

earlier; it may be because of resistance to change; or it may be because of poor organizational design.

These five reasons why systems fail apply to both large and personal computers. Many of the elements also apply to word processors.

#### A SPECIAL NOTE ON PERSONAL COMPUTERS

Personal computers require special consideration. On the one hand, they are relatively inexpensive and have all kinds of off the shelf software available. There are a growing number of people who are interested in computers who have personal computers at home. These employees often bring great enthusiasm and knowledge to office automation projects.

On the other hand, a significant number of personal computers that are purchased end up being too small for the proposed project; underutilized because the software was more difficult to use than was first imagined; or not used at all because the person who first wanted the machine is no longer there. Unfortunately for many organizations, the needs of systems have not been carefully thought out before equipment and software were purchased. Documentation of the system is often poor or non-existent. This is particularly critical when non-professionals start writing their own business application programs. The training of individuals to use such systems may also be handled in a rather casual fashion. Employees may even find themselves overwhelmed or intimidated by the knowledge and enthusiasm of others.

Personal Computers are a far too valuable resource to be avoided simply because there have been some problems with their use. They can be a boon to many organizations if the following guidelines are observed:

- 1) Determine your needs before acquiring software and equipment;
- 2) Follow departmental procedures and regulations in obtaining equipment and software (see Appendix A);
- 3) Document your system;
- 4) Provide adequate training and operating procedures.

#### HOW TO ENCOURAGE SUCCESS

Looking at failure may provide some valuable lessons, but looking at success can provide us with positive attitudes. In all high technology success stories there are two common themes. The first is that people are more important than machinery. The second is that the people who are going to be affected by the system should be involved in the introduction of