An e-business company faces the same problems as any other with regard to values and missions. These concepts must be clear and the members of the company must be familiar with them. The values are a true reflection of the criteria of decision over people: why do we recruit, why do we pay, why do we advertise, why do we dismiss, why do the members of the company work... The missions are the type of real needs we wish to satisfy in our employees, the internal mission, or in our clients, the external mission. The speed of growth of e-business and the change of environment make this familiarisation difficult. It is obvious that in an ever-changing world it is difficult to maintain permanent concepts, yet it is precisely here where deep foundations, which bring coherence to organisational actions, are most necessary.

**How can values in e-business be consolidated?**

In 1997 the company First Virtual managed to attract 3,000 companies and 220,000 consumers from 166 countries as customers. With this growth, its management team not only emphasised personal contact, but also carried out training programmes requiring physical attendance. Some aspects of business activity are managed better according to conventional formulae.

The e-business sector offers great opportunities and quick wealth creation. This attracts entrepreneurs, but it also harmful. The proliferation of retribution systems which aim to achieve employee loyalty, such as stock options, is a clear symptom. Values and the sense of the "missions" can deteriorate if the employee is moved, almost exclusively, due to economic reasons.

Moreover, the rotation of staff in these companies poses a threat. The development of strategies to poach directors and critical employees is a clear symptom. A high level of uncontrolled rotation makes the consolidation of cultural values difficult.

The fact that workers no longer have to remain in one place, and may not go to traditional places of work, can make the assimilation of these concepts, which are so important for consistence of action, difficult. The values and missions need to be more operational when there is geographical dispersion. This is especially so in a nomad organisation, such as workers in the IBM Mobility programme, remote teleworkers (from the teleoffice or telecottage) or homeworkers. Dispersion weakens the possibilities to unify criteria, and this makes them more necessary than ever.

Hence it will be necessary to accurately gauge the information and training processes in order to strengthen the knowledge of and familiarisation with the values. For this purpose we can use the communication power of the CITs, which have some limitations in this subtle field. An indispensable requirement is the establishment of initial reception periods, where these concepts are transmitted through interactive face-to-face training techniques.
The Problems of Managing People in E-business

The principle challenges in e-people management are the definition of the internal mission and the strengthening of the sense of the external mission. In the internal mission, the company should make this definition even more accurately. Firstly it should decide who are to be considered members of the organisation and on what levels. E-business is based on network relations. 40% of the workers in Silicon Valley are contingent: part-time, temporary, self-employed or professional workers... Hence we should ask: Who are my employees? What level of relation do I have with them? Is a self-employed worker working from home a member of the organisation? The type of relation and the needs to be satisfied should be clearly defined: Is it the company's job to train a professional it takes on for a specific project, or should this be the individual's challenge? How can we deal with the influence on the family of such intense work?

Since September 1998 a group of three anthropologists from the University of San José (California) have been studying the influence on the family of working in Silicon Valley.

Other problems are raised with regards to the external mission. In the classic organisation, our direct customers are people; on the net the customer may be merely an e-mail address (see the difference between a traditional bank and an Internet bank). Since personal attention with the customer is reduced, the sensation of usefulness may wane. The "emotional" part of this relation may disappear. We need to establish mechanisms to replace it. The Corporate Universities can bring together employees and customers or suppliers in classrooms and so help the personal relationship, or at least the transmission of sensations in a more humane manner. The function of the intermediaries may be replaced by technological means. Personalised attention and transparency, security in the transactions and the possibility to return the product are fundamental aspects for a high level of satisfaction of an online customer. To bring back "personalised" attention is one of the challenges for online businesses and helps to strengthen the sense of external mission.

Maintaining the values, the external mission and the internal mission alive, especially in the case of teleworkers (whether nomads, homeworkers or remote workers), requires a communication plan in which "face-to-face" meetings should not be forgotten. Organisational culture is a critical factor in the success of business organisation. The processes of cultural construction require communication. The barriers found in the online company should be offset with training programmes which require physical presence and with lateral means of communication. We should also increase the role of the mentoring and coaching processes.