SPERRY+UNIVAC

data entry newsletter

Product Marketing

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data entry

DATA ENTRY NEWSLETTER #263   December, 1980

General   Information

All   Product Line

FIELD SUPPORT SEMINAR 1980

PRESENTATION: THE RPQ CHANNEL

BY: Special Products

The attached materials were the general handout provided during the Data Entry & Distributed Systems Field Support Seminar in Salt Lake City. If you have questions arising from these materials, please contact the presentor or the Worldwide Marketing & Services group for clarification.

Sperry Univac provides the customer an opportunity to have special hardware or software features custom-developed by a major vendor to their specification, and installed with full maintenance.

R.P.Q. represents "Request for Product Quotation"; the response takes the form of a commitment as to cost and schedule. If this is accepted by the user, it is accomplished by the Special Products group.

Form UDI-1120 is initiated by the field Systems Analyst or Sales Representative, to describe the desired feature. The R.P.Q. is submitted to the Regional Management, and then to Worldwide Special Products, Blue Bell, where it is logged and directed to the appropriate staff group.

When very quick reply is required, the initiator can use a cover memo and the telephone to move the R.P.Q. quickly--and a 'ballpark' figure can be had within a week or two. It will not have the warranty of a committed cost and schedule, which require about 6 weeks (additional time for costs above $50K, which must be approved).

If the R.P.Q. is for a 'copy' of a previously created product, the request should clearly indicate this fact. The reply will be quick. The price of an RPQ is always adjusted by the Operations Controller, so no 'fixed price' can be quoted unless agreed to by all the Operations in advance.

When an R.P.Q. involves hardware, it is standard procedure to deliver two copies to the requesting C.E. branch, with documentation. This provides full backup sparing of non-standard equipment only at the locations which require them.

The contact for 1900 and 2000 product line RPQ's is George Mason in Salt Lake City; he can tell you what has been bid and what was built, and assist you in preparing or expediting your R.P.Q.

The most familiar question is, why are they so costly?
There are a couple of reasons:
1. You're paying for a lot of RPQ overhead in bids that took weeks to make, which were never built. The cost is spread evenly over all bids.
2. Your customer isn't getting a slapped-together job out of somebody's garage; RPQ's have self-diagnostics, power-on confidence testing, and extensive inhouse test in addition to the design, creation, and documentation of the product. It isn't cheap, but it makes for a reliable result.
3. Your controller added a markup that may be negotiable with him, if you feel it's important enough. The Special Products group can't get in the middle of that, but they can tell you their bid price.

As a general rule of thumb:

--Don't R.P.Q. when you don't believe that it will be built; it just increases the overheads for everyone.

--Make sure the customer understands that R.P.Q.'s are purchase only and not cheap; they are paying for the full product development overhead, including hand-built results and complete documentation.

--For our product lines, if it is a one-copy item (a single system requirement), it probably isn't worth it! Most of our R.P.Q.'s, because the systems are small in scale, come on multi-system users with a significant cost/benefit on the item.

What's already done?

--The most popular 1900 R.P.Q. was for the interface of a Univac 0719 Card Reader; a card reader interface is also being prepared for the 1900/10 by Special Products.

--A combined tape/line printer switch and keystation switch was built for the 1900 CADE.

--Multi-Supervisors was written for an early V6 software release,
  installed at several accounts and rejected as not feasible for the
  amount of operating system overhead; no concurrency within a task
  was offered.

--The Remote Keystation Adapter began life as an R.P.Q., and was turned
  over to manufacturing as a product line item when volumes exploded.
  The Product Division developed it into the Remote Device Adapter, a
  product line item, for the 1900/10 System.