

PART I

THE HUMAN ASPECTS OF TECHNOLOGICAL CHANGE

BACKGROUND

More than other government departments External Affairs has been aware of and coped with change. It is a fact of our organizational existence that people are constantly coming and going. What has remained constant for many years was the work and how we did that work. Today that too is changing. Micro processors and the age of high technology have brought large computers, personal computers, word processors and advanced communication equipment into our lives. With them have sometimes come job anxiety and resistance to change. We can no longer think in terms of job permanence or final skill levels. Just as we would never willingly send an employee to a strange new post without briefing and preparation, we must never willingly introduce high technology without training and preparation. The following is a discussion of the human problems of the introduction of high technology together with a checklist of questions. Managers interested in introducing to their organization anything from an electronic typewriter to a large computer should read through this document and use the checklist. This method makes it possible to identify major human resource problem areas and start mapping out a more specific plan of action to provide an ordered way of introducing high technology. For the introduction of larger computer systems, Part II contains a more elaborate model for managing the introduction of personnel related changes.

WHY WE USE TECHNOLOGY

External Affairs is rapidly expanding its use of technology because this technology holds out the promise of increased productivity, lowered long range costs, and increased flexibility. Word processors or electronic typewriters can enable secretaries to make changes and redo drafts with minimum effort. Last minute changes to high priority memos do not have to result in overtime. Personal computers can provide assistance to local area applications such as inventories, statistics, schedules, etc. Larger systems are being introduced for immigration, finance and personnel programs. Machinery can be used to reduce the number of routine tasks to be performed; provide more time for other more challenging work; and enable employees to produce reports or analysis that were not previously possible.