Another market segment which should be considered as a potential client for PC software are the Argentine corporations which will be facing new competition from imports. The opening of the economy is now forcing industrial corporations to consider measures to trim production costs. Real time applications are envisioned as an area with great potential in aiding the corporations in this process. The niches which look to have the greatest growth potential are industrial plant automation, robotics, warehouse automation, telecommunications and SCADA. Intelligent buildings are said to be a too sophisticated technology at this time, but some firms, even so, are starting to research it after the Alto Palermo Shopping Mall, Buenos Aires' newest, incorporated this technology. It is estimated that a market for intelligent buildings will be opening up in two years. Additionally, banks are undergoing a brutal restructuring and real time applications are beginning to be introduced in this sector. From the point of view of joint ventures with foreign firms, the translation and editing of programs and user guides and the organization of distribution of software in Latin America are expected to increase markedly. The same applies to benchmark tests and beta tests.

An additional interesting business niche is finding a partner or comissioned agent that on top of undertaking the Spanish translation and editing of a software package would also be in charge of reproduction, packaging and distribution logistics for Latin America and Spain. Some corporations have started on this path and this type of operation is expected to increase in the next years.

b) The market for mainframes and minis

Abstract: Mainframe and Minis sales will grow in the private sector and be focused in communications and large database storage applications. But some government related business remains.

Opportunities for large data storage and interoperability are appearing in the newly privatized government corporations. Among the most important privatization areas are: public utilities (water supply, electricity generation and distribution, natural gas distribution); coal, oil and gas resources; railroads; cargo ships (including the government oil fleet); seaports; telephones; cellular phones; satellite communication, city sanitation systems; city parking control; city tax billing; provincial roads (the road system is converting to a toll road system); and a large number of firms belonging to the Defense Ministry, chemical and metal processing corporations that produce strategic materials. In addition, the Buenos Aires capital market has finally taken off, creating a desperate need for networking capabilities within the stock exchange, the commodities market, as well as money and currency markets, all of which are growing very fast.

Communications software opportunities will mainly come from the newly privatized mammoth government corporations. But, another segment which should not be overlooked are the businesses which are outside the capital area. Argentina, very much like Canada in some ways, has a large land area scarcely populated. The new market oriented economic organization is bound to produce more businesses in the outlying provinces. These businesses, in order to function, will need to maintain fluid contact, not only with Buenos Aires but also with clients around the world.

Software products aimed at specific industries, if focused on fast growing local industrial sectors, will be a good, solid niche for the next two years. The non-alcoholic beverages industry, the insurance industry, the oil industry, the petrochemical, the car industry and the domestic electronics assembling industry, are all expected to be best-sellers in 1992. Of the above mentioned sectors, the most important for their growth rate in software demand are the oil industry and the insurance industry. Both sectors were fully deregulated during 1991 and are growing very fast now and are expected to be among the list of very dynamic sectors for the coming decade. Project supervising software, particularly related to the construction industry, but also across the board, is also expected to be very popular.

V. Keys to Market Success

The Argentine computer market started to develop 10 to 15 years behind the USA market. As a result, user knowledge of software for the PC and mainframes has not matured in parallel with the gradual sophistication of the North American market. The opening of the market to the latest technology imports, therefore, makes training support for the client's employees a crucial item in the sales pitch. Firms are reluctant to buy older technology, because they feel they are being cheated. Yet, they face insurmountable difficulties with the new generation software because the computer culture is not there. Given this environment, software firms that have satisfactorily solved the technical and training support problems