

HP History as Viewed From the Field

-- Mike Needham, for HP Years: 1979-2012



Foreword

Mr. Field Sales Manager—Mike Needham

Watching from my 37 year HP career, in factory marketing, I was always fascinated by the personalities and performances of the field sales force. We would see these individuals in action when we flew out to help with sales pitches, or on the floor of trade shows and seminars, and in their factory visits when there was great camaraderie and more than just a touch of region to region competitiveness.

Our field sales culture derived from 13 independent rep companies in 1960. Personalities ranged from charming good-old-boys in parts of the South, to the technically demanding men calling on the PhD geniuses at Bell Telephone Labs, to the lookalike engineer rookies at Neely Sales, who looked like military 2nd Lieutenants, with their crewcuts, called in from Central Casting. I also remember that we factory folks also viewed Neely's hiring for administrative staff as being the rejects from the Universal Movie Studios one mile up the street. The rep companies came with a certain undercurrent of misogyny.

Professional Sales management came with the HP acquisition of those rep companies, putting the strategies and operations all under the control of the man who hired me in the midst of the 1958 recession, Noel Eldred. Noel's primary marketing slogan was borrowed from someone, "Nothing happens until someone sells something!" With a sale, and upon the delivery, that becomes revenue, which pays all our wages, pays for more parts, more design engineering, more assembly labor, and a thriving company that takes over the world.

Over the years, as I traveled to visit customers with the local Field Engineer, to consult on technical aspects of microwave instrumentation, I observed truly creative selling going on. You could tell instantly that there was heartfelt rapport with their customers. Of course it helped to be selling HP products which were top of the line. No customer could ever be faulted for a bad purchase decision if it was HP. Especially on big deals that might involve support test gear that would be deployed with, for example, a radar system. Our global backup for distributed systems was a confidence builder for a manager tasked with purchase decisions for support and maintenance.

My memories are full. On one trip with an FE in New York, we were stopping at a customer's plant to pick up a loaner oscilloscope, and the customer told us he had decided to buy Tek. My FE simply said that such a decision means he would not get his commission. Since that FE had really aided that customer over months with other loaners for special tests, he told us on the spot, "OK, I'll buy yours."

At the reception desk of an aerospace company in Wisconsin, the FE I accompanied asked if he could use the phone. I was puzzled when he had himself paged. Once the paging announcement came, customers began showing up to the lobby, to consult technically, to negotiate price and delivery, and such. Afterward, I was pretty harsh on the FE, but he pointed out that the company had just received a HUGE airborne radar contract and so many design engineers needed to talk with HP, that his time could be best distributed by making sure he didn't have to go through the security rules which would require accompanied walks if he went to each customer desk, one at a time.

I called once at the NASA Center at Houston. In meeting our customer, I quickly realized it was the first time I ever experienced a person with Tourette's Syndrome. His behavior was most difficult for normal discussion, and ours was complex/technical. I was stunned to watch my FE deal with this impediment in the most sensitive and charitable manner, patient, empathetic, effective. As we walked to the parking lot, I found out that this particular customer engineer was in the genius range, and was a key specifier for a large quantity buy. I was so impressed with the adaptation of that FE.

As a marketing neophyte myself, I could watch and learn Human Relations 101 from FE veterans. Technical people, as we know, are not particularly good at interpersonal signs that are important in negotiating a sales decision, whether for one product or a whole shopping list. In the 1950-60s, before HP marketing had settled on the training program called, *Managing Interpersonal Relations*, the field force relied on intuitive sales personalities, and on-the-job observations of successful senior FEs. Some regions like Neely had developed a variation of a written personality test which was customized by compiling the answers from their most successful FEs, and using that as a filter for new hires. By that time I was Microwave Division Marketing Manager, and I determined that I needed to take the test myself. I flew down to LA, to the psychiatry offices of a Dr. Bob Reveal (I kid you not.). After I finished, his admin graded my answers, ushered me into the Dr. Bob's office, and he proceeded to lay out my whole personality like an open book. At that point I realized that you could indeed pick out personalities which would be winning sales candidates.

Over the years, I received a few offers to come to the field, but having seen the types of good FEs, I knew that such a life would be a serious frustration for my personality. Those men and women must face their mirror every morning, and command, "Let's go get 'em tiger," and they have nothing but my sincere admiration.

Mike's memoir reveals all those things. It's not the story of the stage show, *Death of a Salesman*, or the anvil salesman of *76 Trombones*. But it is an army of dedicated people who know their crucial role in the success of any company. To that end, I once wrote a monograph for the HP Employee Newsletter, *Measure*, during an economic downturn, which Mike has agreed to append to his memoir as Appendix 1. In it, I call for all factory employees, from finance working on field expense accounts to the shipping teams, to cut the bureaucracy and help the FEs get orders.

I found that the real value of Mike's story is an inside view of Enterprise selling. When you are working with the Ford top management to envision an employee benefit of furnishing home Internet connections for tens of thousands of employee families using PCs and printers, that beats calling on a design engineer to sell one signal generator. Mike often called in HP top management to help seal the deal. One aspect of that was the fact that HP was already using in its own global operations the latest in IT data handling, which entailed systems that tracked everything from internal email in 1974, to the order processing to parts procurement to production scheduling, shipment, invoicing and receiving the customer check. HP was internally demonstrating these innovative systems. Then, when you bring in CEO John Young to explain all that, your sales pitch just escalated to an order with a big commission.

Mike also connected with HP's top leaders during some VERY complex corporate transitions. From Young to Platt to Fiorina to Hurd, and during major acquisitions like Compaq and others, these all had significant impacts on field management and strategies. We see these unique personalities thread through his life and career.

--John Minck

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Pre-HP

Since I'm not an engineer, my path to Hewlett-Packard wasn't a traditional one. It's not because I didn't want to be an engineer or didn't try to be an engineer, but because life got in the way. I grew up in northern Indiana, the third child of two educators. Thanks to a lot of time spent on my backyard court, in local parks and gyms, and with a big assist from my God-given height (I am 6'8" tall), I managed to gain an athletic scholarship to Purdue to play basketball. After three semesters studying electrical engineering, I determined that major college athletics, singing in the Purdue Glee Club and being an electrical engineering student wasn't going to work. My grades were still more than acceptable, but I feared graduating without having really learned anything. I spoke with my academic counselor, who advised me to stick it out in engineering and then follow it up with a Master of Science in Industrial Administration, which he called the "Cadillac plan." I told him I was willing to accept the "Buick plan," changed my major to Industrial Management, made EE my minor and went on my way.

Author's disclaimer: This 'history' is written from my perspective and using my memories. Any errors, mischaracterizations, etc. are unintentional and not meant to do any harm. MRN 23Mar18

Beginning in the fall of 1978 (my senior year) I doggedly pursued employment through the Purdue Placement Office. In those days, you signed up for interviews on a schedule that was released at 8am on a specified date a couple of weeks prior to the interview date. To make sure you got on the schedule for a desirable company (i.e. IBM, Procter and Gamble, Exxon, HP) you often needed to spend much of the night on the terrazzo floors of Purdue's Stewart Center to make sure you were among the first to sign up. I can't believe I did it, but often that fall, after a basketball practice, and/or a Glee Club show, I'd go to my dorm and change clothes and then sleep outside the placement office to sign up for an interview.

I secured an interview with HP, but the only jobs for which they were interviewing were in the divisions. I had decided I wanted a job in sales – specifically technical sales if possible. I had a great interview with a representative of Data Terminals Division and told him what I wanted to do. He followed up with a typed list of the names and addresses of the District Sales Managers in the computer group of the Midwest Sales Region. My girlfriend (now wife of 38+ years) and I typed individual cover letters to each of the dozen or so DSMs and put them in the mail along with my resume. As it turns out, this happened just prior to a regional sales meeting for these managers. They all showed up with the same cover letter and resume. (One DM, Tom Bills from Indianapolis, had immediately turned me down in a reply letter.) Luckily for me, Al Criss of Farmington Hills (Detroit) was a big enough basketball fan to invite me for an interview.



My resume picture.
Were we ever so young?.

Getting an offer

I flew from Purdue Airport to Detroit with a short stop in Fort Wayne. I met Al at the HP office and spent time with him and three sales representatives. Then it was back to the airport and back to Purdue. Just a few days later, Purdue played the University of Michigan at Crisler Arena in Ann Arbor. I got in touch with Al and invited him to the game with my "player's tickets" (they're good seats!). We won the game, and better yet, in the stands after the game Al made me an offer to join HP in Detroit. I felt like I'd made my first sale.

I had other offers out of college, but none that intrigued me like the HP offer. It wasn't the best financial offer (Exxon had that distinction), and it wasn't the most attractive location (York Division of Borg Warner in Alexandria, Virginia sounded better than Detroit). But it beat out Procter and Gamble (I felt like computers seemed a little more interesting than a new shatterproof Scope bottle). I took the HP offer and started on May 29, 1979 as a "Staff Engineer."

Starting with HP in Detroit

The computer group of HP in the Midwest Sales Region had never hired an inexperienced sales trainee before. Up until then, Sales Force 02 had been able to meet their hiring needs by luring experienced representatives, primarily from Burroughs, who had a reputation for excellent sales training and an equal reputation for underpaying their sales people. So, when I joined HP, there was no program of training for me. I was put at a desk, given a bunch of sales literature and manuals to read, told to "tag along" with sales reps any time they'd let me go on a sales call with them, and generally "learn by watching." Along the way, I was able to see what worked for some that might work for me and I began to build my own sales style.

I also was assigned to re-organize the sales literature (it was a train wreck), do an audit of consignment equipment (it was in worse shape than the sales literature), implement our participation in a trade show and become the expert on how to use a 2647A terminal with Multiplot software and 9872A plotter to create slides. I must have done 30 demonstrations around metro-Detroit. Customers were amazed at seeing the plotter create pie charts, bar charts and even simple text slides in multiple colors. Equally impressive was the fact that the plotter pens were automatically recapped after each use. I helped sell quite a few of the systems in the summer and fall of 1979.

My first territory

In February, 1980 I was promoted to Field Engineer and was assigned a territory. Up until about 6 weeks before I got my assignment, I had been targeted for the Ford Motor account, but at the last minute I was sent to the General Motors team. I was given an assignment that included a few divisions of GM, the list of a very few contacts (I now understand why I was given the territory!) and told to "go forth and sell." I made a million mistakes, didn't sell very much, but I had a low enough quota that I made my number for the last 9 months of the year. And, I got hooked into a few opportunities that would help me achieve success in FY81 and beyond.



Heidi and me, July, 1979, when our future was in the hands of HP.



HP 2647A Computer Terminal



HP 9872A Plotter. This was the period in industrial product design where hundreds of drafting tables were being replaced by pen plotters and computer assisted design software.

A glimpse of a leader

As part of the GM team, I helped plan an executive breakfast that featured a presentation by John Young, President of HP. The whole team worked on the event, which was planned at a hotel in Warren, Michigan (convenient for GM) on a Wednesday morning starting at 7 am (since GM was an early starting company). Signups were very slow with just a few days to go before the event and I recall being told to ask my "technical" customers to get out their best suit and show up. We didn't want John Young to be talking to an empty room. In the end, we had a good turnout, John was great and we built some momentum for our sales efforts.

I did get a glimpse of John Young in action at the breakfast. We had decided to have him speak right at 7 am rather than having him talk while people were eating. He talked for 30 minutes and then joined the table where I was sitting (I don't recall why we didn't plan this better). Well, one of my customers was there with me, but he'd been delayed and had missed John's introduction and presentation. In an effort to make small talk, he asked John what his role was at HP. I couldn't spit out my coffee fast enough to jump in and explain. John simply smiled and replied that he had a leadership assignment with HP.

The HP Way in Detroit

Our sales office in Farmington Hills, Michigan had about 120 employees in 1979. Even though the employees were spread across all of HP's sales and services groups, I felt like I knew just about everyone within a few weeks of starting. There were two 'break rooms' in the office where the omnipresent donuts, fruit, coffee, tea, and soda pop were always available. Smoking was allowed throughout the office (the so-called "smokeless" ashtrays were soon to arrive) and there was almost always some conversation to be joined. I learned a lot about the various businesses of HP, including seeing how the Customer Engineers did repair work (at this time, they actually did some bench repairs in the field offices, which I found fascinating). I even found myself assisting the administrative team by troubleshooting early versions of the internally developed quote printing systems.

When I started, quotes were produced by administrative assistants who typed product descriptions and pricing from microfiche to multipart forms (with carbon paper between sheets). Any error would result in a great deal of rework, so the best administrators left a little space at the bottom of each page so they could insert a missed item without having to type every following page over. It seems very primitive now.

There was a family feel to the office, reinforced by industrial league sports (softball in the summer, basketball in the winter) and after work events like volleyball. And, there was the annual company picnic. Funded exclusively by HP, these were great events that attracted strong participation by employees and their families. I got to know spouses and children of co-workers and got to watch the kids grow up. We developed a real sense of belonging.

The first big change

When I started, there was a separate sales team (Sales Force 06 for you history buffs) that sold our desktop computer line (which was primarily produced by HP Fort Collins). We even had a small group of people who only sold Data Terminals Division products. Well, at some point in the early 1980s, leadership determined that having multiple sales forces calling on a customer was inherently inefficient. Therefore, SF02 (the "computer group") and SF06 (the "desktop group") would merge. There was open disdain for this move, particularly (it seemed to me) from the desktop folks. Over the next 30+ years we would all see how minor this particular change was compared to many changes we would face. Nevertheless, it was my first look at how individuals in the field could take tactical steps to undermine

what may well have been the right strategic move for the company. It wasn't open rebellion, but little things that – when added altogether – made it more difficult for the blending of the two sales teams to work.

An internal selling challenge

At some point in 1982, one of my customers in GM decided that computers from multiple vendors needed to talk to one another and not be limited by proprietary networks. Out of this seemingly simple concept was born the Manufacturing Automation Protocol, or MAP. It followed an International Standards Organization (ISO) Open Systems Interconnect (OSI) model. The challenge was to get GM's leading providers (at this point IBM, DEC, and HP) to play along, despite each having their own proprietary network environments. As a sales representative, this all made sense to me, but I had to sell the idea to HP internally. I learned that I could apply my selling skills internally as well as externally. What I didn't know was that the GM customer was continually lying to me about the compliance of my two major competitors. You see, he told DEC that IBM and HP were signed up. He told IBM that DEC and HP were signed up. And, he told me that IBM and DEC were signed up. None of this was true, but it wasn't until we were all in line with the task that we learned that. Another lesson was learned. It isn't only sales people who stretch the truth to accomplish their goals.

Two interactions with Dave

I was in California for a meeting about MAP and had a couple of hours to kill. I was in the lower level of Building 3, so I thought I'd wander upstairs and see if Bill or Dave were around. (I'd walked by the offices when I was in Corporate Neophyte but not gone inside.) Dave's secretary told me he wasn't in, so I should feel free to look around his office. I was looking around, looking at various certificates on the walls and admiring the garden view outside the office when I heard someone say, "Can I help you?" You see, Dave had arrived, his assistant had stepped away, and he found me roaming his office. I explained quickly, introduced myself, shook his hand, and got out of there before I further embarrassed myself. A few months later, I had occasion to call Dave regarding a significant opportunity at GM. As I had discovered, while Deputy Secretary of Defense, Dave had worked with Robert Frosch, Director of GM Research, on some programs at NASA. I felt I needed to reach Dr. Frosch to save a deal for HP. Imagine my shock when I dialed Dave's phone number and he answered on the first ring. I explained the situation. I needed to enlist Dr. Frosch's influence to stop a choice of Digital for a big deal in GM Research and Dr. Frosch was on a fly fishing trip.

Dave listened patiently and explained he knew exactly where Dr. Frosch was and that he knew how to reach him. However, he told me he would not contact "Bob" since he was on vacation. I was on my own. Exasperated, I thanked Dave for his help and hung up the phone. I learned a lesson about work/life balance from a great leader that day. Oh, and we lost the deal to DEC, despite having the soon-to-be-announced 9845C, which was almost exactly what GM Research had described in their RFQ.

My first promotion

By the end of FY83, I had experienced a reasonable amount of success as a sales representative. I'd won some fairly significant opportunities, had managed customer satisfaction, and I'd developed some pretty good relationships both with my customers inside GM and with the HP resources I needed to be successful. I had my tenth high school reunion coming up and I didn't want to be just a "sales representative." (By the way, by this time HP Field Engineers had been "re-named" as Sales Representatives. This was a better title and as I understood at the time, was driven by a regulation in Texas where a group of Professional Engineers protested that HP was calling their representatives Field Engineers when many of them were not engineers at all. I do recall that some of the people who were, in

fact, professional engineers sought to retain the FE designation, but I believe we all became Sales Representatives. Some simply added P.E. after their name to address their personal achievement.)

I pursued and secured the position of Field Marketing Manager for the East Area of the Midwest Sales Region. In my role, I was responsible for local marketing activity in three states as well as hiring and development of new sales representatives. I was excited to learn new things, to interact with the management team of the area, to select new HP employees and to help train them in the "HP Way." What I learned was that the HP field sales organization really didn't know what to make of staff jobs. As one leader told me (unfortunately, after I had accepted the Field Marketing role), "Every time you get a job, make sure you have both people (reporting to you) and quota. If you can't have both, choose quota." The lesson here was the only thing that really mattered in the field organization was making the numbers. Lesson learned.

Organizational changes

While I was the Field Marketing Manager, HP leadership decided to merge SF01 (the instrument group) and SF02 (the computer group). Looking back, this organizational change made the least sense to me of all the changes we made over the years. I recall some of the District Sales Managers in the area going for training on oscilloscopes and spectrum analyzers and returning with nothing but glazed looks on their faces. In retrospect, there were probably no more than a handful of sales situations each year in our area that required close collaboration between SF01 and SF02 and those could have been addressed on a one-off basis without an organization change. Eventually, this change, like many before and after it, would be un-done.

In this same timeframe, there were sales alignment adjustments being made. For the first time in my career, discussions about geography assignments versus account assignments versus vertical market assignments were being held in conference rooms across the country. Each fiscal year brought changes in the organization chart. Over the course of time, we oscillated between vertical markets, account-based territories, geographic sub-specialties and the like. It was almost as if we couldn't stick with anything long enough to really work out the kinks, and we'd forget in 3 to 4 years what was wrong with the old structure. Despite all these changes and constant organizational churn, sales growth was very strong.

Another interaction with John Young

In my Field Marketing role, I also was given an occasional one-off task. One year, I was assigned to select the awards for our over quota sales team members. Funding was lacking for awards, so I came up with an idea that I "sold" to local management. I ghost-wrote individually personalized thank you letters for over target achievement from John Young, HP President and CEO, and had his assistant type them up on his executive stationery. After the letters were produced and signed individually by John, I'd have them FedEx'd to Detroit where I'd have them "struck" on a metal plaque which was then mounted on a walnut base. Sales management would present the plaques and the original letters to the award recipients at our annual awards ceremony.

The hole in my plan was that I had to wait until the end of the fiscal year to finalize and customize the memos. And, I had to work closely with John Young's assistant to get the work done in the first few days of the new fiscal year. As I recall, we had set up the awards event prior to Thanksgiving, so I was on a tight timeline. I hated to pester John's assistant Nancy, but I got to the end of my timeline and had to call to check on status. I dialed her number, not really noticing that it was about 3 pm in Detroit, which made it around noon in Palo Alto. I was shocked when I heard, "Nancy's phone, John Young speaking." Looking back, I shouldn't have been surprised, but I was. I recall saying, "You've got to be kidding me. You answer Nancy's phone?" John replied that she was away, and someone had to answer the phone. He

told me he was signing the letters for me right then and he would make sure that Nancy got them on their way to me that afternoon. Unbelievable.

My first sales management role

In late 1988 I pursued a District Sales Manager role in Detroit. Within 6 months after I had my assignment, HP announced we were buying Apollo Computer. This meant that my role would change, since there was an Apollo manager in Detroit and our organization would have to include him and his team. Since I was the newest DSM in the area, my adjusted new assignment was the least attractive, had the most travel, and included some very dissatisfied customers. I had people in 5 offices in 3 states. As a new sales leader, I learned a great deal about managing sales people, particularly some who had far more selling experience than I did. In addition, I observed firsthand how closely assignment was correlated to opportunity for success. I also got the chance to meet Bill Hewlett.

A very random meeting with Bill

The year was 1988. The location was 'Pueblo Plaza' (now named Plaza de César Chávez) right out in front of the Fairmont Hotel, in downtown San Jose. The "Technical Computer Group" sales team was having our annual kickoff meeting. Probably due to size limitations, or perhaps so we could cover for each other, half of the field team was in San Jose one week while the other half attended week two. I happened to be in the second wave. On Thursday night, there was a closing banquet that included entertainment by Cab Calloway (the "Hi De Ho" man) and his band.

Unfortunately, the main ballroom(s) of the Fairmont Hotel were previously booked by the local Junior Achievement organization for their annual awards event. The staff of the Fairmont set up huge tents in the plaza to accommodate the HP banquet, which probably included 350 or so attendees. As we crossed the street from the hotel to the tents, hotel staffers held umbrellas for us to shield us from the light sprinkles. As the evening wore on, the sprinkles became a strong storm. Eventually, the rain came in buckets. There were "rivers of mud" running through the tents. Lucky for me, one of my Sales Reps, being aware of the weather forecast, had chosen a piece of high ground for our table. Not everyone was so lucky.

As the evening wore on, the tuxedoed wait staff got more and more covered with mud. The HP attendees took charge and moved tables to the highest ground, avoiding the edges where rainwater was pouring in due to the inevitable leaks. As Cab Calloway and his band started to play, I was concerned that the electric guitarist might be killed since water was dripping on his amplifier. I got up to use the rest room and saw that the "porta johns" were about 50 yards away. It was dark and I'm a golfer, so I figured I'd take advantage of the situation and relieve myself behind a couple of bushes in the plaza. No need to get soaked and muddy just to use a "porta john."

I had just finished my business when I turned around to go into the tent when I saw a familiar face approach the tent under an umbrella. It was Bill Hewlett! Thinking quickly, I used a stream of water running off the awning of the tent to rapidly wash my hands and then I greeted Bill. I hadn't ever met him, and I wanted to. He smiled and told me that it sounded like we were having more fun outside than the JA crew was having inside (he and Dave had always been strong supporters of Junior Achievement). He took to the stage, said a few nice words to us, and then he was off.

The HP "Family" starts to come apart in the field

I'll use HP Indianapolis as my example, even though I'm certain there would be other similar examples. When I joined HP in 1979, the Indianapolis office probably had about 10-12 sales representatives in the not-yet-combined SF02 and SF06 structure. As I recall, these reps worked for two District Managers.

Just 10 years later, the number of sales reps in the "combined" organization probably was about 35. But now, there were about 10 to 12 District Managers leading those 35 Sales Reps. Why? Nobody in their right mind would design such an organization.

Here's how it happened: two reps were on the GM account – they worked for the GM team out of Detroit. One rep was in the Education market – she worked for a DM out of Pittsburgh; two reps were in Pharmaceuticals – they worked for a DM out of New Jersey; I had two reps in non-GM, non-Ford Automotive accounts – I was based in Detroit; and so on. I think you get the idea. There was no belonging to anything in Indianapolis. Sales Representatives were literally individual contractors. Anytime someone had to be away (i.e. vacation, maternity leave, extended illness) the backfill had to come from another city unless something could be worked out. If there was attrition, it was difficult to quickly cover opportunities since the organization was so fragmented. Had we stepped away and looked at the big picture, I'm confident we could have come up with something that would have been far more efficient, but I don't recall it ever happening. It was sad to see the results.

A time like no other

Unless you were in Las Vegas in March of 1991, you didn't experience what was probably the most exhilarating HP product introduction in history. At introduction, the HP9000 720 and 730 workstations (Snakes) were so much more powerful and so much less expensive than our competition that the only question I ask looking back is, "Why couldn't we have put Sun out of business altogether before they could come close to us?" We couldn't respond to meeting requests fast enough. The factories were – amazingly – able to keep up with demand and keep shipment lead times reasonable, but I'm sure we left some deals 'on the table' because we couldn't keep up with the opportunities. I can honestly say that this was the only time in 33 years where HP had absolute, unchallenged product superiority. It was very fun while it lasted. I only wish now that I had been aware enough of the situation and cognizant of how rare it was to enjoy it even more.



I don't recall much of significance about 1992 or 1993, except that in 1992 we bought the assets of TI Computers. This helped our Ford team since TI was established as a supplier for some parts systems, but I had the Chrysler assignment, and there was nothing there for TI. Another blue bird had landed outside my territory. But enough whining.....

A Global Account Manager's job

In 1993, I was getting antsy about wanting another job. The natural moves were either Area Sales Manager or Global Account Manager. It didn't look like any ASM jobs were to be open soon, so I contacted the head of HP Global Accounts and expressed my willingness to relocate for a GAM job. A few weeks later, he asked if my willingness to relocate included Peoria, IL I said yes, and soon I was the GAM for Caterpillar.

At the time, Caterpillar was the only HP Global Account headquartered in a city where HP did not have a sales office. Because HP required managers to have an office (to support the HP Open Door policy) I had

a cubicle in the HP office in Bloomington, IL (about an hour from Peoria). I never used the office cubicle. Instead, I worked out of my home, even hosting small meetings in my basement office. I look back (mostly) fondly at my time covering Caterpillar. I learned how to get things done around the world of HP.

I traveled frequently – both in the US and internationally. I soon grew tired of fighting political battles with local sales management in Europe and Asia but found that if I could convince them that selling to Caterpillar locally would benefit their country, they'd join me in the effort. Finally, I learned that being a "Global" anything was quickly discounted by HP personnel around the world. You had to earn local respect by providing something of value. Despite some significant personnel changes in my three year stint at CAT, we grew business steadily.

It was during my time assigned to CAT that I worked with Lew Platt on a couple of programs. One encounter with Lew came during an executive seminar hosted at the Cambridge Technology Group. Lew took part in the session and after the day ended, he invited the CAT CIO and me to join him for a few drinks. We weren't the only ones there, but it was a unique time for my customer and me to interact with Lew and hear about the problems he was facing. Lew talked amazingly openly about the breadth and depth of what he was involved in. Looking back, I should have seen the Agilent move coming.

Back to Detroit

Even though we'd grown our business with CAT, the amount of annual revenues needed to justify a GAM role was growing even faster. I could see that I would be asked to take on a second account to stay in my job. I targeted John Deere, but the Caterpillar CIO killed that idea, thinking that he didn't want me sharing information with a competitor. The next idea was Honeywell. They were based in Minneapolis, and there were daily flights from Peoria to MSP. I wasn't too fond of the idea, since I had a family that I missed when I traveled for business. I didn't want to be at the HQ of my assigned account and be on the road. Therefore, I felt like it was my lucky day when – on the exact same day - both the GM and Ford GAM jobs became available.

Why was I so optimistic about getting one of those jobs? Well, I still knew the leadership team as well as the Detroit-based sales management people. And, I knew that if the jobs had been in Denver, or Atlanta, or Chicago they would attract 40 or more applicants. But this was Detroit. Then, as now, it wasn't seen as a desirable place to live. In all, I think there were 6 applicants for the 2 jobs, one of whom told me he had no real interest in the job but felt he should apply for the sake of appearances. I was selected for the Ford GAM job and experienced my second HP move. The first was from Detroit to Peoria. The second was from Peoria to Detroit.

The Ford account had long been a very good source of business for HP. I inherited a significant annual business, an experienced team, and some good relationships. But, alas, there were issues on the horizon. Shortly after I took the assignment, Ford announced that they would be severing their HP ties relative to service bay systems, which had provided a large revenue stream for several years. Additionally, Ford was beginning to select "standard systems" for multiple functions and HP wasn't the chosen standard for much of anything. It was time to find some new opportunities.

Because HP had been involved with managing Ford's Internet Protocol (IP) networks for several years, we started discussions on expanding our services role with Ford. Out of this effort came some long term services deals for us. We had lots going on and we were dealing with virtually every part of HP in every location of Ford around the globe.

A first meeting with Carly

As part of a tour to introduce Carly Fiorina as the new head of HP, we hosted a session at Ford HQ in Dearborn. The HP executives who took part in the meeting were Lew Platt, Ann Livermore (the Account Assigned Executive for Ford) and Carly Fiorina. We met with Bill Ford, Jr. and Jacques Nasser. In addition, I managed to arrange an HP-internal session on the 7th floor of Ford HQ for my team. It was our first exposure to Carly and she didn't disappoint. Looking back, this must have been a very difficult time for Ann Livermore, with whom I worked virtually my whole career at HP. Ann was an outstanding leader and mentor for me through some difficult situations. I valued her counsel and support. However, Carly wowed the HP and Ford people with whom she met. She lit up the room when she entered. I remember numerous team members thanking me for setting up the session.

The Ford Model E Program

In late 1999, I was in a training class in Chicago. The instructor was talking about how to uncover and win large deals. During the class, I was handed an urgent note from a Ford customer. "What price would you give me for 350,000 PCs and printers?" I told the instructor that I thought I needed to follow up on a huge opportunity. In the same class, I recall an example that involved how women sort their shoes: "A woman has her black shoes, her tan shoes, her brown shoes, but over there, on a special shelf, she has her Italian shoes. When you're looking for the extraordinary, look for the Italian shoes!" This would prove helpful to me in very short order.

I couldn't convince HP leadership that we had any chance of winning the deal. In addition, the bid was due on January 3, 2000. Everyone was busy worrying about the Y2K crisis (which largely was much ado about nothing. I even spent a good part of New Year's Eve in the Ford Data Center waiting for something to happen. Nothing did.) Back to the PC opportunity. I did manage to secure the assistance of two people: John Bernardino and James Bailey. Working remotely from each other over the Christmas/New Year's holiday, the three of us managed to "cobble together" an HP bid. My 16 year-old daughter and I printed, three-hole punched, and assembled the HP binders in the Dearborn office on January 2nd and dropped off the box at Ford purchasing on Sunday night.

Back to the Italian shoes

Later that week, at the Ford bidder's meeting, the companies represented were Dell (the incumbent provider in Ford), Compaq, Gateway, IBM, HP and PeoplePC. It was clear to me that PeoplePC was the "Italian shoes." I left the bid review meeting and began reading up on PeoplePC. In early discussions I appreciated what they were trying to do, but frankly I didn't get it. They openly mocked HP because we were so focused on making unit profits on our products and services. They were convinced they would win in the long term through advertising on their internet connection and through cross-selling of discounted products. We determined that Ford was going to do business with them (otherwise, why would they be in the bidder's meeting?) and so we signed them as a PC/printer customer for the Ford deal.

I can still see the surprised looks on the faces of the Ford people when, a couple weeks later, I was waiting in

The Ford deal

At the news conference announcing HP as the hardware supplier to Ford are (from left) John Olmstead, V.P. of UUNET; Bob Weis, HP V.P. and G.M of the North American Consumer Business Organization; James A. Yost, Ford Motor Company V.P.; Nick Grouf, chair, PeoplePC, Inc.; and Bill Stevenson, UAW-Ford Joint Programs.



To read the entire story in HP Measure Magazine, click [HERE](#)

the PeoplePC office lobby in San Francisco when Ford visited them in regard to what became the "Model-E" program. In short, for \$5 per month for three years, all Ford employees were to be provided an HP PC, a Deskjet printer, and an internet connection. The goal of the program was to "E-enable" the entire Ford global workforce. We did sell almost 200,000 PCs and printers to Ford in the US, and about 30,000 upgrades three years later. Unfortunately, the program was doomed to failure as we tried to make it work outside the US. There are a number of reasons for this, and the Ford Model E program wasn't the first – or the last – to fail on this score, but it was a disappointment nonetheless. To this day, I sometimes see an xxxx@peoplepc.com email address, and it makes me smile.

Ford services growth

Ford IT leadership was concerned that they were spending too much of their energy in managing existing systems rather than responding to opportunities to help their business customers. They therefore embarked on a significant exercise to "outsource" operation of their non-mainframe computing environments. After a long, difficult sales pursuit, HP was selected for a program which was eventually called the GINNESS program (named by a Ford person, the acronym stood for Global Infrastructure, Networks, and Enterprise Server Support). This win put us at the center of Ford IT operations going forward. It was in celebrating this win that I learned a couple of additional things about myself: 1) I didn't actually celebrate wins – what I celebrated (quietly) was not losing; 2) I only celebrated not losing for about 10-15 minutes – I then focused on "How are we going to deliver this deal?" Looking back, it saddens me to know that I never really let myself feel good about a win.

HP buys Compaq

In September of 2001, we learned that HP was buying Compaq. What wasn't immediately obvious to me at the time was that, in buying Compaq, HP was acquiring three separate companies flying in "loose formation." We were getting Compaq/Compaq, DEC/Compaq, and Tandem/Compaq. In the time between acquiring these other companies and eventually being bought by HP, almost nothing was done to integrate the DEC and Tandem teams into Compaq. This meant that integrating Compaq was going to be that much harder for HP. Also, and I didn't see this at the time, when Carly was at Lucent, she had a general lack of respect for HP US sales management. Apparently, she recalled this as she was helping to build the new, merged US sales leadership team for HPQ.

Many of you may recall the "Red Team" -vs- "Blue Team" rules that were in place when building leadership structures. Well, that didn't hold true at the highest levels in the US. If I recall correctly, there were 18 area sales managers in the US after the merger was completed. 17 were formerly Compaq managers. This was the first time in my career where I felt like an outsider in my own organization. I had lost my network. And, to further complicate the situation, almost all of the Compaq sales leaders were Compaq/Compaq and therefore had no idea about the lengthy sales cycles for large scale systems.

I recall a situation which illustrates the point. HP SuperDome systems were large systems designed for mainframe alternative opportunities, particularly with SAP software. My guess is that the average sales cycle for this type of system was 6 to 9 months. Because SuperDome sales were below expectations, a "special bonus" program was announced with 30 days to go in the first half. All sales representatives closing a SuperDome deal in H1 would receive a \$10K bonus. It was akin to announcing a \$10K bonus for a baby born in December on December 1. Funny, but sad. These were not bad people, it was just that they had learned their sales management skills in a short sales cycle business and were now trying to apply the same solutions to an entirely different set of problems.

All sales and account team leaders were interviewed for their jobs without being told they were being evaluated. I recall getting a call – unannounced – and asked if I had 30 minutes of time available right then for a conference call. As it turns out I did, and I'm not sure who all was on the phone, but they

proceeded to "grill me" about Ford, our business there, our people, our relationships, etcetera. It was an account review and a review of me as the account manager all at once. A few weeks later a memo was issued listing all the "approved" Account General Managers. I was on the list as the Ford AGM.

The difficulty in bringing together four separate sales teams covering Ford included wide variations in pay structures, different timelines and systems for performance evaluations, and varied selling processes. I spent a great deal of effort attempting to keep everyone engaged and satisfied with their jobs while getting them aligned with the goals I had set for the Ford account. Added to this was the complexity of a global account, with factions in Europe and Asia that simply didn't want to "play nice" with us. I'm not sure how I'd grade my performance in this timeframe, but we made our numbers year after year, so leadership was pleased.

The customer changes

Not too long after we signed the Ford GINNESS contract, a new CIO was hired at Ford. He didn't believe in outsourcing. He didn't believe in contracts either. He ignored clauses in the contract and began tearing it down piece by piece. He did, however, believe in IBM. I should have recognized right away the danger to my career, but I was too naïve to recognize it. I spent the next three years fighting for our continued growth at Ford, and it was a losing cause. I later learned that in this timeframe, my career trajectory in HP (for whatever that was worth) was taking major hits. I became the person who "lost the Ford account." Up until then, I felt like I had a good reputation inside HP leadership across the company, but that started to change. (As stated earlier, when the Compaq sales team merged with HP sales leadership, my network dissolved.)

More about Carly

I was desperate to rebuild our Ford business despite the forces at the top fighting me. I learned that Carly was visiting the area to see executives at GM and Delphi and to speak to a gathering of Arab nations in Detroit. I managed to squeeze in a visit to Ford HQ. The CIO made himself unavailable, but I managed to get 45 minutes with the CEO of Ford, Bill Ford and the COO of Ford, Nick Scheele. It was a pleasant meeting, but, looking back, really had no impact on our business. As I accompanied Carly to her next appointment in the limo, my cell phone rang. I recognized the number as a hospital in Ypsilanti where my wife had undergone a procedure. I was to pick her up later that day. Carly listened to my end of the conversation and then scolded me for not having my priorities straight. Why would I be making sales calls with her rather than caring for my wife?

Now, fast forward a couple of years. Carly has been dismissed by the HP Board of Directors. She had committed to speak to the Detroit Economic Club and although she had delayed her speech, she didn't cancel. When she spoke, she gave an excellent talk about the need for education, particularly technical education, specifically for young women and minorities as a way of improving our country. I took my wife and daughter with me. We stuck around after the speech to greet Carly. She said it was good to see "old HP friends" in the Detroit audience, she called my wife by name (unprompted) and asked her if she'd ever forgiven me for paying more attention to my job than to her. Unbelievable.

You might recognize my fondness for Carly. I'm not here to defend her tenure as HP CEO, and I don't hold her up as someone who is without fault, but I will say she is one of the most incredible individuals with whom I ever worked. I know I am in a small minority of HP employees who respected much of what she was able to do. In the end, my observation is that either her unwillingness to bring on a strong operations manager to execute and/or the lack of a strong operations manager with the willingness to be a COO led to her dismissal. Oh, and the dysfunction that was the HP Board of Directors.

Back to GM

Having spent the better part of three years fighting against a CIO who simply refused to work with HP, I set an appointment with the head of HP Global Accounts and told him I was unwilling to continue as the Ford Global Account Manager. I wanted to remain an HP employee. I would consider other assignments, even those requiring a move, but if I was unable to secure a new assignment inside HP, I would leave HP. He thanked me for my candor and told me he'd get back to me with any option(s). It was just a few days later that he asked if I'd consider what he called a lateral move (it was actually a demotion) to join the GM team for what was to be a large pursuit as GM tried to diversify their services suppliers (they had been 100% outsourced to EDS). I liked the people on the GM team and I was able to stay in Detroit, so I joined the GM team.

I was assigned two or three segments of GM for the pursuit, which lasted through the end of FY05 and into FY06. The outsourcing contracts with EDS had an end date of 6/6/06 (perhaps a nod to a deal with the devil?) and there was far more going on behind the scenes on this opportunity than I recognized. HP was targeted for a few contracts not necessarily because we had the best solution, but because GM really wanted to gain leverage against EDS going forward. Ultimately, EDS received the vast majority of the contract renewals, with HP gaining the next largest share, and IBM getting a few "scraps." Coming from where HP had been (nowhere?) this represented a huge step forward in our business with HP and caused a significant celebration. Again, I spent most of the "celebration time" fretting about how we would be able to deliver. Looking back now, it makes me sad to think of all the time I spent worrying.

As it turned out, I hadn't worried quite enough. Absorbing the services contracts we had won, integrating our globally dispersed, offshore development teams (both internal and partner-based), dealing with the demands of GM, gaining cooperation from the EDS team(s) that were in place (and had been for years if not decades) and learning at least the rudimentary parts of how to deliver services to GM (i.e. What is an ITSR?) was almost enough to break the HP team. We went through leadership changes, stressful customer satisfaction reviews, massive escalations and embarrassing delivery issues. It wasn't at all clear to me that we had actually won anything. But, for the most part, we began to "right the ship" and we were starting to meet delivery commitments and a few of our profit targets when another change took place.

A meeting with Mark Hurd

In May of 2008, Ralph Szygenda, the GM CIO who had managed the 2006 "services provider diversification" effort, was sponsoring a West Coast executive visit for his leadership team. The opening and featured presentation for the HP session was to be made by Mark Hurd, Chairman and CEO of HP. As I recall, the combined GM and HP leadership teams assembled for the meeting – about 24 people - filled the conference room at the HP visitor center. There was a delay in getting started in the morning and Mark Hurd was nowhere to be found at his assigned time. In his place, Ann Livermore announced she would cover the topics Mark was to address.

Ann started her presentation, providing an overview of HP's business and then Mark arrived at the door. He asked Ralph to join him outside for a one-on-one. He asked that Ann continue her presentation. The walls of the conference room were glass, so while Ann presented, more attention was being paid to the very animated conversation going on outside the conference room between Mark and Ralph. Ralph was visibly upset and was doing a fair amount of hand waving and pacing around. I recall one of Ralph's managers turning to me and whispering, "Mark just surprised Ralph, and Ralph hates surprises!"

Within minutes, everyone in the room began looking at their cell phones and Blackberries as the news began to break about HP's pending acquisition of EDS. A very red-faced Ralph Szygenda asked for his GM legal team member to join him in another conference room to make some calls – most likely to EDS. All I recall from this point forward is that we completed the agenda but nobody paid any attention to the

presentations. There was way too much going on outside the room to make anything going on inside the room interesting. The bottom line for GM? By acquiring EDS, HP had "undone" the entire exercise of services supplier diversification. What a mess for GM. And what a coincidence: We had GM IT senior leadership in our facility on the day the news broke!

The integration of HP and EDS for GM

After the visit ended (but not until after a long night of adult beverages in the hotel bar with the GM executives) we all returned to Detroit to try to make sense of what was happening and to try to figure out how to bring together the HP and EDS teams to deliver to GM. In comparison to my counterparts on the HP GM Account team, I had both the most seniority with HP and the least seniority with the GM team. Therefore, I thought I could be most valuable to the integration effort if I were to step away from my day-to-day role and focus entirely on building a merged organization. After numerous discussions, I was put into a lead role on the "clean room" team for the pre-merger HP team for GM. I was joined by two EDS people (Al Hanawalt and Bill Casey) who represented the pre-merger EDS GM team. We were part of the larger corporate integration team, but we focused solely on how the joined team should be organized for GM.

For the purposes of this history, it isn't necessary to have all the facts perfectly correct (and I believe I destroyed many of these records!). Nevertheless, as I recall, at the time of the announcement, pre-merger HP had about 800 people (or full time equivalents) on the GM account and pre-merger EDS had about 5500. So, in this case, from a global perspective, a bluegill was trying to swallow a whale. Quite quickly, I realized that – in the case of the GM account – the merger would be more of the opposite – the GM EDS team would be acquiring the GM HP team. Over the course of the integration process, I learned that my original assumptions were correct. It was much easier to think of adding the old HP team onto the EDS team. In addition, in contrast with the EDS team, the HP team were "newbies" to services delivery to GM. Furthermore, the services contracts HP had won had previously been EDS contracts. I know some pre-merger HP people thought I "sold out" to the pre-merger EDS folks, but there was simply no comparison when it came to GM experience.

I had been living in Detroit since the late 1970s, and EDS had a very interesting reputation. They had "boot camps" where new employees were subjected to military-like training for services delivery. Having heard about these tactics over the years, I didn't know what to make of my early interactions with pre-merger EDS GM Account Team leadership. What I found was very encouraging. The people I worked with had extraordinary services expertise, deep account knowledge, comprehensive delivery mechanisms and, most importantly, a cultural dedication to customer satisfaction.

I soon was feeling very good about how the culture of EDS and HP could mesh. A small aside here to illustrate a point – and maybe some bitter feelings about IBM that lingered from my days at Ford. It didn't occur precisely in this timeframe, but the point is still valid. IBM joined forces with a consulting partner to bid on a large systems project for OnStar – the Call Center Application Replacement project (CCAR). HP and EDS also bid on the project, but IBM was chosen. After multiple years, multiple restarts, and multiple cost-increasing change orders, IBM declared the project "non-deliverable." When OnStar stopped paying IBM, IBM sued for damages – stating that requirements were impossible to meet, deadlines weren't fair, etc. In discussing this with my new EDS co-workers, we both marveled at a company who would sue a client – and openly said that either HP or EDS would have delivered the CCAR project. We would have lost millions of dollars doing it, but we would have delivered. Amazingly, IBM and GM eventually reached a settlement and GM continued to do business with IBM. (There is a lesson here, but I'm not sure I like it.)

My GM assignment in the "New" HP

Having worked on the integration of the joint team for GM, I was "interviewed" for a position on the leadership team for the merged team. Luckily for me, one of the senior leaders on the EDS side was choosing to retire and it made sense for me to be slotted in as the leader for the GMAC team. I "interviewed" with the GMAC CIO (who I already knew from a previous assignment) and was approved as the leader for the GMAC team. Thus began my introduction to large scale services delivery. I was blessed with a great team of people and an even better executive assistant who helped me navigate my new world. And, because I was the only "HP Classic" manager on the merged GM Account Leadership Team, I became the source of knowledge for everything HP.

Among the things we had to work through were pay practices, company cars, expense reporting, delivery cost models and working with product sales teams. Each of these items (and many more) caused a fair amount of headaches, but we got through them. We had escalations, we had outages, we had projects that were off schedule, but for the most part we achieved our financial objectives and managed to be viewed as "successful."

As GM continued to squeeze us on costs and HP leadership wanted more and more profitability, I recall the most stress coming from the quarterly head count reduction targets. It became so routine that we developed a core-competency in managing Work Force Reductions (WFRs). I recall feeling responsible for the people on my team. I didn't see them as names on an organization chart, but saw them as mothers and fathers who were providing for their families. This made any WFRs that much more painful since I knew the impact, but the WFR targets kept coming.

My last HP assignment

Because I had demonstrated the ability to work with an executive while she was at GMAC (which eventually became Ally), and since she was proving hard to deal with in a GM assignment, I was asked to leave the Ally team and take on a GM assignment. I wasn't happy about this and I made it clear to my boss. He and I had been in conflict for a while but it never became serious enough for him to feel the need to get rid of me. I had considered quitting, but I felt that would be a "win" for him so I stuck it out. When he announced that he was taking on a new role, he announced to his former leadership team that one of his regrets about changing jobs was that he "had finally learned how to work with Needham," which caused a good deal of laughter in the room.

I had been working in my new GM assignment for several quarters. I had been dealing with the normal personnel issues, delivery issues and WFR targets when my new boss was summoned to New York for a meeting with the new GM CIO (not coincidentally the former CIO of HP, Randy Mott). It was in this session that we learned that GM was going to terminate our newly renewed services contracts. Randy was going to "in-source" IT. We could either agree to work with them to end the contracts "peacefully" or we could choose to fight them and go through hell. Eventually, we opted to help them terminate the contracts. Many members of our global HP GM team would be offered positions with General Motors IT since it was our people who had the needed expertise to provide services to the GM clients. For some of our long-term employees, there was some irony. They had started with GM then joined EDS when it was a GM subsidiary then spun out of GM to EDS then eventually to HP then back to GM. What a ride. I honestly don't know if I would have been offered a position with GM, but something happened that took that decision out of play.

The 2012 Enhanced Early Retirement program

At about the same time that GM was terminating their services contracts with us, HP was offering another in a series of Enhanced Early Retirement (EER) programs. I had long planned to work until the

age of 57 (at one point I had planned to work until I was 61 so I could have worked in 6 different decades, but that plan had passed) and – by my calculations – HP was making me 57 from a financial point of view. I analyzed the financial aspect of retirement and felt I could live on what I had saved. After much thought and prayer, I chose to volunteer for the EER program, which made August 31, 2012 my last day with HP.

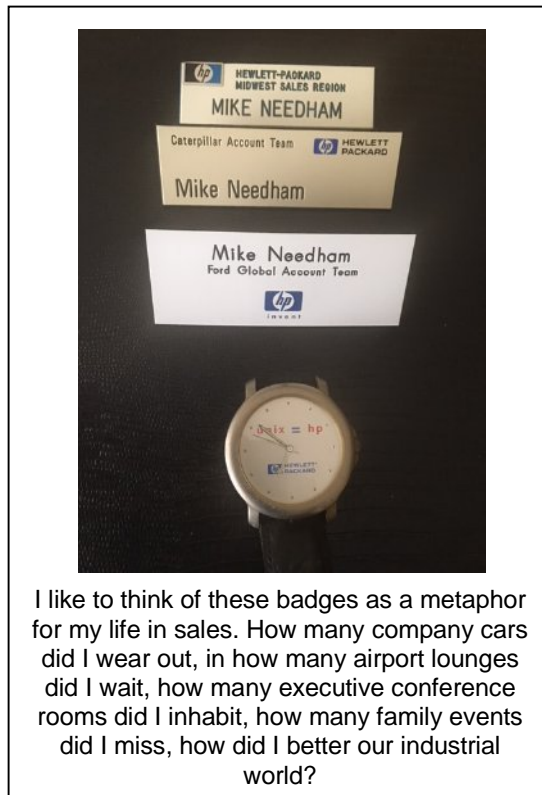
Long view observations

I joined HP in May of 1979. For FY79, HP reported sales of \$2.36B and closed the year with approximately 52K employees worldwide. Ten years later, HP sales for FY89 were \$12B and we employed 95K people. By FY99, sales were \$43B and we employed 125K people worldwide. In FY09, sales were \$114B and we employed 304K people.

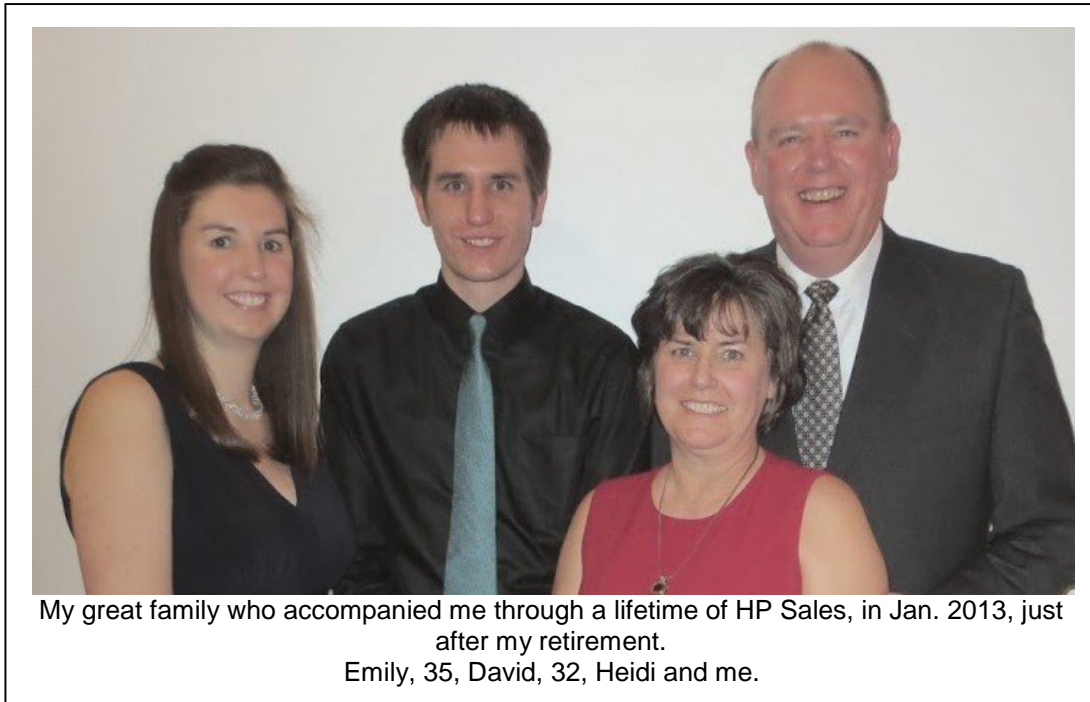
Obviously, acquisitions (and spin-offs) changed these numbers. However, the HP that I worked for was never boring. The personal computer era dawned when the IBM PC was launched in 1981. The internet was "invented" before I joined the company, but experienced amazing growth in impact during my career. I saw the home printer market start, grow, and now as a retiree, I believe I'm watching it shrink. I was involved in the early days of "distributed computing" and now, with the emergence of the cloud, I feel like I'm seeing the comeback of timesharing and mainframe-like environments. It's fun to not worry about what is coming next!

As I look back, I was privileged to work alongside some of the smartest, challenging, hardworking and inspirational people you'd ever hope to meet. Some were co-workers, some were competitors, some were customers. I'm sure I didn't appreciate each one at the time, but, looking back, I worked with some incredible people. I had a career of over 33 years with an iconic organization, the Hewlett-Packard Company. I rubbed elbows with founders, executives, laboratory geniuses, and engineering experts. Day in, day out, I worked with some of the finest people I've ever known. What was the common thread? An old definition of HP: Have Pride. Care about what you do.

Finally, at our August 31, 2012 retirement event, I recall discussing the good and the bad about our careers and someone asked me my least favorite HP memory. I said I preferred to remember the good things. The day I walked into HP I had about \$50 in my wallet and a debt for the engagement ring for my soon-to-be wife. Heidi and I got married just 6 weeks after I joined HP, so she lived through all my adventures and is still with me for the retirement journey. I gave HP all I had for 33+ years. In return, the company provided me with a comfortable living, enabled my wife (and me) to raise two wonderful children (Emily, who came along in 1983 and David, who joined the family in 1986) and provide them debt-free college educations (two Purdue



degrees!), and helped me to retire at the age of 55. I don't measure my success or failure on the basis of "things," but almost every "thing" I have I got from HP. I can only thank Bill and Dave for creating a place for me to spend my working years.



--Mike Needham
White Pigeon, MI.
April, 2018

YOUR TURN

Invites *Measure* readers to comment on matters of importance to HP employees.

"Getting the order" is the lifeblood for Hewlett-Packard, according to John Minck, advertising and sales promotion manager for Stanford Park Division in Palo Alto.

The persistent business recession the world has been going through has caused much personal suffering and stress outside HP. We see it every night on TV and read it in the newspapers, and most of us feel lucky and relatively secure working at HP.

If there is a good effect from the world recession, it is the growing awareness of the public, from politician to union member, of the critical importance of jobs. The mayor of Fremont, California, describing his city's attitude toward welcoming industry to the area said, "The quality of life starts with a job."

The important thing to remember in a manufacturing company the size of HP is that all our paychecks are dependent on a continuous stream of orders. I hope no one at HP is naive enough to think that we deserve these orders or that customers order from us automatically. We have to earn them one at a time. And in an economic time like this, each order is extremely important.

A customer order becomes a product shipment. That brings in the money to pay for the parts we buy, provides wages for all our people, buys new buildings and equipment and pays for R&D for new products for our future. It also gives HP about 10 percent profit: fulfilling our No. 1 corporate objective. But note that a customer order starts the entire process.

I think it was an advertising man who observed that "Nothing happens

until somebody sells something."

Direct responsibility for getting orders at HP, of course, rests on our hundreds of worldwide field sales people. But just like a fighting army, only about 5 percent of our "troops" are out in front selling; the other 95 percent of our "army" is crucially important to supporting the front lines and winning the war.

Each field sales person depends directly on dozens of other functional people to be effective: order processing, fleet, training, regional sales engineers in each factory, shipping, etc. Every additional minute that a field person can spend with customers due to more help by support people brings more orders.

In a company with 67,000 people, there may be 50,000 who don't even know a field salesperson. What I would like to propose is that every one of us look at our attitude towards sales and orders. A customer order is pretty remote to a librarian stocking the book shelves, or an instrument assembly worker in a factory and even more so to a records retention person in the document archives.

R&D engineers affect orders well in the future. Quality assurance affects orders almost immediately since a customer who receives a defective product might stop his next order.

We need lawyers to be sure HP meets laws and regulations. And we need financial people to write accounting procedures. Personnel training people teach us how to deal with people. (Did I leave anyone out?)

Important as all these thousands of functional jobs are, I assert that each of us should adopt a positive attitude towards getting orders. If you are writing a computer program to assist field sales people, the program should leverage the sales person's time to the maximum. If you are an accountant writing cost control systems for field sales, try to minimize hassling the sales rep's time. If a factory marketing person runs down to you in the shipping de-

partment late on a Friday afternoon to plead for shipping a sales demo that day, recognize that you'd be helping orders by having the positive attitude and shipping the demo.

Let's all take the attitude that we help, not hinder. In World War II, when the legendary General George Patton and his American Third Army were racing through France, he was pretty specific about his expectations from his support troops. When he sent his tanks 50 miles out in front, he expected his logistics and administrative people to figure out how to get behind the front lines with supplies and help. Can you imagine an accountant on Patton's staff telling him that some accounting rules would prevent getting fuel to his tanks?

While I can't speak for our field people, I know them to be serious about their great responsibility in these tough times to keep orders flowing month after month. Not only should we let them know we appreciate their work, but we should also give them as much positive support as we possibly can, no matter how far "behind the lines" we are.

JOHN MINCK
Stanford Park Division
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Address letters via company mail to Editor, *Measure*, Public Relations Department, Building 20BR, Palo Alto. Via regular postal service, the address is *Measure*, Hewlett-Packard Company 20BR, PO Box 10301, Palo Alto, CA 94303-0890. Try to limit your letter to 200 words. Please sign your letter and give your location. Names will be withheld on request. Where a response is indicated, the best available company source will be sought.