

BEAVERTON, Ore. — The sprawling Tektronix plant in Beaverton, Ore., is ultra modern in facilities and buildings, but once inside, the atmosphere is reminiscent of the firm's humble beginnings 20 years ago.

Greetings and introductions are informal; a simple, "This is Fitz," finds you shaking hands with Robert Fitzgerald, youthful vice-president of operations.

Although Fitz is an articulate man, he weighs his words carefully. He answers questions with candor and consideration, but sometimes parries with: "I'd rather not talk about that. It could lead to generalities."

If you get the impression of hesitancy, it is probably because he doesn't want the answer to sound like, "I did this," or "I did that."

For Robert Fitzgerald is a team man, like the other Tektronix executives, most of whom "grew up" in the company.

How It's Done.

The oscilloscope manufacturing firm's corporate image has never been oriented toward public relations and, although steps are being taken in that direction now, the executives are still hesitant about giving their views on the electronics industry and on Tektronix in particular.

Ask Mr. Fitzgerald to recall a notable success among the many the firm has achieved, and he might answer:

"It's not one thing. It's the way we work together. For example the relationship between engineering, manufacturing and marketing; during peak production, there are no problems. But if one of these functions is held up, the others must adjust to keep us on an even keel.

"Whoever is called upon does it. It's as simple as that."

Pursuing this theme further brings out some pertinent observations:

"Capable young people are necessary to the growth of any company. Although the competition for the top college graduates is growing, we have always attracted our share by concentration on professional opportunity, rather than just a job."

Capability Search.

Part of a company's responsibility is to provide its key men with a supporting staff. "Tektronix has a training program right down the line, and we encourage all our employes to make use of it. Through it, we not only can bring all of our people up to date, but we can also discover hidden capabilities and find those workers who are genuinely interested in the electronics field.

"Tektronix feels that a narrow job is a stifling one, and we are constantly studying the field of job enlargement." Individuals vary, but most people can increase their capabilities and capacity under the proper incentives.

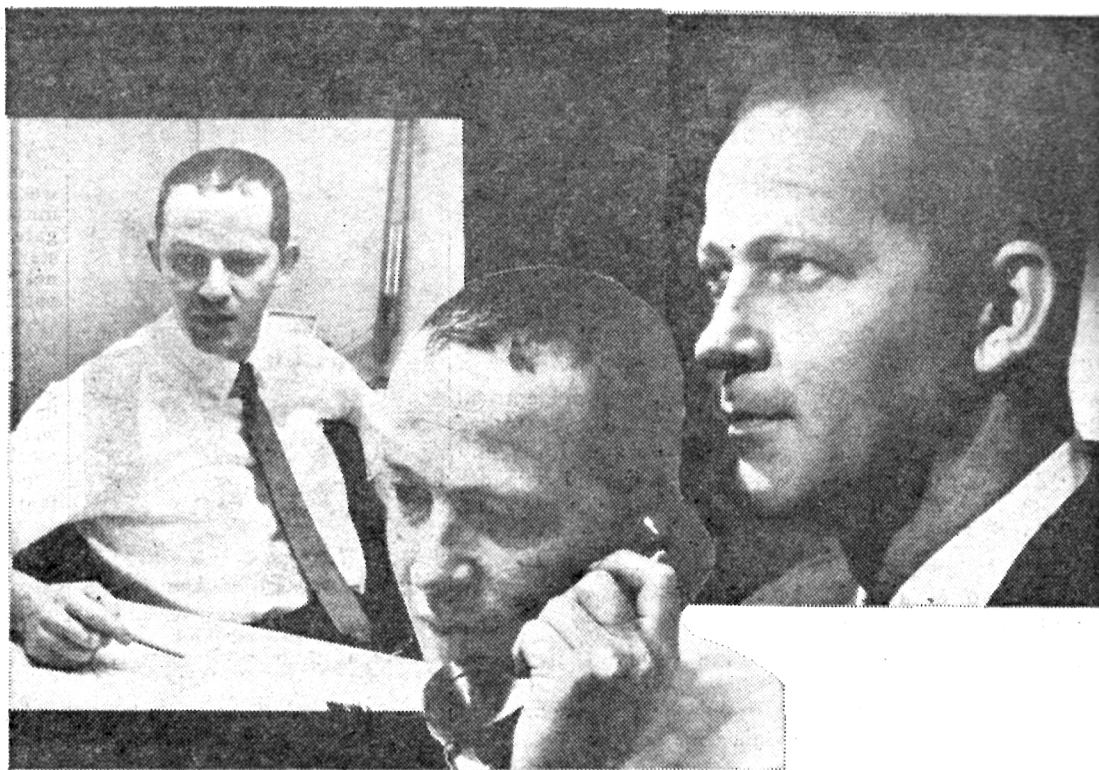
So when, "others adjust to keep us on an even keel," it is not a happy coincidence but part of a carefully applied company policy that has put the capable person in the proper job.

Mr. Fitzgerald capsules the accomplishment into: "It's the way we work together."

Apprenticeship Served.

Mr. Fitzgerald is not just a team man. He is also a team leader and has served his apprenticeship well.

He was the 35th employe of this industry giant, which now employs over 3500



Just 'Fitz'—High-Powered Executive

workers. At 38, he has 17 years seniority in the 20-year-old company.

"I began as a part-time employe in 1948, while I was still in college."

Since then he has served Tektronix as maintenance man, warehouseman, receiving agent, materials manager, buyer and controller.

In 1950 he graduated from the University of Portland and became a full-time Tektronix employe. He is married to the former Jane Grace, and the Fitzgerald's have three children.

Interest in Young.

Mr. Fitzgerald is a board member of Tektronix and also of the United Good Neighbor drive. He serves on the executive committee at the Christie School for retarded children and is on the advisory board for the Portland Community College, a committee that was just recently formed.

Tektronix — company and individual employe — puts its full support behind UGN, and he is enthusiastic about the work being done and the results that have been achieved.

The State of Oregon, particularly the Portland area is bursting its educational "breches" and the Community College plan is not only worthwhile, but necessary, Mr. Fitzgerald believes:

"Industry is absorbing and benefiting from the trained man and woman, and it has an obligation to see that ample educational facilities are provided for the youngsters that are growing up."

The Christie School is his personal interest. Like all altruists he does not enlarge upon the extent of his services.

He shakes his head ruefully at the remark that a Fitzgerald day must be a long one, but the observer is sure that if he was needed, he could find time to do just a little more.

Mr. Fitzgerald is not an expounder but,

after a sip of coffee, he offers a few random thoughts.

Adding It Up.

"We've grown rapidly, like many electronic industries, but the field itself is still in its infancy — and that's about as far as I care to go in making predictions," he adds with his engaging grin.

Problems?

"In a growing market, the big one is keeping up with demand. But there are always built-in situations of which we must be continually aware.

"The electronics industry is tied very closely to the world situation. Plans, that are subject to a calculated risk, must often be made. Political and economic factors can change almost overnight, and you must allow for resiliency, so you can bounce with them.

"Rapid industry growth is a problem in itself. You are working on order backlogs of two or three months, but in your building and training programs, you are projecting two, three, maybe five years into the future.

"We learn as we go along, and we've been wrong before, like everyone else."

Without Fanfare.

What do you do?

"That's the team effort. If manufacturing moves too far ahead you call on marketing to take up the slack. So far, we've never been let down."

It does sound simple, but you have come across good teams before, and you know that behind everyone is a meticulous coaching staff that has painstakingly provided for every contingency.

From Howard Vollum, company president on down, Tektronix has that, and Robert Fitzgerald is among the ablest.

Optimum results, with the minimum fanfare.

— William Galvin