

Scenario 7

The work of the FS Allowances and Benefits Section entailed many tedious and repetitive tasks. Each year, in addition to the many individual changes, there are several global changes to the allowances of the approximately 2,000 employees serving abroad. These allowances, salary revisions, and post index changes would consume an inordinate amount of time as clerks would have to use a calculator to determine how the changes would affect each individual's allowances, and then record the changes on card and allowance requisition forms.

Decision

Equip the area with a personal computer.

Action

- i. dBase 3 plus was chosen to maintain the employee information over an entire career, including the payment and use of various benefits, and for the calculation of such benefits.
- ii. Detailed instructions were created by team-work within the unit to ensure standardization of inputs.
- iii. Data on all employees was duly entered and the clerks began to use the dBase programs for all calculations.

Results

Positive:

- i. As long as individual changes were completely up to date, then large-scale global changes took only minutes rather than days. This encouraged everyone to switch from the old manual system to the computer system.
- ii. Success in one area spread: the same logic was used to create an elaborate bring-forward system that would automatically accrue points which would increase individuals' allowances on predetermined dates.
- iii. Employees were freed from the boredom of the old methods of handling the work. Many felt a greater control over their workflow and used their time to consider improvements to the service offered by the unit.
- iv. Person-year savings realized enabled the unit to take on a new FS directive and to consider a reorganization of duties with upwards reclassification of positions.

Negative:

- i. One of the ten employees in the unit found it impossible to be comfortable with using the computer and experienced a great deal of anxiety during the process.