The Making of a Master: No. 3 in Series

In selling for Tek, it's fun to help customers with their problems

By KEN CUSHMAN

The Tekweek series, "The Making of a Master," continues with this interview with Larry Haga, a Sales Engineer with the Instrument Group working out of the Washington, D.C., Field Office. Larry was one of the 91 Tek salespersons to achieve masters status for FY500.

Larry Haga joined Tektronix February 23, 1976, beginning as a bench technician at the Rockville, Md., Service Center. He transferred to the Dallas, Texas Service Center in August, 1978, and three months later was promoted to Field Service Specialist.

Upon the advice of Jim Lindsey (Dallas Service manager), and with his recommendation, Larry entered selling in April, 1982, starting as a Sales Engineer in the Houston Field office. Two years later he returned to Rockville as a member of the sales force.

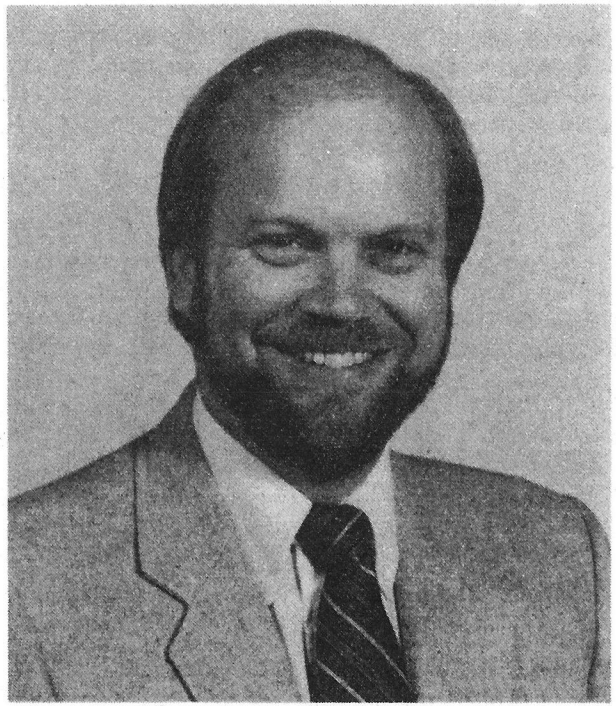
In recalling his early days at Tek, Larry mentions that four of his fellow technicians at Rockville also went into sales—Mike Hines and Dwight Moxness, both of DCFO, attained "Master" designation; Ted Constantinides is now a Branch Sales Manager in the Detroit FO; and Dean Turnbaugh, a former Sales Engineer.

Larry, what do you like about your job?

Most important is the ability to interface with people on a daily basis and actually help the customer with his measurement problems. I also like being able to affect my own financial income directly through my own effort.

What do you dislike about your job?

The paperwork! The paperwork! Doesn't everyone? Seriously, I hate the feeling of helplessness when I get into a situation where I give up control. An example may be having to go to the factory for information on delivery, configuration, or information, and then just having to wait before responding to the customer.



Larry Haga (SE, Instrument Group, Washington, D.C. Field Office) says what's best for the customer is best for Tek.

How do you approach your job each day?

I plan my days in advance through call scheduling, with time allowed, maybe an hour a day, for freewheeling. Interspersed in all this are seminars, training sessions and meetings.

What's the secret in being a successful salesman?

I'd say the secret is truly caring that the customer gets what he needs. What's best for the customer is best for Tek. Another secret is longterm relationships, and don't forget honesty...even when it means telling the customer that "unfortunately" we can't help him.

What advice would you give a college student considering a career in sales?

Don't try to follow any formula. I think there are as many ways to succeed as there are people trying. The trick is not to give up. Be sincere in your effort to help the customer solve his problems.

What advice can you give to other Tek salespeople who aspire to achieve Masters status?

Don't give up, and don't get discouraged. Most of all, try to avoid being too comfortable. Work your "SalesList." It's a very effective tool you can use to reach many customers with information.

How difficult do you find the competition vs. a few years ago?

Today's competition seems to be much more aggressive, especially in their advertising where they attack us directly. This competition comes from new areas now. The old foes are gone and new young aggressive ones have taken their place.

Finally, is there anything you'd like to say to the Tektronix workforce?

My first exposure to Tektronix was when I was in the military 15 years ago. I was one of eight technicians, and we always fought for the chance to use the one Tek scope. This is true today in the quality of the product we offer. I say with pride, "We are the best." If customers don't buy the best, they have to settle for less.□