Strategies for Tomorrow: An Executive Seminar in Information Technology
(Sponsor: Wang Laboratories. At: Boston, Ritz-Carlton Hotel, 7-8 Nov 83)

Excerpts

I. <u>Duke Sutherland</u>: Office of the President, Wang Laboratories

° Office automation (OA) is a management process, <u>not</u> a technology process. The human is the information processing system; the office is an extension of the human.

° The industrial society is past; the information society is the future.

° Integration of technology and organization is the goal. <u>In the end, you change the way you do business.</u>

° OA has a technical focus but, not just ADP; the environment (lighting, heating, furniture, aesthetics) is part of it. Again - the focus is on the human.

° Top management must oversee facility planning, human resources planning and office automation: these are the interactive elements.

II. <u>Dr. Michael Hammer</u>: President, Hammer & Co. (Harvard faculty, on leave)

° Difference between administration and management is that between main-tenance and innovation.

° Automation is not the word for the 80's - it was for the 50's. The focus is not cost reduction but performance improvement; the focus is on the user. On effectiveness - not efficiency.

° Phase I automation was back-office processing; administration; the main frame computer.

° Phase II was front-office managerial; the mini computer and PC.

° Pase III will be the user; innovation; networks.

° Information systems are not just for back-office processing or for manage-ment but to re-define the business.

° <u>Don't</u> automate an office; <u>do</u> improve organizational performance. Don't try it at the corporate level; do it at the departmental level. Begin by team building: with line and technical people.

° System architecture includes: 1) the personal appliance - tied to; 2) the departmental information system (this is where the action will be for the next 5 years [The structure of the computer systems should mirror the organization]); 3) the corporate infrastructure-providing the networking, the mainframe.

° Central Control of procurement is outdated but total independence is
  not desirable. Two or three vendors are best: all are equally nervous
  and equally benefit from the shared orders.

° Don't buy a product only but buy a long-term arrangement.

° The key to success is how well people are considered: sensitivity to
  their concerns & feelings; informed consent; participation; incentives.

° There is a new role for data processors. They are the consultants, the
  helpers. A new mind-set is required. So too the users-manufacturers need
  a new mind-set.

° Senior management role: strategic direction; support; set the climate for
  investment to change. Preferably, be a role model - not sitting at a
  terminal all day but take the lead. Begin now.

III. Continental Illinois Bank Case Study: Louis Mertes, Executive VP

° Tied dumb terminals to more complex ones to the main frame. A single ter-
  minal is the long-range goal.

° Totally underestimated the training and hand-holding of professionals
  required. Included are electronic mail; audio mail, personal computing.

° Tried and abandoned teleconferencing.

IV. Peter McElroy: Director, Strategic Planning Wang Laboratories

° Senior management must: a) set objectives (will there be a terminal
  on every desk? will all use a common electronic mail system?);
  b) decentralize information management; c) coordinate multiple
  technologies; and d) re-deploy technical staff resources.

° Leery of single communication protocol - believe creative movement just
  beginning in communications.

° Software is lightyears behind hardware.

V. Dr. James McKenney - Harvard University

° Information systems were seldom on top management agendas -- now, in 200
  companies surveyed, quarterly or monthly.

° In future, the bulk of software will be purchased -- and by users.

° What works in one industry won't work in another -- and that's as it is and
  should be.

° Expect one million information systems in the U.S. Graduates are going to
  software houses, not hardware; expect their salaries to exceed $100K --
  and late teens/early 20's are most creative periods.

° Technology architecture is going in two directions: 1) user oriented;
  2) utility technologies (central main frame shops).

° Telecommunications will be the major opportunity for the late 80's for utility
  systems. Competition for telecommunications personnel will be/is staggering.

° Aside re user: mis-use of analyst time writing code or learning contracting for procurement.

° Intelligence-based systems are deterministic-not evolutionary. Office productivity improves if the work force is involved in the system decision process.

° Often, secondary benefits become more substantial than the expected primary benefit.

° The pilot project is the fundamentally smart way to go.

° Standards development: one way is not to impose but develop from within.

° A cultural change is involved. The leadership addresses roles, rituals, tools and taboos.

° The information manager is the supporter of change; the user is the leader of change and designer of the work station.

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