A Bit of Computer Know-how Can Be Acquired Easily As a Business and Profit Maker

Pick up the newspaper, turn on TV, read Time magazine! Almost every medium that attacks the senses is extolling the computer or information revolution.

And, well they may.

The computer or information revolution will usher into our lives very dramatic changes. Those changes intimidate and frighten some, excite and motivate others. All sorts of emotional reactions occur based on one’s understanding of the changes that are occurring.

I would like to zero in on the application of today’s technology applied to the task of solving the problems of and improving the efficiency and profitability of the typical wall and ceiling contractor. In other words, how can the computer effectively benefit him in his day-to-day business activity? How can the contractor harness the power of the computer to serve and afford real meaningful, dynamic benefits?

A well designed computer system can provide benefits to the interiors contractor that can be directly related to increased business volume and increased profits; the famous “bottom line”. For example, consider that the “well designed system” can, in fact provide the following:

- the ability to expand four times the number of bids produced manually with no increase in manpower requirements and with only the nominal cost of the computer system. In today’s marketplace the real cost of acquiring such a system can be very modest based on a five year depreciation—an investment level well within the reach of almost any size contractor.
- the ability to have your bids reflect the true cost of the job, free of the errors that occur almost 99% of the time in the manual bidding process.
- the ability to have the system develop information, i.e., the labor cost involved in various phases of the job while the system, provides the time required to have you or your estimator relate to each of those labor activities and factor them intelligently relative to the real conditions you expect on that job.
- the ability to develop labor and material requirements by each location, zone, floor, etc., of the job—thus providing maximum efficiency in the scheduling of material and manpower.
- imagine the system automatically generating a budget by work phase on each job and providing a simple, but effective job management program which allows for periodic monitoring of the job as it progresses by each work phase to insure your best chance of bringing that job in at a profit.
- the ability to also provide computer efficiency to all your administrative functions. For exam-

Continued on page 62
ple, automatic payroll development with the automatic distribution of labor to be applied to the Job Management Program, previously mentioned.

- the ability of the system to automate and streamline all your accounting and administrative functions, provide up-to-date profit and loss information, cash flow information, etc.

In summary, the “right”, and I will repeat, the “right” data processing system can afford benefits which can increase volume, profits, earnings, and efficiency. Unlike just a few years ago, when the medium-to-small size contractor was convinced that the type of automation was either beyond his needs or just wasn’t flexible enough to cope with all the variables inherent in his business, today literally every contractor recognizes the potential capability; But each is also faced with what, at first, must be a terrible dilemma—“what system?” . . .

“what computer?”—The choices seem so many and it appears as an impossible task to sift through them all, to consider all the possibilities, or to research what would be the best choice.

Consider the following: When you think a bit and apply common busi-
ness sense, the dilemma isn’t quite so great. When you sweep away various options that don’t provide you with the system advantages you need, the real choice is narrowed to a few. Against those few choices you can measure your decision in the same logical way you measure your other business decisions. The questions then become:

1. What is the best system available to accomplish our goals;
2. What is the best investment in terms of cost justification and payback;
3. Which supplier represents the obvious answer to the above questions;
4. Does that company have the reputation, financial strength, technical and human resources to insure that the chosen system will provide for our goals today, tomorrow, next year, or even five or ten years from now.
5. Does the supplier, having met the above criteria, possess the resources, as well as the commitment, to develop new and advanced software enhancements involving new hardware peripherals. In both cases, can the supplier make available the latest state of the art.

When you can answer the above questions to your own satisfaction, you are on the way to appropriate decision making in the field of computers.