Oral History of Bill Kampe

Interviewed by:
David Laws

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Laws: Good morning. It's January 27th, 2022. I'm David Laws, semiconductor curator at the Computer History Museum here in Mountain View, California. And today we're going to talk with Bill Kampe. Bill had a 35-year history with Hewlett-Packard, It's going to be interesting to explore many of the different aspects and evolutions of Hewlett-Packard over the years as well as understand Bill's career and the things that he remembers from that era. So, welcome to the Computer History Museum, Bill.

Kampe: Thank you very much, David.

Laws: Let's start at the beginning. Please tell us about your background and your childhood. Where you were born and something about your family.

Kampe: Well, I was born in New Jersey on the seashore, during World War II. My father was over in Europe. He was a paratrooper about to jump into Holland at the time. And after the war, we stayed there for a couple of years. He got out of the service and ended up going back into the service and that kind of propelled us into a range of different locations. We went to Fort Bragg, North Carolina; and then Fort Benning, Georgia; and Fort Leavenworth, Kansas; and spent some time in Europe for four years including two years of high school in Munich, which was really pretty neat. So, we saw a lot of different places, never understood the concept of a hometown for a long time. So, that’s kind of the quick version of it.

Laws: What did your mom do?

Kampe: She was a homemaker, but she was also a very active woman. At every post we were she found some activity to be involved in, often running the thrift shop and trying to make the business actually work as a business while she was doing it. She played tennis, played badminton, and she was good at both of those. I think my father never beat her until they were both in their 50s. And I'm not sure he was never happy with that, but he had to work at it pretty hard.

Laws: Sure. And you had siblings?

Kampe: I have two sisters, both younger, both living in California now.

Laws: So, your mom must have been pretty busy during all the time your father was in the Forces, looking after three of you and bringing you up.

Kampe: What I remember most vividly is the time we were in Europe and every summer we’d start to travel. And, of course, Dad had to work for most of that. Occasionally, he’d get off for a week or two, but we'd spend 45 days out of the 90 days of the summer on the road, visiting different places. We get up to Edinburgh, Scotland, or down into Rome. And I was in the 12-to-16 range and I'd be the navigator. I'd sit in the right-hand front seat of our VW and with a map in hand saying, “Go here, go there,” and she'd drive. And we'd have a great time exploring all kinds of things. It was a pretty vigorous approach to tourism because every day was full with kind of all the things that we can fit into the day. And it wasn't

until much later in my life I realized there are other ways to travel, spend some time relaxing, enjoy time at the café, amble around a bit.

Laws: That's just a wonderful eye-opening experience for a young person.

Kampe: It was fabulous. There's nothing about that that I regret whatsoever. I'm so delighted I had the experience. Yeah.

Laws: With all that moving around, did you find school a challenge in terms of accommodating a different environment?

Kampe: Well, in the really young years, the base schools covered the elementary school. And then I went to 6th grade in Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. And I remember it was just down at the end of the block. So, that was really quite easy to do. When we got to Europe for 7th and 8th grade, they were base schools also. And then into high school, which was an American high school run by the military and that was a terrific experience, by the way. We're living in a small town called Bad Tölz, which was about 30 miles south of Munich. And they'd pick us up on a bus on Monday, take us up to school, we'd live in a four-day dorm. And, so, from 9th and 10th grade, I had this opportunity to be away from the house and kind of a different level of independence, which was really terrific. And then, on Friday, they'd pick us up after school and take us home. And it was a very good school. There were some terrific teachers there. The folks in the dorm, the dorm counselors, were good folks and just made for a great experience.

Laws: Were there subjects that you enjoyed particularly?

Kampe: Well, I always liked the math and science subjects. And mathematics was a lot of fun. In particular, there was one episode where my geometry teacher probably was in a position to derail my interest in that topic. I was sitting in front of her a few desks back and she was giving a lot of homework in about the third week of the class. I said, you know, "Excuse me, Mrs. Gold, but you know, I'm not sure we can really keep up the homework. We've got other classes we have to spend some time on as well." And she looked at me, and the way she pronounced my name was-- "William Campy [sic], go sit over there." And she moved me to the side of the room and I was ostracized for a while.

I just never got to participate. I'd put my hand up and was thoroughly ignored until about three weeks later and the homework was really tough. I remember there were five questions. This is, by the way, my most vivid memory of a class in high school. There are five questions and three of them are really tough. And I struggled and struggled, but finally got them okay; I got to the class the next morning and she would call on people to go to the board and show the proofs. And, for the first two, I put my hand up, nothing happens. Second one, put my hand up, on the third one-- and because she calls on somebody else-- I put my hand up and I look around the room and she's looking desperately around the room for another person to call on. And, finally, she says, "Okay, William Campy," and sends me to the board. And I go up, I put the proof up, she says, "Okay," and I sit down. And the fourth problem, and I put my hand up, and she's looking around-- nobody else. And with the slightest glimmer of a smile, she calls me up to the board again. And then for the fifth question, same thing happened. I put my hand up and, at this point,

she's actually loosened up and kind of chuckling. I go to the board, show the proof, and after that, I was back in the class again. But I kind of asked myself if that had been really a dismal experience for the whole class, would that have sustained my interest in math and the career that I actually followed?

Laws: That's fascinating, but how do you look on it now? Was this positive or negative?

Kampe: I think the lesson was “Do your homework--” It was a little bit characteristic, by the way, because I think I've always had this slightly irreverent streak of speaking up maybe where other folks were silent. And sometimes that’s served me well and other times it hasn't. So, if I could have learned more about sorting that out beforehand, it would have been helpful.

Laws: Were there any other teachers or influences that guided your career choices and college choices?

Kampe:. Well, I don't know if it guided my career so much, but Mrs. Anderson was one of the teachers, I think, for algebra. And she had extra tickets-- or she had tickets to the Bayerische Rundfunk, which was a fairly renowned symphony orchestra in Munich. And they did open rehearsals on, I think, Thursday nights or some such thing. She'd provide the ticket to me and -- I don't even know how I got to the Symphony Hall, but I’d get to go listen to some absolutely fabulous classical music. And, so, I've had a lifetime interest in classical music anyway, for the enjoyment of listening..

Laws: College choice: What did you want to do and where did you end up?

Kampe: I had no idea. At some point, my father made a fairly casual comment “If you like math and science, you ought to go to MIT.” And that kind of stashed in my mind and that's where I ended up going. I applied to North Carolina State, I was in Fayetteville, North Carolina, when I graduated from high school. So, I'm coming back to the United States for the 11th and 12th grades, and that was the local town’s high school. And it was a good program there. I felt well prepared. I applied to MIT, applied to Caltech, applied to North Carolina State, which had a good reputation; and I think there was another school, probably the University of Michigan. I was accepted at all four schools, but got a scholarship from MIT and that was one of the deciding factors. And it was also a little bit closer to home.

Laws: Relatively.

Kampe: And it followed that one of the things I really appreciated while I was there was that my father made the financial situation pretty easy, because, unlike a lot of folks, he just provided a regular modest amount, but it went into my checking account automatically every month. It just really eased the whole financial aspect of it. Not that it paid for everything. I still worked at bussing tables in the cafeteria and a few other things, but it gave me the ability to kind of plan my own activities and what I was doing more so than a lot of people around me who were depending on the next check to come from home.

Laws: That was a good stable situation for you. How was your experience in college?

Kampe: Well, Boston's a fabulous city to go to school in. It's absolutely remarkable. There are 25 four-year colleges within 15 miles of the center of town. So, that was great. The classes were good. The electrical engineering professor was Amar Bose, of Bose speaker fame. And he was quite the character, but that and all the rest of the courses were really well presented and I enjoyed it.

Laws: And what was the qualification-- you ended up with? A BS in--

Kampe: In electrical engineering.

Laws: And then you went for a masters?

Kampe: And I did. Now what was interesting is that I was also in NROTC at the time. And the military background that I'd grown up in led me to believe you kind of owe some level of service to the country. So, I signed up for an NROTC. And when it came time to graduate, what I learned is you can get a deferment if you are going to a graduate program in a scientific field. So, I fortunately, received an NSF fellowship to continue. And I did that in electrical engineering and it was going to be a one-year program. So, I was at the swimming pool one day about the second week of classes and an NROTC graduate from the year before, Paul Eych[ph? 00:12:48], came into the locker room. And we said hi to each other and "What are you up to?" And Paul was a chemical engineer, but he was also on the deferment program and he says, "Well, you know, what I discovered was you can actually do two degrees at the same time." He had signed up with the Sloan School to do a master's degree in business at the same time. And I walked out of there thinking, "I wonder if I can still get started on that?" and talked to my advisor in electrical engineering, talked to Sloan School, and was able to get registered in the Sloan School for a parallel program. And you could get joint credit for some of the courses you took. I didn't quite finish the master's degree in business before I graduated. So, after my three years in the Navy, I had to go back to finish that up for a semester. So, that was a little bit of a glitch, but it turns out that it worked out well.

Laws: That was a great combination, particularly in those days.

Kampe: I've had some fraternity brothers who had actually followed that pattern as well. They'd done their electrical engineering degree and gone on to Harvard Business School. Doug Spreng, who's still active in the area, in the MIT club.

Laws: What did you do in the Navy?

Kampe: I started off on an aircraft carrier as my first assignment, went to Philadelphia for damage control school, and boiler school. That was kind of a neat thing. And while I was there, we're all talking about what our first assignments are going to be. And I said, "Well, I'm going to the Shangri-La," and somebody in the room said, "The Shangri-La? I hear the engineering officer on the Shangri-La eats lieutenants for breakfast." And I thought, "Okay, well, that's a little ominous." So, I went down to Mayport, Florida, reported aboard, met my new boss, the damage control assistant, and the engineering officer, Commander Polatty. Turns out he was the best bosses I may have ever had. He was great, but the lieutenants he ate for breakfast, by the way, were lieutenants from other departments that came seeking

favors from the engineering department. Because the engineering department can do a lot of stuff and he wanted to make sure we were focused on keeping the ship running, not doing favors for everybody who had a special project. But he was great.

Laws: Tell me about damage control. What are damage control classes?

Kampe: Well, —your ship might have the occasion at some point to get hit and what do you do to fix it? Or a fire may break out. The ship has three organizations. There's the administrative organization. And I was the auxiliary's officer. It has the watch organization that keeps the ship running for daily operation of the ship. And then you also have the combat organization. I had the Repair 3, which was the stern-end of the ship. And you're there to do fires, control flooding and retain as much as the capability the ship as you can.

Laws: A lot of different skills there. --

Kampe: A lot., By the way, my deployment was the Mediterranean.

Laws: That was my next question. Did you see some of the world on this trip?

Kampe: I saw more of the world. We, you know, went into Barcelona Spain and that was our first stop where we could get ashore. What was interesting is I'd actually had an idea from earlier when I was in NROTC; I was supposed to have a summer deployment in my junior year in the Mediterranean. I didn't get to do that, but, part of what I wanted to do was some bicycle traveling. So, I talked to my boss and said, "Gee, can I take short leave between here and the next stop and Cannes?"It's about 600 kilometers. And, by the way, it's February. This was actually a factor, but I bought a bicycle, got a coat to put on, borrowed some equipment from the ship, and just before the ship left, I went ashore in the last launch with my bicycle and my backpack and started pedaling to Cannes. I met the ship in Cannes.

Laws: What an incredible experience.

Kampe: It was great. It was absolutely great. It was a little cold in the mornings, but--

Laws: And you weren't considered going AWOL or anything and they let you get off.

Kampe: Yeah. Fortunately, you know, the ship didn't get diverted. That would have been more problematical, but that worked out well. Had a lot of people at the beginning of it said, "What are you crazy? What if you get sick? What if this happens? What if that happens?" and there's simple answers for all of that stuff, but, after the trip, I had folks coming up quietly saying, "Geez, you know, if you ever do that again, why don't you let me know? I might like to join you." But that was really the only time.

Laws: That's a great story. And, so, you left the Navy in when-- what year would that have been?

Kampe: 1971 is when I left, went back to the Boston area, and found an apartment. And I was married at the time, by the way. And finished up the final semester to get the credits that I needed.

Laws: And, so, then you start job hunting.

Kampe: I did. I started job hunting and I remember talking to two oil companies, because they interviewed and they do a lot of really interesting mathematics, by the way, and computer work for analyzing the potential oil fields. And that's what I talked to those folks about. And then I talked to Xerox in Rochester. In 1972, by the way, is the time when Xerox really had an awesome reputation. And I talked to HP. And I got three offers out of the four. HP says, “Well, you know, right now we're kind of slowed down.” So, I accepted-- this is my diversion here-- the Xerox offer and then HP came through the offer. That's the one that I really wanted, but I felt obliged to go to Xerox. So, I had a 19-day career at Xerox.

And what happened was I got there and there was this pall hanging over the department. It was the finance group, by the way, and morale wasn't too good. And I also began to realize there are battalions of MBAs here and everybody is boasting about how they're working 70 and 80 hours a week. And I had no idea what they were actually doing at the time. But then there was a reorganization in the first three weeks and anybody who left the department I was in would refer to him at the going-away event as “You escaped.” And it just didn't have a particularly good feeling to me. I called up HP and said, “Is the offer still good?” and they said, “we’ll call you back,” and they did call back. And they said, “Yeah,” and I said, “okay, I'd like to do that.”

Laws: That was a good move.

Kampe: Kind of wrapped up at Xerox. It was an interesting time, by the way, because I've heard consultants talk about that period of Xerox. And seven years later, by the way, there was a “Business Week” article that said, “Whatever happened to Xerox?” And all the roots of the trouble dated from that particular era. The thing that was really interesting about it is they had a project called Project Decoy, which consultants talked about as something that Xerox was diligently exploring to do a desktop copier. My perspective, in this very limited perspective I understand it, but this, of the six projects, was a self-decoy. Decoy was literally the self-deception of saying, “We are trying to do desktop copiers, but what we really love to do are the big, high-volume copiers in the central copy room of large installations.” And that's where I think the heart and soul of the company was at the time. And it turns out the Japanese really made a lot of hay with that. And, by the way, interestingly enough, it led to one of the great successes of Hewlett-Packard company, which was the LaserJet printer, because the engines that were being developed in Japan for small desktop copiers turned out to be the core of the LaserJet business at HP.

Laws: Interesting aside there, Bill. Yeah. The Hewlett-Packard offer was in California-- in Santa Clara?

Kampe: It was in California. It was in Santa Clara. Part of the reason I actually wasn't sure that I wanted to do it is I thought Santa Clara was in Los Angeles until I actually interviewed with them. But I almost

didn't interview with them, because I didn't understand the geography. But it turns out it's real close by here at the Computer Museum.

Laws: Just down the street.

Kampe: So, I started at the Santa Clara site.

Laws: You're married at this point. You and your wife moved--

Kampe: I was married at this point.

Laws: Any children?

Kampe: No children from that marriage. No.

Laws: So, you arrived at Hewlett-Packard, 1972.

Kampe: Yep.

Laws: Tell me what Hewlett-Packard was like in 1972. It was an electronic instrument company in those days.

Kampe: It was largely an instrument company. The computers had just started. I think I started in April and the HP-35 shirt pocket calculator, scientific calculator, had just come out. And that was really a remarkable contribution at the time. But that was not the business of our division. I was part of the instrument group and the group that I was with made frequency counters. And frequency counters were kind of arcane something that your neighbor never understood but were increasingly important at the time because of the growing communication business around the world.

Laws: A very large box with nixie tubes. That's what I remember.

Kampe: Yeah, that's the 524 frequency counter. That's the one I knew from my lab at MIT, one of the electrical engineering labs. And, at that point, it was pretty obsolete, by the way. It had been replaced by the 5245, kind of keeping the theme of the numbers, which was a much smaller frequency counter with plugins to extend the frequency range. But it was a fairly significant division of HP at that time. And I was in the marketing department and my job in product marketing was to really try to understand customer needs and as the new products would come out to introduce those products to our field sales force in the marketplace and take them as far as we could take them.

Laws: What was the culture HP like?

Kampe: It was, I think, fairly remarkable and I didn't have a point of comparison. Certainly, the Navy culture is very different. But it was clearly a first-name. Everyone could talk to everyone else. Things were

pretty fluid. We had some fairly good protocols in terms of the project management and the reviews that went on. Bill and Dave and the entourage of the senior executives would come through once a year and there'd be a big product fair and talk about everything that was going on in the labs, in particular. But everybody was very cordial but interested. And they all were very willing to share perspectives. And it was helpful.

Laws: This was the era of management by walking around?

Kampe: Management by walking around, yeah, absolutely. But it was also the era of MBO and "management by objective." And in the earlier, simpler form of that, it was "What are you going to do; kind of how do you know you're doing good, the measurement part of it; and when you going to be done" type objectives. And they were about that simple. And everybody was writing a series of objectives. And a little bit later at that division, in a different role, I found that very helpful.

Laws: Now there weren't any personal computers in those days. But was computing capability available to you?

Kampe: We had-- I'm trying to remember what we had at the time I first started. And it was pretty limited, but after a couple of years, there was a thing called a 9825, a desktop calculator that was programmable. It had fabulous memory. I think it was 8K. And-- but it had this simple HPL programming language that made it incredibly powerful. And it turned out to be a really useful tool.

Laws: Was this about the time that David Packard had made his famous speech about managing the business?

Kampe: 1974. 1974. Yeah.

Laws: Okay, tell us about the speech and how it impressed you.

Kampe: Let me give a little precursor, because that was about two years after I joined. And Dave Packard had been at the Department of Defense and serving in the-- I think it was the Reagan Administration. And when he came back, things weren't as he thought they ought to be. But what was interesting to me-- and a little follow-up on the culture-- is that about a year and a half into it, something came up and I realized, you know, "I don't know enough about this. I think I'm going to find somebody who knows more than I do." And I looked up and down my row and realized-- and I'm looking left at all the desks there and the people, and a few down that way, and I thought, "I'm it. I'm as senior a guy, except for my boss, as anybody on this row." It was a very fluid culture in terms of the growth of the company, it really created a lot of personal opportunities, but it also meant we were running that company with a lot of relatively inexperienced, but inquisitive and eager voices. And they mattered, even at the-- pretty much the lowest level of the company. Your voice actually mattered. So, that's one of the things that struck me about it. And, later on, when I was in a position to recruit people to our division one of the compare and contrasts to the computer group, for instance, was in this division your voice, even as a very new employee here, can matter to what we do for the future.

So when Dave Packard came back, and he's quite a presence, he discovered that the company was about to issue $100 million long-term debt financing. What had happened over the previous couple of years is that the company was increasingly strapped for cash and had a lot of short-term debt. And when he got back, he and Bill Hewlett sat down and looked at it and said, “You know, we don't want to do that.” These were folks who came out of the Depression era and they did not like debt. And their whole idea of the company was that it would be self-funded.

So, they went around to the divisions and gave a talk to each of the management teams at the divisions. And I was not a manager at the time, so, I heard this on a tape recording. And I believe I've provided a transcript [to the museum] of the Packard talk and I believe that was to a different audience, a more senior audience than the tape that I heard. But it was a very, very powerful speech. So, what I sensed is--and I'm listening to Dave talk and he's introducing this topic. And I'm imagining a dragon breathing fire. And what was interesting about it is that it's not that he was roasting people. He was singeing some tail feathers, but he wasn't exactly roasting people on a really personal basis. But you had this very clear impression that we were going to restore order to the realm. And the order was the financial order. And, by the way, Hewlett Packard's number one objective for the entire time I was there was “Make a profit.” And I'll come back to that in a moment, because I think they had a very honorable and appropriate intent for that objective.

So, Dave spent some time going through the financial reports. The company had grown 38 percent, but the earnings only went up 20 percent. And if you take out certain parts of the company, in fact, the earnings didn't go up at all. And he explained over and over and over again in many different ways why that just doesn't work, It all came down to the question of cash flow and how do you generate the cash that's necessary to run at a higher level of business, if you don't make adequate profit. And, basically, the return has to match. And he went through things, like, accounts receivable had mushroomed and that means we kind of make (book) a profit on accounts receivable, but we don't have the cash in hand. He looked at finished goods inventory, he looked at raw materials inventory, and each of those had mushroomed and it was all adding up to a hundred. And we heard this phrase “And that's a hundred million dollars!”

And, so, his constant revisiting of “That's a hundred million dollars!” ultimately was also translated to what people do in their everyday work life. And that's the part that was really powerful to me. Because I'd had the courses. I’d had the accounting courses, the finance courses. I could theoretically talk about how you derive this number in an annual report in the financial statements, but what I couldn't do, which he cleared up for me, is day in and day out, what do you do that makes a difference to that number in the financial statements. He says “…and if the accounts receivable clerk goes home and they still have a stack of invoices that haven’t been billed, that’s—(???)blah, blah, blah—how much money? And if the shipping clerk and the shipping department is supposed to get three boxes on the pallet, but only gets two on and doesn’t get the next one on until a couple days later, we can’t invoice the customer and that’s--- blah, blah, blah. And we’d go back to “And that’s a hundred million dollars!” And if the purchasing agent who’s buying raw materials—and, by the way, this was a time with 38 percent growth. The industry was exploding, parts were in short supply, and, so, things were being triple-ordered, which really screws up the whole supply chain, because now the vendors are getting triple orders and they don’t know what’s

real or not. And that's really problematical. So, we were doing a lot of that and the whole idea is to make sure we've got enough parts to be able to build our instruments. And he says, "And anybody could do the job if you got three times as much inventory as you need." And then the other phrase that would creep in is, "And if you can't do it, I'll find somebody who can." So, we were hearing that through the whole theme, but, basically, I found it just utterly compelling, both from the financial analysis, but, especially, from how every job in the company matters.

Laws: The personal responsibility—

Kampe: And he separated things that individual employees needed to do. But he really laid the responsibility on the management team to ensure those things were done and that the resources were there for the people to do it. And some of the issues he reserved strictly for the management team as their obligation to the company.

Laws: And did you see a change in the company—

Kampe: We didn't do the hundred-million-dollars long-term debt financing. That was all cured. It was cured very quickly.

Laws: That's an important part of the HP story—[Packard] -taking charge of the company again.

Kampe: Yeah.

Laws: So, you stayed in this product marketing role, for the instrumentation division until about 1976. What changed then?

Kampe: I was asked to be the service manager for the marketing department. That was a group of about 15 people, included some service engineering, some tech writing, and we had a graphics design department to help create the manuals. And it was part of the philosophy of the culture that you want to have people have different variety of experience, especially early on, so that there's an increased perspective of all the audiences that we have to engage with effectively to be able to make the company actually work.

Laws: Do you have any sense of the revenues the division at that time?

Kampe: The division—our product line was about $70 million, if I recall. I think the division was about $100 million. There were a couple other product lines. We made the counters, we made atomic clocks. And, at the time, those atomic clocks were, in fact, the world standard for keeping time. And we had another product line that was really exotic in digital signal analysers.

Laws: This was the time when the computer division was beginning to grow and become an important part of the company?

Kampe: Yeah.

Laws: Did you have any involvement with that side of the business?

Kampe: No, not directly. Actually, the early part of it was kind of a spinout of Loveland, and they said, "I think we can make a calculator." And they made this really neat calculator. The thing I remember, by the way, about this calculator was it had a CRT for a screen and magnetic core memories, and what happened is, when you'd turn it off, the screen would start to shrink, but the magnetic core still retains all the data. So, when it goes off, the data is still there. So, you see the whole screen shrinking down smaller, smaller, and then it would fade away, and when you'd turn it on, you'd still have the same data there, which was kind of a cool feature. Not like the boot-up process we have now on a computer.

Laws: Sure.

Kampe: But that was the early part of—and then there was the HP 1000 with its Real Time Executive, and I don't know how that started. I remember in one of the early training courses I went to we got to set up the bootstrap loader with the front panel switches to be able to read in the tape that was the operating system.

Laws: Which division did the HP 35 came out of?

Kampe: I don't recall the division name but very quickly it became the Advanced Products Division, APD, which existed by 1974.

Laws: APD was based in Cupertino for quite a while, I recall..

Kampe: That was really an interesting group. I didn't talk to them a whole lot. I remember some event where was sitting at the table with the general manager of APD, and we had just introduced the financial calculator. I'm listening to him talk with what I thought was some disparagement of MBAs and the Wall Street crowd, and I'm thinking, "That's your market, man." But it became quite the standard for Wall Street.

Laws: It did indeed. Now, about this time, didn't John Young give a speech about service as a business.

Kampe: It was actually very related to what Dave Packard was talking about. I was the service engineering manager, and I got to go to a seminar with service managers from our field organization, and this was from all parts of the company, not just instruments, and John Young came in to talk to us a little bit. And at the time, the service organization operated its repair centers and its service mostly as kind of a cost center mentality, and, in particular, we did warranty repairs on instruments, for example. So, that was clearly in the kind of the cost center mode, but we were always worried about cost and keeping it down. And our belief was we sold a lot of really great stuff. It should never break. Oh, my goodness, it broke. So, there was some level of embarrassment that it broke. And so, our instincts were to try to take all the pain out that we could for the customer. And so, there wasn't a whole lot of profit flowing out of that part of the organization. So, John Young came in. And now, this is the heyday of the handheld calculators.

And he started off. He said, -- I don't know if I'm going to get this all exactly right. He started off, "You know, this is what the company did, and it's really, really great." And that was the overall picture, and he says, "Now, what is going on is that if you look at APD and the handheld calculators, that's growing even faster." He says, "But the thing the Street doesn't know about, Wall Street, is that the rate of growth of profits isn't keeping up with it. And if Wall Street knew about that, our stock price would not be where it is." And then he says, "Now, let me talk about the service business." He says, "What probably none of you realize is the service business is actually growing faster than APD, and the profitability is lower. So, if Wall Street knew about that, our stock price would really be impacted." And he says, "We need to make the transition from a cost center orientation to a profit center orientation." And the thing that was crucial to that is that he didn't just say we're going to do that because we want the money. He says, "Here's why it's better for the customers." And the basic theory was if you were a profit organization, you begin to invest in the procedures,'the protocols' and the systems that allow you to interface better with a customer and the tools to be more effective in delivering the service. And he says, "You don't have anywhere near the opportunity when you're always begging for money for your cost center operation. You get just much more discretion about how you approach the delivery of your service." He says, "What we find is, in the end, that produces better results for both us but especially for the customer." And that thought stuck in my mind a lot.

Laws: What was Young's role in the company?

Kampe: I believe he was the president at the time. Now that—and, by the way, that may have been about 1978 or so.

Laws: Right.

Kampe: So, that may have been a little bit beyond '76.

Laws: I wonder what his background was that gave him that idea of making a service center business.

Kampe: I don't know. I believe he was also a business school graduate with, of course, a technical undergraduate, and I don't know what the personal background was. What I did realize is that our senior executives talked to executives in other companies fairly often, and they actually learned stuff from them. <laughs>

Laws: And applied it, apparently.

Kampe: Yeah.

Laws: In this case. And so, around '79 you made a change to a different kind of business within Hewlett-Packard.

Kampe: Yeah, I was asked to go be marketing manager for the microwave semiconductor division, which was one of two divisions in our semiconductor group, and the other one was optoelectronics.

Laws: Right.

Kampe: And what the question you have to ask is why is somebody from the instrument group being invited to go over and be a marketing manager at this division. Well, this division was in some distress, and, in particular, the marketing department was in some distress. The personnel turnover was 55% a year, and I knew that going into it. And I said yes anyway, and I'm not sure it was the wisest thing I ever did. And it was a very different environment. The culture was, in my mind, strange.

By the way, I want to go back to Dave Packard and his quest for profit and growth of profit. One of the things that struck me throughout my career is that HP was a very ethical company, and the dedication to serving customers well was always right at the forefront. And in a separate talk, I heard him a couple times say, "Profit—and why is profit the number one objective." He says, "Well, what we find is that unless we are financially healthy, we cannot serve our customers, our employees, or our communities well." And we kind of lived that, as I saw it.

And the reason I wanted to give it as a precursor is that, at the microwave semiconductor division, profit was a little sketchy. The inventories of semiconductors that hadn't sold had mushroomed significantly, and I heard a person in the semiconductor business at a different company say, "Yeah, it's always easier to sell it to yourself than to sell it to a real customer," in other words, put it into inventory rather than actually make a sale. And in the marketing department, in particular, I ran into some cultural issues that maybe I had the wrong view on it, but when everybody is going out to lunch with their buddies and charging it to the company every day, that didn't seem right. I'd never done that in seven years at Santa Clara division, and I wanted to kind of get some of that under control. It was a very contentious time, and it was a very different culture in other ways, but a couple things as learning lessons came out of that, anyway.

One was, in our department, the employee satisfaction issue was really tough, so we got our marketing staff together and said, "You know, this is not good. We've got to do something about it. Let's schedule an offsite meeting. Let's talk about the agenda." And our international sales manager, Frank DiPietro, raises his hand. He says, "Just a minute." He says, "Why are we going to do an offsite meeting?" He says-- and we're in one of our department conference rooms. He says, "The problem's right out here, and the answers are right here. We've got to get the employees of this department involved, and we ought to do it here." It was like, "Oh okay. Great thought." So, we did that, and it turns out we did some things that, in retrospect, were some of the things that brought the most satisfaction, not necessarily from a career advancement point of view. I personally felt that I didn't have all the tools to deal gracefully with all the things that were going on, but they made a recommendation to us. And one of the cornerstones was communication.

Laws: They being the employees?

Kampe: The employees, yeah, who worked on this. And there was a tradition of coffee pot talks. The tradition was the department manager would be the fountain of all wisdom and give the talk. And they wanted to bring that back and made the suggestion. And I went back to them, and I said, "Here's my problem. I would like more participation from other people. I'm not sure--" I said something like, "I'm not sure I have all the answers." Number one, I knew I didn't have all the answers. And frankly, I didn't want

to have the burden of trying to know everything. But I said, "Let's find a way to get other folks involved in it." And we got this rhythm where we rotated it to group managers within the department. And so, we'd have our weekly staff meeting. We'd have a designated person who was going to do the coffee pot talk the next day. We'd go through our agenda. At the end of the agenda, that person would review okay, here's what I've got, da-da, da-da. And they'd write it down. And other folks would say, "Oh, don't forget to mention so-and-so." And what about training? Training was a big issue, by the way. Okay, who has come back from training? Good. Let's ask them to describe their experience. Who is at training this week? Be sure to mention that they're there. Who is going next week? Be sure to mention that they're going next week. So, we emphasized training as kind of a core part of it, but at the coffee pot talk, what happened was that it really featured and put at the forefront each of the group managers. And it increased their stature in the department. We had the habit of if somebody had done something special, we'd ask them to say a few words about it. So, the employees were more engaged. We got to feature all the training that was going on. "How can I do my job? I haven't been trained." So, we got to feature all the training that was going on. And I had the chance to chime in periodically when I had something to add that was useful to the process, but it just changed the whole tone of how the department interacted. And that came out of Frank saying, "Hey, the problem is here. The solutions are here. Let's get the people involved."

Laws: Interesting insights, Bill. And when you mentioned offsites, it reminded me that there were the famous Hewlett-Packard picnics, where Bill and Dave would grill the steaks. Was that part of your period there?

Kampe: Yeah, more division by division, so it wasn't Bill and Dave there grilling the steaks, but I remember shucking a lot of corn and, yeah, taking a turn on the grill and that kind of thing.

Laws: Didn't they have a place up in the hills where this would happen?

Kampe: It was in Big Basin, yeah. There was a park there. I don't know if that's still used.

Laws: Right, it might have burned down in the last couple of years after the fires there.

Kampe: By the way, I wanted to add a little bit about the training. One of the things that was really the dilemma about training is everybody wanted to be trained before they expected to be able to do their job, or at least that's the way it was kind of coming out in the verbal comments. And there are just so many dimensions to every job, and scheduled formal training only happens a couple times a year at most. So, how are you going to learn the job. And what we did was we, as a result of this little group that got together and identifying training, and after a few iterations back and forth, it was let's make a list, for each of the main roles anyway, of if you're really good at this job, what can you do. And we made lists for each of those jobs and made sure that everybody had a copy and said add things, you know, if we've left something out, add it. Keep it in your desk, and here's the deal. If you need to know something, instead of waiting there at your desk for it to fall out of the sky, get up and go ask somebody. Everybody is going to be willing to help out. We'll get you to courses. If you need a course, let us know when it's coming up, but also look for opportunities to do things that are on this list. If it's write a datasheet, and your boss is looking for somebody to write a datasheet, volunteer for it. If you need to know something different about

how to forecast the semiconductor demands from the customers, talk to somebody who knows and get involved. So, we wanted to shift the, not the burden, but the opportunity of personal development back to each of the individuals. And it turned out that also worked out very, very well.

So, the final consequence of that was that I was only at that division for 18 months. We had zero turnover. I said 55% when we started per year annual rate. It was zero turnover in the last six months. And, to me, the quest, and I did some of this probably well and some of it not so well, but the quest was when people come in to work in the morning, they have to feel that their effort makes a difference. And that's not the case when I got there. They felt there was a lot of futility. And they were almost always overridden by somebody else in some other department before final decisions were made. And we got a lot of that back in the department. And that included regional sales engineers who were quoting on big deals, and they were routinely overridden by somebody in production who wanted to make sure that he could ship a lot of chips. And we finally got that back to that is the only person who makes a price quote out of this division to a person in the field. And they may not be the only voice in the discussion, but they will make the final decision on what the price will be. And these were folks that had only been in the company for six months. And you're putting a lot of faith in that. And yet, it worked out well. And that, I think, is the kind of thing that mattered.

Laws: Interesting insights, Bill, in a challenging situation. Hewlett-Packard, in those days, as most Silicon Valley, was highly White and very few females. Were there any females at your level of the organization in those days?

Kampe: Yes. And it was not a lot. And I remember that era fairly well because when I was service engineering manager at Santa Clara, among the seven service engineers, one was Black, one was female, for instance. And that was the high-density part of diversity in our marketing department. And visitors would come in and kind of almost remark on it because it was a little bit different. At microwave semiconductor division, we were at the leading edge of some of the diversity issues. And I remember talking to my marketing department about an appropriate role for women, and what was interesting is we had six secretaries, I think we called them at the time, but today, it's admin assistants. And it struck me as-- and by the way, we also had a couple, a manager and a regional sales engineer, female, and, of course, our order processing department had quite a number of female employees. But for the some of the women in the group, this was good news as we talked about the topic, and for others, you could tell I was turning over the apple cart in terms of what they felt they brought to the work environment. And that was kind of a lesson for me because the personal charm and the flirtation was clearly part of the skill set for some folks.

Laws: Especially the sales department.

Kampe: Yeah, well the visiting sales folks were always a little bit of a challenge.

Laws: So, you did this until about 1980, and in '80, you made another change to customer support manager?

Kampe: I did. I went to what was a newly forming instrument service division. And this was kind of in line with the idea that John Young had talked about, we want to be a profit center. And so, we were forming that up here in Mountain View, by the way, and I can't even remember the address at this point, but the idea was to start to operate more in line with being able to operate as a profit center. And my responsibility was North America. North America, by the way, was Canada and the U.S. And that included three different arms of it. One was the traditional bench repair for instruments. The other one was the onsite engineering, particularly as we had more and more system products beginning to go out into the market. And the third was systems engineering. Systems engineering was an outgrowth of some specialist field engineers who had been kind of redesignated as technical gurus in various areas. And they were highly specialized and able to consult with customers. And the field engineers (ed: the sales people) could call on these people as resources. And so, we brought those all together as a business entity. We still did warranty work, obviously, and the onsite repair and the bench repair, but the rest of the business was intended to be a profit-making business. And there was a lot of opportunity in the onsite repair business because the warranty would be about a year, maybe three years, but the contract requirements for a good uptime were significant. And these were things that were much harder to repair in traditional ways. And so, yeah, that business actually grew quite well.

Laws: And until that time, most of the product was a piece of hardware, electronic instrument--

Kampe: It was, yeah.

Laws: Software was beginning to creep in to products?

Kampe: Software was very much beginning to creep in. And that's where the system engineers came in because they're the ones that could hook stuff up to computers and really pull a lot of information together from a multitude of instruments. And we didn't really have a software product, per se, but we did have the desktop calculators, which were great instrument controllers. They had most of the capability you needed. Then the PC came along, and that was helpful also. But that was really a growth opportunity. What we discovered, and it came from a sales manager in Canada, who had Northern Telecom, that there is real value to a system engineer beyond just helping make the sale. And they-- Northern Telecom needed some systems capability at about times 10, and they needed it in a hurry. And Alan Holdway went out with a systems engineer and said, "I'll tell you what." And he also had I think one of his customer engineers there, as well, in the discussion. He says, "We've got a room where we can pull all this equipment together, do the integration for you, the system validation, and then deliver these systems as assembled, complete systems to your requirements. And they talked about the price, and they came up with a price and did the deal. And this was really a breakthrough for the instrument group.

Laws: This is system integration.

Kampe: Well, it was system integration, exactly. And it worked out well. Northern Telecom was happy. They got it on time. The sale was tough, by the way, because they looked at our price compared to the hourly wage they were paying their engineers. And it looks really expensive, but what they don't factor in is all the overhead and time efficiency that somebody who actually knows their stuff can bring to the party

and the background overhead, of course, that every employee in every company has anyway. And so, these were enlightened enough to realize that time matters, and all these other factors matter. And they got something that worked for them, and it worked for us.

Laws: Was that a difficult sell?

Kampe: It wasn't to Northern Telecom. The far more difficult sale was our field sales organization because, for them, taking a very precious systems engineer, who could help them nail quota credit earning sales, away from their availability was a take away. And, by the way, this organization didn't report solely to me. They still also reported through a field organization through a sales manager. So, the sales manager, North American sales manager, who was Bill Wilson, and I would talk a lot. And Bill was really good about trying to create an umbrella that we could both operate under and not skew this for his own sales quota benefit. So, kudos to him for this transitional time.

The dilemma was case-by-case. So, every time we talked about anything that would take away the perception that they were getting the full-time attention of the system engineer was always resisted at the district manager/area sales manager level. Now, the arithmetic on this is fairly compelling. If we can double the activity level by revenue producing activities, we can have twice as many systems engineers. And they're not going to spend 100% of their time. And instead of having to get somebody from Toledo, if you're in Dayton, you can get it maybe from the person who's actually in Dayton because now we can have a person in Dayton. In other words, our geographic coverage could get a lot better. It was still a very, very difficult transition to do that.

What we ended up trying, this is just before I left this particular role, is we said, you know, we ought to do project centers. And we said we need to do four project centers where we separate these individuals so nobody in the field organization feels this is a take away when they spend time getting a revenue producing deal, and we'll grow some centralized expertise and be able to respond to these larger opportunities. And so, we got the four managers named for the U.S., one for each of the regions. And they got up and started. They got a few deals going. Well, after I left, kind of the next tier, range of management said, you know, I'm not sure about these project centers. It still doesn't look like it's part of the core of our activities. And we probably need to wrap these down. Well, 10 years later, I came back and looked. And the project centers are still going. And you ask yourself why. It's because the customer need was so blooming clear. And our expertise was adequate for the job. So, there was, I think, a compelling need. I'm not sure we ever fully embraced that as an instrument group, by the way. And you asked earlier about the software component of our business. The software component was always a difficult part because, increasingly, it had begun to emerge as something that really mattered to the end users. There was this upstart called National Instruments that was selling LabVIEW. And they were practically giving it away to college students, who were learning their electrical engineering using LabVIEW. So, sure enough, when they go to work for companies, they want to make sure they've got LabVIEW on their desk, and it kind of helped them a lot.

Laws: And the software became the product, eventually.

Kampe: It became a big part of the product. Well, you still have to be able to make the measurements, but when you start to think about where do you spend your time, increasingly, it was beginning to shift from the front panel of the instrument to the keyboard of a computer, desktop computer typically. And that was quite a transition.

I was actually involved in the very early days. Instrument interfaces were kind of crazy, and about 1976, HP introduced a thing called HP-IB, the Hewlett-Packard Interface Bus. And there were four fathers of this invention from various divisions around our company. The one that I was closest to was Dave Ricci, who was located here in the Bay Area, but there was somebody in Loveland. There was somebody at one of the computer divisions. And what they had developed was this connector system and interface protocol that could allow instruments to hook up to 15 instruments to a computer, all using the same cable, the same type of cable, and the same connectors and a standardized protocol. And there were handshake protocols and parallel wires to transmit data and whatnot. And this was really pretty revolutionary because, if you looked at the hodge-podge of connectors that were on the back of instruments, it was a mess. And by the way, that was '76, that is still an option offered. And it's now called GPIB, General Purpose Interface Bus.

Laws: It had an IEEE spec, I think.

Kampe: Yeah, IEEE 488..

Laws: What was your involvement?

Kampe: Well, the first thing that happened was Al Oliverio, who was the sales manager for the United States, and a couple other folks were having a conference at that end of the aisle in Santa Clara division in about 1976 and half. And I could kind of overhear a little bit of it. And this was, by the way, part of the culture, the on the fly what are we going to do to make this work. And Al was asking a lot of challenging questions about do people have the resources they need. One of the resources they needed was a programming guide, how do you program this stuff. And so, they came to we need a programming guide. And they looked down the aisle, and I was sitting in my desk, and next thing I know, I had this assignment to write the first programming guide for HP-IB, which was-- it was kind of a fun experience. There weren't very many instruments, by the way. There were only about four instruments that actually had this connector on the back. And there was one calculator, the 9825, which I think I mentioned, and an interface card.

And so, I had to write the manual. And so, I went to the engineers and said, "What do we have to tell the customers?" He says, "Well, you've got to tell them about the three-wire handshake, and the different this, and the acknowledgement line, and the timing diagram, and the--" And I'm thinking this is bizarre, but I think I've got to go out to the 9825 keyboard and tell them which keys to push on this keyboard to make the instrument do something. And I realized in the process of writing these things that I need to include the chapter on the timing diagram and the 16 wires and all that because I had to have their endorsement, essentially, that this is an okay document, but what it was really was showing the keystrokes you have to press to make the instrument respond, and that's what we did.

And it turns out, then there was a fellow by the name of George Stanley, who did training courses for both HP people and customers. And he took a large part of that first printing for it and started going around teaching seminars. And he'd come back saying, "Hey, this is working really well." There was a lot of evolution beyond that, the HP-IB. there was S-SCPI, S-C-P-I, Standard Codes and Programming Interface, or something, which started to extract metalevels of the different basic commands and different programming protocols that were actually very helpful in the sense that, instead of having to learn a lot of individual instruments, it started to make it possible to have driver approaches that began to separate internals of the instrument from the programming flow.

Laws: Was there an actual product, HP-IB, that you could buy? Or was it just a specification?

Kampe: The product was the instrument with the connector, there was an interface card for some of the early calculators. The irony was that was appropriately, maybe not appropriately, a product of the computer group. And they didn't care a lot about this. For a brief period of time, they had a disk drive that had an HP-IB interface, but it wasn't on their product roadmap. And it was clear that it wasn't going to get the attention it needed. I tried to argue for bringing back in the instrument group, failed on that one, but the other part of it was the calculator itself that you put the interface card into. But for a long period of time, there was not a lot of software product. Eventually, a product called Vee, V-E-E, which was Visual Engineering Environment, came out from the Loveland division to do this, but otherwise, it was kind of a crisis for us in terms of the development of uniform drivers that could work with anything.

A little bit later in my career, I was group marketing manager for the electronic instruments group, and we had a software tech center in Loveland. Our headquarters was in Santa Clara, kind of long spin back to Santa Clara. And I went out to Loveland one day to sit down and talk with them. There was going to be a meeting out there on what we do on our overall software strategy. And a couple things came out of that meeting that were really interesting. One was in terms of we're watching National Instruments get a lot of traction, and we said well, let's get a market model. And I'm in the back of the room watching people put this application by industry, 6x7 matrix, and we're trying to fill it out to try to figure if there are any insights here in terms of what our strategy ought to be.

And finally, somebody in the back of the room says, "How do we know that National Instruments looks at things this way?" They said, "Every time I talk to anybody from National Instruments, they're talking about the measurement architecture. It's the interface. It's the protocols. And it's the software and the controller, the PC. And they want to own all of that architecture." And everybody in the room says, "Oh." And so, we were starting from a very late place in the software world. The other thing I was trying to get to was different interfaces were coming out. And this is kind of later in my career. Firewire had come out from Apple; we had USB coming out; HP-IB was still very strong, and the dilemma, what's the interface going to look like in the future. And I really tried to make the case that let's not make the question of what interface the critical issue. Let's have the capability to do software run here, and our instruments run there, and not care about what the interface is, be able to connect through that connector to whatever the interfaces are of the future. That didn't get a lot of traction. The core dilemma was the software tech center was operating as a cost center. It's back where your motivations are. They were trying to beg the divisions to get consistent-- get some kind of standard for drivers for their instruments. The divisions really

wanted to sell it based on the measurements they made but not have to bother with the software drivers because that wasn't their expertise, and I remember getting back to my boss at the time, and I think he didn't know I'd gone out there on this trip, and when he found out, he says, "Bill, I hear you went out to Loveland earlier this week." And I said, "Yeah, I did." And what he kind of got to was he didn't really think we ought to spend a lot of time doing this software stuff because somebody can go out in their garage over a weekend and duplicate it. So, where's the distinctive competitive advantage? I think we missed a little bit there. I don't know where the company is today on that topic.

Laws: So, Bill, we've up to about 1983 now, and I believe you made a fairly major move across country.

Kampe: Yeah, I did. I was offered a role as marketing manager for our New Jersey division, and, at the time, I was really kind of torn about whether I wanted to move across country or not, and I was struggling-- by the way, how to make decisions like that, you don't get to do it very often, and I kept asking myself, "Should I do this?" And I was starting to get pressured for an answer, for God sakes, you know, do you want to do this or not. And I finally asked myself a different question more along the lines of, if I were going to do this, how would I go about it, and-- because you've got to sell a house. And I asked that question of myself, and all the answers fall into place almost instantly on the how you would do it, and then it actually started to feel okay. And so, I did. And I remember when the refrigerator was being moved out of the kitchen and all of the dust bunnies from my time in that house in Palo Alto started to float around the floor. I said, you know, you've got to clean out the dust bunnies every once and a while and just do something different.

Laws: There's a metaphor of some kind there..

Kampe: So, anyway, that was the whole process, and HP at the time had a really good approach to helping you make the move. So, there was a lot of good assistance on it, going out to New Jersey. And New Jersey is interesting because it's a real outlier in the HP realm, and it doesn't have any nearby divisions. It's not like the Colorado cluster of HP activities, and it does have the advantage it's a lot closer to Europe, and if you have to go to Europe, which we did once and a while, it's a shorter, more manageable trip, but I was in a division there that had a lot of people who had kind of grown up with kind of the precursor businesses for our power supply business, and I was, again, an outsider as I was at the microwave semiconductor division. And the division actually made good products.

Laws: What was the product?.

Kampe: Power supplies. And it was an interesting product line because, in some sense, it was pretty similar in the minds of field engineers to the frequency counters, and if you do a hierarchy of the technical gee wizardry of the products we sold, out of forty product lines at the time, there was actually a survey at HP instrument business on kind of the infatuation factor, or some such thing. And way up at the top, you get network analyzers and spectrum analyzers and all this really cool microwave stuff and logic goodness-knows-what, and tied for thirty-ninth out of forty were power supplies and voltmeters, and these are our rock-solid core products.

Laws: I mean everybody needs one.

Kampe: That's exactly it.

Laws: Your market is the world.

Kampe: And there's a story behind that. Everyone needs one, but what the challenge was is we didn't know how to work with that because the currency of kind of marketing swagger was all oriented around how awesome your product was and how awesome your industry was. So, the folks at Santa Rosa division, which had emerged in this time, were kind of fairly much the top of the heap, and we kept getting a lot of advice about well, what you've got to do is march in to the field marketing centers and the sales offices and do this and that and the other, and we're kind of scratching our heads saying I'm not sure why people want to spend a lot of time doing that for us. And we had a couple challenges. By the way, anytime somebody comes in from outside instead of being promoted from within, you know that there's something that isn't fully gelled yet for that organization.

Laws: The fact that they couldn't find someone to promote?

Kampe: Well, yeah, and actually the potential might be there, but it hasn't been developed. So, I get there, and the first thing I hear is-- I'm starting to hear a lot is-- I'm asking questions like, "Why don't power supplies have HP-IB on the back?" And I've already talked a little bit about HP-IB. "Well, you know, after you've been here for a while, you'll understand that--" da-da, da-da, da-da. And so, I go through some of these phases, and then they had an additional product line that I, frankly, didn't understand then, and I'm not sure I ever did. It was really cool. It was called a multiprogrammer. What the heck's a multiprogrammer? Whatever you want it to be. Well, that was another problem. It couldn't be defined specifically enough that you could make it make sense in our corporate world, and eventually, our product charter was truncated to eliminate that product to avoid confusion with Loveland. It turns out the products were, interestingly enough, totally different in terms of what they did. They just looked a lot alike, but they did different stuff, and we hadn't been good at articulating that, but what I discovered was two things.

One, and I accepted it with some embarrassment, which is well, we can't really ask our field engineers to sell our products. And the other thing is, when we went out on new product tours or new product training sales events or the annual sales events, and we'd set up our booth, we weren't showing particularly well, and there was a lack of professionalism in the preparation, the materials, and the presentation itself. The asset we had, and it was fabulous, is that our regional sales engineers-- these are the people that talk to the field teams on a regular basis, day in and day out. If you've got a question about our product or what it really does in this application, these are the folks you talk to, and they get you the answers. And a few of the divisions rated the sales support they got from our-- excuse me, a few of the regions rated the sales support they got from the different divisions, and a couple of our folks, where the regions did this, were getting number one ratings, and this is out of like 20 divisions. So, this is really a big deal, and it was repeating. And what was really magical about it-- well, that's because you've got Joe Delia. Joe's awesome. Well, the Neely sales region, that's our western sales region, stole Joe out of our division, and the next person comes in. Let's see what happens when you get somebody else in there. Number one. And what I began to realize is there is a spirit of friendship that's very deep-rooted, family-oriented, and you'd see it when a visitor would come into our division, and they are wandering along the aisle, and somebody would always come up to them, "How can I help you?" They'd be cheerful, and they'd kind of

look at you to do it. Some other divisions, if you're wandering lost in one of the aisles, you'd wander lost for a long time.

Laws: That was interesting because I usually found that East Coast is not that open and friendly as much as the West Coast tended to be.

Kampe: A little diversion sidebar here, my wife, when we came out here, Joan, was my first wife, by the way, who was a terrifically talented woman in her own right in the journalism field, she did a company publication, but we'd talk about that because everybody was friendly and, "Hi, how are you? We'll have to get together some time." What that meant was, "Good talking to you." In the East Coast, they may be gruff, but when they get to saying, "Hi, we'll have to get together some time," it was, "How about Sunday, two o'clock, my place?" And we decoded that fairly early, and it turned out to be important for us to understand the dynamic, East Coast versus West Coast.

Laws: interesting aside.

Kampe: Yeah, and folks that go further. I don't mean to slight that at all, but the style of interaction was different, but it was very genuine in New Jersey division.

Laws: Good.

Kampe: And so, this taking care of the field engineer as a buddy in arms was just-- it was really deep. And eventually, all the regions were doing it (ed: rating divisions), and we were getting top ratings from everyone. The other thing is we answered the phones. This was the time where voicemail was coming in, and everybody, and including the corporate voicemail coordinator, who came out to talk to us about all the ways you don't have to answer your phone anymore. Don't let those pesky customers bother you. <laughs>

Laws: Get in the way, right.

Kampe: And we said no, we're not going to do that. We're going to answer the blooming phone. And we think if you're not at your desk, what happens next? And well, just let it go to voicemail. No, it's got to go to somebody else who can answer the phone, and so we answered the phones. And we'd-- I'd go out to sales meetings, and there'd be skits at some of the social activities, where the sales team would put on skits, and they'd kind of do caricatures of divisions. And some of the divisions that didn't answer the phones would get skewered, and I'm not sure their marketing managers were picking up that you can do this differently. So, we answered the phones.

We also said yes. Somebody would call in, and I want to do da-da-da special design modification and we'd say yes. And, by the way, I was chastised on this by one of my colleagues at a different place. I was asked to talk about why does field like New Jersey division. I said, "Just say yes." And we don't just actually say yes. We say, "Yes, we'll be glad to work with you on that. Yes, we can get a quote in about two weeks. Yes, we can do it, and here's the price." And internally, and I remember tracing through one case of this where somebody had a deal in the works, and they talked to a couple levels, and they hadn't gotten the answer they wanted, and got to me in our organization, and I said, "I'll tell you what. Let me go

see what I can find out." And at each stop, it was, "We're not going to do this if it doesn't make sense for us." But the question first is what-- can we do it, when can we do it, at what price can we do it that we'll be pleased to do the business? And we ended up getting back to them, the field engineers down in Huntsville, and we said, "Yes, the price is going to be five X the standard off the shelf price for the product, and instead of four weeks delivery, it's going to be eight or--" you, know, I'm kind of making up these numbers for you.

Laws: Right-- understand.

Kampe: We gave them the-- and he says, "Okay, I'm going to take it to my customer." We had the order the next day. This was a hundred thousand dollars a year for 10 years, and we had the order the next day. And the spirit is to find something-- let the customer say no if we're going to say no, but, for us, we're going to say yes to something if we can say yes to something, and that was kind of part of the spirit of the division. I didn't invent it, by the way, but I kind of figured out the pattern and tried to amplify it where we could.

Laws: Were most of your sales to internal HP customers?

Kampe: Oh, no, no.

Laws: Or a lot of outside business?

Kampe: By the way, we made a very different power supply from what folks think of when they're thinking of what you stick in the back of your computer. We made instrumentation power supplies. They were in a rack, and they were programmable, and they were used for the purpose of testing both designs-- because you need a power source. Anybody who's doing electronics, even battery-powered electronics, needs a power source for the design phase and even for the production phase. We tested, with our power supplies, we were part of the test set for a lot of cellphones. And a cellphone operates at three different power levels. There's the off level, which is a very, very low drain on the batter to keep stuff alive. There's the standby level, and then there's the full transmit active level, and they want to know what the behavior of the current draw is in all three of those modes of operation. And so, we were a tool to help them do that at a very precise, controlled level of voltage. Any of the communication stuff needs a very, very quiet power supply. And so, these come in boxes that are big, boxes that are small, boxes that are fairly gigantic, but they're significant products, and they'd go from two hundred and twenty-five bucks for a real small bench top simple turn the knob kind of thing up to ten thousand dollars or more for some of the more substantial products.

Laws: That's amazing.

Kampe: It was. So, the other thing that was so interesting about it is that-- and I talked about when we presented, we didn't do very well. I started to look at our dynamics to how we prepared for stuff, and what I began to find was we didn't do a whole lot of dress rehearsals, and, during the dress rehearsals we did, the computer graphics plotters had come out, and you can make slides that really look nice. So, somebody would do their first draft. They'd be on a slide, and we'd start going through the presentation,

and you say, "Well, that word there it really--" "Well, yeah, but we've got the slide made." And then the next one, it's, "Well, that doesn't necessarily quite capture it." "Yeah, but we've got the slide made." And so, we were dismissing the edit phase of this whole thing.

And finally, it got to, look, Xerox some damn hand-written notes because we didn't want people to feel attached to it, and let's start with let's just get the core concepts and flow right. And so, we started to get that process going of doing edit reviews and injecting flexibility in the early rounds so that people didn't get wedded to it as it was because that was kind of problematical, and then we'd invite other folks who had been out. By the way, this was an interesting part of it to me because there's the Ray Kroc thing with McDonald's hamburgers. If you're going to be in the hamburger business, and we kind of were the hamburger end of the dining spectrum of all the products, you've got to be able to see the beauty in a hamburger bun. So, we were finding beauty in the hamburger bun in a sense. We started doing reviews and making edits.

Then, about that time, somebody from corporate said, "Look, new product training events--" And we were touring the world with these events. We had a bunch of transit cases and slide sets, and, you know, god knows what, little jigs to demonstrate stuff, and you'd go to Paris and London and Singapore and Hong Kong and Japan and, not necessarily me personally, but somebody would have to go. These are so important that you can only afford to send your best people. I thought I don't know what it is about that, but it's not making sense to me. So, for us, we did it very differently in our division. We said look, we want everybody to have this frontline experience of being out there in the field, see what their environment is like, what's on their minds. And we not only sent the best, but we sent everyone if we could. We invited R and D folks to go along. We always invited the R and D folks to go along, and they'd send somebody. We opened it up to the manufacturing managers and that team. We had finance people out there, and they'd take a section of the presentation and give it and-- but we just did it, and folks would say, "Why? Are you guys crazy?"

Well, a few years later, a fellow by the name of Bob Willmot, just salt of the earth guy, he's doing a review on one of our new products, and the room has twenty people in it, twenty people who've been out there and done it. And he's up there, and he says, "Welcome to edition 7.4 of the XYZ product review." And fortunately, he's smiling a little bit anyway, and he goes through it, and we all have a protocol on how to take notes and suggestions, and, at the end of that, we take all the slides, and we put them out on the table, and we've got twenty people around the table, and we're shifting a slide here and there, and we're changing a word here and there. And the idea, by the way, is get a red mark on a slide as soon as you can. That was my personal goal to establish the idea that we're going to change something if it needs to be changed. We're at least going to consider it if it should be considered. And every person in the room has something they bring to the table for that process, and the consequence was, after a few years, when our division went out, the field would rate people on their presentations, and we were coming out at the top of the list. By the way, this pissed off a lot of the other divisions because, somehow, they knew that their division was higher in stature than our division. So, we didn't-- you know, how could that happen? And it happened because we did some fairly basic stuff fairly well.

Laws: And something that you need to do with a product that doesn't have glamour or features that some of the other divisions' products would have had.

Kampe: What I discovered, and you know in different assignments, you listen to presentations through a different lens. When I was out there, I'd listen to my companion divisions with the really awesome stuff, and they had to brag about their stuff and how awesome the (they were)-- and it was all delivered to the head, and we had somebody who did standup comedy as part of it. We also had it delivered, we felt, to the heart and to the gut, and it had to kind of resonate in multiple ways for them, and that kind of worked out.

Laws: You did this job for nearly ten years?

Kampe: Yeah, it was almost, I think it was about eight and a half years, yeah.

Laws: And then you moved back to the West Coast again.

Kampe: Yeah, before we get back to the West Coast, I want to talk about something I mentioned, which was, when I got there, we'd been reluctant to ask the field engineer to actually sell our product. We did a lot of things to try to not be dependent on the field engineer. And finally, one day, we're a couple years into this, and probably about three years after I had been there, and our product marketing manager says, "So, we don't ask the field engineer to sell our product. Why not? We ought to ask the field engineer to sell the product." I'm kind of feeling embarrassed because why didn't I think of that. And we actually said okay, maybe we should do that, but how do we do it so it resonates well. We're not going to win the macho contest with the folks that are at the top of this imagined hierarchy, but what do we have going for us? We had great support, the real-time support, and everybody needs power supplies. It's not just the aerospace super high-tech folks. It's everybody needs power supplies. I went to an installation in an AT&T facility. It had sixty-seven power supplies in a rack. This is actually worth getting up in the morning for.

And so, we started thinking about what would happen. And I want to tell you this story because it was one of the more fun parts of my time with HP. So, we got a group together. We started brainstorming, and our sales manager brings in this tie, and it's a nice looking tie. It's got all these dots all over it, squiggles, and he says, "We can use this as a prize for a reward program." And I look at the tie, and I'll be damned, he's got this tie that he'd got just because he thought he wanted to do something with this as kind of a prize, and it's got a power supply symbol on it, and it's dotted with these little power supply symbols. And if you're not in the electronics business, you would never know, but if you are, it's a power supply tie. It's absolutely a power supply tie. We said, "Okay, what else goes along with this? When do they get the tie?" And we started to ask questions on under what circumstances. Well, beyond that first threshold, is there another threshold, maybe a second tier of reward? And we ended up with a three-tier program, and it was going to be a reward point program, and we thought about things like how is it that the field engineers who are calling on small geographically distributed accounts, have a lot of accounts, can compete on an equitable basis with the people with the really big accounts that always get big orders and they always win all these awards. And we-- I got a per customer, per unit system all ginned up, and it ended up being a five, fifteen, twenty-five program, and there was a tie, sunglasses, and a camera. This is a PHD camera, the point and shoot cameras were coming out, push here dummy. And so, that was the top-level reward. They were about a hundred bucks at the time, nice little Nikon thing. And we said, "Okay, that's great." And then we got to thinking a little bit about it. We need a slogan. So-- and this was about '86 or '87. And

we started to scratch our heads on what the slogan ought to be and what is the context in which we are asking people to sell. And we had already determined we're not going to ask them to get up in the morning to go sell power supplies. It's a piggyback sale.

I'm going to flash ahead to 2009. I'd retired. I'm living in Pacific Grove. Anything that I thought I was connected with HP or meant by then Agilent Technologies is deep in the-- kind of in the past. There's a package at my front door from Santa Rosa, California from Agilent Technologies, Santa Rosa, California. What the heck is this? And I take it inside, and I open the package, and in the package, there's this nice little note from Ron Nersesian. Ron Nersesian is the CEO of what today is Keysight Technologies. It's a significant company, and it's the ultimate descendent of the original HP in the garage is Keysight. And with the note, there's the hat. And the hat is-- and it says here on the front, "What about power supplies?" And the significance of this is that slogan was actually hatched when Ron Nersesian was a relatively new employee with HP at New Jersey division. He wasn't in the room when we did this, but he was kind of part of the management team. He actually followed me as the marketing manager at that division, really terrific guy, but we came up with a slogan, "What about power supplies?" And this hat showed up twenty-two years from the original time, and the thing that just gave me such a thrill about it, I got to tell you, is that marketing slogans come and go, and they tend to have really short timespans, and for this to be in active use as originally conceived twenty-two years later was just an awesome feeling. I was thrilled to get that. So, that's a treasure.

Laws: And what caused him to send it to you at that point?

Kampe: Thank you for asking. The note said, "I was at a sales conference-- or sales meeting last week, and I saw this. Thought you might like one," and he thought to send it to me. So, I really appreciated that.

Laws: Good story, Bill. So, back to California.

Kampe: Back to California. So, anyway, came back to California. I was group manager for the electronic instruments group. We had about eight, ten divisions, I forget what the head count was, with a range of kind of the more base-level, more generalized equipment. We had some for fiber optic tests that were oriented toward communication systems, but it included logic analyzers and oscilloscopes, DVMs, power supplies. I can't remember the full line, but that was kind of an interesting job because we had four groups in the instrument part of the business at that time, test and measurement organization. EIG was one of them. Microwave communications was another. And it was a very small staff of people. So, it was mostly a coordinating efforts thing, and the issue that was becoming very apparent, and I worked very closely with a fellow by the name of Mark Saunders, who had the microwave communications group, is we're all calling on the same customers, but we're all competing in terms of trying to get their attention. And so, we were emerging at that time with the idea of market initiatives that would be more unified efforts. And so, the corporate-- or our group challenge was to find ways to pull people together, and we came up with this multi-divisional initiative thing, where each of the divisions would pitch in some money, and the groups would pitch in some matching money to do unified programs. So, we basically invited proposals and funded them, and-- to some degree. And the glib comment, of course, for the group was where's the group money come from? My money is your money, and it's so literally true, but the divisions' marketing managers were pretty smart. They say, "Look, if I go to my division manager and tell him I want to spend

part of my budget working with other divisions on a collaborative project, he's going to say, 'That's not why you're here. I want you working on my stuff,'" but if we seed a little corporate money into it, now it's okay. And so, it actually started to work out well. I think it took root pretty nicely, and we made some progress on that. It led to an organizational change after I left.

Laws: So, now you'd have one salesperson calling on an account representing a whole bunch of different product lines from different divisions of the company?

Kampe: Well, it was more the things that supported the sales team.

Laws: I see.

Kampe: It was one salesperson, but what are the marketing campaigns we can put around it? Can we offer presale seminars that people can go to? And by the way, one of the things back when I was with ISD [Instrument Systems Division?] we did was start to charge for presale seminars, which was-- because there's value. And actually, it improved the reliable attendance at these seminars to do that, interestingly enough, and the scores went up. So, this John Young thing of you can charge people. You've got to deliver the value, but you can charge people, and it works better for both. So, we looked at different presale seminars and activities, brochures that were joint brochures that had multiple product lines represented, advertising campaigns that were more unified advertising campaigns.

Laws: You did this for several years until a major change came about.

Kampe: A major change came about when I was walking down the hallway one day. “Stand by for an announcement from our CEO,” and I can't remember whether it was Lew Platt or John Young. I think it may have been after John Young in the Lew Platt era. So, the announcement was-- I think we knew that McKinsey had been in talking with the senior folks. We're going to split the company, and we're going to split the measurement part off. And this new company, Newco was the code word, by the way, but this new company will include the test and measurement organization, the medical products, semiconductor products, the automated test products, and the life sciences and analytical products. So, it was a big split. The part that was certain is that the computer part of HP would retain the HP name, even though the part in test and measurement that was being split off really represented the original core of the company.

Laws: A lot of people still call it the real HP. <laughs>

Kampe: Well, you know, culturally, I think there's been a lot of changes on all sides of this thing, but we had more of it I think than the computer group. That became very different very early. So, my reaction, it took a couple milliseconds, but I finally got to yay, and the thing that was so vivid in my mind right at that moment was we sell million-dollar pieces of test equipment to manufacturing departments, for example, and board tests, and the manufacturing managers' admin has an HP printer sitting on her desk, and literally, we had this problem at the time, and they're having trouble with the cartridges, and they're upset. And the manufacturing manager is upset because we are not able to fix it, and it's not the instrument people who are going to figure that one out, and we can provide some free cartridges, but fundamentally, the bad will that we had on a relatively minor situation-- and, by the way, the printers were great printers

in general, but every product has its moments. It was interfering with large sales. And so, you say okay, the dynamics are different. It confuses the customer when we have incidental parts of our products that happen to be HP calculators or computers because that's what we have to do, and it's not right at the core of our business. So, let's get that separated. That will actually be helping.

The Wall Street people and the financial folks had a very different reason for that, by the way, which is they say, "Look, if we want to assemble a portfolio, we know how to do that by buying stocks. If you're saying the portfolio makes you a stronger company, it doesn't do anything for us." So, that was one of the other compelling factors, and I think it was hard to make the case that, when you're doing group reviews for the senior management, that the language of each group had reached the point where they're different enough that the intuition you develop around what's good and what's not good had really diverged a lot. So, I kind of supported it from the beginning.

So, I was tapped on the shoulder to take a new role, and that was director of marketing for the consolidated new company, and that led to a number of miscellaneous things. I was responsible for a web team that was going to bring up the new website. And so, we had a group of folks that started working on that real hard. I had actually the opportunity to be in the room when we negotiated the purchase of the new company (domain) name from the folks that actually held it at the time. So, there were some interesting tactical dynamics. But we had the challenge of really taking the old company and transitioning it to this new interface-- ideally, a new set of attributes-- with the new players that we had, and bringing everybody aboard to a common identity.

Laws: But the Agilent name still represented a lot of different kinds of businesses.

Kampe: It still did. And so, the first thing-- and there was a brand manager and my direct supervisor at the time, who were actually negotiating the creation of the new name. Where my job started to really get interesting was, after that new name was revealed, we needed a transition plan that was going to do, fundamentally, the marketing transition. So, I was designated early as the marketing transition manager for Agilent Technologies, and there was a manufacturing transition manager, and a-- you know, R&D. And a big part of it was-- field admin was a very significant part of this transition, because of all the paperwork contracts, and so on. There was the intellectual property transition, because we had to tease apart the IP of the two companies, and who's doing what. And how long can we use the HP logo in our business, before we have to really cut the cord and be *fully* separated?

On the marketing side, I got that, and we put together a team. And this was a day when we worked with a lot of volunteer collateral duty folks, who kind of might be cajoled into saying, "Yes, I'll sit on that committee." And that's how our committee was actually formed. They all had day jobs, including myself. I remember talking to a fellow by the name of Larry Lopez, who was from our Atlanta office, and we needed a field admin representative. And he was out in California for a meeting, and I talked, "Larry, your name's been mentioned to me as somebody I ought to talk to for this job of helping us do the transition planning." And I talked to Larry, and he says, "Well, what would it involve?" And I described all the things that we thought we had to do. And he says, "That sounds like a lot of work." <laughs> I said, "Yeah." He

says, "Well, we'd better get started." And that spirit was really pretty phenomenal, as we were going through this transition.

But we also had the spirit of, "Well"-- from the five groups, "Well, our business is really pretty different from all those other folks." And so, finding the points of commonality and getting people aboard was one of the <clears throat> challenges we absolutely had through that process. What we did is, first we asked ourselves the question of, "What are people going to want to know, both internally and externally?" And then we asked ourselves, "Okay, how can we get the answers out to them?" And it's like, "Okay, great, the master plan. And where do we find the expertise to answer all the questions we're going to have?" And he says, "Well, we might have a lot of it here. Let's just start getting some stuff down on paper." And that's pretty much what we did.

The... as this thing started to evolve, the brand folks had a lot going on in their plate, and so my boss came to me. He says, "You know, in addition to the marketing transition, we need a branding and labeling transition plan, specifically so that we get all the real hard-core stuff, where things have to change. And they have to make sense to customers. They have to make sense to HP, our departing entity. They have to make sense to us and our legal department, and make sure all the details work out." And so he says, "I would like you to be the branding and labeling transition manager." "Okay." So, marketing transition got that, and marketing was kind of, probably, pretty straightforward. And then, a little bit later, I was in a different meeting that was the sales transition. And I don't know why I was in the meeting, but I looked around and noticed there were no salespeople in the meeting. And so, before it broke-- and we had these things called RDCs, Rapid Decision Centers. And the idea was, you go out knowing what you're going to do, not questions about what you're going to do. And somebody looked and said, "Hey, Bill, you know these sales guys. How about you being the sales transition manager?" So, I ended up picking up that, so I had the day job and these other three jobs at the time. But that was-- it turned out to be a lot of fun, because we got the team together for the transition planning, and started answering the questions we could answer.

We created a little bit of a framework: "We need kind of the broad timeline, so there's a general understanding; there's more detail around this here. And then, in the branding and labeling, let's list all of the places our brand is going to show up in front of the customer." And we had a list of like 125 different situations, and each needed an answer: Where's the packaging going to come from? When can we get it? What... how important is it to do things like have the instrument *in* the box match the packaging *on* the box, during the transition period? I don't know. Let's ask a few folks their opinions and write an answer. What about labeling on components when it's too small for the full logo? What do we do in manuals that don't get ever turned over? And those... so we had 125 questions, basically, we had to answer, and we started filling in the columns. You know, when does it have to be done, what are you going to do, and where do you get the resources? And we just created a long table. I actually have the master plan. It's only yay thick. It's like an eighth of an inch thick, and it became a master plan for a large part of the company to make the transition.

We went on the road, started talking about it. The philosophy was kind of interesting. We'd be sitting around-- often it was on a phone conference, by the way, and somebody'd say, "Well, goodness, that's a

tough question. Where do we get an answer?" "Just do the best you can. We'll send it out for review. If it's wrong, somebody will tell us, and we'll fix it." And so we did a couple rounds of review, draft, send it out, get comments back-- there actually weren't that many comments-- and we went to press with that plan. And it actually worked out very smoothly.

Laws: A massive test. How long did this take to implement and start to see results in the field?

Kampe: I think the announcement was in April 1999 and day one was that November. And so there was a lot of intense work up to day one, because, operationally, we had to be ready to go on that day. That website-- by the way, that was the first enterprise website to become Agilent, out of 3,000 enterprise applications that we used. That's another interesting sidebar. That was... man. That was-- it was a tough experience. <clears throat> So, then, from November 1, we operated as Agilent, until June 1 of 2000, and a large part of the transition had to happen by then. The sales one was interesting. I've got to tell you about that, because when you actually talk to salespeople and say, "What are your customers going to know? What do you feel *you* need to know?", what was coming out of it was this feeling that, "I really don't want to have this interfere with my daily ritual. I want to know that everybody else is doing what they need to do, so I can tell the customer it's all going to work out." And for all the rest of us, there were forms to be revamped, packaging materials to order, data sheets that were going to have to be printed in a different style. There were hard, tangible changes.

But for the sales engineer, it wasn't. So, what we did was we had an ex-sales guy take this project on. We took all the materials we had on how this transition's going to unfold, and made a slide set. And ideally, we would've gone out and done a lot of training, and we had this corporate program that allowed you to do online learning. And you could register, do a course that had all this material in it, and then get certified at the end. We took all the center part out, and said, "That's the slide set. We're going to tell the sales guys, 'Look at the slide set. Go to the registration. Register, and you'll be self-certified that you are prepared for this transition.'" And it turned out that really worked, because it gave us a metric that we knew exactly how many salespeople, by business, had actually done it. And when Ned Barnholt, our new CEO, said, "I want to review it," I sent a message out to the-- the status of the transition-- I sent a message out to the VP of Sales of each of the groups, saying, "I have to update Ned on the transition status in two weeks. This is where your group stands." And all of a sudden, registrations would go way up. And so, by the time we got there, the level of preparedness was really high in the sales organization. And it served another purpose. We wanted to make sure that, when we went live, that they weren't going to be coming back saying, "Nobody ever told me." And once they had self-certified, they had kind of taken away that opportunity. And we kept the door very open: "If you got questions, ask. We'll do our best." But that was kind of the spirit of how, "Just move ahead. Do the best you can. Get the best information out, and let's figure things out as we go."

The other observation that I thought was kind of interesting is, there was a lot of resistance to some of the details, until someone just kind of finally decided that resistance is futile: "Just do it. We're going to have to get there anyway." And then you'd go racing ahead. And then, all of a sudden, other folks are saying, "Hey, wait a minute. All my excuses of, 'This can't be done right now,' just vanished." And you'd see an

acceleration in other groups, as well. And we'd start to see this kind of... not exactly a total snowball kind of thing, but a cascading-- slow cascade of folks starting to say, "Okay, I get it. We can make this work."

Laws: Interesting times. A big challenge there.

Kampe: Yeah, it was.

Laws: So, you did that for a couple of years, and then you moved on to a very different project.

Kampe: That was about a year and a half, yeah. Then I got involved in some special projects. Our CEO started a program where to get operational improvements, and there were like 16 different projects. Various people had leads. I had the lead on three of them. And I think we actually got two and a half of them done, by the way, which was a very high percentage for that full set, because a lot of these were really hard problems. And some got nailed pretty well, and others are tilting-at-windmills kind of projects, but...

Laws: And this time, you were reporting to the COO?

Kampe: Yes.

Laws: Who was that?

Kampe: Alain Couder. He'd come in-- he's from France, from-- and I forget what his background was. I came to like him a whole lot. He was, to me, refreshingly candid on two fronts. One was that he's willing to call things as he actually saw him, and not just speak a lot of happy talk about where we were. And he also had a style that he wanted a very positive outlook, but he was able to do that without sugarcoating the-- he wanted affirmative language, in terms of doing things, but when you ran into a problem, you can tell him about it, which was, I thought, a nice combination. Took me a little bit to kind of get that decoded, but, yeah, it worked out all right. By the way, one of the not-so-happy news things was, he had asked me to do an analysis of what our break-even point was going to be, at a time where the market was turning down. And I think Alain was bold enough to say, "You know, we ought to sell the corporate headquarters here-- we don't need it anymore-- and relocate." That was not-- I don't think that was kindly received at the time. It was a nice building, and the conference rooms had great names, just like the museum here, of all the luminaries of, kind of, the antiquity of our specialties. But... he asked me to do a break-even point, and I came to something like $1.663 million, or billion, a quarter. And we went into a long down period. It was an extended down period, and we were well below that for a long time. And then our CEO came on-- Ned-- and I thought the world of Ned. He was a really great guy. I thought, in this particular situation, that he had expected a faster rebound than we got, which was unfortunate for the company. But he came on and said, "Our revenues this quarter are 1.664 billion. We've finally reached break-even." And I'd done that analysis fairly independently of our finance group, two years before, and just a little bit of personal gratification that I was able to get it. By the way, I got chastised by our-- in a very nice way, by our finance group, because I went out and found my own numbers. And they said, "Bill, you really ought to talk to us,

because we have to reconcile what you say with the financial reports that these executives are seeing, and it would be a lot better <laughs> if we could get on the same page up front." "Okay, I got it." Yeah.

Laws: And from there, you moved on to a very different kind of world: Quality control. It was around—2003 when you took on that job. How did that transition happen?

Kampe: There were some organizational changes going on, and I-- honestly, I'm not sure I remember, because I did a self-assigned sabbatical to a systems project for a service organization. It was to install the Seybold service management package. I'd already spent time working on Project Everest, which was the enterprise management package from Oracle. So, when I reemerged from that, I came back and ended up in this role of Director of Quality Information, or some such thing. I don't remember the title.

Laws: Director of Quality Information is the title on your resume.

Kampe: Okay. So, I was reporting to our VP of Quality, and we were trying to get quality processes ingrained throughout the company, and this was all five groups. I actually had a little bit of appreciation for this role, based on my time in New Jersey Division, because the company had begun to embrace quality issues, and I had actually discovered that some of these principles work even in a marketing department. Usually, it's a production environment that people talk about for the quality management, but we were trying to instill that in the product development processes, the marketing processes, the service admin process-- every part of the company, the theory was, could benefit from that. And we were trying to, then, kind of spread that gospel. And by the way, that included shepherding the company's quality policy, which is a commitment to-- among other things, it's a commitment both to measure the quality of what we're doing, in all its facets, and to make continuous improvement in all the facets. So, I was really appreciative that I'd had a chance to really dive in fairly deep when I was marketing manager at our New Jersey Division, and come to believe that this really makes a difference. So, yeah, we did that for a while. There were some other duties that I can't even remember, at this point, what they were, that were on my plate.

Laws: Agilent Customer Satisfaction was one of them.

Kampe: Yeah. That was-- actually, that was kind of one of the crown jewels for us. Part of the issue of quality is how you measure it, and a thing called the Agilent Customer Satisfaction Survey had-- it had been developed. And Mark Saunders, I mentioned, had actually shepherded that to life with a gentleman by the name of Bill Toy, who was an expert market researcher. And what it meant was, we worked with a vendor. Maritz was the name of the vendor. But what we did-- what *they* did is develop a computerized questionnaire that you could go through, and there were skipped questions, side branches, and whatnot; very sophisticated. And we'd send it out to customers after interactions with our company, Agilent Technologies. And there were like 35,000 of these surveys going out every year, and we had five groups, we had four regions, and we had six points of customer contact. And I think the product of that gets to 120 different intersections with the company, and we provide scorecards on customer satisfaction with all of those.

And I remember, after that transferred to my area of responsibility, we sat down with Maritz, and... the challenge was, how do you get people to pay attention to it? And part of the survey was open-ended customer questions. And so we talked to them about it. And the other thing was, we knew they had the capability-- they boasted of their capability-- to take data and assimilate it in real time. "Why can't you post it in real time?" "Well, we have to scrub the data." "What are you scrubbing? Just post the data." "Well, we've got to make sure there aren't any outlier, wrong things that skew the data." "Well, why is that wrong?" "Well, people might get the wrong"-- says, "Look, my problem is, I've got to be able to go out and interface with these folks, and get them to believe this is useful to them. And if it's a month late, you're three weeks beyond their memory window." "Oh." And, now, one of the things they did have in there was they had the ability to take open-ended comments, and they had a BabelFish translation capability. So, if you were in Japan, and you had a comment from a German customer, you could actually see enough of it that you got a sense of what was going on in their mind. And that turned out to be pivotal. Eventually, they said, "Yes, we can post data real-time." Great.

So, now I go around and do some visits, periodically. So, it wasn't my full-time job, but on a periodic basis, I'd go out. And if I were in a region, I'd sit down with the people who had customer interfaces role-- a call center, a sales team, whatnot-- and ask them about how they're doing on national customer satisfaction. "Oh, that's-- it's not relevant. Our business is different. You don't understand. Our context is"-- "Oh. Well, let's go in and take a look at some of the customer feedback. You're getting a 7.4. By the way, we know that if you can get it up a tenth of a percent, your sales would go up a percent." "Well, I'm not sure I believe that." "Okay, well, let's look at this. What does the customer say here?" And we'd read the customer comment, and he'd say, "Oh, well, that's-- we can fix that. Not a problem." But it's kind of like, "Okay, why *don't* you?" But what came up-- and we come back to that: "We answer the phones." What came up over and over and over again was, "I called. I've left three messages. You promised you'd get back to me. I've tried to follow up three times, and nobody has the answer." "Oh. Okay. Well, maybe we ought to do something about that. Okay." And case by case, country by country, it's, "You're not getting back to me and meeting your promise of getting the answer for me." Over time, it actually-- we went up by a fairly significant amount; I think, about six-tenths. We're getting enough improvement that folks were starting to say, "Yeah, I got it. Pay attention to this stuff." And real time and customer comments were crucial to that.

Laws: And then, finally you became Director of Customer and Quality Operations in Santa Clara.

Kampe: Yeah, that was a slight expansion to what I was doing. And somewhere in there, between that prior job and this one, my boss, Jim Horner, came to me and said, "We're going to do an innovation program: an Agilent Innovation Program." And... so, what-- if I might kind of take a detour into it, because this is another one that was kind of a fun one. He says, "We're going to start doing innovation, and-- an innovation program-- and I'd like you to put it together." So, like, "Okay, what the hell is an innovation program?"

Well, fortunately, during the marketing transition, our marketing education manager had hooked me up with this group led by somebody from IDEO, who had been with IDEO, which is a design firm in Palo Alto-- a very capable and very creative design organization. And it was specifically a group of many different

companies, each sending a representative. It was looking at the process of innovation. And so I had some background on what the elements of that were, and on all of them, it has to start top down, with a lot of top-down support. So I'm listening to all this, and I'm kind of putting together some ideas on what we're going to-- *might* do. And the core idea that had come up for me was that we'd kind of do an innovation contest, with participants from around the company.

And then I was starting to get some interest from our corporate development people, who saw themselves having a role in this, and it turns out it was a really good one. And they also were giving me advice. They said, "Bill, you've got to go talk to Bill Sullivan (CEO), and sell him on this idea. He's got to be involved. It's got to be tops down," and all this kind of stuff. And... and then they were starting to coach me on how you talk to a CEO. Well, I'd actually directly reported to Bill Sullivan for a brief period of time, until I said, "Bill, I've got to go actually find a day-in-and-day-out kind of job. If you don't mind, I'm going to go get involved with a service project that was going on," which he was supportive of.

So, anyway, I got on Bill's calendar. Now, I knew he had been out touring, talking to all of the companies that had been setting the standard on innovation programs. And it was exactly the list people said, "You've got to tell him about what they're doing at British Oxygen, and IBM, and"-- and so I'm thinking, "He's been there. He's talked to them. I don't think I ought to be telling him." So, what I did is, just about two days before, I said, "Oh, it's obvious. I just got to ask him." So I'm sitting across the desk from Bill, and I said, "Bill, you've spent a lot of time out on the road, talking to these companies. What have you heard about innovation that you think might apply to Agilent Technologies?" And he kind of looked at me. He says... "Nothing. It's all smoke and mirrors." <laughs> And I actually laughed. <laughs> And it helped, because he's absolutely right.

When programs are presented to the outside world, they are polished up to the point where they no longer resemble what actually happened inside the company. And by the way, that's true for HP folks doing it, and I've seen it in our management meetings, and I've heard it from other companies, and it doesn't give you the roadmap of what you have to do to make something work. You've got to talk to somebody who'll tell you what really happened.

In fact, another sidebar on that: I'd watched my boss, Jim Horner, do that at one of our management meetings, and I watched him follow all the folks that said, "We examined trends in the market, and the implications for the future, and where technology was headed, and we developed a strategic plan to do this, that, and the other, and da-da-da, and we're brilliant." And Jim got up for his talk about what his division has done, so he says, "We're running out of steam, and we're kind of confused, and we weren't sure where to go. There was this guy who would do something for free, out of corporate. We brought him down, and we created this committee, and that, and we had UNCs for user needs councils"-- U-N-C-- "and we had leadership executives"-- we call them the UNCLES-- "for each of the groups. And we did-- and this didn't work, and that didn't work. But eventually, we did this, and it worked." And that turns out to be the pattern of what actually happens most of the time. And I saw the ratings, by the way, and the reason this is important: I saw the speaker ratings for all of the folks that presented, and Jim was so far head-and-shoulders above everybody else in the speaker ratings, that I said, "There is gold here, and it's really important to understand it."

So, when Bill said, "Nothing; it's all smoke and mirrors," I felt I understood exactly what he was saying. And I said, "Okay, Bill. Well, here's the thought: What we'll do is we'll have this little contest. Different groups that have done projects can enter. We'll come up with some criteria for judging the projects, and we'll kind of go organization level by organization. Divisions will have a winner, and group will have a winner. And, by the way, the GIO, the Global Infrastructure Organization, would also have a winner, so that people serving internal clients can also be innovative." And we did it. We had 1,000 entries. This was a 6,000-person company at the time. We had 1,000 entries. And the database that did the online entries was, I think, a $1200 budget item for a third-party vendor to cobble together this little front end that took all the entries. And there were some glitches, but we fixed them.

And the judging started, and people wanted to know, "What's the scoring system?" And this is a bunch of engineers, by the way, right? We've got to have a calibrated scoring system. This is-- look, the scoring system is, you get all the things together, and you get three piles on your table. And on pile one, "Wow, that's really cool!" On pile two, "Hmm. That's pretty neat." And on pile three, "Yeah, *but*." And so you just sort them out. And then look at your pile one, and ask yourself, "What strikes your fancy?" And that's basically what it was. And we had three items for criteria. It included business impact. In other words, you had to have gotten far enough to have done something, or at least have the high potential indicators that you're going to do something. And I don't know what the other two-- I wish I could remember them. The idea was not so much that it creates a scorecard directly, but as you're assessing them, you have those in mind. And when you explain why the number one came out, you can explain it to the whole division audience in terms that made sense.

And it turns out that a highly simplified system worked really well. By the time this bubbled up-- and we had certificates. These certificates were printed on a cobbled-up form. I think I designed the forms. It was just three different colors for different levels of achievement here in the system, that they could print out, locally, on their laser-jet printers. And by the time it bubbled up to the division level, our corporate development people have now integrated, basically, a product fair of the five contenders that were competing for the grand prize, which was now going to be called the Barnholt Award for Innovation, and it was a featured element of the senior management meeting for that year. And the folks that presented these projects did a fabulous job. We also had a larger conference for people, around the topic of innovation, that we'd done for an audience of about 200 people, and these five winners had a chance to sit and talk about what they were-- group winners-- what they were doing.

The (final) judging was by our group presidents, and I ended up sitting in the conference room with them as we were discussing who was the top award winner. One, from Santa Clara Division, was one of the very high contenders. They were doing something in the optics manufacturing realm. The grand prize winner was from life sciences, and it was a tech who ran the elutriation lab. And I... elutriation is where you suspend particles in a liquid, and you separate the really small ones from the really, *really* small ones. And they were necessary for the columns, for liquid-- or gas chromatographs. And the issue was that the quality of the gas chromatograph depends on the quality of the column, and that depends on the quality, the uniformity, of the particle size. So, he had been using this old, clunky stuff that he had inherited, that was a cylinder, and it didn't do very well, and he needed a conical-shaped vessel. And he asked his boss for the budget-- it was going to be $5,000-- to get it custom-made, and his boss said, "We can't afford it."

The guy's reading a thing on beer-making, and he sees a home-brewing kit, and it has a conical vessel with all the right ports on it. And he says, "Oh! I think I'm going to try that out." And he ordered it-- 280 bucks. And he gets it in, and all of a sudden, he's getting much better uniformity and reliability out of this process. And that was his entry. And the home-brewing kit probably helped a whole lot, as a universal appeal element to that particular entry.

But I was looking at the level of interest as the group presidents walked around. It was extraordinary. And practically tears in their eyes, when they got to the point of actually presenting this award to this individual. A very powerful event. And we turned the innovation model upside down, let it bubble up, let the enthusiasm and, frankly, the competence of the folks that were doing things infect our top management, more so than doing it the other way around. It was one of-- and by the way, I don't know when or whether that continued. The five groups have all split out. It's not the same company anymore. But it continued for a long time after that first event. Yeah.

Laws: Interesting note to end your career at Hewlett-Packard -- or Agilent, Is there anything else you'd like to say about the company before we move on to what you've done since?

Kampe: Well, if you don't mind, I'd like to go back to the Agilent Customer Satisfaction Survey, and customer focus. I want to mention a study. I mentioned Mark Saunders, who was a very close working colleague with the Microwave and Communications Group. And when the company split apart, pretty early in that process, Ned Barnholt called us in and said, "I want to get a look at... kind of, customer excellence. And I want you guys to look at what works well in this company, and how we might embrace it in our company, into the test and measurement [ph?] organization." And so, Mark and I started scratching our heads on it, and we got the list of, kind of the renowned divisions, some were in instruments, some were in analytical, some were in medical. We got all those examples, and we set about doing it, and what was very clear to us is it's not one thing. We knew that starting out, and part of the reason we knew it, I'd been to a conference of market researchers, and they all brag about their research tool, their metrics, and how "Mine's good to four-digit accuracy." "Oh, mine's good to six-digit accuracy." Totally different approaches, but what we also knew is somehow, whatever it is that's getting embraced in our division, it's making a difference. So we started around interviewing folks, and after we talked to a number of folks, what we realized, nobody's doing it exactly the same, but there are some common elements. The reason I want to go into this is this is, in my mind, broader than just HP, or Agilent, but I thought it was a useful insight. What we started to realize is the three elements that we saw, and we borrowed an acronym, CVM, which stands for Customer Value Management. It's kind of almost a manipulative-sounding tool. But what it hit for us was we said "In every one of these, there's a culture, there's a metric, but the customer voice ultimately is the thing that's made the difference." But the three together are the characteristic for every one of these divisions that have really got it together. They have a quantitative measurement tool to measure customer needs, preferences, satisfaction, whatever. They have a culture that actually looks at data, but in every case they quoted, for every one of them when you actually ask them for an example of where it made a difference, there was a customer voice behind it. The one that was most vivid, to me, was for our DeskJet printers, and DeskJets were made up in Washington, and he was down in the Bay area, and went in Fry's Electronics. I think they're no longer around, maybe?

Laws: They're pretty insignificant, if they are. [On February 24, 2021, Fry's Electronics announced on its website it had shut down operations and closed all 31 of its stores after 36 years, citing "changes in the retail industry and the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic."]

Kampe: Yeah, but anyway, it used to be the superstore for electronics geeks, and he goes in, and he says-- and the sales guy doesn't know who he is, he says "Hey, do you have printers?" "Yeah, we've got printers. Let me show you some Epson printers." Apparently, the salesperson said to him "Well--" he replied back to the salesperson, he says "Yeah, but what about HP printers?" The salesperson says "Oh, they make nice printers but they're noisy. Let me show you the Epsons." Well, it turns out every printer developed after that episode was a lot quieter than the printers from before that episode. At that point, by the way, I had actually had personal experience with the difference in noise level. What took him so long? They actually had it in their dataset from their customer satisfaction surveys, they knew it, they just didn't believe it was that important until that VP heard that salesperson tell him "I'm going to show you Epson, because HP printers are noisy." So some of the learnings along the way, the thing that I appreciated through that journey was it was a culture where we had a chance to explore enough of that. There was a lot of investment in both formal training, but kind of the interaction of a lot of folks who were inquisitive and open-minded enough. Not always open-minded, <laughs> by the way, but open-minded enough to try something new that really produced these kind of bright spot moments.

Laws: That's a great story, Bill. Great career.

Kampe: I enjoyed it.

Laws: You chose to retire?

Kampe: I did. Actually, and by the way, I did choose to retire. I'd been through four rounds of-- I forget what we called it, voluntary severance incentives, or whatever, and survived through all four of those. I always knew there was a time where I either had to be ready to retire, or had my resume ready, and my boss came to me for the fifth round and said "We're simplifying, reorganizing. We'd love to have you stay, but if you want a package, we have a package for you." Because there were a lot of options at that time for how to cover the waterfront. I was talking to somebody about this just the other day, I actually said "Well, gee, yeah, I appreciate the opportunity to stay, thank you very much." Then I go home and talk to my wife, and for about two weeks I'm thinking "I'd better do the arithmetic here. I'm probably ready to retire in a year, and that package is worth pretty close to a year's salary." I went back to my boss and said "I think I'm failing an intelligence test here. Is the package still available?" He said "Yeah." So, accepted the package with great appreciation, packed it up, and by then I had a house in Pacific Grove. So Cheryl, my current wife and I, bought that in 2003. It was now 2007, and formally retired on August 31, 2007, yeah.

Laws: Tell me about Pacific Grove [on the Monterey Peninsula, California]. What did you do there? I first met you when you came to the front door as candidate for mayor, and I believe you were knocking on every single door in Pacific Grove at the time. And my wife, Jean, said "We've got to vote for this guy. He's really working hard."

Kampe: <laughs> Well, I'm glad to get the sympathy vote, thank you <laughs> very much. The precursor was we did buy the house in 2003. When I retired, and I was actually living with Cheryl in her house, in San Jose, so she sold that house, it closed on October 7th, things went really fast. The market was dying, but in the little enclave we lived in, it was-- nothing particularly extraordinary about it, but it was a nice place, was still stable. So we were able to get the sale, and eight offers, as can happen in the Bay area when things are hot, and move to Pacific Grove. A couple of U-Haul trips, a lot of sweat and toil. When we bought in 2003, Cheryl had some very clear ideas of where we could improve the property, and so we started a home project, put a garage in the back, and a studio up at the top for her to do some art, and some improvements in the front, and I had to start marching down to city hall for project applications. We had an architect who'd been a former mayor of the city, and--

Laws: Was this Jeanne Byrne?

Kampe: Jeanne Byrne, yeah. So we got these projects under way, and as part of it, I went to the Architectural Review Board, Planning Commission, Historic Resources Committee, and watching the process of how this went through. In retrospect, it actually went through pretty well compared to some of the projects I've learned about later. But at the time, it had some snags. It just seemed to me to be a little bit mysterious to me, but the snag let me go into city hall to plead the case, talking to the city manager, talking to the city attorney, and get everything all worked out.

So during that process, Jeanie had kind of planted the idea that I ought to consider running for city council, and something came up. What was probably the pivotal thing was in 2007, when I did go to the city council, I had to talk about why we should get our permit for our project, in spite of the fact that two trees ought to come down. The council had passed the tree moratorium, where no trees could be cut down, but four projects had gone into the city hall and been frozen because the moratorium went in place after the applications were submitted.

So I asked myself "What is it that makes something of a case for letting us go ahead with a project?" What I thought about was how is it that a forest of a thousand years retains its serenity, and charm, and beauty when the individual trees only live a hundred? It's a cycle in nature of time, decay, and renewal. We can't stop time, we can't stop the decay, but we can support the renewal, and the same is true of the build infrastructure. So I kind of made the case, had a few people ask some hostile questions, mostly had a couple sympathetic questions, including from Ron Shenk, whose question I appreciated immensely, which was "This doesn't feel very fair, does it?" My answer was "Not yet." Well, anyway, through that process, I started to meet a number of people, the mayor at the of that session. By the way, they said "Yeah, you can go ahead and do it." He says "By the way, we have an opening on the Beautification Natural Resources Committee."

So I thought "Well, that's interesting, yeah, I'll turn in an application," and then it ended up on the Beautification Natural Resources Committee. So at the time I was commuting down-- you can't do that now, you have to be a resident of PG. But I was commuting down, and some folks thought "What's this outsider doing here?" And other folks said "Well, it's good, he can bring some ideas down from Silicon Valley. That might be good for us." The only idea transfer, by the way, that I can specifically identify was

something I learned from the forester of Carmel, who was talking about how you assess tree hazards, because I had some worldwide product safety responsibility. How we assess product hazards was a hot topic at the time, and what I learned here was useful in a meeting back up in Silicon Valley. So an interesting sidelight.

But anyway, on the BNRC, we were taking a look at recycling. I know this is a shaggy dog story, but I'd written a couple of articles for our hometown bulletin, which you are familiar with, and I realized on one of the articles I had an error in it that I needed to try to fix if I could get there before production deadline. I did, and they said "By the way, before you leave, what do you think about this tax measure?" It was a 1% sales tax increase, and I said "Well, I think the city needs it," and talked for a few minutes with him. I got a call about an hour later from the hometown bulletin, "We're going to sponsor a panel discussion on this tax measure, and we'd like you to be a speaker for." I said "Well, it seems to me that in this town, Pacific Grove, that there's a real benefit to being a long-term resident, and I don't think I meet that criteria, but thank you very much, I appreciate that." They said "Okay, well, we'll think about that." I got a call back, and they said "Look, we really want you. We've heard you speak, and we want you." "Okay, I'll speak at this panel."

The key part was not just speaking at the panel discussion, the key part was I did some homework which was-- I wanted to understand the city finances and the need. At the end of that, my conclusion was the city really needs the money. We're largely residential, we don't have the large corporate stuff, we don't have big-box stores, we don't have any of that. We have a fairly strong tourism base, but nowhere near like Monterey, or Carmel. The other part of it was not only do we need the money, but there are a whole bunch of folks who have a very outdated understanding of where we are. Money used to be flush, it's not. So I thought "Okay, maybe I've got a voice that would be useful."

In 2008 I ran for council, the problem was nobody knew who in the heck I was. So I got the poll listing from the county elections office, and said "Okay, I'm going to knock on every door with a voter behind it just so I have the chance to say 'Hi, I'm not a two-headed monster, maybe I'm a reasonable person,' and maybe it'll work." One of their early challenges was at the candidate's forum they typically conduct in our city, and I'm brand-new, and there are eight of us running for three seats for the council role. The first one, it's "I was born here, and I've lived here. I went to this school," and they get down to me, and I'm brand-new. One other person was relatively new, and I just had to start with "I just want you to know I am the newest person to this town on this panel, and here's why it's good for Pacific Grove," and we kind of went from there. That was really interesting because after that forum, I'd already asked people if they wanted signs for the yards, and I wasn't getting a whole lot of enquiries. But basically, a whole bunch of folks got in touch with me and said "Yeah, give me a sign for my yard." It was very, very encouraging.

But the key was, and I was kind of computing it, how many people am I contacting, and among those, what percentage do I think I may be influencing in terms of being a vote? My goal was to try to get about four thousand votes, and I think that's about what I got. By the way, I did not spend time, it was like "Hi, I'm Bill Kampe, I'm running for council. Can I leave you a brochure?" Nobody wants to be assailed at their front door, to be forced to talk politics. It was a fabulous experience, it turns out I enjoyed that walking around. Probably created part of my hip problem, which has since been replaced. But what I found was,

and the purpose was I wanted folks to see that maybe I'm a reasonable person. But you learn where the streets are in the town, you learn the condition of the buildings, and this idea that built infrastructure needs renovation, you bet, it needs renewal. Because you realize when you get up close to the buildings, that there're a whole bunch of them that the owners no longer can take care of, and it needs renewal. You hear the issues, because every once in a while somebody will say "Well, while you're here, what's your position on--" and you have to be able to do that, and it gives you a rehearsal forum for the things that you know you're going to have to talk about as the campaign wears on. Five ways, it was valuable to do, and you learn a lot about the gate latches of Pacific Grove. <laughs>

Laws: An IQ test, sometimes, I think. <laughs>

Kampe: There were times where it's like "Wait a minute, I think I got eight different fundamental variations." Then <laughs> there were always the inward, outward, up, down variations on that.

Laws: Yes, we have one that always fools the FedEx man. And so you went on to become mayor, and what were the biggest challenges as mayor, Bill?

Kampe: What I looked at is the challenge as mayor is to be able to bring your council to a conclusion. Let's get the best thinking of the staff, the citizens, and the council, how do we structure a dialogue that works? At the time I became mayor, I think PG, and PG for a very long time was kind of known as a fairly raucous political environment, what I discovered-- and unfortunately, a lot of public picking on the staff, which I was not fond of. It was really to try to diminish the role of the staff in decision making. One of the tactics of you don't like something is try to diminish every voice that doesn't agree with you. So I viewed the role partly as to gain as much clear space for a constructive and civil dialogue as I could, and it was a hard struggle. It was a bunch of simple things to start with. I sat down with our city manager after the election results came in, I said "Tom, what can we do about some things?" I had an agenda list, and he had a lot of good procedural thoughts, and they involved our city attorney, (he) was really great at helping separate me from things you really want to do, darn it, from things that work, <laughs> and don't have the blowback--

Laws: The politics of the possible.

Kampe: But we did some simple things, like the clocks, the three-minute clock would turn red at three minutes, and the bell would go off at 3:15, three minutes, fifteen seconds. Then there was "And please finish your sentence," and some people don't have periods in their mental typewriter, and can go on for a long time. So people became very used to basically filibustering the council. We reset the clocks so that at 15 minutes-- 15 seconds until the 3 minutes, it went red, the buzzer went off at 3, and my next words immediately were "thank you very much, Mr. so-and-so." Folks were shocked at first, but over time what we began to see is people understood it, and there was a reason for it. There are a lot of people out in the audience who are actually getting very upset to have to listen to it, and watch things run over. There sometimes is some favoritism in that as well, which is probably not healthy. But folks got to understanding that it's three minutes, and you can submit a letter, we'll read the letter. By all means, please, thank you for coming, and it worked out pretty well. So that was one thing. The other one was we would listen to

people make assertions during general public comment. By the way, the way government works is very different from business, and folks talk about wanting government to work like a business, and it can't. One of the things I learned in a seminar in Washington courtesy of Hewlett-Packard company, was government is designed not to be efficient, but to prevent the abuse of power. So open meeting laws, scheduled agendas, you can't ramble off topic, you've got to stay with the topic. So during general public comment, anybody can comment on anything, and the council can't really respond, because it's not an agendized [sic] item. Well, the dilemma is people will make assertions that are far from the truth, and they're very disparaging to the city. So what had been happening is we just let that go, and then went on with the agenda. What the city manager and I concluded was for things that can and really need to be refuted on the spot, after everybody had made their comments, before we'd go on to the next item, I would turn to our city manager and say "Tom, I made a note on a few things. You may have a few others, but could you give us some background on X, and then Y, and then Z? Thanks. You got any others that you need to comment on?" He would make those comments as well. So we'd reinject facts back into the room, and it takes a little bit of the wind out of the sails of those who want to work unfettered by the facts.

We changed a couple of the ways we dealt with agenda items. One was there's sometimes a lot of time between when you say "Yes, go do this project," and when you get the next review, and we realized that during that entire time, there's no agenda item for it. So people can be at the podium during general public comment picking away at it, and any time we sense that there was going to be a public attempt to intimidate the council, we'd say "Let's get an agenda item on the agenda for this meeting." That means that everybody who wants to comment on it has to comment on it at that item, and we have a chance as both the staff and a council to have a dialogue about it. It just makes it a fairer kind of environment for dialogue. After six years, we had terrific audiences.

Laws: I've been to several of the meetings, they were well managed. One of the biggest challenges during your tenure was the issue of water availability. I recall you managed to come to some kind of agreement between the mayors of all the different cities. But I'm not sure it lasted for long.

Kampe: Yeah, and other thing about government, and I used to talk to our VP of government affairs at Agilent Technologies, and she used to always remind me "Bill, it's never over." <laughter> Because I was dealing at that time with some government initiatives in toxic substance control, and implications for how we had to manage our product flow into and back out of the customer sites water. One of the things that happens when you get involved in city council, and particularly as mayor, is you get engaged in regional bodies. One of the common issues for the peninsula is the shortage of water, and there was a creation before my time called the Monterey Peninsula Regional Water Authority, which when I became mayor, I became the de facto representative from our city, and eventually ended up being the president for the remainder of its functional existence. We worked very hard to get a uniform effort around a desal project that would serve six cities, and could've served a seventh city, although they kind of elected not to participate. But I thought we were making a lot of progress, but after I retired, the folks that followed in the next generation had a different view on life. We may or may not have the long-term solution with some really good work done by our wastewater district on recycling, and there's a major project that's underway now that is actually in production, but there needs to be more water. They have a follow-on project going, whether it'll serve the full need is still a little bit of a question.

By the way, I was actually asked to be a panelist on behalf of our recycling project to give a government's eye view of what it takes to get one of these things going. I remember I was sitting on the panel next to somebody from the state water resources control board, and the night before at a social event, he was telling me the core of being successful is TMF, in large infrastructure projects. TMF, what's TMF? He's describing it, he says it's "The technical, the managerial, and the financial resources." I thought "Yeah, that makes a lot of sense, and I can see why it does." But I went home that night thinking "I'm supposed to represent kind of the governmental elected body environment and what it takes to do it," and I've got to thinking "I'm not sure that's quite there." So he spoke first on the panel, then I got to follow him, fortunately. I said "I would just like to offer a companion acronym of TMF to what you've already described, as something that is also important to getting these projects done. It's tenacity, moxie, and focus." The room, they loved it, because so much of the room were in jobs where that is absolutely the heart of what it takes to get something done in the public domain, and the core dilemma is time, and regimes change, and projects can be long. When the regime changes faster than the project can be completed, things can get very sidetracked, and the people in opposition understand that very well.

Laws: The California bullet train project, for example.

Kampe: The bullet train is great, the Big Dig in Boston was another one. I was listening to NPR, and they talked about why is it that when wages have gone up by a factor two over so many years, the cost of infrastructure projects is going up by a factor of seven? And it's all the regulations to try to make sure we don't waste money, that cost us so much money. In California, we love our Environmental Quality Act, that's part of the mix. It has one benefit, it has some big drawbacks. All of that, these things also extend the amount of time, and when the clock's running, the dollars are burning. On the Monterey Peninsula, we have the Del Monte Hotel, or at least the history of the Del Monte Hotel. It's now part of the Naval Postgraduate School. That hotel was built in about a year and a half, start to finish. "I want a hotel," okay, door opening a year and a half after that. It was a magnificent structure. It was the wonder of the world at the time it was built. Presidents stayed there, people came from Europe, we had royalty, and all the names in American society, and a year and a half.

Laws: And when it burned down, it went back up again in about a year and a half, I think.

Kampe: So, yeah, a lot of stuff takes longer now.

Laws: Yeah, it sure does. Well, this has been fun, Bill. Well, what do you do outside now you're no longer mayor? Or how do you spend your time?

Kampe: Well, I'm keeping it simple. I'm <laughs> walking our dog twice a day, loving it, getting around town. Cheryl keeps saying when I get back "What took you so long?" "I ran into so-and-so, and we talked a little bit." So that's great, but I'm also trying to help out with my wife's art, in terms of doing her website, and I'm trying to do a redo on that. That's where I've gotten myself way in over my head on software engineering, and <laughs> man, it's changed a lot. My software skills have gone south, and the complexity has gone north, and I'm trying to kind of get back to a functional level, and getting the website back up.

Laws: Yeah, any thoughts of writing memoirs or anything about your--

Kampe: Well, I do have a website, which is in its very formative stages right now. But some of the things I told you today I want to document as stories on the website. [https://www.kampesite.com/] There's seven stories out there now. But I have about 30 that I've drafted, and I've got to go back one-by-one polish and format to publish and add more later. Mostly I want to get my wife's website upgraded, because we've got some obsolete technology out there today.

Laws: Any thoughts on your long career that you'd like to pass along to young people who are beginning to try to go through the process of "What do I do with my life"?

Kampe: I'm not sure I've got profound insights, but some thoughts that have crossed my mind at times, one was kind of be willing to explore options. When I went to MIT, I had no idea what I was going to do, and got up there, and actually it was a letter over the summer that said "By the way, we've got some special programming in electrical engineering if you'd like to sign up." Because I hadn't declared, and I thought "Oh, that sounds good." So I was willing to try it, my wife asked me one time "What's your long-term plan?" I didn't specifically have a long-term plan, which kind of-- and this is Cheryl, my current wife, kind of amazed her.

But what I did talk about was whatever you do do, find things that are interesting to you. I found I did this in every job, find some part of that job that you can make an extra and special contribution to, and enjoy while you're doing it. I look back in my career, and there have been pieces where something has come up where no one else in the room has an answer to it, and I say "You know, I think I've got something I can add here," and pulled together what skills I did have to be able to do that. Make sure that you are developing a track record that can serve you well for things in the future. I talked about in the geometry class situation, do your homework. Well, a lot of things are just doing your homework. When you get there, be prepared.

I kind of think back in terms of what it means even for something simple to be finished with a job. When I got to Microwave Semiconductor, and I'll use that as an example, I got there, and we had a bunch of irons in the fire, but nothing seems to be completed. I'd asked who I thought was responsible for it, "Where's this stand?" "Oh, we're done." "Oh, good. Well, bring it in." "Oh, well, I'm done, so-and-so has it." "Oh, well, when you're done, bring it in." So we had to shift the idea of what does finished mean, and I've seen a lot of folks who kind of get part way into things, but it maybe doesn't get finished. Getting to that finish point where it becomes useable to other people is fairly critical-- and I'm probably preaching to the choir here, because we're in Silicon Valley, we have entrepreneurial spirit emerging everywhere, and folks absolutely understand you've got to have something to put on the table, and make work. But that's not necessarily fully understood. I love the area I was in, but when I've talked to other folks who are maybe just starting their career, it's just find something you really enjoy, but do it well.

Laws: Any last comment?

Kampe: I've appreciated the time to be here with you, to be able to share some of the stories. I hope it'll be helpful to someone, and thanks for the opportunity.

Laws: Well, thank you for joining us, Bill.

END OF THE INTERVIEW

