

Stan Shell

My name is Stan Shell, SE and Training Support Manager at GSD. Today I would like to talk to you about our role in training and software support, and some of the other areas that touch on User Services.

I would like to keep this as interactive as I can, as it is important that we get a dialogue going. So what I will do is very quickly skim through some of the topics I am going to be discussing, allow you to organize your questions, and then ask them at the appropriate time.

First, I am going to talk about the philosophy of support, repeating a little bit of what Ed (McCracken) said in the last meeting. Next, I'll be talking about the role of the Customer Engineer, System Engineer, and the Product Specialist, in both the field and the factory. Then, I'll touch briefly on the service division, CX and pre-CX systems and customer training and the Eastern and Western technical centers. I'll also cover phone-in consulting services.

In the last meeting, Ed briefly mentioned that what we want to do in providing user services is to be competent partners in your success. If you are successful, then so are we. Conversely, if you are not successful with your installation, then we have problems.

In addition to providing you with services that you need, we would like to maximize the impact of the services that we provide. We would like to make the services that we provide satisfy a majority of the user community. For instance, if someone would want assistance in interfacing a solar energy cell to a 3000, that might be one that we would look at with caution. However, if there is something that we are not doing, that we should be doing, and it would benefit the majority of users, that is what we want to hear about. We also want to know where we are not doing a good job.

There is a little bit of confusion that exists in the user community about the HP representatives that the user may interface with; specifically, the Customer Engineers, the Systems Engineers, and the Product Specialists. It is pretty easy

to identify a salesman. It is kind of his job to identify himself. Where things may get a little blurry is in the area of "What does the SE do?", and "What does the CE do?", and "Who is this person called a Product Specialist?"

The CE's, of course, are the individuals that are primarily hardware oriented and provide you with support, primarily of a hardware nature. In the factory at GSD, we have a group that parallels the CE group in the field. When there are problems that cannot be answered in the field, the factory is where the field should turn for assistance.

Product Specialists are the superstars of software knowledge . . . in MPE. These are the individuals who will be called in by the CE when you have a problem in your operating system. Once again, we have a Product Specialist group in the factory that is responsible for training these product specialists, and for providing backup when they, in turn, need help.

The SE's are yet another group. They have not spent years with the operating systems like the product specialists, but they are concerned with helping you with subsystem software problems. Also, they work in a sales environment. SE's can be found in the presales environment during technical discussions. In a postsale environment, if you have trouble with COBOL or IMAGE, it is your SE that you turn to for assistance.

Let's talk about CX (and pre-CX systems). I have about 30 seconds to talk about this support, and I am sure you have about two hours worth of questions out there. So, let me start by saying that we will support CX and pre-CX systems. I think Ed pointed that out in the last meeting, and I would just like to reemphasize that. There is a group in the factory that will specialize in assisting the field in satisfying problems relating to CX and pre-CX systems, MPE and hardware areas. Now, for subsystems. It would probably make sense to look at the fact that subsystems on both Series I and Series II are essentially the same. There are some minor differences related to four word floating point and double integer, but FORTRAN is

FORTTRAN . . . there is one FORTRAN compiler. There are two compiler libraries that will cause a program compiled in FORTRAN on a Series I to have a different object code than a FORTRAN program compiled on a Series II. But, it is still one subsystem and it will still be supported out of my group in the factory, and, of course, your local SE.

I would like to briefly talk about some of the ways that I think you will be getting better quality support from your SE's. My group is charged with responsibility of training new SE's and, also, with advanced training of experienced SE's. There are a couple of things that are coming out that will provide the SE's with more tools to solve your problem.

The training that we have for the HP SE's right now is a little thin. We haven't in the past done enough to provide them with the proper tools. We will be offering to our SE's, in the very near future, three to four new training packages. A couple of the courses will be related to programming techniques, and one course will be devoted to system performance, system evaluation, and system optimization. What we are attempting to do is put together a cohesive package so that the SE can converse more knowledgeably on what to expect from a system in a particular situation. I think this will make the SE more valuable to you on a consulting status. I would anticipate in two to three months, we will be starting to train our SE's in the performance area.

We will be looking very strongly at providing specialization courses for our SE's. In my mind, at least, it makes sense for our SE's to begin to specialize more in the commercial environment or the scientific oriented products. What we will be doing is putting together specialization packages to train our SE's so that they can more adequately support you.

On customer training, the eastern and western technical centers will be the area training sites. The courses we currently offer are held at these centers. Training on the 3000 follows an interesting course. When I started working at HP

(4 years ago), the 3000 was visualized as being a super mini type machine with a problem solving, scientific orientation. Therefore, I can recall back three or four years ago, we were gearing our customer training in that direction. We had, in the preparation stages, classes that were going to address such things as I/O drivers, MPE internals, etc., for the knowledgeable user. Well, we found out the 3000 was also a very good general purpose commercial system. Having a relatively high technical content, courses for a customer from an RPG installation might confuse them. Also, not only was it difficult for some of the commercial customers to comprehend it, but it wasn't necessary to solve their application. So, we took a look at customer training and fashioned courses a little more for general purpose commercial community.

Now it is becoming evident, as our customer base is growing, that we are in the situation where people need more information than we are communicating in our customer courses. There are some of you out there who have some very sophisticated tasks that you would like to accomplish. Our training has not effectively addressed that. But, we will be offering such courses in the near future. One month from now will be the debut of a class tentatively called Series II Special Capabilities. It will be programming oriented, as opposed to the syntax oriented ones we have had in the past. For example, we will cover how to utilize some of the intrinsics that are available to users, how to use the debug package, etc. It is probably going to be difficult for individuals that purchase a system now to take our introductory classes and then run right into our advanced user class. I think eventually we will have an intermediate course for users. So, essentially, for those users who are not interested in complex utilizations on the 3000, we still have our basic courses that we teach on an introductory basis. For those of you that are interested in more advanced techniques on the 3000, we will have offerings in that area also.

We will also be offering, at selected installations, on-site training. The majority of on-site training will be done by professional instructors out of the Western Technical Center.

This slide mentions PICS. What is phone-in consulting? The service that it will offer is to answer specific problems that you might have, where the answer to your problem, hopefully, is no longer than a telephone call away. The individuals on the phone will have access to our factory SE group. If they get into trouble with a question you have, they have the factory SE group to fall back on. If the factory SE group cannot answer the question, assuming it is appropriate for PICS, then the Lab, of course, is available. That is what the individual manning the PICS phone will have as his method of information of retrieval. He has full access to our SE group and in turn, the Lab to answer customer problems.

Now, let's talk about software problems and PICS. I think one of the significant offerings of PICS is to allow you to have immediate response to problems you are encountering with your software. The phone-in consulting service will be the focal point for the software problem reporting system at HP in relation to the 3000. It will be a funnel, a filter, and will allow the customer when he calls PICS to immediately describe his problem and get an immediate response, "Yes, that is a known problem," or "No, it is not."

Here is how I envision the system working. You are out there and you have a problem. Well, what you can do with PICS is to call the Tech Center and describe your situation. Now, if it is a simple problem, the PICS SE will try to give you a work around and will submit a software problem report if necessary.

Now, let's take something a little more complex. You have multiple discs with a complex data base. You run this program for half an hour and you get the wrong answer. What is wrong there? Unfortunately, this type of problem you are not going to be able to describe over the phone and have the PICS person verify it. It is obviously of a much more complex nature. What we will have to do at that point is have the PICS individual contact the field SE. The appropriate field individual will travel to your installation, and with you the customer, reduce that problem to a manageable entity. And, at that point, the customer with the SE's assistance, will fill out a problem report and send it in, if appropriate.