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cover story

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General Electric Information Services Company, U.S.A.

QUIK-COMM™ SYSTEM GETS BOUQUETS FROM AMERICAN FLORAL SERVICES

"What we are doing for American Floral Services, Inc.," said Carolyn Bradfield, marketing representative, Office Communications Operation, "is dramatically affecting their business." She was discussing the recent addition of the Oklahoma City based AFS as a reseller of the QUIK-COMM System in the wire transfer of flowers market. AFS is a \$100 million clearinghouse for floral transfers and has been in business since 1971. "They are proud that they have grown so large in just 14 years against tough FTD competition."

The relationship began when AFS saw a good opportunity to compete with the older FTD Services by putting up its own wire service. The FTD system is comprised of teletypewriters, and a customer could use AFS for flowers by wire by pressing a button on the FTD teletypewriters. AFS saw a market for a cheaper, more versatile system.

Bonnie Derrick is the account representative assigned to AFS, and she called in Carolyn after her first meeting with AFS. "What they were really looking for was a reliable, large network, and having the name of GE behind them was a big bonus. There are horror stories in the industry of systems burping and florists losing thousands of orders, so reliability was a key factor," Carolyn explained.

"Our client had worked for a major accounting firm, so he was familiar with our services," Carolyn said. "They were very impressed with our published up time, the redundancy, and both WATS and local access—no other network could touch us on those qualifications."

"Combined with the network, the QUIK-COMM System was a perfect fit. The mailbox concept, the store and forward features, forcing a reply, group addressing, message tracing, and administering their own system were just what they wanted. In fact, the system had to be modified very little to suit their

needs. And finally, the price was right, with the transaction price just under 50¢ an order," she continued. "After the initial fit, we spent a lot of time searching for the appropriate hardware for AFS to offer to its subscribers. We recommended the IBM PC and the Texas Instruments 707 data terminal."

Carolyn explained that AFS contracted with SDC to write the functional specifications for the software needed for those two pieces of equipment. AFS then contracted with two vendors to write the software for the IBM PC and the TI 707 data terminal. The result is that the TI 707 has an auto access cartridge to pop into the machine. With the cartridge the florist can order flowers or supplies, send and receive messages, and cancel or edit orders. "The TI even has a clock so that it can access the network and look for orders at preset times. During peak periods, such as Mothers Day, the clock can be changed to look more frequently."

"The whole project took lots of time from a group of people both in OCO and outside," Carolyn said. Bill Wright, application support manager, and Janis Schwartzkopf, marketing representative, worked on the technical end from Marketing & U.S. Sales Operations; and Katie Vogelheim, sales manager, western area, Rand Walker, technical consultant, western area, and Joni Reeves, technical specialist, from OCO, all worked hard to make the project go.

When everything was lined up, AFS sent fliers to its members announcing the service. Already they have 700 people signed up for the service and are working toward 3000 by Mothers Day and 10,000 by next year. AFS has 19,000 members out of 33,000 U.S. and 600 Canadian florists. Ninety-five percent of those who have signed up have chosen to use the TI 707. "Since most of the florists are small operations, the TI 707 offers them what they need at a low cost. This is an important part of AFS being

competitive with FTD on the overall costs, and since AFS's philosophy is no charge to the ordering florist, the whole arrangement keeps them competitive on price while offering more services.'

"While it is important for AFS to be a QUIK-COMM customer, what's great about this sale is that AFS is the first vertical market that we have broken into—and that's the real key to our success!"



Joni Reeves (left) and Carolyn go over some of the QUIK-COMM and TI capabilities with Alvin Cooper of Carren's Flowers in Dallas. (Carren's Flowers graciously supplied the flowers in the cover photo.)

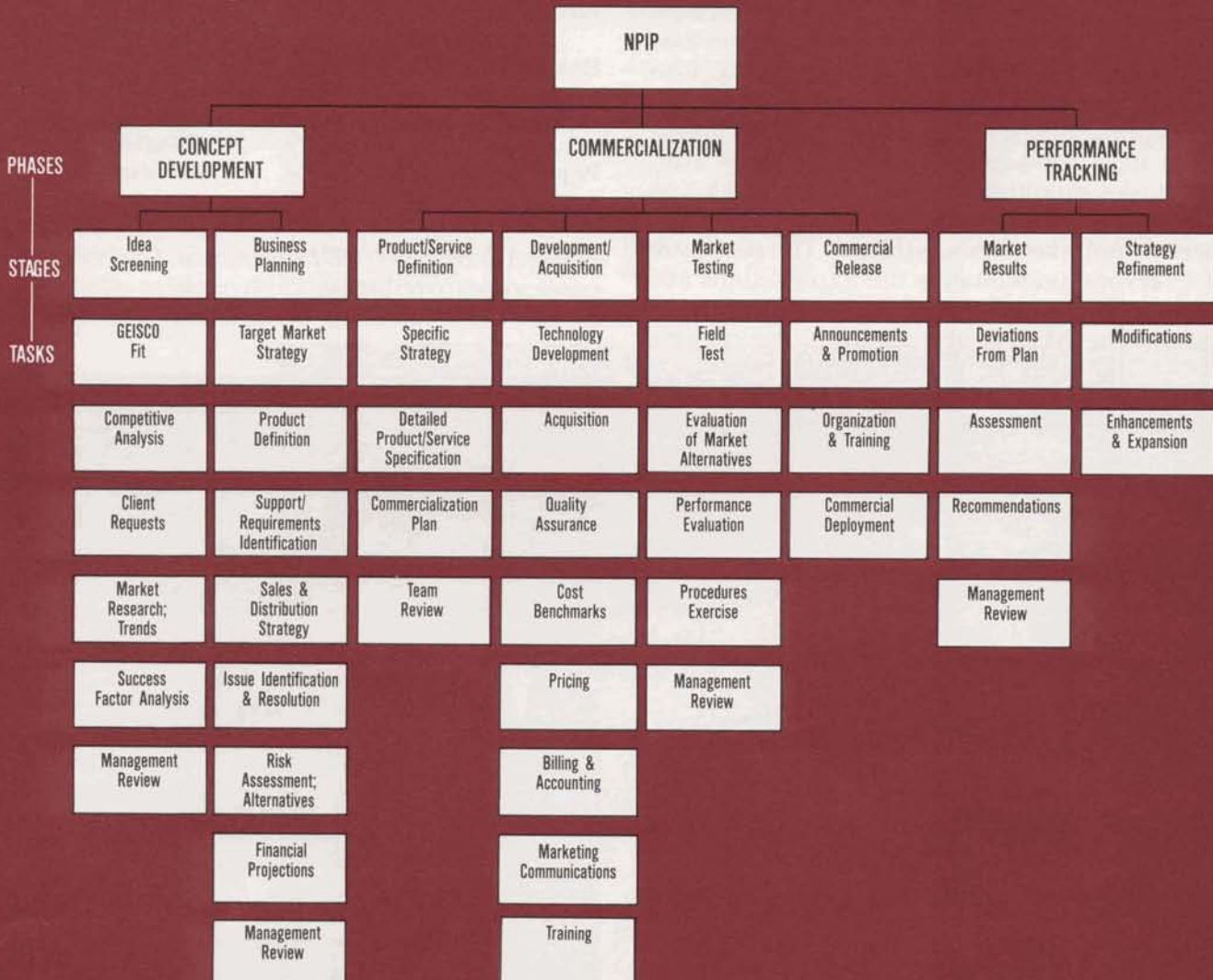
NEW PRODUCT INTRODUCTION PROCESS COMPLETE

"It is really a guide to the process," said Dave McIntosh, project manager, pricing. He was describing the New Product Introduction Process (NPIP) Project Manager's Handbook. Dave has been working on the handbook since last year, and its completion—and the issuance of the revised company policy 6-2, New Product Introduction and Final Price Ap-

proval—mark the end of a project that began with the NPIP task force in 1983.

"The NPIP Handbook reflects what is happening and what should be happening in the process," Dave explained. "It will be most beneficial to the Marketing product manager who is responsible for a new product, but it will also be useful for the people

WORK BREAKDOWN STRUCTURE



who interface with Marketing, such as Engineering, the Project Integration Office, Finance, client services, who are members of a new product introduction team."

The Handbook lays out the phases a new project goes through from inception through commercialization to performance tracking. The handbook includes sections on project concepts, the NPIP life cycle, work breakdown structure for NPIP, concept development, commercialization, the project file, project scheduling and project management software, and milestone reporting. (See chart, page 3.)

"The phases and stages are not new," David said. "Variations on the basics can be found in a number of marketing textbooks and publications, but I have never seen the whole process described in just this way. This really flows from our business and how we can do things better here. Even so, not every product will include every task in every stage, but most products will include at least half. And the tasks should be viewed as a checklist so that the project manager and the other NPIP team members do not overlook anything." The net result is that everyone understands the expectations and the project can be completed with all the aspects dovetailed. The NPIP is also useful in the preliminary planning phase to determine when projects can be realistically delivered.

The revised company policy 6-2, which is slated to be effective this month, assumes that the NPIP will be followed in order to obtain a final price approval. The new policy replaces one that has been in effect since November of 1970. "The policy stresses the cooperation of Marketing and U.S. Sales Operations, International Sales and Services Operations, and Office Communication Operation," Dave said. "The three operations must work together to succeed."

If you would like a copy of the NPIP Handbook, copies are available from OLOS, publication number 850.02.

RESULTS IN ON INTERFACE '85

After all the time and effort and money spent on preparing for and participating in INTERFACE '85, what exactly were the results? Eileen Hussar, senior systems specialist, Enhanced Telecommunications Venture, has prepared the following summary of the results as of the end of March.

ACTIVITY	GOAL	REALITY
Reception	200 attendees	450-500 attendees (80 percent clients)
Press Breakfast	15 attendees	16 high-quality attendees; one-on-one interview of Bob McCalley by <i>Business Week</i>
Literature requests	200	360; 75 percent <i>Fortune</i> 1000
Hospitality suite	5 companies per day	5 companies per day; all significant opportunities
Paper presentations	50 attendees each	150 attendees each

Note: Almost 5,000 GE Information Services diskette cases were distributed. Twelve major client presentations have already been scheduled, and more may be in the works.



INTERFACE '85 giveaways.

