

Festivities

December 23 – Crawley and Brighton staff gathered together at the Posthouse Hotel, Horley for the annual festive bash. By all accounts a great time was had by everyone and a few no doubt went home slightly the worse for wear! Hopefully the headaches did not spoil the rest of the holiday.

Newsline would like to thank **Sandra Corcoran** for organising the event, on behalf of all the staff.

We will let the pictures tell the story.

Just some of Systems Division.



Pat with her toy boy.



Mainly customer services above - with a bit of old personnel department too!



CEM and purchasing are all smiles.



Caught in the act - collecting up all the half empty bottles!



Katherine and Kevin take a break.



A bevy of matriarchs!!!

Sandra Champ and the rest of finance department take long-awaited revenge on the editor!!



From the Editor

Our end-of-year edition looks back on the festive season as it was celebrated by the Crawley and Brighton staff and also focusses on the future, reporting below on Systems Division's sales meeting in December.

Please remember to keep me informed of any events of interest so they can be included in Newsline during 1998.

Beryl Hutchin editor

Systems Division Review

Brighton - December 5 - autumn sales meeting - Systems Division.

Director of sales **Phil Northeast** opened the meeting and announced the agenda for the day. He then handed over to chairman and chief executive **Michael Aldrich**, whose theme followed the lines

of his presentation to the IT Maintenance Services convention, featured in last month's issue.

Aldrich: "...by the year 2000 ROCC will have become a total services solutions company"

He asked his audience the origins of the name ROCC and the old ones were mentioned like 'Rediffusion's old computer company', 'Redifon's original computer company', but a new one had emerged, he said: 'Reliable Outstanding Customer Care'

"By the year 2000 ROCC will have become a total services solutions company," said Aldrich. "I am in the process of buying out my co-directors, terms have been agreed and we are making good progress. The company is a stable one," he assured his audience. "It has an enviable track record and a large client base."

ROCC's business activity is split into four sectors. Systems Division comprises three software groups **SEECHECK**, **MICRORATE** and **UNICLASS**, each with its own range of products, salesforce and support consultants. IT Maintenance Services Division is made up of PC and peripheral maintenance, network installations and help desk operations. The International sales operation covers Central Europe, Australia and New Zealand. Finally, the Contract Electronics Manufacturing facility has built up a good client base, with work being done for companies connected with transport, security systems and the manufacture of high voltage power systems.

"The biggest area of growth over the next few years will be services, encapsulating consultancy, training and forms design, feasibility studies, project management, application maintenance, audits, evaluation and bespoke systems. All these fall under the generic term of 'Professional Services' a route that ROCC is going down and where we shall be in the year 2000," said Aldrich.

"Around our products we will be building a whole range of services. It is these services that will deliver and make ROCC money." Moving on, Aldrich told his audience that all the ROCC locations would be networked, slowly paper would diminish as locations communicated via e-mail. And, with excellent conference facilities now in place, Crawley would be used for factory visits and meetings. Likewise, the respective divisions, if required, could use both Rochdale and Brighton. "My ultimate goal is to get the company working as a team - this will be of paramount importance if we are to succeed. Skills are plentiful within our workforce and soon you will see a lot of homogenisation."

Turning to the new product releases, he continued: "SEECHECK started its life in the 1970s as a hardware system. It made the company a great deal of money, margins were wonderful and we had the right product at the right time. It was what the marketplace cried out for - bulk data capture that was extremely robust and proved time and time again its cost effectiveness to clients.

"Now in the 1990s we have a software product bearing the same name which years ago the company saw fit to register as a trademark. Again, we have the right product at the right time. This product too, is cost effective, it yields up real benefits to the client, and what company does not want to save money," he said. "Every organisation is conscious of the fact that saving money makes for a healthy profit and loss account. The message you must impart and reinforce to your clients and prospects is that ROCC has a range of products that will significantly reduce their overheads. Why? Because it will save organisations money. Magic!

"For example, scanning documents reduces errors, relieves the possibility of pain of keying-in high volumes and the equipment does not take up much space. The integrated intelligent



Sinden: "...its platform technology is nearly two years ahead of a typical business system"

character recognition (ICR) system, is ready to use, there is a predictable lifetime cost, ROCC offers total support, contracting is a risk free investment. ROCC has entered another data entry revolution.

"We need to sign up organisations on at least five-year contracts. I appreciate it may be difficult to convince some prospects to commit to this term but if we have in place a total solutions package and the reference sites to back up our performance to deliver the goods and the service, both pre and post sales, then that is surely a successful route to securing attractive and profitable business deals."

The new **SEECHECK** range comprises four models - 00/10C (colour scanner) - 00/36 - 45/27 - 100/60. The scanning figures, where appropriate, on the left represent single-side feed and the right hand double-sided feed per minute.

In concluding, Aldrich pressed home his message by saying. "SEECHECK is simple to use. It has the capability of scanning, storing, recognising and retrieving data. From the signing of a contract it can be delivered within 30 days. To any organisation, time is money. Keep your sales pitch simple. Avoid procrastinators – it costs us money and possibly lost sales. What I want is market penetration; the sales and the volume systems culminating in ROCC cementing its dominance in this marketplace. Many of the systems you currently sell are around £20k. The salesforce's target is to sell two systems a month per man."

Rounding off the morning session, managing consultant **Paul Sinden** showed how the new storage and retrieval product works as an attractive additional to the SEECHECK family. The system can read from 60 to 100,000 characters an hour, equating to 25 clerical staff keying at 4000 characters per hour. "It has the best components to make it fully functional from day one to the end of its useful life. Its platform technology is nearly two years ahead of a typical business computer system," said Sinden. "From next year the product range will be all ROCC, further establishing ourselves as a supplier of both hardware and software products. The company has agreed with Fujitsu to supply their scanners, as they are the best in the marketplace," he continued.

Sinden then went into the technicalities of the system and its versatility: "Our solution is an all encompassing system - not a product you can buy off the shelf at PC World. It is an add-on to be sold with recognition systems. Look on it as a mini filing cabinet that will one day eliminate the thousands of miles of four and five drawer cabinets currently in offices and warehouses throughout the UK. How much will this system cost, I can hear one or two of you asking? The price for this little gem starts at around £15,000."

Sinden gave a demonstration and finished by saying that problem solving would be more streamlined by using a 56k fax data modem with remote diagnostic links into clients' systems, thus giving them an even better service.

In opening the afternoon session, **Phil Northeast** emphasised the division's needed to get its sales administration structure in place. "It's a bit of a war zone out there," he stressed.

When he joined the company two years ago, the salesforce was doing its own thing and was not a cohesive unit but extremely disparate. Now the structure was beginning to gel and it must be taken seriously. Sales and pre-sales support must be dedicated to getting business.

"I am recruiting for Rochdale, Bristol and Edinburgh, to give a more even national sales coverage. From now on the name of the game is to increase the client database from new business sources. We are already building up a pre-sales support team in UNICLASS to work with sales manager **Chris Potter** and Rochdale-based senior account manager **Lloyd Williams**. The direct marketing centre's sales and marketing system must become a fully functional business tool, as both Brighton and Rochdale will use this common database. The salesforce must know what is happening with prospects and the system should be generating new leads on a regular basis. However, the onus is also on the sales people to key in sales forecasts regularly. SELL and SUCCEED - ROCC must not miss the window of opportunity," Northeast stressed.

In reviewing his team's performance, **Henry Francis** said that they need to secure more business. The team's figures were reviewed, together with expected contracts. "It is important to identify the big paper houses and major in on them. Organisations where we can identify savings, where the workforce can be sensibly and effectively redeployed or where the organisation was looking to reduce its overheads," he said. "Much more emphasis and sheer hard work must be placed on winning new business – not a daunting task and one that should be easily achievable," he concluded.

Said business development manager **Luke Aldrich**: "the MICRORATE for Windows products for CESMM (Civil Engineering Standard Method of Measurement) and MMHW (Method of Measurement for Highway Works), which we had expected to sell at around £15,000, are not entirely finished. What we have instead is a small, nearly perfect, billing system which we are able to ship quickly, at around £3000. To date, 15 clients have signed up for this package. Rochdale was running a series of training courses, creating much needed revenue and we are receiving excellent feedback from customers for the new generation of MICRORATE for Windows. However, there is still a need for new products and services," he concluded.

Taking over for UNICLASS, sales manager **Chris Potter** briefly explained the product range to the audience. It comprises a suite of financial systems which are installed, for example, in local authorities, commercial firms, ambulance services and NHS trusts. The systems are year 2000 compliant. "Business is ahead of target," he stated. "Earlier this year we launched UNICLASS

release 3.0 in a Windows environment. One of its principal features is that it is far quicker in extracting management data from the system. Also the ICR system can now be bolted onto UNICLASS as an input system and Hartlepool BC has contracted for such a system.

"UNICLASS works in a niche and incestuous market. If you are not established then you will not win the business. Plans include upgrading the remaining 75% of the user base and targeting large direct service

organisations and commercial markets. We must form strategic partnerships, grow our sales team and go out and get the business," concluded Potter.

In winding up for Systems Division, **Northeast** reiterated that they must make the numbers, the targets and the margins, which would ultimately result in a better life for everyone. Finally, **Aldrich** said: "to date, we are doing quite well. The prognosis for the future is very, very good. If we concentrate on building up the services on the back of our product ranges to give us a total services solutions business, then we will be a company well positioned in the marketplace to enter, with confidence, a new and exciting Millennium."



Northeast: "sell and succeed"



Andy Cush (l) and Chris Potter (r), pictured with Phil Northeast, were well ahead of targets at the end of November - hence the champagne