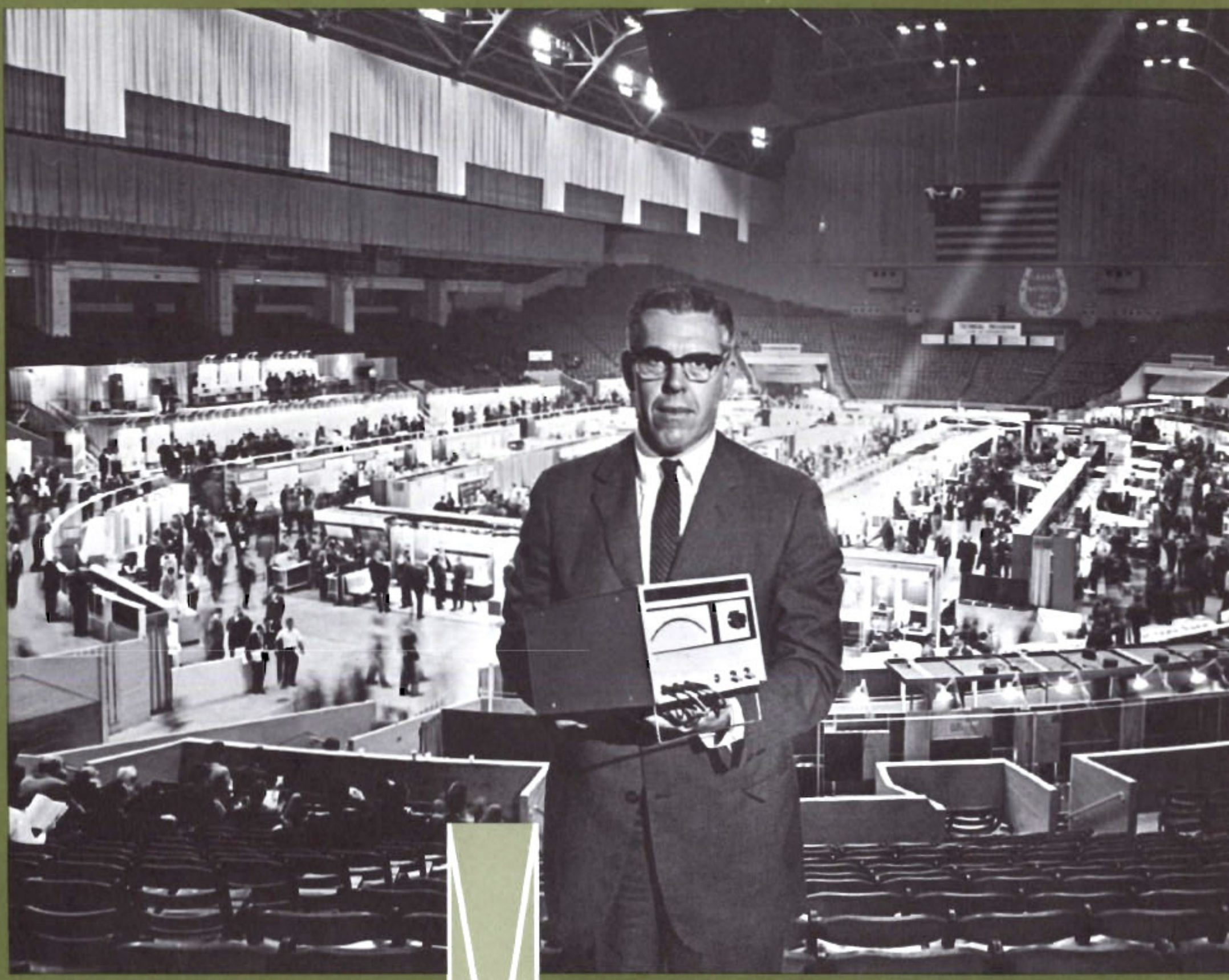
September 1965



Measure

In this issue

A product goes to market

STANDING BEFORE THE HEART of one of the nation's most important electronic trade shows (see cover), a Hewlett-Packard marketing executive holds the latest product of his division's cumulative, coordinated effort. If his expression is one of intense seriousness and determination, it is because the moment is one of great importance to himself, to his division, to his company.

□ To Marketing Manager Tom Kelley of Loveland—and to virtually everyone else in the division—the newborn product signifies the happy result of a year and a half of study, research, development, production engineering, market planning, and a multitude of other activities. Thousands of man hours, some fraught with frustration, preceded this moment in August when Kelley could say at Wescon that "we are ready. Our new volt/ohmmeter is the only one of its kind. It fills a need. It is available."

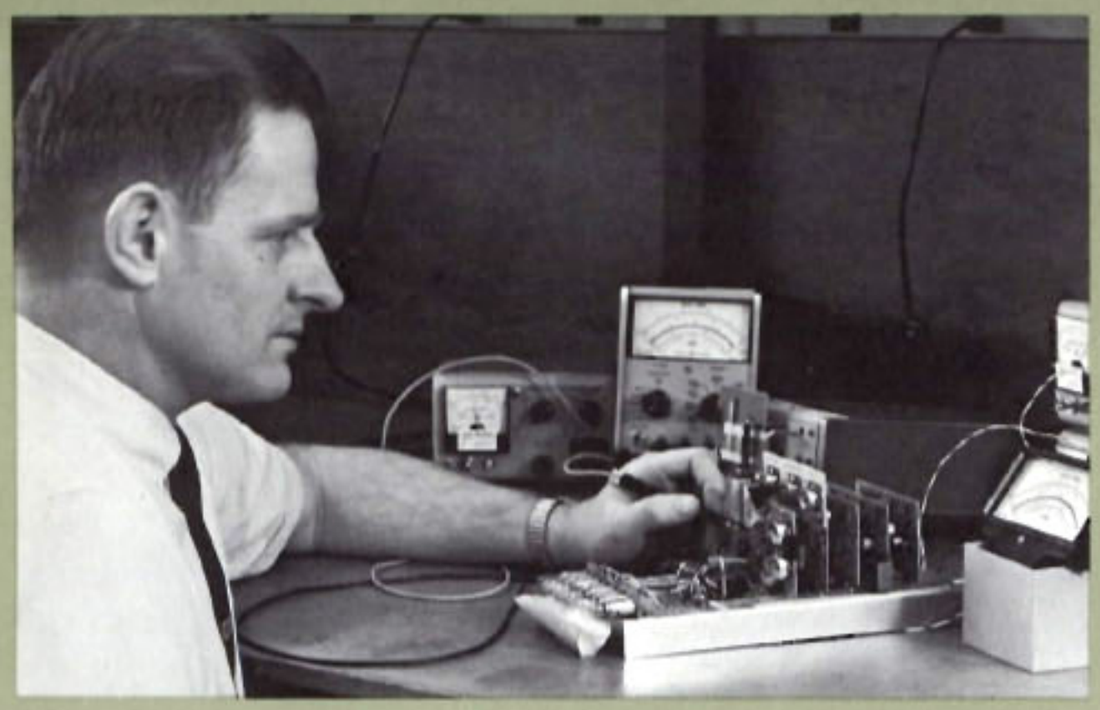
In many ways, the course Loveland's new product followed to the marketplace is typical of product introductions by other HP divisions. In many ways it serves as a model of intelligent planning, attention to detail, teamwork, and complete success in meeting target dates.

□ The story of how the 414A solid state volt/ohmmeter got to this year's Wescon in San Francisco as a marketable product goes back to the origin of the ideas which made the product possible. Marketing begins here because products must be created for a purpose, they must have sales potential. There can be no isolation between the people who create the product, the ones who produce it, and those who must plan and carry out its sale.

In a successful, profit-oriented company, the marketing man must ask many questions before large sums of money can be spent developing a new product, regardless of how much that product reflects inventive genius. In the case of the 414A, Loveland's marketing people asked if the instrument could be sold by HP's existing field sales organization. Would it be bought by the same types of customers already being called on—which minimizes sales costs—or would it require expanding the sales force with special personnel to deal with a new class of customers?

□ What about competition? Are there similar products on the market, and if so, does this new product offer important advantages? And how about applications? Are there enough real and potential uses for such a product to warrant the time, effort, and money to develop and produce it?

Timing of new product introductions is yet another vital consideration. If you are too far ahead of your market, there can be a long and expensive education job to acquaint customers with new measuring techniques. On the other hand if you are too late, customers may be "locked in" with other manufacturers. ▷



In a sense marketing starts when a product is little more than an idea. Is it practical, does it make a contribution, will it sell? Here, one of the pioneers of the new autovoltmeter, Don Schulz, checks an experimental circuit. He was project director for the Loveland product.

Product designer Jerry Blanz was vitally concerned with the 414A's mechanical design. Simplicity of construction, ease of maintenance, low cost, durability—these all bear importantly on a product's sale.

After it has been developed, the product is modified as necessary for mass production. Here Arlene Ireland is shown working in the assembly area.

Down the conveyor to the shipping area goes the first unit. Now the marketing people move in. They have been working hard for months to be ready for this moment.

(continued from page 3)

Furthermore, the question must be asked, does the instrument compete with other HP products? If so, would the resulting loss in the sale of those products be more than offset by the sale of the product-to-be?

☐ To find answers to all these questions about the proposed new volt/ohmmeter—with its solid state circuitry and autoranging features—Loveland market planners left no stones unturned. Customers were queried, the literature of the industry was researched, and page after page of statistical data was gathered from authoritative sources. When the returns were in, the course was clear. The 414A would serve a market suited to HP's selling organization. The product with its unique features would meet true state-of-the-art standards. There was nothing quite like it. It would be useful in a variety of production line and bench operations, fitting an area of applications not ideally served by conventional adjustable meters, on the one hand, or the expensive automatic data acquisition devices on the other.

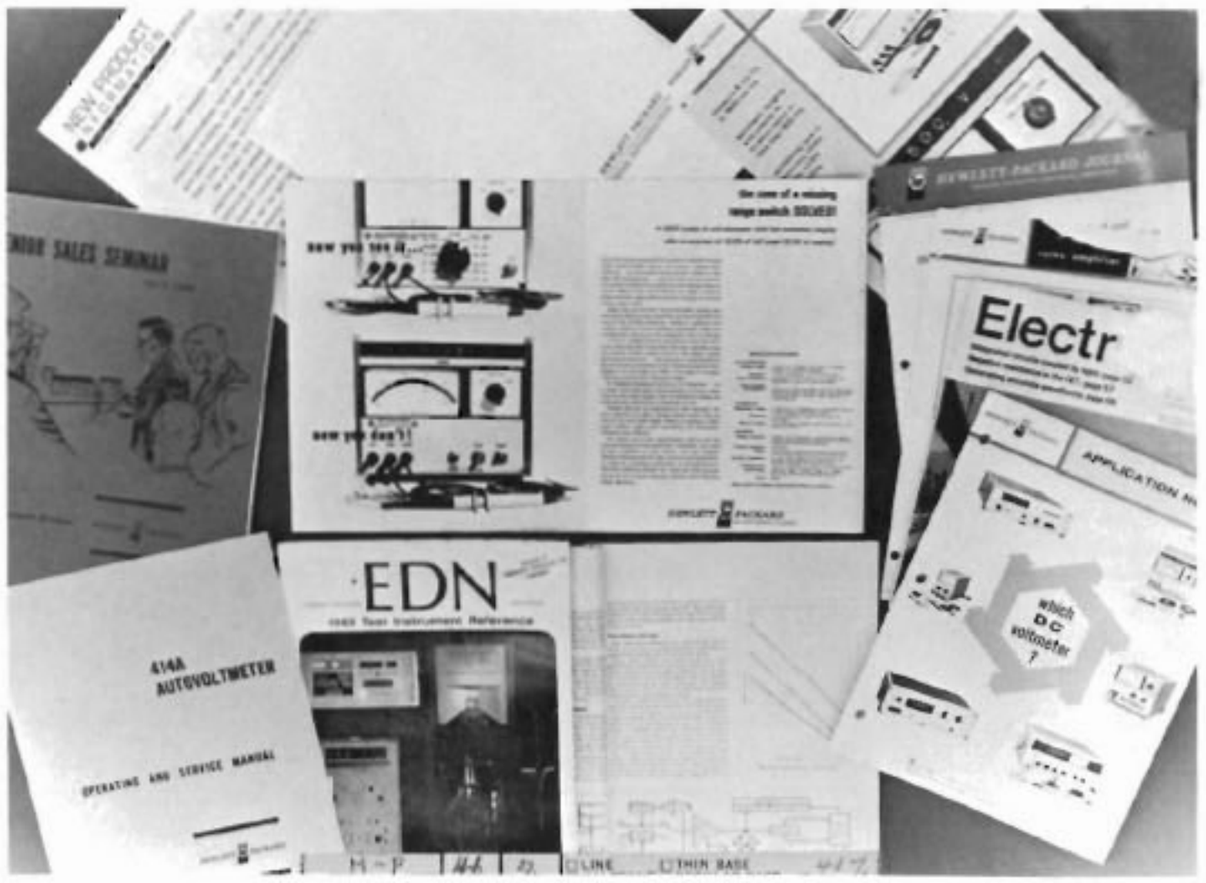
In other words, Loveland was on to something big. Engineering proceeded at top speed. Meantime, the marketing people set about to lay plans in great detail. One major problem with this, or any other product introduction for that matter, is to assure that all the steps involved happen at the right time. If an instrument is fully developed long before the manufacturing operation is ready, time is lost. If the marketers start their promotion and pull in orders before production can deliver, a less than desirable condition exists. So the key is that tired old expression—teamwork.

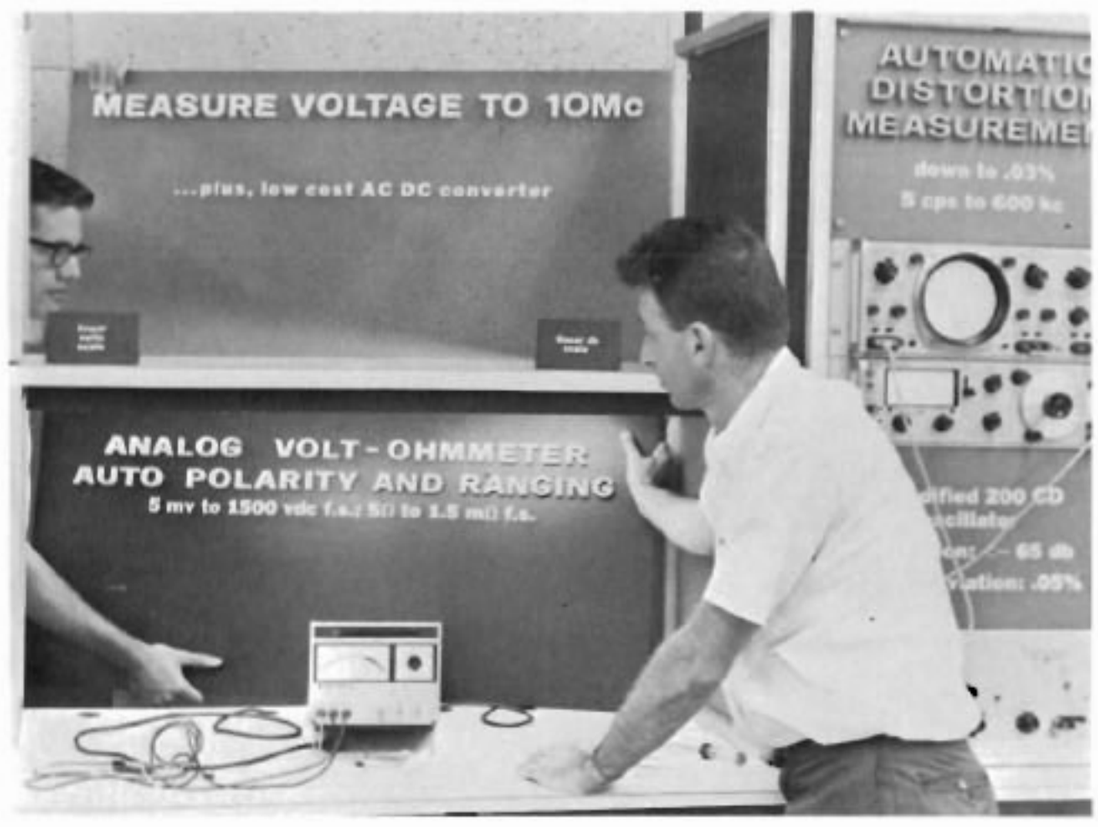
☐ The 414A is a state-of-the-art instrument, a proud thing for the company because it means it is a first. *Electronics* magazine has described it as the best solution yet against meter burnouts from pushing the wrong button or flipping the wrong switch. The 414A autoranging meter can't burn out, as *Electronics* correctly states "because it senses the voltage being measured and automatically switches to the right range within 300 milliseconds."

Nevertheless, as a state-of-the-art instrument, Loveland marketing people had to take special pains to see that the product got the best possible introduction, at the best possible time, to a vast range of customers. The pictures on these pages show how the 414A went to market. ◁

Long before the first instrument rolls off the production line, artists, writers, and promotion specialists are busy planning and creating printed materials which will explain and help sell the new product. Artist Allan Howe (seated) and Art Director Jerry Farm discuss ideas for the best ways to present the 414A graphically.

Great variety of literature, advertising, and publicity must be created. Brochures often take months to produce, ads and magazine features must be placed well in advance in order to coincide with product introduction date.





Decision was made to unveil 414A at Wescon in August. Here Roger Davisson and Peter Kertesz (right) apply finishing touches to Loveland display booth before shipping ten days in advance of show.

Before they can tell customers all about the new state-of-the-art instrument, field engineers must study it themselves. Dick Jablonski conducted a seminar last February for field engineers, several of whom attended the Wescon introduction.

Excellent opportunity for full technical discussion of instrument with potential customers is provided by Wescon technical sessions. Don Schulz presented a paper before a large audience of scientists and engineers.

Jim Kistler (left), design engineer on the 414A project, shares his deep knowledge of the product's technology with a booth visitor.

Hundreds, perhaps thousands, of customers have seen the product in action at the booth. For Loveland marketing men, and HP sales people everywhere, it's a thing of beauty to see a prospective buyer fill out the card saying he is interested and wants to know more. The product has gone to market.