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Subj: Full transcript of Win's 7/30 interview, Craig video tape is on its way

Transcription of Win Hindle Interview

Q: Talk about your career here.

MR. HINDLE: Fine.

Q: -- (brief) and give us (some) background on your career starting in ??

MR. HINDLE: Sure. Through one of the gentleman that I just referenced, Jay Forrester, I met Ken Olsen, back when I was working at MIT, and they introduced -- or Jay introduced me to Ken. And I interviewed with Ken when I was leaving MIT and Ken offered me the position of Assistant to the President, which I accepted and started in September of 1962.

In those early days, you did a little bit of everything, but my particular responsibilities were to invent a new scheduling system where we could check on our engineering projects, and also to be the personnel officer for professional employees, in the hiring and salary increases and all the performance evaluations of professionals.

So, I did that, and many other things for Ken. And then when Ken decided to move the company into a business unit-oriented structure, which we did in 1964, he asked me to become one of the business unit managers, which we then called Product Line Managers. And for the next 15 years I worked in the product line structure of the company, first as a Product Line Manager for some of the smaller product lines, and then for the -- what was then called the PDP-6, which was our largest computer. Which then became the PDP-10 and then ultimately the DEC System 10, then the DEC System 20, which continued on as a Digital product line until the late seventies.

At that point Ken formed an Office of the President, and I became the Vice President, Corporate Operations. And in that role, I did reviews of all parts of the company as Corporate Operations Manager, although I wasn't directly responsible for all corporate operations. I set up a review process which was intended to get people to review themselves, really, but it was far more than just a review of their financial results, it was a review of everything that they were doing, their products, their marketing, their customer relationships and all of that.

And I did that for about two years and people seemed to appreciate it, because one of the things I think that as a company we've never done as well as we could have, is review of operations. It's always been very financially-oriented, and I've always been of the belief that, when you review operations, you should be reviewing everything that a group does. So we did that for a couple of years.

And then I was responsible for a number of the corporation functions in addition. I was responsible at one point for corporate communications, advertising and public relations and brochure preparation and on functions such as that. I was also responsible for corporate planning, corporate purchasing, and corporate information systems at one point. The responsibility has changed over time and so over the course of thirty years with Digital, why I've been in almost every position you could think of.

I was the General Counsel for a couple of years, about a year I guess, while we looked for a general counsel. I was Chief

Financial Officer while we were looking for a Chief Financial Officer. And that's been kind of fun, to take on those roles, to get to know the really good people we have in every function in this company. I guess that's what has impressed me all during those years is that in every function I worked in, I felt we had excellent people, and if there's one thing that I would give great credit to Digital for, it's having the best people in the world that work here. It's always impressed me.

In the last couple of years, since Bob Palmer became the President and Chief Executive, I've been responsible for several areas, a new area called Business Ethics and Business Practices. And another one, which we have known for many years, Corporate Quality. And so those two functions have been a responsibility of mine in addition to Corporate Security, which is another corporate function which I've been responsible for for a number of years.

Now with my retirement, the functions will all be turned over to other executives to manage in the future.

Q: Back when you first started (and) business background ?? , being first business manager with a lot of engineers --

MR. HINDLE: When I joined, I wasn't the very first business person that was at Digital, because we did have people in finance and people in marketing and other functions that didn't come from an engineering background, but clearly the most senior managers in the company were engineering-oriented, and the company was a very strongly engineering-manufacturing-oriented company.

I think people accepted me because I really appreciated the value that we had as an organization because of our excellence in engineering, and that was what distinguished Digital, and that was what separated us from other companies that were being born at that time, and that's why we did well. Because we were a good engineering company. We had excellent engineers. We grew rapidly. And the engineers built products that other engineers would buy, and it was a very upbeat experience for me as a business person to see this business-oriented culture that was engineering-oriented at the same time.

Let me comment here on the thing that I think was Ken Olsen's most brilliant contribution to industry. From MIT he learned that an academic atmosphere was one that was very important to an innovative, spirited environment, where creative people could come together, interact with each other, but each independently could come forward with their best ideas. And he had that in his group at Lincoln Laboratory.

What he lacked, and what the group lacked at Lincoln was the business purpose. They would build a prototype and then turn it over to somebody else to build, and what Ken and the people that joined him wanted to do was not only have the innovative environment of a commercial enterprise, but to have the business challenge of being able to invent products, to build those products and manufacture them, and then to make money. So it was the innovative environment, plus the business motive that was the key to the early days at Digital.

In the first nine months that the company was in existence, we made a profit, and made a profit up until the last several years. And so the combination of an innovative environment, and a profit-oriented environment were the keys to the original Digital.

Q: ?? the old culture was ?? .

MR. HINDLE: People have talked a lot about the culture of Digital as it was originally, and I prefer to think of it as a

series of values that were core to the company's success. Some of those values of course are people-oriented values, of an innovative environment, a meritocracy where people's performance was what made them successful. They were not ever promoted on the basis of political connections or on the basis of who they knew. They were promoted and rewarded on the basis of what they did. And how successful it was.

Now, that doesn't mean that people who tried things that were innovative and failed were cast aside, because they weren't. By and large in the early days of Digital, we gave people an opportunity to try, and if they didn't make it the first time, to try again. And it was the willingness to let people try again, I think that was another aspect of the culture.

I think later years that became a bit of a problem because we would let people try too many times before finally deciding that they just didn't have the right combination of skills to be successful in our environment.

The environment also required people who were self-motivated. We did not have a lot of managers who were telling people what to do, so you needed people who were motivated by the desire to do well, and that was the kind of people that were attracted here. It was an environment that there was a lot of controversy, technical ideas were tested through the peer group relationships, and only the best ideas came to the top. But those best ideas were usually pretty good because they were tested. And that was another element of Digital's culture that was very, very important.

I guess the fundamental value that I'd have to say was fundamental because it was so important to everyone, was integrity. Integrity with customers, integrity with one another, as employees of the company. I guess I don't have to define integrity for anyone because it's sort of self-defining. But the way I simplify it is to say, it's meeting commitments. Whenever you make a commitment to a customer, to another employee, to an outside community, whoever you make that commitment to, you're obligated to follow through. Integrity means you follow through with whatever it is you promise to do. And it was that part of Digital's value system that attracted us to a lot of customers. It attracted a lot of employees to Digital. And it remains just as important in today's environment as it was 30, 35 years ago.

Q: (QUESTION INAUDIBLE).

MR. HINDLE: I don't think the idea of new idea -- I don't think the idea -- let me start that one again. I think that the innovative culture or environment of Digital was stimulated by the people that were hired, not by any one person. Clearly, Ken had a lot to do with creating that environment, and his presence was very heavily felt, but he never told people what to do. He always felt that the best ideas came from people when they were free to come forward with what they thought would make money. What they thought other people needed.

And so, the number of products that we have has always come from the people that we've hired to do the development work and the product development work of the company. I don't think it ever came from a single person.

Q: How did that culture have an effect (on Digital's success)?

MR. HINDLE: Creative people came to work for Digital, not just engineers, but people in sales. People in finance. People in manufacturing. People in service. Creative people liked the atmosphere of Digital because it was an open environment where

people communicated freely. Where you were promoted and rewarded on the basis of your competence. Where you could propose new ideas whenever you felt they were important. And where you could get an answer as to whether your ideas would be followed or not.

One of the concepts that we followed through, all through Digital's early years and right up 'til today is that the people who are going to do a project, or run a business, are the ones to make the proposals. Once you've made a proposal, you take responsibility for it, and once you have approval for that proposal, or that project, then you are the one to run it. So you're taking responsibility for fulfilling the commitments that you've made to the company in the proposal that you brought forward.

And that came to be shortened to be, he who proposes does, or she who proposes does, and that concept is very valuable and just as valuable today as it was thirty years ago.

Q: (INAUDIBLE QUESTION)

MR. HINDLE: Growth is tough. I don't think people realize how hard it is to grow and remain a fine organization. Companies that can grow rapidly and remain healthy are to be admired, it's not easy. And the reason is that a company like Digital depended very much on the value system that was set by the original managers and when you then brought in, literally thousands of new people, transmitting that value system, and transmitting that environment, was not an easy thing to do, and never would be for any company.

We did a lot of training. We did a lot of development, so that people could understand the environment and could be helped to enter into this value system in a way that they could appreciate it. But it's hard to do that, and when you grow rapidly you suffer the problem of potentially people not understanding the value system and not appreciating it, and therefore not following it.

One of the things we did when we opened up in new countries, either a manufacturing plant or a sales subsidiary, we would always seed a few seasoned Digital people into that new plant or that new country, so that they could bring the culture and value system of Digital to that new operation. And they would generally stay there for the first two or three years. And then the idea was to bring in people from the local environment, from the local country, and have them run it after the first few years, because we have always had as a goal, having all of our local operations managed by people who were from that local environment. But the important part was making sure that somebody who understood Digital and its value system was there teaching and training in the early years.

Q: ?? Digital has gone through (a similar shift) ?? .

MR. HINDLE: The core values of Digital haven't changed, the core values continue to be integrity, customer satisfaction, teamwork, excellence and a number of others. You build on those a culture. You start with the core values and you build a culture around those core values. And the culture or the requirements of a computer company in the nineties is different than the requirements in the sixties, seventies and even eighties.

A number of cultural aspects have become far more important. Accountability in particular is one that is key in the current Digital. We have to sharpen our definition of accountability so that business units can really be accountable for what they propose and do. So that individual people running projects or

programs can have that same kind of clarity.

Historically within the company we haven't had as much clarity around accountability as is needed. I think I mentioned before that people were oftentimes given the second, third, fourth and more chances to do a program or a project. That's not possible to do in the current competitive environment, the current cost environment, that we find ourselves in as a computer company. You don't have the luxury of giving people three and four chances anymore. You can give them a second chance, and people should certainly have a second chance, but beyond that, people have got to produce. We don't have the time or the -- or the ability to give people a lot of time to succeed.

So the whole time frame has compressed. We have to run our projects much quicker. We have come up with new products in a much faster time frame. And the people that will be successful in the new environment are people who can respond to that increased emphasis on speed and turning things over quickly, cycle time is important.

New products come on in the market it feels like every six months, not every two years as it used to be. And in that kind of a situation you must have people who can respond in that kind of time frame. So there's more pressure I think on the people system of the company as a result of the changes in the industry. As we've become an industry where more of the output is like a commodity, then this kind of environment happens, just as it happens in other industries. And we have to react to it in order to be profitable.

Q: (INAUDIBLE QUESTION)

MR. HINDLE: I think that we have reacted quite well to the increased speed and requirements for faster cycle time of product development. We've got a lot more to do, but there's a general acknowledgment within our organization that this is necessary in the new environment that we find ourselves. And the core values haven't changed, the core values of integrity, respect for individuals, excellence, those core values are just the same as they were back 35 years ago.

Now, I should also say that it's harder to live to those core values today than it was then because they're -- the competitive environment requires such a diligence to make money, to make a profit, and so that sometimes it seems as though we are not living to those core values as we should. And I have to say that it is probably true that we look on those core values as more values that we're striving for, that we're looking to attain, than values which we think we have accomplished. But I would say that was even true thirty years ago. We were never as good as we wanted to be, we were always striving to achieve the core values that we had as aspirations, and we still are doing that today. It's hard though in an atmosphere of down-sizing and lay-offs to have all the human qualities that you want to as an organization, because it just feels like an environment that's not as kind toward human beings.

We have done everything we know how to down-size and lay off in a respectful, dignified manner, but I'm sure that with all the people that have departed from Digital, there's no question that some of them haven't been treated with the kind of dignity that we would all wanted them to be treated with. We've strived to do our best, but at the same time we have to be realistic, and realize that we haven't always attained that. We will continue to strive toward those core values because they're just as important to the future of this company as they were to the past.

Q: (INAUDIBLE QUESTION)

MR. HINDLE: It goes without saying that the core values of our company must be retained in the future. Those values of excellence, integrity, team work, accountability, customer success, all are vital to us being successful. And one more, respect for the individual continues to be vital.

I'm convinced that we will be excellent again as an organization when our people believe we are excellent. And our people will believe it when they have understood the mission and vision of the company and believe in that just as strongly as we believed in it years and years ago. And I believe I see that happening, and it will happen over time as we roll out the new systems and new organization structures for the company, because we're continuing to experiment with how it's best to run and make money. We have to be profitable as a company. And I think our employees will gain confidence in the company when we do make money. Customers want us to make money, employees want us to make money, we have to be profitable as an organization. Profits, as I mentioned earlier, were one of the very earliest values that the company had, not only an innovative environment, but the ability to make money in that innovative environment, which is what separated us from being an educational institution, you have to make a commercial success out of the products that you build and the services that you offer or it's not a viable organization. And that's just as true in the future, and will be the turning point, when we make a profit as a company.

Q: (INAUDIBLE QUESTION)

MR. HINDLE: I think we're well on the way to a new Digital. A new Digital which is just as concerned about its values with customers, and with other employees, as it is with making money. You can't have one without the other. I'm convinced that there is no way that you could be successful as an organization unless you are valued by your customers, by your employees, by the communities in which you work, and that you are profitable, so that the investors in your company feel rewarded from their investment.

Our investors haven't felt very rewarded in the last three or four years. As our stock price has plummeted, our investors have been very dissatisfied with us. We have to get them back as part of the team. The team is very clear and you can't emphasize one element over the other. The team starts with our employees, then goes to our customers, then goes to our investors, and the communities in which we live. And all of those communities, all of those constituencies, have to feel the company is successful in their part of the equation, and that they can -- they are being contributed to and they are contributing to the success of the company.

It all hangs together. You can't have one part of the organization, or one part of the community feeling good and the rest of them feeling bad, it is not going to happen. They all have to come forward together. And I believe I see that starting now. Certainly our investors don't feel good yet because we haven't turned a profit yet, but we will in the short term, I'm convinced. And when that happens we'll all start to move forward together as the customers, employees, stakeholders in our communities and our shareholders. We'll all start to feel much better about the organization and the success of the future.

Q: (INAUDIBLE QUESTION)

MR. HINDLE: The company is a series of communities which all work together to make it successful. To be successful you

have to have good technology, you have to have excellent people. You have to be well-financed. And you have to have customers that believe in your products and services. And who want to deal with you. The customers will not be there without the products and services and the people to provide them. It's an equation which has to all fit together in order to make sense. And I think that the future of Digital is very contingent upon all of those communities feeling that we're successful together. And it's a -- it's a point at which I think we'll be able to test when we have that feeling of moving forward together. And I think we're close to achieving that in the next few quarters. I really have a lot of confidence that the management team is well aware of all of these issues that I've been talking about in the future, and is well on the way to having them realized and the company successful.

Q: (INAUDIBLE QUESTION)

MR. HINDLE: You know, I'd be happy to repeat questions if you think that --

Q: The question was, ?? change ?? .

MR. HINDLE: Digital has changed the computing industry several times before. Back in the very early days of the company we changed the industry by inventing the mini-computer. Computing up to that point in time had always been done on huge machines sitting behind glass walls and having people come to a glass window and passing their cards or tapes in and getting them processed and then finding out that they had made some errors and they had to turn around and do it all over again the next day.

We made computing accessible by one person, one computer, which is really the definition of a mini-computer, or the definition of the personal computer. The personal computer evolved very naturally from the mini-computer.

After the mini-computer we innovated very significantly with our friends at MIT and Bolt, Beranek and Newman, to invent time-sharing. When I say, invent it, we were the first ones to put time-sharing on a commercial computer. We didn't do all the invention because our colleagues at MIT were very much involved in that, but we commercialized the idea. And the PDP-6 was the very first time-sharing computer built to be a time-sharing computer back in the early 1960s. So the Digital of the past has been an innovator and a company that's changed the industry.

In the seventies I think our biggest contribution was probably networking, when we changed the way people thought about networking, by the way we communicated within our organization. We knew that to be a successful organization and run the way we wanted to run, which was that everybody was equal and everybody could communicate with everyone else, we would have a networking system that would service our own requirements, on a peer-to-peer relationship, so that the communications went directly to the individual that you wanted to communicate with, rather than having to go through a central switch. And that kind of peer-to-peer networking was quite new when we started it, and -- although had been experimented with in universities. And was quite different from what our major competitor, IBM, was doing.

So, once again in the seventies we contributed very significantly to the computing industry. In the late seventies and eighties, I think our biggest contribution was the VAX. And the VMS operating system which operated on the VAX. It wasn't the first 32-bit machine, but it was the first one that had an operating system that, although it was called a mini-computer, it was a super mini, and it had an operating system that had much of

the quality of the mainframe systems produced by other companies in the computing industry. So the VAX was the first super mini computer that could be in commercial environments and operate as effectively as a mainframe in certain kinds of establishments.

Now, it didn't replace the mainframe and let me not in any way imply that it replaced the mainframe, 'cause it didn't. But it supplemented the mainframe in many kinds of applications and had the kind of reliability, software reliability, that was then only known to the software that ran on mainframes.

So, the history of innovation in the industry is very much a part of Digital's culture and Digital's history. I think that our contributions in the nineties will be heavily oriented around our Alpha, our Alpha architecture, our Alpha AXP systems. The fact that we have here a new 64-bit architecture which we believe will be the computing environment of the long term future in the computing industry, and we're working very hard now to make the Alpha AXP architecture just as successful as the VAX was 15 and 20 years ago.

Q: (INAUDIBLE QUESTION)

MR. HINDLE: Just the other day I had a young employee ask me -- knowing that I had worked for Digital for 32 years -- whether he should plan on a long career with a company, or whether he should expect that he would be moved around the industry every few years. My answer was, I hope he had the privilege of working for a single company, whether it's Digital or some other company, because I found that a long career had a number of very significant advantages. Number one, you could build customer relationships which lasted, and get to know customers very well over time.

Second, you could build team work over time with your fellow employees. And build teams of people that were used to working together and could continue to work together very effectively. So, the team-building part of a long career was also important.

And finally, I think that the satisfaction you get from being with a company as it grows and matures and becomes successful, is something that becomes your own personal satisfaction as well as the satisfaction of the company itself, and the success of the company itself.

Now, at the same time, I would counsel anyone that because of the volatility of our industry and most industries these days, and the competitive aspects of it, that I would always keep my skills updated, in case the company came onto bad times and had to reduce its size. I would always be sure I understood what my skills were, what my profession was, and make sure I continually trained myself in requirements of that profession. So that if in fact it wasn't possible to stay with the company that you were with, you always had the skills to go out into the marketplace and find another position with another firm. And that would be my advice to anyone in today's environment. Not just in the computer industry but in any industry.

I think longevity is not going to be as valued in the future as it was in the past. But I think if you're lucky enough to have a long career with a single company, a successful company, then it will be a rewarding and rare and good experience.

Q: (INAUDIBLE QUESTION)

MR. HINDLE: I think it's always important to recognize the heritage and the history of any organization, because whether you're an organization in commercial work or whether you're in a university or a hospital, history does have a place in everyone's -- in everyone's current occupation. And it's important to



understand that history.

Now, it's important to put it into perspective, too, because you can't live on your laurels in any industry, certainly not in Digital. As we've found, if you fall out of favor with any one of your constituencies, your stockholders or your employees or your customers, things become very difficult. So you have to keep current. You have to have a business plan and a strategy and a vision that's updated and you understand where you're going in the future. But you want to base that on the culture and on the values that have been important to that organization in the past. And in that way you can connect with other employees who have been here longer. Other employees who believe that they can make contributions into the future.

So it's important to understand history but not dwell on it. It's important to understand the future, but not dwell on it. It's a nice combination of history and the future vision that will make the strong company of the future and the strong Digital of the future, I believe.

Q: (INAUDIBLE QUESTION)

MR. HINDLE: I think any new manager joining a company, having been with another firm or several other firms, would do very well to pick a mentor within the Digital environment, and make sure that that mentor has some sense of the history of the company and a -- an understanding of course of the -- of the future. By having a mentor whom you can sit with once every couple of weeks and just review what's happening, I believe you'll maximize the opportunity to succeed in the Digital of the future. I don't think this is restricted to just Digital, I think this is good advice for anybody joining any company when they have had their original career with a -- with a different firm.

It's important to understand the culture and values of the company you're joining, as well as the vision, (as) where you want to help take that company. And the best way to find that out is by having relationships with people who have some history with the organization, and who have a willingness and an interest in helping newcomers to understand both the past and appreciate the opportunities in the future.

Q: ?? . What advice would you have in addition to ?? , any other things that you ?? ?

MR. HINDLE: In a --

Q: (INAUDIBLE QUESTION)

MR. HINDLE: Sorry?

Q: (INAUDIBLE QUESTION)

MR. HINDLE: My observations of executives who have joined Digital from other companies are that the ones who seem to be most successful are those who want to find out a lot about what this company has done in the past, what its values are, what the culture of the organization is, not that it's all correct, or that it shouldn't be changed, but unless you understand where the company has been, it's hard to understand the employees whom you will be supervising. And I would strongly recommend spending a lot of time in the first months of your new career at Digital, visiting with people who have been here for awhile, so that you can understand the ambience of the organization and the thought processes of the people here, and if you want to change the way Digital does its work, then you're starting from a base of knowledge about where it was, so you can help to bring those changes about to where Digital's going.

If you don't understand the past, it's very hard to make

changes that will be easy to implement by the people who have been here longer than you have.

Q: You mentioned several (decisions) ?? .

MR. HINDLE: As I look on Digital today, I think that our constituencies really want us to succeed. They've been disappointed with us over the last several years, and rightfully so. For our shareholders, we have not produced profit. And they will be dissatisfied until we start to make a profit. For our customers, they want to see us successful and proud of ourselves again, and when we are, they'll like that. They've been very loyal. We have lots of loyal customers and they like Digital a lot. They like our people and they like our products. They want to see us successful, and they'll be happier dealing with us when we are successful financially.

Employees are discouraged at present primarily because the organization is not stable. And the future is not as clear, and of course because we've had to have a lot of lay-offs and a lot of friends and departments have had to leave the company.

I believe the future will continue to have a lot of continued down-sizing, and it's important that we do that in a very straightforward way so that people understand what we're doing.

I believe employees will feel a lot better about the company as soon as the directions are clear, and as the future is unfolded and the senior management team articulates where it is we're going together. So, profitability is very key to the future in all the constituencies, and employees feeling confident about the company is key to getting our customers to feel good, also. Profitability is the key, however, we must get back to profitability.

The communities in which we live of course are nervous because we have left a number of communities in the last several years, so wherever we have a manufacturing plant or a sales office, they -- they hope that we'll remain there, because we've generally been thoughtful of the communities in which we live, and I believe that we want to be thoughtful in the future.

We did over-expand, we built too many -- too many manufacturing plants. We expanded into too many places. And we've had to pull back, unfortunately. We all wish we didn't have to do that. But in order to attain financial viability, we've had to make those -- those -- we have to do those shut-downs. And it's been painful, every one of them has been painful. And we hope that we don't have to do very many more. But we probably will have to do a few more.

As soon as we can come to stability and financial viability so that we're profitable, then we should be getting out into the communities and once again, restoring confidence by -- on the part of those communities -- that we are a good corporate citizen.

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BEGINNING OF SIDE TWO

MR. HINDLE: -- ?? and once again, restoring confidence on the part of those communities that we are a -- a good corporate citizen and that we're -- we're here for the long pull. But we have to attain our financial stability before we can do that.

Q: (INAUDIBLE QUESTION)

MR. HINDLE: Sure. Sure. Just after Bob Palmer became Chief Executive of Digital, he asked me to begin a new corporate function called the Office of Ethics and Business Practices. This office, although there in spirit before, was never a

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reality. Some people originally felt this indicated a weakness on our part that we didn't believe we had been ethical or had good business practices up to the point in time that we started the office.

Not the case at all. The -- the start-up of the office was meant to emphasize the fact that this was a key and important part of Digital's value system in the future, and it was a -- a place where employees and customers could come if they felt that we were not living up to our -- our stated goals to be ethical and have integrity in all of our relationships with customers and with other employees. And it's worked out that way. We've had a number of customers and employees who have brought their concerns to our office. They have been dealt with and we think that the -- the way we have handled those concerns has been straightforward, and it's been satisfactory to the people that have brought them.

Now, when everybody is satisfied, of course, we'll know we've -- we've leaned over too far in the other direction, and I won't say that everybody thinks that we've come to the right conclusion every time, but that we have, in a -- in a fair and straightforward way, we have come to a conclusion and given an answer to every question that was asked. And that's what we intend to do in the future.

Q: (INAUDIBLE QUESTION)

MR. HINDLE: Okay?

Q: (INAUDIBLE QUESTION)

MR. HINDLE: Okay.

Q: ?? is there anything ?? that I've ?? --

MR. HINDLE: There -- is one -- there's one more I could -- I'd like to make a couple of comments on quality. Have we still got some more tape left? Okay. A year and a half ago, Bob Palmer asked me to lead the Office of Quality. And we formed a new center called the Strategic Quality Management Center. And that effort has been very interesting to me because it's been an opportunity for me to learn area -- areas of knowledge that I didn't know about before.

I guess everyone has heard of Total Quality Management, or TQM as some people abbreviate it, but it's not really very well understood except in those companies where TQM is a way of life. What I've learned about TQM in the last year and a half is that it provides a management system where everybody can participate in the success of the organization, where everyone can feel a part of fixing anything that's wrong. Where managers and employees can work together to satisfy customers and to handle concerns that any employees have about one another.

It's a way of bringing a quality work place experience to an organization. And quite frankly, I hope that as Digital moves into the future, that we will adopt a TQM attitude, and although we don't have to use the words, TQM, the principles that guide a TQM company should be the principles that we follow. And by the way, Digital follows most of those principles today, but we haven't adopted a management system that embodies all of those principles yet, and I believe that Digital will be stronger in the future, if we can have a -- a system of management which emphasizes customers, employees, and communities in a way that all managers and employees work together to achieve excellence in every one of those dimensions. If we do that, our shareholders will benefit because we'll be a lot more profitable, and a lot stronger company.

Q: ?? (room tone) --