

Computer bugs, glitches always threaten their jobs

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mouse pointers, compact discs — have come before ordinary business people could understand practical applications.

To make these advances salable, computer managers began to turn to simple applications — an easier-to-use word processing program, self-help screens within programs and a more versatile spreadsheet — as well as customizing software to specific companies. Such changes have led to results.

The Ford Motor Co. was able to cut its 500-member accounts payable department by 75 percent after recent innovations by in-house computer managers. Rather than having

rows of clerks manually match suppliers' invoices with Ford's purchase orders and receipt records, they authorize payment, a constantly updated computer data base matches purchase orders and receipts automatically — with no invoices required — and the computer authorizes payment.

Yet while Ford was successful with these applications, some new computer managers have found they had to clean up messes left behind by predecessors or consultants. A CIO hired last year by a large area bank found the institution using 11 different brands of large computers.

"They were shell-shocked," said the CIO, who asked not to be named.

"They had listened to a consultant in the mid-1980s who told them to decentralize everything, and they didn't realize they would have to put everything back together eventually."

The CIO has since cut back to seven computer makers, and plans to end up with four. To keep away from these problems, Silvani said the accounting firm has been careful to keep its computer management teams small. Follimer has been successful in doubling revenues of its computer information services division over the last two years, Silvani said, "because we hire good programmers and leave them alone to work with a client in small groups."

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WOMEN'S NETWORK

Thursday, Nov. 7 — Managing change addressed at for three hours beginning at 6:30 p.m. at the Quality Inn in Rochester Hills. Non-member fee: \$49. Information: Joan Hoover, 391-0086.

LSAT WORKSHOPS

Saturday, Nov. 7 — Law School Admissions Test preparation workshops 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. near Rochester. Fee: \$195, includes materials. Information: 370-3120. Sponsor: Oakland University.

STARTING AT HOME

Saturday, Nov. 9 — "Starting a Home-Based Business" 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. in Troy. Fee: \$50. Information: 689-4094. Sponsors: Business Enterprise Development Center, U.S. Small Business Administration, Service Corps of Retired Executives, Oakland County Economic Development Division, Troy Chamber of Commerce.

GETTING PUBLICITY

Tuesday, Nov. 12 — "Promotion for Start-Ups" 9:11-30 a.m. in Troy. Fee: \$20. Information: 689-4094. Sponsor: Business Enterprise Development Center.

WOMEN ECONOMIC CLUB

Tuesday, Nov. 12 — CEO of Proctor & Gardner Advertising Inc. of Chicago addresses Women's Economic Club of Detroit at noon in Southfield. Information: 963-5088.

INDIVIDUAL INVESTORS

Wednesday, Nov. 13 — President of Lipper Analytical Securities Corp. addresses American Association of Individual Investors at 7 p.m. in Troy. Non-member fee: \$20. Information: 851-1833.

ZONTA INTERNATIONAL

Wednesday, Nov. 13 — Zonta International of Southeast Oakland County meets at 6 p.m. at the Community House in Birmingham. Information: Dorothy McMahon, 645-2544.

LIFE UNDERWRITERS

Wednesday, Nov. 13 — Greater Detroit Association of Life Underwriters meets at 8:30 p.m. in Southfield. Fee: \$6 at door. Information: Nancy Simon, 643-9313.

BUILD AN INVENTORY

Thursday, Nov. 14 — "Setting Up Inventory" 9:11-30 a.m. in Troy. Fee: \$20. Information: 689-4094. Sponsor:

Business Enterprise Development Center.

CASH FLOW

Thursday, Nov. 14 — "Advanced Cash Flow Control" 1:30-4 p.m. in Troy. Fee: \$20. Information: 689-4094. Sponsor: Business Enterprise Development Center.

UNCONVENTIONAL FINANCING

Thursday, Nov. 14 — "Survival Financing" 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. at Walsh College in Troy. Fee: \$75. Information: 689-4094. Sponsors: Business Enterprise Development Center, U.S. Small Business Administration, Service Corps of Retired Executives, Oakland County Economic Development Division, Troy Chamber of Commerce.

INVESTMENT SEMINAR

Thursday, Nov. 14 — Free investment seminar begins at 7:30 p.m. at the Somerset Inn in Troy. Information: 433-8514. Sponsor: Prudential Securities.

MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTANTS

Thursday, Nov. 14 — Oakland County Chapter of the Institute of Management Accountants meets at 6 p.m. at the Kingsley Inn in Bloomfield Hills. Topic: "What Is New in the 1991 Tax Law?" Dinner: \$20. Information: Maxine Sherman, 737-2743.

WILL IT FLY?

Saturday, Nov. 16 — "Testing the Feasibility of Your Business Idea" 9:11-30 a.m. in Troy. Fee: \$20. Information: 689-4094. Sponsor: Business Enterprise Development Center.

WINDOWS USERS GROUP

Monday, Nov. 18 — Detroit Windows User Group meets 7-9 p.m. at the Radisson Hotel, Tower Center, Southfield. Information: Ann Stanzel (313-842-8877) or fax (313-841-4190).

APPRAISER LICENSE

Monday-Tuesday, Nov. 18-19 — "Uniform Standards of Professional

Appraisal Practice" for appraisal recertification offered in Troy. Information: 689-8282 Ext. 250. Sponsor: Walsh College.

TAX AND NEW BUSINESS

Tuesday, Nov. 19 — "Tax Considerations and Requirements for Starting a Business" 1:30-4 p.m. in Troy. Fee: \$20. Information: 689-4094. Sponsor: Business Enterprise Development Center.

BUSINESS BASICS

Tuesday, Nov. 19 — "Basics of Business Operation" 9:11-30 a.m. in Troy. Fee: \$20. Information: 689-4094. Sponsor: Business Enterprise Development Center.

START-UP MARKETING

Tuesday, Nov. 19 — "Start-up Marketing: Stop, Look and Listen" 9:11-30 a.m. in Troy. Fee: \$25. Information: 689-4094. Sponsors: Business Enterprise Development Center, U.S. Small Business Administration, Service Corps of Retired Executives, Oakland County Economic Development Division, Troy Chamber of Commerce.

DP MANAGERS

Wednesday, Nov. 20 — Detroit Chapter of the Data Processing Management Association meets at 5:30 p.m. at the Eastman Kodak presentation facility in Bingham Farms. Non-member fee: \$27. Information: 535-4400.

BASIC PURCHASING

Thursday, Nov. 21 — "Basic Purchasing and Cost Control" 1:30-4 p.m. in Troy. Fee: \$35. Information: 689-4094. Sponsors: Business Enterprise Development Center, U.S. Small Business Administration, Service Corps of Retired Executives, Oakland County Economic Development Division, Troy Chamber of Commerce.

APPRAISING PROPERTY

Thursday-Sunday, Nov. 21-24 — "Introduction to Real Property Valuation" for appraisal recertification offered in Troy. Information: 689-8282 Ext. 250. Sponsor: Walsh College.

Breaks mean little to foreign HQs

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He declined to identify the companies that participated in the survey.

"Kent County (Grand Rapids) had as large a share of foreign-owned companies as Wayne County did," Karpen said. "It has a much more mixed economy than Detroit. My suspicion is many are auto-related and maybe they wanted to be located between Chicago and Detroit."

Why the fall-off in locations here the last couple of years?

"THE COST of capital abroad has been increasing in

general in the last decade," Karpen said. "Countries where saving is greater than the U.S. tended to have lower interest rates."

"The U.S. economy started slowing down in 1987, whereas in some other industrial countries, it kept going a little stronger and a little longer."

"Finally, another factor that's tough to measure would be world events over the last few years: the opening of Eastern bloc countries and the reunification of Germany. To some extent, they're focusing inward," Karpen said.

Karpen conceded that his firm probably overlooked some foreign-owned companies in this initial survey effort. Annual follow-ups are planned.

Chambers of commerce say they lack resources to lure foreign firms

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Companies in those communities with a foreign interest include Futaba Corp. of America, Pressac, Brosse North America and Mandell.

Some 60 Japanese firms do business in Southfield, said Nimrod Rosenthal, community relations director for that city.

"We are looking into it now, to more aggressively market the city to foreign companies working through the state chamber of commerce," Rosenthal said.

"We think that Southfield definitely has become the business center of metro Detroit. We're 20 minutes from downtown Detroit, 20 minutes from the airport. Three hundred thousand people work here every day. We have more office space than downtown Detroit."

"BY US BEING the business center, they come to Southfield and look for us," Rosenthal added. Nipponese America, U.S. subsidiary for a Japanese

manufacturer of auto parts including heating/air conditioning systems, fuel injectors and alternators, dedicated a new building in Southfield in 1987 more than a decade after arriving.

"Obviously, it's very centrally located to our customers, the Big Three, and we have major manufacturing plants in Battle Creek and Jackson," said William J. Irahah, executive vice president.

The city's response to helping company officials adjust to the community and schools also made an impression, he added.

Nederman, a U.S. subsidiary of a Swedish company, established a warehouse/sales/office facility in Westland about six years ago, said Roger Bennett, Nederman's president.

The company makes air filtering systems which capture fumes and dust.

Why Westland? "It was based on a relatively low-cost facility to lease and access to a major airport," Bennett said.

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