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ASHTON-TATE'S DOCUMENTATION AND SUPPORT SET A HIGH STANDARD

The experience gained from five years as a major microcomputer software marketer, and a substantial commitment to the delivery of leading-edge documentation and prompt, responsive telephone support, combine to make Ashton-Tate's documentation and support organization a leader in its field.

Ashton-Tate's commitment is reflected by its unprecedented creation of a senior management position to head its documentation and support organization, consisting of product documentation, testing, and telephone support. Robert D. Gafford, vice president of consumer communications and the former head of product services at VisiCorp, has implemented a multi-faceted program designed to maintain Ashton-Tate's leadership position.

"Our primary goal is to provide the best product support of any company in the industry," he said. "Our initial focus has been on building an outstanding telephone support group."

Results are already being reported: A national computer publication recently cited Ashton-Tate for its excellence in telephone support.

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"We have a very straightforward objective in the documentation and support area," said Edward M. Esber Jr., president and chief executive officer of Ashton-Tate. "We intend to be the leader among the major software vendors in helping our users be more productive in their jobs. The philosophy permeates our entire company, from software development to our documentation department."

Creating top-flight documentation is only one facet of Ashton-Tate's comprehensive support strategy. With hundreds of thousands of people using its dBASE II, dBASE III, and Framework products, Ashton-Tate receives a large volume of technically-oriented telephone inquiries each day. The company has assembled an expert technical support staff to answer these telephone inquiries. Their work is producing one of the fastest response records in the software industry. On average, users now receive answers to their questions within three minutes.

"Our technical support phone bank is the most visible aspect in our support operation," Gafford said. "It provides direct contact with our users. Quick and helpful response builds a tremendous loyalty among our user base."

Ashton-Tate also uses other means to support its products and disseminate technical information. After surveying data processing executives across the U.S., the company launched a major effort in April 1985, its Corporate Emphasis Program,

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designed to provide special product and technical support and training for corporate users of Ashton-Tate products, and for dealers selling to that audience.

Ashton-Tate regularly publishes a technical newsletter, <u>TechNotes</u>, to subscribers who want to maximize the benefits of using their software. The newsletter, which is provided at no cost to corporate users, contains technical advice from Ashton-Tate's support staff, as well as articles from the many third-party developers who have designed applications based on Ashton-Tate products.

The company also regularly distributes support-related information electronically, using two on-line "bulletin boards": The Source, to general users, and One Point, to dealers and corporate customers. Information and technical tips are updated weekly.

Ashton-Tate is also developing a series of on-disk tutorials -- electronic documentation that provides an interactive method by which users can increase their mastery of their software.

The books developed and distributed by the company's Publishing Group are also designed to help different levels of users solve programming and productivity problems and use their computers and software more efficiently.

In the international market, Ashton-Tate supports its product line through its major offices worldwide, with technical

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support personnel on staff in each office. Its master
distributors provide high-caliber localized service and support,
including technical hotlines and informational newsletters.

Ashton-Tate is one of the leading microcomputer software
companies worldwide. The company also includes a publishing
unit, which produces books as well as a quarterly magazine. For
the fiscal year ended January 31, 1985, the company had revenues
of $82.3 million.

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