E.C.

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I N T E R O F F I C E   M E M O R A N D U M

C O R M T S   A L L - I N - 1   S Y S T E M

                    Date:    18-Jan-1989 01:33pm EST
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TO: See Below

Subject: FALSE ASSUMPTIONS IN DIGITAL'S ADVERTISING

I'd like to review our basic assumptions in advertising.

First of all, I think our biggest goal or the highest attainment anyone could have in advertising Digital is to invent a catchy phrase like, "Digital has it now." Every time we talk about advertising, people want to invent the new, catchy phrase or invent the new "Big E". In general, these things only mean something to us and nothing to the customer.

Secondly, we don't like to talk about products. We like to generate generalized pros about business efficiency, return on assets, and things we don't understand. People who do understand these, don't read or pay any attention to us.

We hire advertising agencies and hire experts within the Company who don't understand our strategy, know little about our products, and their only contribution to justify their fees is to write generalized prose which, of course, nobody ever reads.

We believe that we should catch the customer's attention by doing what everybody else does in their advertising which is to present some generalized "pros" (which could sell cars or soap) that will attract their attention, or make them call on the salesman because, after selling our ad, they suddenly got the idea that they should compete in this worldwide economy. The people who make these generalized, general purpose pros believe that, once the salesman is in there, he will tell the people all the wonderful things about our products and, in one hour, leave them with a detailed message of everything we have to offer.

I believe what really happens is that no one ever reads our pros. We catch their imagination with facts, features, speeds, and prices, but we think it's too low brow to tell them this, and besides, our professional writers don't know how to put these into perspective.

If, with great persistence, one our advertising people does get in
to talk to a customer, we get very little information across in
the one hour he is allowed. The customer doesn't normally
believe it the first time because there are no facts involved,
and the salesman tries to leave a pile of literature which is
limited only by how much he can carry with him. They are all
usually glossy, heavy, slick, magazine type ads that tell the
wonderful, glorious things that we can do, but still without
facts.

Another bit of our religion says that we dump everything we can
think of on the press at the day of an announcement. If they
don't catch everything that we've said and put it into
perspective, it's because they're stupid, and it's not our fault.
We work so hard to concentrate everything we know into this
one-hour presentation, and we have no energy to follow through on
advertising or marketing afterwards. Besides, we think there is
a certain amount of immorality in giving a message more than
once.

I'd like to try a new approach to advertising. I think our
testimonials are great, and we should maintain them, but maybe at
a lower level in order to make room for a factual program.

Suppose, after next week's announcement on the 6300, we had a
doubled page ad which had pictures of seven computers across the
top and, under each one, we had a few simple facts. These seven
computers would be three or four MicroVAX systems and the rest
6300 models. With this one spread, we can put all our major
computer lines into perspective. We would have all the simple
comparisons such as speed, memory size, disk size, disk access
speed, memory access speed, and a few other pertinent features
that we think customers should look at. There would be no pros
on the page at all--just simple numbers or a simple statement.
With this, the customer and the newspaper reporter could have
something to meditate on which will help put everything into
perspective rather than having an enormous jumbo of pages,
booklets, pictures, and facts that tell how everything is more
glorious, more powerful and more revolutionary than every other
product we make, and how everything we do will make everybody
more competitive with everybody, everywhere in the world.

Then suppose we follow through and use the same format for a
whole series of ads. The next one would be seven of our desktop
devices. The next one would be the seven ways we do networking,
starting with DC423, thinwire Ethernet, fiber optics, lazers,
microwaves, and maybe wide area networking. Another page would
be seven approaches to LANs and group computing, starting with a
very cheap one for a small number of PCs and showing how the
seventh one will tie the whole company together. Another group
of seven would be what we offer in software. (This may not break
down into seven). Here we would say we do VMS and ULTRIX and
then list all the common features, interfaces, software

applications and architectures that are common between both of them and a statement when to use ULTRIX and when to use VMS. We might also say that, for the VAX computer, we can run VMS, ULTRIX and MS DOS. For the RISC computer, we can run ULTRIX and MS DOS and for the PC, we can run MS DOS and the blank version of UNIX.

We might also make a group of seven on the subject of clustering. We may also have a group of seven application categories in which we do very well. We might also have a group of the seven services we offer such as education, software services, field service, network design, and network management.

We could then put these all into a book that is quite thin and is not much harder to read than a comic book, and in each double page, there's a group of seven things we offer in each category. If the salesman uses this booklet when he visits a customer, he could use it as an outline for his talk and leave the booklet with his customer. We could have a cross reference that offers books on each of the subjects.

We would start with the book and then use double pages for ads, and we could use it as a vehicle for orienting each new product announcement.

I believe, very seriously, that we have to change our approach to selling and advertising. We like the right pros and talk generalities, and we have to do something to increase our efficiencies.

KHO:dao
KO:2583
DICTATED ON 1/17/89, BUT NOT READ

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