

## Video: Capital Investment?

In *Video — A Corporate Picture*, a monograph distributed by Sony Corp., Walt Robson (Innovative Media, Inc.) points out that operating expense considerations including staff, size, salaries and productivity have already been examined, along with several implementation plans. Including the "phased-in" plan, based on achieving results on an incremental basis and the "major startup" in which all elements come together as a "task force," at some predetermined point in time.

From a capital investment point of view, there are two areas to consider: Playback equipment in the field; and origination equipment at headquarters and/or field locations.

Any or all of the following capital items may comprise origination equipment: video cameras, film/slide chain, editing video recorders, editor/controller, portable video recorders — battery operated, video monitors, waveform monitors, switchers, enhancement equipment — time base correctors, etc.

A sales representative or dealer can explain the function of these specialized components. A demonstration can also be arranged that will show what these technical items are designed to do and why they are advantageous for certain applications.

Exploring the options available, without all the technical jargon, may help to simplify the decision making process.

Without field video playback equipment there can be no audience. The goal is to reach targeted audiences as economically as possible. Here are a collection of some of the most relevant options:

- Rent or buy?
- Color or Black and White?
- Reel-to-reel or Videocassette?
- Playback or Play/Record?
- Portable or Assigned Use?
- "Wide Gauge" or "Narrow Gauge"?
- Professional or Home Machines?

### RENT OR BUY?

When first programs were a success, the decision to rent or buy became a matter of simple arithmetic. The number of rentals that would equal or approximate the cost of an outright purchase. And any applicable investment credits or other tax advantages.

Choosing videoplayers is now almost automatic, since black and white equipment seems to be disappearing from the market. Color playback equipment provides excellent reproduction, even if initial programs are in black and white. There's always the option of upgrading to color programming in the future. And color programs produced by others can be acquired and played as designed — in color.

The television set or monitor (a special TV set which accepts videotape signals directly rather than through the channel selector which degrades picture quality) can be either color or black and white. Naturally, there are initial savings by purchasing black and white instead of color. When the organization's three to five year plan calls for black and white only, the choice is clear. But, if



color will be needed or desirable before then, the wisest investment would be color. With depreciation allocated to the operating budget for each of the next five years.

North American audiences expect color, since most families have one or more color TV sets in their homes. Color videotape is the preferred option for customer presentations, public relations and other applications. Because color conveys an additional degree of professionalism. For internal technical training, role plays, etc., black and white is adequate. And color sets could be used in some locations and black and white in others. A careful examination of business needs, audience expectations and near term growth goals will provide the data needed to make the color vs. monochrome decision.

### REEL-TO-REEL vs. VIDEOCASSETTE?

The market itself has dictated the type of equipment that predominates — in terms of numbers of models and numbers of units in use. Videocassette is, without a doubt, the most popular. It owes much of its rapid acceptance to its inherent ease of handling. Reel-to-reel has been likened by field personnel to threading a movie projector. Whereas videocassette has been described as being as easy to deal with as dropping a slice of bread in a toaster. Both descriptions might be slightly exaggerated, but the fact is that the convenient drop-in-loading and encapsulated/protected design of videocassettes is responsible for their widespread popularity.

Open reel, half-inch machines still enjoy some popularity because they are economical from a capital investment point of view. Plus, they are also lightweight, reliable, and already widespread in many organizations. A not uncommon situation, which presents the following options:

- Add to the current system.
- Introduce videocassette players.
- Replace current system with videocassette units.

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## Making Meetings Work

*Execu\*Time*, the newsletter on effective use of executive time, presents the following tips on getting your meeting work done as effectively as possible:

1. Control the size of meetings. Invite everyone only if the meeting is to disseminate information or start people thinking. Meetings to analyze a situation or reach a decision require five to eight people maximum. To save time, agree with everyone, but leave inappropriate ideas out of your summaries.

2. Formulate a detailed agenda in advance. Make sure it specifies the topics (a question format is more involving), and indicates the time allocation for each. Two to three days ahead, distribute working documents, background reading, proposals for discussion, etc. Make clear: people who don't prepare should not show up for the meeting.

3. Describe in agenda what you expect the meeting to accomplish: sharing information; delegation of tasks; opening of new discussion and generation of ideas; situation analysis; or final decision. Tell attendees what role you expect each one to play. (Hint: expect one thing at a time.)

4. Meeting leader should pump quiet ones, cap gushing ones, summarize and synthesize, and move the meeting along. A sure sign of an over-done discussion: people repeating their own or others' arguments with little or nothing of value added. Cut this stuff short and move to next item. — July, 1979