

ending-Feb.  
E.C.

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INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM

Doc. No: 026890  
Date: 10-Feb-1992 02:47pm EST  
From: Ken Olsen  
OLSEN.KEN  
Dept: Administration  
Tel No: 223-2301

*Bill Strecker*

TO: See Below  
CC: Win + others

Subject: PRESENTATIONS AT THIS WEEK'S WOODS MEETINGS

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At this week's WOODS meeting, if you present all the Engineering projects and products being developed and plan to make decisions as to which projects we keep and which we drop, there are some that might be so obvious this would be an easy thing to do.

I propose, however, that we not make the decisions at that time because, in many cases, engineering groups have put much of their life into their projects. Many understand their projects really are not needed when we orient to market needs. However, those who want to, do deserve the right to argue for their projects.

This probably should not be done at a large meeting, because we are not going to take a vote and impose on the marketing groups products we want to continue or initiate. My hope for this meeting is to have Engineering's organizations and overhead structures presented so we all have an understanding.

There is a rumor around that every engineering group has been asked to cut twenty five percent. I can never figure out who gives these orders. No one will ever tell me, and yet, these stories are often true. I am the only one who apparently does not know who initiates them, and sometimes, it is done in my name.

If it is you who is giving orders to cut twenty five percent, please explain your plan. If it is not you, please propose a plan to eliminate overhead and unnecessary activities.

As you list engineering projects, it might be helpful to identify each group's growth, NOR and profitability. This is not an

indication of the value of the groups, but it does give a feel for what is going on. I do believe it is very important that the Product Committee have an understanding of Engineering's activities and its overhead structure.

At this meeting, or soon after, we should have a very clear definition of who is working for whom.

KHO:eh  
KO:6595  
(DICTATED ON 2/9/92, BUT NOT READ)

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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**

**Doc. No:** 026887  
**Date:** 10-Feb-1992 01:46pm EST  
**From:** Ken Olsen  
OLSEN.KEN  
**Dept:** Administration  
**Tel No:** 223-2301

*Charles Christ & Barry Goldstein*

**TO:** See Below  
**CC:** *Win & Others*

**Subject:** COMPUTER ARCHITECTURE AND SOFTWARE DESIGN

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Digital has a long history of great competence in computer architecture and software design. However, success and responsibility for continued products does create a certain rigidity in an organization. In no way can we discourage the ongoing work, or drop the things we have learned in the past, or discourage the pride people have in the work they are doing. However, we do have to look, in detail, at alternate approaches. The obvious way to do this is with Skunkworks. In a very short time, on an informal basis, I think we will demonstrate alternate ways to make office computers and alternate ways of networking them. If they don't work, the cost is low, and the decision should be made in a very small number of months.

Our tradition has always been to make faster and faster computers, with more and more complex software so more can be jammed through a single channel. This means speed for our computers is the utmost goal.

In our software features, and, therefore, complexity are the primary goal. People who take time to learn our software love it with a passion.

Apple has a different approach. They initially spent more of their computation capability on human interface. We never do that because computing is too valuable to give up on trivial things. However, the result is that many more people passionately love Apple.

I asked if we should make a special Athena terminal that students could buy and own. People say this is a great idea, however,

the students love Apple better.

I would like to suggest the possibility that you start a Skunkworks, independent of the Digital approach, to consider, however, we could make easy to love software that would still be consistent with our ACE commitments.

I don't mean crazy things such as multimedia terminals, or natural languages, but simple ways of doing simple things for people who have other activities that dominate their interest. You might set up a small team to look at the approaches of others to see what we can learn from them.

KO:6587  
(DICTATED 2/10/92 BUT NOT READ)

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