MODERN TOOLS FOR MODERN MANAGEMENT - OFFICE EQUIPMENT

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To-day, we listen to speakers and read articles reminding us that we are in an electronic age and entering upon an era of fascinating developments. When we hear of these things, we immediately think of the electronic computer and perhaps rightly so because it is the heart of most electronic systems.

However, surrounding the computer and available generally are hundreds of machines and devices which prepare and transmit the input material of the computers and, similarly, receive and translate into readable form the output from the computer after processing. These go under the heading of "peripheral equipment" and are normally located at some distance from the computer, sometimes thousands of miles.

The next speaker is going to discuss in some depth the role of the electronic computer. It is my intention to talk about some of the peripheral equipment and also about other office machines which are keeping pace with electronic developments and are making their full contribution to advances in the office equipment industry.

I must transgress a little upon the subject of electronic computers to bring you two definitions that are essential to you if you are to understand properly my constant reference to the role of peripheral equipment.

Time Sharing - In brief, time sharing is the concept of connecting a computer complex by lines to several departments of one company or organization, regardless of their location, and of having the computer perform tasks simultaneously for these various customers. The computer, in this instance, is equipped with several channels. When a query is sent to a machine by wire, it fits into the programme in such a manner that the computer is able to return the answers without disturbing the other work it is doing.

Decisions in Real Time - When we speak about "real time" we refer to the ability of a computer to relay back to the client facts about a situation as it exists at the very moment in time that the query is made rather than at some cut-off point in the past. Examples of such information are accounts receivable balances,

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