THE BUSINESS IMPROVER

Network puts Volvo in driver's seat 4

THE 10 SINS OF TELEMARKETING 9

TELECOM FAXSTREAM: three businesses give their verdicts 13

Mobile Office: IT'S HERE! 3

Telecom Australia

WELCOME!

FRANK JONES

Communication the key to improving your business

C ommunication will be a major key to unlocking business success in the 1990s.

The major challenge facing business is how to make the most efficient use of communications – in terms of both technology and management practice.

The major challenge facing Telecom Australia is to harness our substantial resources to become a true partner of business in improving communications.

This magazine, *The Business Improver*, is just one of many initiatives Telecom is launching to meet that challenge.

The aim of *The Business Improver* is simple: communicate relevant, interesting material on the world of communications to Telecom clients in a way that will improve your business.

Our resources and expertise place us in a unique position to help everyone from the smallest to biggest business.

We are the one organisation that will be able to provide the answer to any telecommunications question.
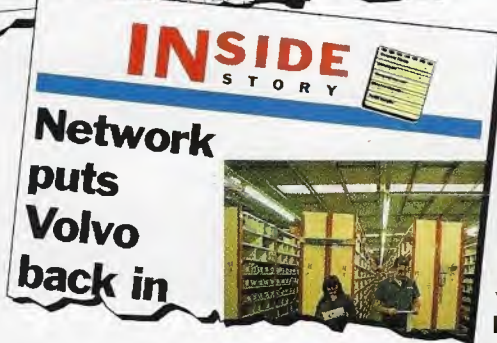
Getting those answers will also become easier. As a key business client you will now have one single point of contact – your Telecom Business Consultant.

You don't have to purchase anything, or even be in the process of purchasing, to talk to them.

They are available to provide you with expert opinion on any aspect of your telecommunications system. Part of their task is to make sure you are getting the most out of your existing services and if you need it they will provide detailed appraisal of ways that can improve your telecommunications.

As this is the first issue of *The Business Improver* I should give a brief explanation of the various columns and sections and the sort of information you can expect to find in this and future issues of *The Business Improver*.

Connections: This will be the "what's new" column that will provide an insight into the many exciting new products and services that are becoming available in the ever-changing telecommunications world.

Tell Me: One of our Telecom Business Services specialists will be interviewed each issue to talk about their particular area of expertise. In this issue we talk to Frank Barrot, General Manager National Sales Operations, about initiatives designed to provide better client support.

Inside Story: How one of Telecom's clients is running its business communications and the sort of lessons that other businesses can learn from them.

Telemarketing: *The Business Improver* will look at the art of telemarketing and offer tips, suggestions and expert advice on how to get the most out of telemarketing.

Compute It!: Computer products that will enhance your telecommunications. News items you can use.

Help!: Common problems that business clients run into with their telecommunications. Our technical experts provide the answers – and tell you where you can get more information if needed.

Talk!: Communications is a lot more than putting in the right equipment. *The Business Improver* will talk to management consultants, academics and business psychologists on the art of communicating. In this issue we look at how to run a productive teleconference.

'Our resources and expertise place us in a unique position to help everyone from the smallest to biggest business.'

Mobility: Communications on the move. Mobile telephones have revolutionised the way a lot of people do business in Australia. This article will help you get the best from your mobile.

Fax It!: Major changes to even further improve the productivity of facsimiles are coming. We look at two businesses using Telecom Faxstream and the benefits they have found.

Read It!: Books of practical interest to busy business people.

The Next Thing!: Telecommunications trends both in Australia and overseas.

Use It!: Some of the services that Telecom offers its business clients.

Frank Jones is the Executive General Manager of Telecom Business Services.

The portable office

Telecom's Mobile Office fits into a business briefcase, and combines a Toshiba laptop computer, modem and cellular phone with data interface. You can transmit or retrieve data from your office computer, "read" bulletin boards, contact your voice mailbox, or send and receive PC-based fax messages with the inbuilt fax/data modem option. The briefcase weighs 8.5 kilograms and costs $8000. For details, phone Freecall 008 011 511.

Yellow Pages on disk

Yellow Pages™ can now be read on compact disk. Telecom Business Finder's new Compact Disk – Read Only Memory (CD-ROM) has listings from all 55 metropolitan and main regional Yellow Pages directories. Users can make simple, complex or geographical searches of all directories at once.

Telecom Business Finder can be used for:
■ Market research, analysis or planning.
■ Direct marketing, mailing or telemarketing.
■ Sales prospecting or territory development.
■ As an electronic directory.

The package operates on any IBM-compatible personal computer with hard-disk spare space of at least three megabytes (Mb) and Microsoft Windows 3 software. It can be used on most Apple Macintosh computers with hard-disk spare space of 3Mb. An ISO 9660 standard CD-ROM drive is needed. The data can be exported into ASCII, WordPerfect, dBase 111+, DIF and Telemagic software packages.

Telecom Business Finder costs $2000. For details, phone Murray Ogden, 03 896 4409.

Freecall 008 enhancements

Telecom is boosting its Freecall™ 008 service to make it more flexible and efficient. A Newspoll study this year found that people prefer companies that offer 008 numbers. More than two-thirds said they would rather phone a Freecall number than use a coupon or any other form of response. More than half the respondents said they were more likely to call a Freecall 008 number than an ordinary phone number.

Telecom's improved service includes:
■ A new charging structure based on distance. Your Freecall 008 number can be offered to clients in your local call area as well as interstate callers. Local calls will be charged at the local rate, so just one

number can be offered to all customers.
■ One Freecall 008 number for several locations. Businesses will be able to use one Freecall 008 number for up to 55 branches or depots. The call will be automatically answered by the branch nearest to the caller.
■ Diverted calls between branches. Calls will be able to be diverted to one office after hours and on public holidays, allowing an extended service on minimised staff costs.
■ Specified areas for calls. Companies can choose the areas from which Freecall 008 calls can be made. For instance, a business can specify that calls from only Adelaide and Sydney will be connected. The areas can be changed when the company wishes, without having to change the Freecall 008 number.

If you have a Freecall 008 number, Telecom will contact you before you are transferred to the enhanced service. For details, phone Freecall 008 055 055.

Telecard: any phone, anywhere

The Telecom Telecard™ allows holders to phone anyone, anywhere from virtually any phone without putting the call on someone else's phone bill. With touchtone phones, the caller simply keys in the number on the Telecard, the PIN number and the phone number being called. Voice prompts guide the caller. For phones without touchtone dialling, calls can be made through Telecard operators. The cost of the call is charged to the phone account nominated, and a record of calls made using Telecard is listed on the phone bill.

Telecard has three access levels:
■ Unrestricted access allows the holder to make international, national and local calls from anywhere in Australia. In addition, calls can be made through "Australia Direct" from

more than 20 countries and operator-assisted calls can be made from more than 100 countries. The "Australia Direct" service connects the call directly to an Australian operator. All overseas calls are charged at Australian rates.
■ National access allows automatic and operator-assisted calls to be made anywhere in Australia. Sales or service staff can stay in touch without a mobile phone.
■ Limited access restricts the user to up to five nominated numbers in Australia. The numbers could include the office, factory or important clients.
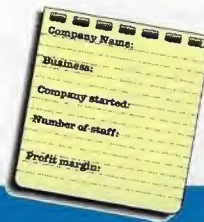
Telecom Telecard makes it easy for family members to keep in touch, whether overseas or interstate on holiday or business.

The card is issued free and has no annual charges. There is a validation fee for all successful calls. For details or to apply for a card, phone Freecall 008 032 032

Network puts Volvo back in driver's seat

Volvo's spare parts warehouse at Minto where dealers' orders are implemented.

Telecom's Austpac® network has given Volvo a major boost in how it handles its spare parts business as well as letting it be master of its communications destiny. **John Kavanagh** reports.

One of the vogue terms in business circles in this recession has been outsourcing. During the boom years of the 1980s companies ploughed millions of dollars into auxiliary functions like computing, in the hope of developing systems that would give them an edge over their rivals. Many of them are now discovering that these non-core activities are a big cash drain and deliver only marginal competitive advantage, and they are being persuaded to hand over the management of their information systems to outside organisations. But at least one company, Volvo Australia, is swimming against that tide and its management believes there are strong arguments for maintaining internal expertise in information systems.

Greg Childs, administration manager of Volvo Australia, has a team of 13 information systems specialists in his unit. The company has had an information systems function for all of its 20 years in Australia but in recent years its goal has been to be self-sufficient in that area – something it managed to achieve 18 months ago.

Childs says Volvo's experience with external providers of computing and information services was that they were expensive and had trouble delivering the service.

"We used to be quite reliant on contract support but the providers of those services found it difficult to respond to our need to change," Childs says. "You often find that the person who developed the system you are using has moved on and it is very difficult to get any further development work done. Those services are cost-effective if your business is fairly static and you are content to keep using the same services but if the business is changing the contract company either finds it hard to keep up with you or charges a premium to meet your needs."

Belying the conservative image created by its solid, long-lasting cars, Volvo Australia has experienced some big changes in recent years. Its Swedish parent went through a restructuring program when it split its car and truck divisions into separate operations and assimi-

lated the parts division into the product units. Last year there was more change when Volvo announced an alliance with the French car maker, Renault. In May Volvo Australia announced that it would be distributing Renault cars.

Child's group has been working on improvements to the distribution of spare parts to the Volvo dealer network. Since 1986 Volvo has operated a dial-up parts inquiry and ordering system; in July it transferred the system from an ageing videotex carrier to a native IBM protocol supported by Austpac, Telecom's X.25 packet switching network.

The move is in line with the company's strategy of taking greater control of its information systems functions.

"The videotex system was OK but it had some limitations," Childs says. "There were restrictions on the amount of on-line support we could give to the dealers and it needed specialist knowledge that we did not have."

Volvo Australia is an IBM user. It has two AS 400 high end mid-range machines, which support 150 in-house terminals, 80 dealer PCs and 14 dealer minicomputers (IBM System 36s). The communications protocol for the system is IBM's 5250 environment and the switch to Telecom's Austpac allows the Volvo network to communicate in that native environment. Childs' team has been testing the

Volvo dealer staff can now order parts, check availability or process invoices through the Austpac network.

system for several months and all the dealers went on line in July. The results, so far, have been very good.

Spare parts distribution is a critical aspect of the auto business, especially for a supplier like Volvo which supports a large number of big commercial vehicles. The computerised service, called Volvo Vision, is designed to handle inquiries, orders and deliveries as speedily and efficiently as possible. Through remote terminal or PC access dealers can check on the availability of stock, make an order entry, process invoices and make other accounting inquiries, and send memos to the Volvo dealer support staff.

The system has the added benefit of keeping down clerical staff numbers at head office. Between entry of the order at the dealership and activation of the "picking document" at Volvo's spare parts factory at Minto, southwest of Sydney, there is no human intervention. "The spare parts business would stop without the communications system," Childs says.

Childs says the implementation of the system has been fairly smooth. The dealers running System 36s had a very smooth transfer because their computer can switch directly into the 5250 environment. The dealers running PCs had one or two false starts. their DOS machines required special emulation
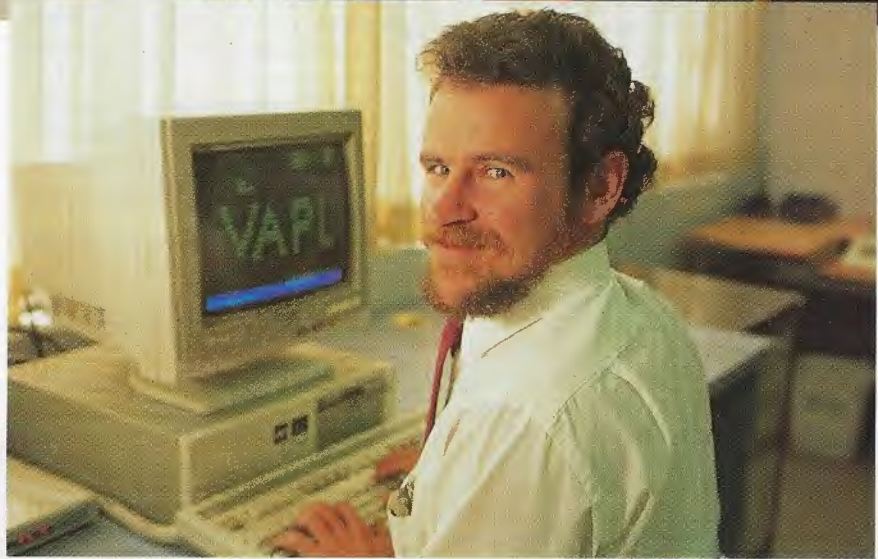
Greg Childs, administration manager of Volvo Australia. "The spare parts business would stop without the communications system."

software and the addition of some hardware at the head office end to give them entry into the native environment. IBM could not provide the required emulation solution so Volvo went to a third party supplier; that equipment had a few teething problems.

The basic infrastructure of the system has operated without trouble. Childs says the AS 400s have been very reliable and in three years of operation have had only three instances of downtime lasting longer than an hour. The Austpac network has been smooth.

Volvo considered offers for the network part of the system from Telecom and OTC. OTC, in a joint venture with Infolink, offers a similar service called Vanguard. "There was little difference in the price of the two offerings but we were not convinced the other offering had the necessary support infrastructure," Childs says.

"The Austpac people have given us good technical support, helped with the system design and helped co-ordinate the implementation by doing things like going out and pro-

How Volvo talks to its dealer network

VOLVO DEALERS

Sydney Metro Dealers

PC

PC

IBM SYSTEM 36

x.28* Protocol

x.28*

x.25* or x.32*

Public Switch Telephone Network (PSTN)

Sydney Metro dealers only

AUSTPAC NETWORK

x.25*

x.25*

x.25*

x.25*

Protocol converters

PAD**

PAD**

SDLC

SDLC
(Synchronous Data Link Control)

VOLVO AUSTRALIA HEADQUARTERS, CHATSWOOD

IBM AS/400

*Communication protocol

**Packet assembler disassembler (PAD)
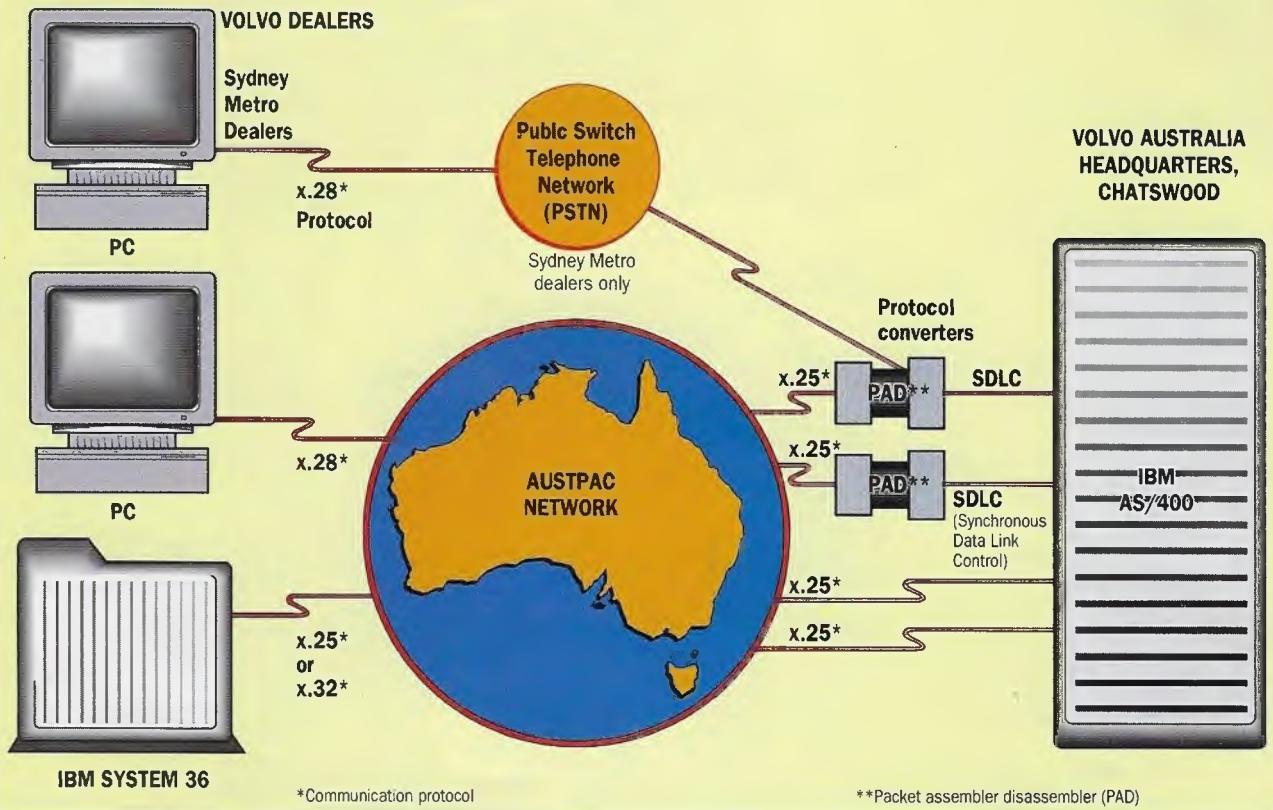
The basic outline of the network that links Volvo dealers with Volvo's head office at Chatswood on Sydney's north shore and its parts warehouse at Minto.

cessing the registration of our dealers (all Austpac users have to be registered with Telecom)."

Childs says that when Volvo first introduced on-line dealer support in 1986 it was a novelty and gave the company a competitive advantage in spare parts distribution. Now such systems are common in the industry and Childs describes them as a "competitive necessity". His job now is to add value to the network so that Volvo can reclaim some advantage. Having brought the network within the 5250 environment he has the people with the skills to enhance the service.

Already there are a few new bells and whistles on the system: an electronic mail module allows Volvo to use the network for the distribution of price update information and information bulletins. Childs has introduced a "parts location" option – if a spare part is out of stock in the Minto warehouse dealers can use the system to find other dealers who might have the part.

Another new feature is the guaranteed price service. The computer will tell the dealer how to price a service; he feeds in details of the type of service to be performed and the parts required and the computer will price the parts and estimate the time required for the job. The dealer can use that information

to provide his customer with a fixed quote prior to service.

"We will be adding other services to the system," Childs says. "One of our plans is to start processing warranty claims through the network; if we can speed up the processing of warranties it will improve dealer cash flows. We are also working on a vehicle location service for new and used cars."

Apart from benefits to the dealer network Volvo has found other communication spin–offs from the new network system.

Childs says the network has given Volvo

head office staff the ability to work at home on computer and connect into the system's database.

Sales staff who are in the field visiting dealerships have also gained improved access to head office functions via the new network.

Childs says that each of the sales representatives has a portable computer and can link

into the system via a modem call and get access to the electronic mail system or perform specific tasks such as running a warranty check on a specific dealership.

Childs will have some additional chores when Volvo adds the dozen or so Renault dealers to its own 110-strong dealer network.

Volvo will begin importing Renault's R19 model later this year. The R19, which was the top- selling imported car in Germany in 1990, will be launched in Australia later this year priced in the under $30,000 bracket.

Volvo and Renault now operate together through a worldwide alliance following a partnership deal struck last year. Volvo owns 20 per cent of Renault's parent company, Regie National des Usines Renault, while the French company owns 25 per cent of Volvo Car Corporation. In addition, the two companies both own 45 per cent of each others truck operations.

Volvo Australia was established as a wholly owned subsidiary of its Swedish parent company in 1970, and Volvo cars have been the highest-selling volume European imports in Australia for 16 of the past 20 years. Last November Volvo launched the 940 and 960 models, facelifted versions of the current 700 series production model.

Childs is confident that the decision to shift the company's information systems work in-house will provide management with the strategic support necessary to cope with the changes that lie ahead for the company.

TELL ME

Client service the key

Frank Barrot, General Manager National Sales Operations, Telecom Business Services, has spent 25 years with Telecom Australia. His background is in customer service and sales operations, and he has been in his present position for 12 months.

What is Telecom Business Services?
We are a major division of Telecom Australia, responsible for telecommunications services to most Australian businesses. Telecom Business Services is concerned with selling, maintenance, servicing and billing … we do everything for our business clients.

Who in the main are your customers?
Our clients are a complete cross-section of the Australian metropolitan business scene. Those falling outside our sphere are the country located businesses and the 250 largest firms and organisations. Needs are as varied as the types of businesses we service.

How do you aim to help your customers in today's rigorously competitive business environment?
We don't just sell communications systems, we sell "business improvement". Our representatives work closely with clients to fulfil current needs and identify future areas of possible development where we can assist in any expansion of business. Telecom Business Services is positioning itself as a valued business partner providing a full range of communication services, not just a telephone company.

Frank Barrot: "We don't just sell communications systems, we sell 'business improvement'."

The Telecom Business Services sales operation is presently undergoing a major reorganisation. What is involved?
The biggest changes are the reassignment of sales representatives to each handle a smaller portfolio of clients, and at the small business end of our market we have significantly expanded our telemarketing operation.

What difference to the customer will these changes make?
Our major accounts will see much more of our sales representatives, who will work with the customer to ensure that available communications technology is capitalised on by the client, and that the mix of products and services best matches the needs and budget of the customer's business.

Is this service solely Telecom oriented?
No, we can also work with private consultancy firms where necessary. For instance, if a client is interested in setting up a data communications network or establishing electronic data interchange to co-ordinate the transfer of information across a number of sites, we will work with the supplier of the computer system to integrate it with the company's telecommunications needs.

How will Telecom Business Services representatives maintain their new client relationships?
We want our sales force to improve their understanding of their client's business. To this end we have reworked our training

programs to emphasise their responsibilities to clients in account planning and development; we don't pay our sales force to sell inappropriate technology or for over-servicing. Our competitive environment increases the need to secure clients and build relationships with them.

How will you keep customers up to date with technological advances?
We recognise that with the rapidly advancing pace of technology, no client has the time to keep up to date with every development. Our representatives are constantly being informed of network developments and new service offerings. They will apply this knowledge to recommend the most appropriate, cost-effective communications technology to support their customer's specific needs. We will keep our major customers informed through continued personal contact, regular printed updates such as this and other magazines, audio tapes on specific developments and personal invitations to conferences and seminars covering areas of particular business involvement.

Why should Australian business stick with Telecom?
Australia's Telecom will provide value-for-money quality service to its customers. Our entire operations are being improved in customer focus and service. Others may follow but we will lead. Improving our customers' business is our business.

HELP

You are not in the telecommunications business. *Telecom* is.
Here are some common questions businesses ask Telecom to answer.

Q I installed an eight–line Commander system into my business six months ago. In recent weeks I have noticed the board is occasionally full. While that is frustrating to staff I don't want to expand the system yet. Are there any staff management techniques recommended to handle this?

A Yes we are able to offer you either a telephone techniques course for your staff or we could assist you with switchboard management. These courses assist you in effectively managing your telephone system, and can be run either on the job or in formal training rooms.

Q I am about to buy a facsimile machine. Do I need to put in a dedicated telephone line?

A Yes it would be recommended to have a separate line installed otherwise your facsimile machine would be connected to your existing telephone line which would prohibit customers from calling you when you are using the fax and alternatively faxes could not be sent to you when you are on the phone.

Q I run a small engineering consultancy that recently opened an office in Adelaide to service a specific project. In an attempt to improve communications between Melbourne and Adelaide staff I have instigated a mandatory weekly teleconference. However, it has not been well received, with staff describing it as frustrating and unproductive.

A To get the most out of a tele-conference, like any meeting, basic rules must be adhered to. Two of the most important are to have an agenda (circulated before the meeting) and a meeting chairperson. For more detailed tips on how to have a successful teleconference turn to page 11.

Q I need to apply for a new line. Which is the right section to ring?

A By ringing the dedicated number in the front of the White Pages directory – 132678 – you should be automatically connected to the office responsible for your area thanks to Telecom's new intelligent network system.

Q I placed an order last week and was told the delay was five working days. Do you know what time the technician will turn up?

A If you have been given an order number your Telecom salesperson can ring the technicians to make an appointment for you. If you do not have an order number then the consultant can check and get your order number.

Q I would like to order a Commander system. Who would I need to talk to?

A A call to 132678 will connect you to an appropriate salesperson who will be able to help. If you prefer to have a field representative visit that can be arranged on the same number.

Q How long does it take to get a phone connected?

A If there is a line available in the premises that can be taken over we just need to place an order to the exchange and it only takes 24 hours. If there is no line it will take approximately one week.

Q How much does it cost to get IDD (overseas access) connected on my phone line and how long does it take?

A If the access is to be provided on the exchange line there is no charge and Telecom needs only one day's notice. Because it will affect the phone account authorisation in writing is needed.

Q Can you tell me how much it will cost for me to send a fax to Sydney?

A It costs the same price per minute to send a fax as it does to make an STD phone call. It is all time charged. For a breakdown of the rates please consult the front of the White Pages.

Q I want to cancel my telephone line. What do I have to do?

A You have to send Telecom something in writing to authorise cancellation – a fax is fine (008 055 000) if that is more convenient. We also require a final billing address to send your Final account to.

Q I have heard about something that is available that allows you to hear if someone is trying to call you when you are already on another call?

A Telecom has a service known as Easycall that helps you avoid lost calls by making a single line appear to work like two lines. You can take two calls at once and alternate between the two calls. The only equipment necessary is one of Telecom's Touchfones and a user booklet, as the brains of the facility are at the telephone exchange.

Q I have had complaints from my customers saying that they cannot find me when they ring 013. How do I go about getting a listing there and how long does it take?

A When customers get a line connected they automatically get one entry into the White and Yellow Pages. If their customers are unable to contact them via 013 it is probably because they may have more than one business name under which they are known but only have one name listed. Subsequent entries can be obtained at a cost of $170.

For inquiries call 008 011 216

The 10 sins

Ten tips to convert grand expectations into reality. **Dorothy Coombe** reports.

Proponents of telemarketing often seem like gamblers – you only hear of the successes.

Stories abound on how telemarketing reduces sales force costs, improves productivity, increases geographic growth and coverage and enables businesses and customers to be more accessible to each other.

For every success there are several failures. The challenge is to convert your enthusiasm for telemarketing into real cost savings and productivity gains.

The 10 most common mistakes that businesses make are:

1. Not considering telemarketing as an option

The most basic mistake. The market reality is that there has been an explosion in costs of field sales forces and a general growth in the use of direct response advertising. This has been compounded by the recession and increased competition. This, and the increased sophistication of telemarketing itself, has forced managers to pay greater attention to telemarketing as an alternative to traditional sales and marketing techniques.

Many sales and marketing executives and advertising agencies still fail to incorporate telemarketing in their plans. This can cost their companies dearly in the longer term. .

2. Lack of commitment and resources

Commitment must come from the head of the organisation and must be made at the outset. This requires a commitment of time, effort, expertise and funding to do the job right. This does not mean executing a program on a "shoe-string" to see if telemarketing really works.

3. Not enlisting expertise

Staff are critical to the success of a telemarketing operation as well as being a major part of operating costs. However, all too often there is urgency given to getting staff on deck rather than ensuring that the correct criteria for selection is set and that staff are selected against that criteria. While hurried efforts are made to get telephone representatives, even less time is often spent in enlisting the supervisor and manager. Without proper coaching from the supervisor, and leadership and planning from the manager, a telemarketing operation will not reach its full potential.

4. Lack of understanding of the importance of the database

Quality of the database is vitally important to the success of direct marketing. While this is said often corporations are still seen to be using Yellow Pages and hard copy lists obtained from wherever possible. The best database will be built from a company's own records and interactions with its own base. This is particularly so in Australia with the poor quality of lists available.

A customer relational database will improve list quality, identify opportunities, enhance campaign development, improve productivity, obliterate "cold calls" and provide a clear focus of activities. Telemarketing without good database management is like direct mail without definable targets and back-end list evaluation.

5. Improper human resource planning

This covers call reluctance, compensation and career paths. Lack of planning here leads to lack of recognition, reduced job satisfaction, poor service to customers, lack of customer commitment and dampening creative and innovative input. Ultimately this can lead to both expertise and customers leaving your organisation.

6. Improper facilities

Telemarketers need to work in a motivational environment with space to break away from the telephone. They must also have all the information and facilities to service customers at their fingertips. Ergonomic furniture is advisable.

The centre must also be established to meet the needs of now and the future. It must have the best telecommunications systems on the market to ensure call distribution, call management, force management, call transfer, data transfer, interconnection to computer, facsimile and fulfilment processes are all implemented. It must be located near telephone exchanges which will offer the latest network facilities and can handle line growth and Freecall 008 number provisioning. Buildings must offer protected and air conditioned space suitable for these facilities.

7. Lack of quality control

A successful telemarketing operation must be planned and quality control checks implemented to ensure:

- Management commitment, understanding and support.
- Clear objectives are set.
- A solid workable and achievable concept is instigated.
- Effective execution and supervision.
- Co-ordination of the overall program.
- Continuing and thorough follow-up.
- A generous, yet precise, timetable is set.

8. Failure to understand links with direct marketing

Telemarketing is not an isolated activity. It is supported by or with many of the other direct marketing disciplines of direct mail, print, broadcast, catalogue, field sales and others. The success of a campaign is often dependant on the support of these other elements.

9. Lack of call guides

People with the right abilities and proper training will not "read" scripts which is the fear of employers who do not instigate this discipline. Well designed, rehearsed and executed call guides cannot be detected nor can they be outsold. The data from the behaviour is invaluable in driving improvement for future campaigns.

10. Not thinking like a customer

Many systems, campaigns and products are designed around how the company believes things should be. To ensure sales they then mould the "trained customer" to fit in with the way they do things. Failure to think like a customer will ultimately lead to the downfall of a company.

Today's telemarketing techniques are just the beginning in the most powerful person-to-person medium ever developed.

They can work for your business as they have for others however grand expectations must be equalled by planning and discipline.

COMPUTE IT!

PC to fax: savings and snags in going direct

Sending and receiving of faxes directly from your personal computer can save a lot of time. You no longer have to print out documents before faxing them, and you don't have to queue up at the fax machine. And you save the expense of thermal paper.

Dialling instructions are entered at the keyboard, and you can store and reference your fax correspondence on hard disk.

Despite the obvious virtues of fax and computer link-ups, some problems have not been solved. Your computer needs to be turned on permanently for fax reception. Incoming documents can require significant disk space because they are read as graphic images rather than ASCII characters. Two A4 pages, for example, can take up one megabyte of disk space.

For sending faxes efficiently, your computer should be capable of "background operation" otherwise it is tied up completely.

PC-fax link-ups can be created in two ways.

■ You can buy a fax board which can be inserted into a spare expansion slot inside your PC. Additional fax conversion software is needed to translate the fax and computer formats. The fax board allows you to throw away the fax machine. NetComm, for example, offers a PC fax card including the necessary software, at $599, for the single user environment. FaxNet, designed for network users, retails at $1594 for a 10-user licence.

■ You can link your fax machine to your computer. Sophisticated fax machines often provide optional interfaces that can be connected to a computer. Voca Communications (Tel: 03 697 7000) offers one such product with its memory fax, the F-SS. The Fax Interface Processor (FIP) kit, selling for $1500, allows you

to send and receive faxes from an IBM or compatible system. It can also operate on a local area network system for the benefit of all connected terminal users.

Remington Pitney/Bowes also offers a software and hardware package with the 8200 series of faxes, and with the laser fax 9200. Price is on application.

Modems: a beginner's guide to instant access

Modems have been around for a long time but they have only been considered seriously over the past 10 years with the advent of personal computers.

Home users and businesses now recognise the potential of instant communication with other PC users and electronic mail and databases.

A modem is a relatively cheap and easy-to-install peripheral.

In the bad old days, manufacturers had their own standards, so different modem brands could not communicate. The Geneva-based standards body International Telegraph and Telephone Consultative Committee (CCITT) developed a set of industry standards to which all modems could adhere.

These apply to most of the Western world, except the United States and Canada. The recommendations influenced transmission speed, and speed is largely what modems are about – the faster the transmission, the lighter your phone bills.

Some of the most common CCITT standards include V.21, V.21bis, V.22, V.22bis, V.23 and V.32. They reflect the speeds at which modems operate. For example V.32 modems are significantly faster than V.22s. They can send and receive data at a rate of 9600 bits per second (bps). V.22bis is the standard for modems sending data at 2400bps.

A superior 9600bps modem operates best with one of its kind

but, with "auto ranging", it can "talk down" to slower modems by finding a bps speed common to both.

Often line quality is not good enough to handle 9600bps traffic so the modem is forced to step down to a lower speed. Most modems have several step-down speeds and you may find very expensive 9600bps modems slowing down to 300bps if there is a lot of line interference. This is not unusual when communicating overseas.

Basic 2400bps modems (about $400), may have more appeal to a novice buyer than 9600bps models at twice the price.

The 9600bps modems offer some sophisticated extras If there is a lot of line interference data may be corrupted during transmission. Most 9600bps modems, and some 2400bps modems, offer "error control" so the transmitting modem resends corrupted data.

Sophisticated modems offer data compression schemes for reducing the size of transmitted files, which further increases the rate of data transfer. The terms Microcom Network Protocol (MNP), Level 5 and V.42bis refer to two types of data compression methods.

Modems comprise the hardware, usually an external box, and the communications software that drives the modem. Not all modems come with software. Make sure that it is reasonably user friendly and preferably menu driven. It should include automatic setup, an easy dialling system, a good help screen and a directory clear facility.

Brand names in external modems, such as NetComm, Datacraft and Schmidt, offer a

variety of modem types and customer support. NetComm's (Tel: 02 888 5533) range starts with the low-cost AutoModem family ($499 for the 12/12). The Pocket Rocket, for laptops, costs $649, and, at the top end, the SmartModem 9600bps MS costs $2000 and the super speedster costs $2799. NetComm's easy-to-install and menu-driven NetComm Program Software is included in the price.

Datacraft (Tel: 03 727 9111) offers two standard modems: the Quadcraft, a 2400bps, error-handling modem, and the Quincraft,

Modems: more businesses realising the potential of instant communications.

a 9600bps model offering error correction and MNPS data compression ($2000). Schmidt Electronics Laboratories (Tel: 03 531 8011) offers the Panther and Schmidt range of modems. The Panthers include the low-end Panther 3, a 1200bps modem, ($359), and Panther 4, a 2400bps modem ($399). Schmidt modems, similar in speed to the Panthers, include the high-performance 123AT ($549) and 1234AT ($699). Both come with a five-year parts and labour warranty.

Teleconferences: Basic rules to meet by

Some basic rules will help make your teleconference more productive. **Liz Donnelly** reports.

The recession has forced business to constantly look for more efficient ways of working.

Time and money spent travelling to meetings can be both inefficient and expensive if the meetings are unproductive.

Teleconferencing is a technology that is changing the way many Australians do business. It enables any number of people to conduct meetings from any single telephone to anywhere in Australia or overseas, keeping regional or international branches in touch literally at the press of a few buttons.

Dr Roy Lundin, a specialist in teleconferencing training at the Queensland Institute of Technology has produced a checklist for businesses to work through when considering teleconferencing.

■ Seek out the areas in your business where people are working against time in making critical business decisions – these are areas in which improved communications will make most difference.

■ Look carefully at how new technology will be applied, ask how the system will fit in with attitudes, skills, tasks, routines, policies and procedures. Opt for training if necessary.

■ Find individuals who are innovators and give them the job of introducing the new procedures.

■ Draw on specialist advice to find the right system for you, but don't forget to consult the in-house communications expertise you already have.

■ Consider teleconferencing and personal computing as two related parts of the same process (at least one microcomputer now has a loudspeaker telephone built into it).

Preparation and basic meeting rules are the keys to a productive teleconference.

"Perhaps the most interesting impact of teleconferencing is what it can do to the structure of organisations," says Dr Lundin.

"First, the levels of hierarchy flatten out as communication between the various levels increases and top management has more frequent access to coalface employees.

"Second, groups with tasks in common co-ordinate their activities more successfully through the use of the new technology and become more flexible, able to react quickly to change and new demands."

However, the technology cannot ensure the success of a teleconference.

Poorly organised and unstructured meetings will be frustrating and unproductive.

To make the best use of your time there are techniques to be learned.

Dr Lundin says preparation combined with some basic rules are the keys to a productive meeting. Rule number one is to elect a chairperson to direct a previously agreed agenda.

Dr Lundin says choosing a system of teleconferencing will depend on your business needs and objectives, how often you need to speak to your colleagues and whether six people or 100 need to be involved.

Cost is another important factor. A one-hour conference through Telecom's Conferlink™ might cost about $60. Video conferencing might cost from $250 to $700 an hour.

"Teleconferences are to the point and productive. There are a few occasions when face to face or live video interaction may be required but most of these activities can be effectively carried out through audio teleconferencing," Dr Lundin says.

Telecom operates four types of teleconferencing: audio, audiographic, video and computer.

Audio teleconferencing uses the telephone service and is the most accessible and economic form of teleconferencing. A meeting can start from just one handset linked to any number of callers through an operator. Telecom's Conferlink service includes a special feature called "meet–me" where users simply ring the same number to be connected to the meeting.

Audiographic teleconferencing combines the telephone system with some form of graphics communication, such as facsimile, digital scanner, electronic blackboard or computer generated text and graphic.

Video teleconference is a one-way video transmission with two-way telephone audio, like talk back television. Operated from studios in all capital cities face-to-face video conferencing is also possible but requires specialised equipment.

For more information on the range of teleconferencing services offered by Telecom Australia Freecall 008 024 448.

HOW TO GET THE MOST FROM YOUR TELECONFERENCE

BEFORE THE MEETING

Notify participants of time, date and agenda of meeting.

Set a time limit for each speaker (perhaps 15minutes).

Send relevant data or graphics to each person before meeting.

DURING THE MEETING

Start on time.

Conduct a roll call (the operator will also do this).

Begin with an agenda review and outline the objectives of the meeting.

Make any agenda amendments at the beginning and establish a priority for items.

Stick to the agenda.

Ask participants to identify themselves when they speak.

Assign follow up action on items immediately it occurs.

Summarise and adjourn.

Schedule your next meeting.

The upwardly mobile phone

Mobile phones, once considered yuppie toys, are becoming basic business tools. **Monica McCormack** looks at the different types of mobile phone.

The cellular phone has proved itself an affordable and flexible part of business, an advance on the mobile radio and pager.

Telecom's cellular network, MobileNet™, which began in 1987, prompted a mini revolution in mobile communication. Inevitably there were some teething problems, but they have been overcome.

MobileNet is constantly expanding and now covers all major metropolitan areas and main country centres. (To check if your area is covered phone Freecall 018 018 888.)

Call congestion during peak hours sometimes results in call "drop out", but this happens in all the world's big cities when too many people try to use a cellular frequency or channel in the same cell at once. By international standards, Australians have an efficient and economical cellular system.

Handheld mobile phones can be carried anywhere. Some brands claim to be pocket size, although, in most cases, this is stretching the truth – and the lining of your pocket. Handheld phones, such as those from NEC, Telecom and Motorola, weigh 280-700 grams, and the newer models are shrinking in size. For example Telecom's new range of "flip" phones are substantially lighter and more compact. Telecom's NEC-made Walkabout 4B weighs 400 grams and costs $2199. It boasts a neat design, and has a call timer, 99 telephone memories and signal strength indicator. It can be installed in your car and is very reliable.

Motorola's Business Classic and Micro TAC portables are wallet sized, with the speaker pieces flipping over the keypad and display.

The Mitsubishi-made DiaGem, about $2400, is the lightest handheld cellular phone on the market, at 269 grams.

Handhelds are good for carrying around the city because they are powered by batteries. But they are the least powerful mobiles – 20 per cent of the strength of in-car units – which can mean patchy reception in fringe cell areas. They are not for out-of-town calls, and the battery life on most phones restricts conversations to one to two hours. Standby time (when the phone is turned on ready to receive calls) is from 10 to 30 hours.

Car phones are designed for leisurely, long-distance conversations. They are permanently fixed, and run mostly on the car battery. They are the most powerful, at three watts, which improves reception and call quality. Car phones can cost as little as $900, including installation.

Some companies, such as Mitsubishi and Uniden, are improving flexibility with carry packs or "kits" as optional extras. The kits allow you to remove your car handset and transceiver, pack them into the kit, which has cables and batteries, and carry the lot away. One of the better designed "transmobiles" is the Mitsubishi Delegate.

Telecom's Traveller K costs $1199, including installation. Its features include auto answer and hands-free operation.

Car phones need to be installed properly by a trained technician. Poor performance is often because of poor installation.

The best place for the aerial is in the middle of the car roof but you have to drill holes in your

Hand held phones: becoming lighter and more compact.

roof, which could affect the car's resale value. The aerial is easy to remove when it is glass-mounted on the rear windscreen.

A hands-free microphone allows you to talk and drive without taking your eyes off the road and hands off the wheel. The best place for a hands-free microphone is in the centre of the car where there is no wind noise and it also allows passengers to speak and be heard.

You should sit in your car and test the hands-free microphone. The transceiver unit is usually put in the boot or under the driver or passenger seat.

Transportable phones can be carried around but, weighing 2.5-6 kilograms, are much larger than their handheld siblings. They incorporate powerful battery packs, which give longer talk and standby times. They have wider coverage, better call quality and can be used in and out of the car, but sales account for only 15 per cent of the cellular phone market. They are popular with trades people, who need on-site and robust phones. Motorola's, Uniden, Motorola and Mitsubishi have dedicated transportable units, costing $1500 to $2000.

Telecom is planning to release a new transportable in September.

For more information on the range of mobile phones and services offered by Telecom Australia call Freecall 008 055 055 .

MobileNet's New Charges: How To Pick The One That Suits You

Business users can now choose a charge scale that best suits their mobile phone call patterns.

There are five different charge scales: Flexi-Plan standard, Flexi-plan 130, Flexi-Plan 80, Flexi-Plan 20 and Flexi-Plan 10.

To work out which band suits you work out your daily call rate. If you are a moderate user and make more than three calls a day on your mobile then Flexi-Plan 80 is probably best for you. After paying the $80 access fee you get a combination of discounted calls depending on whether calls are made in peak or off-peak times and whether they are within a 165 kilometre radius. For example if all your calls are in peak times and to places within 165km then under Flexi-Plan 80 you get 150 minutes of calls a month at 10 cents a minute.

If you are a heavy mobile phone user and want a virtually fixed cost per month then Flexi-Plan 130 would be the band to choose. The $130 access fee allows you 250 minutes of peak-period calls free before any extra charges are made. That works out to about seven calls a day.

If you already use a mobile phone you will be charged the Flexi-Plan standard rates until you notify Telecom which alternative charge plan you want to be switched to. A $15 fee applies to switch charge bands.

FAX IT

Daily changes in currency exchange rates can mean big losses or gains, so the latest information must reach traders immediately. Thomas Cook's Cairns branch uses Telecom FaxStream to send its rates fresh from its international offices.

Amanda Keldie saves six hours every week with FaxStream.

Thomas Cook staff used to take up to two hours every day sending rates on individual faxes to 60 hotels and duty-free shops from Port Douglas to Airlie Beach. Since March, staff have spent five minutes a day by using FaxStream™. Bureau manager Phill Waite is impressed with the difference FaxStream has made. "Our clients are getting information much faster. Now everybody is getting their rates before 10am every day," he says.

Unlike standard faxes, sent through an ordinary phone line, FaxStream messages are sent on a dedicated digital network. A message can be sent to up to 3200 destinations with a single call. FaxStream allows you to use three types of list when sending a fax to multiple numbers:
■ Broadcast lists to up to 100 numbers.
■ Group lists to up to 32 numbers.
■ Personalised lists to up to 32 FaxStream numbers, with each recipient getting a personalised greeting at the top of the common message.

Messages travel at maximum transmission speed and reach their destination at a uniformly high standard.

Amanda Keldie, a secretary at a Sydney-based livestock sales agency, says that before her company got FaxStream, clients often phoned to check details on faxes smudged or with numbers chopped off the page.

FaxStream has improved the quality of faxed pages. "I used to get lots of calls about faxes but now nobody complains," says Ms Keldie.

She has gained six hours in her working week since FaxStream's arrival in her office. Ms Keldie faxes price updates on sheep, cattle and pigs to about 60 clients three times a week. Other departments of Calm Services use FaxStream to send sale catalogues (of up to 20 pages each) and advertisements to newspapers.

"In the past, using an ordinary fax machine, I couldn't get through to some people, and they would complain that the information hadn't arrived. I used to take about two hours, but now I spend 50 seconds."

Telecom can easily switch an ordinary fax line over to a FaxStream line, and no new equipment is needed. FaxStream calls are charged at different rates to standard faxes. All calls are timed, and cost reductions of up to 20 per cent are achieved for multiple-page faxes sent over long distances in Australia.

For Chris Jones, a machinery broker, FaxStream has created opportunities that he never envisaged. "FaxStream has enabled me to do my business in a totally different way. It opens up a new door to me," says Adelaide-based Mr Jones.

Since last December, he has used FaxStream to find out the machinery that businesses or local councils need – graders for road work or machines for the farm. When firms send him their requests, Mr Jones contacts potential suppliers by FaxStream.

"With ordinary fax services, I wouldn't have the time to use them. In the past I would use the phone and call around the country. With FaxStream there's no comparison in cost and time saving."

FaxStream's other advantages include:
■ Electronic mailbox address, to which confidential messages are delivered and accessed by password.
■ Bulletin board, that stores up to five pages of information on the FaxStream system, and allows other FaxStream users to call and get the information.
■ Message distributor, which allows your received FaxStream traffic to be shared equally by up to three FaxStream machines.

FAXSTREAM COMPARED WITH STANDARD FAXES

FaxStream:
■ Dedicated digital lines
■ Maximum transmission speed
■ Quality
■ Call charge advantage for long distance transmissions
■ Fax network facilities

Standard fax:
■ Standard phone lines
■ Variable speed depending on line noise
■ Variable quality
■ Standard phone charges
■ No network features

FaxStream fees

Connection charges: Installation (FaxStream line only)
■ Local exchange area and up to 40km out of the area – $250
■ More than 40km out of the area – $400
■ Changeover from existing fax service – $110

Rental charges:
■ Local exchange area and up to 40km out of the area – $40 a month
■ More than 40km out of the area – $80 a month

Call charges:
■ 24c for each call
■ 24c for each time interval as follows:

	Peak time (8am-6pm Mon-Fri)	Off peak (All other times)
0-165km	56 seconds	86.5 seconds
165km-745km	52 seconds	76.5 seconds
More than 745km	31 seconds	61 seconds

■ International calls are charged at IDD call rates.

Subscription charges:

	Per month/list
Broadcast list	$5
Group list	$3
Personalised message list	$6
Mailbox address	$4
Bulletin board – Information provider	$30
Fax message distributor	$1

READ IT!

Reducing Your Tax
Making Income Tax Laws Work For You
By Herman Odijk
176 pages $19.95
Published by Schwartz and Wilkinson

If you understand the tax laws and know how to apply them, you will probably pay less tax than those who do not. This might not be fair, but you can't change the system on your own.

Herman Odijk, a Queensland tax and finance lecturer, knows the laws and knows how to explain them in plain English. He gives lots of examples of businesses, their taxation "behaviour" and what they could have claimed.

The book examines the subtle differences between tax evasion (illegal) and tax avoidance (legal), and explains that venturing into evasion can be very costly. It looks at the structure a business operator can choose to take advantage of tax benefits: sole trader, partnership, company or trust.

Odijk also covers taxes other than income tax, including sales tax, stamp duty, land tax, capital gains tax and fringe benefits tax.

You might not feel confident to fire your accountant or tax consultant after reading this book, but it should save money by reducing the hours your advisers need to spend on your affairs.

Going Broke, Staying Sane
By Richard Shrapnel
33 pages $9.95
Published by Schwartz and Wilkinson

Richard Shrapnel's booklet, subtitled "Everything you need to know about liquidation and bankruptcy and don't know who to ask", is essentially a collection of questions and answers to problems that afflict the business owner in trouble. Its layout is simple, and it offers basic, if poorly proofread, advice.

Shrapnel, an accountant for more than 16 years, declares at the outset: "This book will help you retain your most valuable asset: the drive and motivation which made you go into your own business in the first place. The worst thing you can lose going broke is this spirit; if

you do you will end up in a hole out of which you may never climb." It is debatable whether this booklet lives up to its aim, but at least by the end the reader should suffer less from an overwhelming fear of the unknown.

The first section has advice for the company owner staring at liquidation, and the second part outlines the options for the individual facing bankruptcy. Questions posed include: When should I put my company into liquidation and how do I do this? What happens when a liquidator is appointed to my company? What company records do I have to hand over? How is a family or unit trust under my company affected? Can I start up a new company and begin a new business after the old one has gone into liquidation? What is the effect of going bankrupt? What happens to assets owned by a spouse? Does my superannuation go to my creditors in bankruptcy?

Shrapnel ends with a very human section, encouraging people in financial trouble to stay healthy, set goals and look to the future.

Tourism in Australia
Challenges and Opportunities
By Peter Grey, Klaus Edelmann
and Larry Dwyer
### 120 pages $16.99
Published by Longman Cheshire

Tourism is one of Australia's largest and fastest growing industries, and this study by the Committee for Economic Development of Australia (CEDA) looks at ways to further boost it.

International air traffic is growing faster in the Asia-Pacific region than any other part of the world. Travel patterns are changing, from domestic to foreign trips and towards long-haul journeys. Australia has vast landscapes, unique plants and animals, a good climate and friendly people, all of which are strong attractions for overseas visitors.

The study, illustrated by graphs and tables, finds many weaknesses in Australia's tourist industry. It highlights skill shortages resulting from rapid growth, a lack of international-standard service, poor staff training, restrictive government regulations and poor shopping.

The authors single out several opportunities for growth, including computer reservation systems, special events, business and convention travel, rural and cultural tourism. They suggest that foreign capital can speed up the rate of development, allowing benefits to be realised earlier.

One of the main threats identified is destruction of Australia's natural environment. The study looks at ways of harmonising
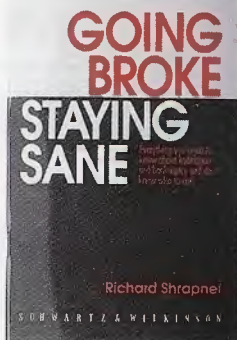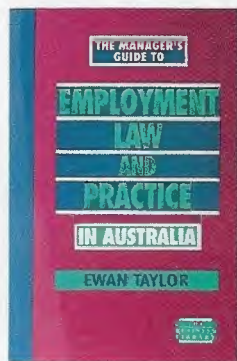
tourist development and protecting the environment.

Tourism in Australia is scholarly in approach, but this does not make it inaccessible for the business or even lay reader; it is simply thorough.

The Manager's Guide to Employment Law and Practice
### By Ewan Taylor
182 pages $24.95
Published by The Business Library

"One of the keys to business success is establishing and maintaining a co-operative and productive relationship between management and employees," Ewan Taylor opens his book. Avoiding industrial strife is better than trying to fix problems.

Taylor, an industrial relations and employment expert, guides the manager through federal and state industrial laws, equal opportunity and anti-discrimination legislation, awards and agreements. He looks at the role of the Industrial Relations Commission, and gives case studies of commission hearings. Wage fixing and the Accords are covered in depth.

The unpleasant business of dismissing staff, including redundancy, is detailed, and there is a long section on unfair dismissal claims. *Employment Law and Practice*, produced in association with the Australian Chamber of Manufactures, also gives a rundown of the obligations of employers for occupational health and safety.
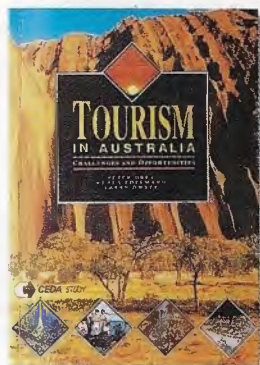
Australian Economic Terms
By C.E. Noble
241 pages $14.99
Published by Longman Cheshire

The general business reader will find this economic dictionary, in its fourth edition, valuable even though it is intended for university and secondary school students. If you've been puzzled by references to vertical integration, treasury bills, money supply or supply-side economics, you'll find enlightenment here.

Publishers' addresses:
Longman Cheshire, 95 Coventry Street, Melbourne Vic 3205.
Schwartz and Wilkinson and The Business Library, 45 Flinders Lane, Melbourne Vic 3000.

THE NEXT THING

Technology that is making news overseas

Cellular phone fraud

■ New York police have arrested six people for allegedly running an illegal cellular phone business that siphoned calls from a cellular network. Scams are costing US cellular companies about $US200 million a year in lost revenue.

Pirate operators install customised phones in cars and charge customers about $10 to make a 20-minute call anywhere – usually South America. Manufacturers are working on software that will allow carrier systems to verify calls before they can pass.

Wall Street Journal

Mini fax machine

■ Sharp Electronics claims it has come up with the world's smallest fax machine. The pocket-sized accessory can be attached to the Wizard pocket organiser, and can only send faxes. And Sharp has introduced what it calls the first desktop colour fax machine, worth $US31,999.

New York Times

Faxes from laptops

■ United States business people can now send faxes from a laptop computer when they are out of the office. With Ibis Software's On The GoFAX software, the laptop is hooked up to a jack or an acoustic coupler for a car or pay phone. GoFAX sends the fax to an American Telephone & Telegraph Co (AT&T) service bureau, which sends it to its destination, redialling up to four times an hour. GoFAX has a word processor for noting messages, sends one document to many numbers at once, and keeps a record of faxes. Price: $US69.95.

Fortune magazine

Multimedia systems

■ The world's largest electronics companies are working on a new generation of products that combine video images, sound, graphics and text. Multimedia brings together the technologies of television, computer, telephone, fax machine, video camera, optical, compact and floppy disk and stereo, and allows the user to interact with all. A history exam paper could become a mix of documentary film, maps, text and period music. An accountant could dictate comments about his company's earnings statement to his personal computer, which would record the comments with the document. Letters could combine typed words, snapshots and audio recordings. Sony, Intel, Next Inc, Microsoft and Eastman Kodak are investing heavily in research, and a key part of the recent IBM-Apple co-operation deal was joint development of multimedia technology.

International HeraldTribune

Laptop printer

■ Laptop users can print out their work on a Seikosha America Inc. LT-20 portable printer, which weighs 2.3kg and easily fits under laptops. Its cut-sheet cassette prints 100 pages on one battery charge, and it has a built-in letter-quality fount.

The Futurist

Hacker defence

■ An electronic key and lock device has been invented to stop hackers breaking into business computers and phone systems. US Gatekeeper Telecommunications Systems' device denies hackers access to a computer carrier tone, making it much harder to get into a system. Users send a code generated by a small keypad over a phone line to get access to their computer or phone system. The "lock" goes in front of a modem so hackers cannot tell what system is on the other end. Price: about $US10,000.

Wall Street Journal

Electronic atoms

■ IBM is getting closer to its dream of making electronic circuits with parts only an atom across. US researchers have moved around individual silicon atoms, using an IBM-invented microscope. Today's most miniature circuitry in computer chips is measured in microns, or millionths of a metre. Atomic circuitry would be measured in nanometres or billionths of a metre. Smaller circuitry makes computers faster, less expensive and more sophisticated.

Science

Intelligent documents

■ Documents of the future will be able to "think" and "act" for themselves, changing the information they present depending on who is reading them. The pages will be created by electronic publishing tools, but under their electronic "skin" programs will be attached to various parts of the document. The programs can create graphics or cut and paste text just as any user does, and perform other programming tasks. The programs are activated by, for instance, a user making more than five spelling mistakes, a file elsewhere on a computer network being updated, or by the user making a menu choice that causes a program to run.

The Futurist

British Telecom hard sell

■ British Telecom has begun a campaign to boost its US sales of video-conference equipment. It claims its systems give clearer pictures than competing models and will be especially good for offices holding international video-conferences. British Telecom wants to build a $US300 million business within three years.

Wall Street Journal

Pocket phones

■ American Telephone & Telegraph Co (AT&T) has developed a pocket-sized radiophone, similar to a cellular phone but smaller and on a different radio frequency. AT&T wants to test a new network for the phones, in competition with many small US phone companies.

Wall Street Journal

Holidays out of this world

■ Sometime after 2020, holidaymakers could be boarding their space plane and taking the four-hour trip to Space Resort, where they will take in space walks, space games and a spot of stargazing. Wendel R. Wendel, president of US StarNet Structures, is working with engineers from Japan's Shimizu Corp on the $US28 billion venture. Mr Wendel estimates that a space holiday would cost $50,000 to $100,000 in 1991 dollars – "like taking a luxurious suite on a cruise liner". And Mr Wendel is serious.

Wall Street Journal

ILLUSTRATIONS BY ANDREW DYSON

USE IT!

To help solve your business communications needs Telecom Business Services can supply information and sales and service on any of the products listed below. For more details phone a Telecom business consultant on 008 055 055

MOBILE OFFICE

CREDITPHONE™
Most credit, charge and savings bank cards can be used with Creditphones, found in airports, railway stations and hotels. Call charges appear on your credit card statement or are debited from your bank account.

MESSAGEBANK™
This computerised message system operates 24 hours a day, answering the phone in your voice, taking and sending messages. MessageBank can broadcast the same message to 20 phone numbers at once.

MOBILENET™
The cellular phone network covers 75 per cent of Australians. By next year, it is expected that 500,000 mobile phones will be operating.

MOBILE PHONES
Telecom's range of mobile phones includes Telecom Walkabout (compact, handheld) and Telecom Traveller car or transportable models. Some car phones can operate hands free. Features include memory for regularly dialled numbers, automatic answer while driving and abbreviated dialling. Calls can be diverted by Telecom MobileNet to any telephone number, a pager or to voice mail box.

PAGERS
Three pager models – tone, numeric and alpha numeric – allow access to the Telecom Pager Answering Service.

PHONECARD™
Buy a $2, $5, $10 or $20 Phonecard to use in payphones. The cost of calls is deducted until the value of the card is exhausted.

TELECARD™
Charge your calls to any designated phone number with Telecard. The card can be for unlimited access, national access or local calls only, and can be used with any type of telephone. A secure PIN number prevents abuse.

BUSINESS LINKS

BLUEPHONE™
Rent a payphone for staff and passersby. One key controls the three-position lock from standard payphone operation to coin-free operation, and gives access to the coin box.

CENTEL®
This network–based facility has many features previously available only with a telephone switchboard system. It does not require extra equipment other than a Telecom Touchfone or Telecom Commander. Telephones across the country can be linked to the same system, and calls can be forwarded from one office to another instantly, and redirected to a mobile phone. Other features include inquiry and conference calls, call waiting, call barring and group search.

COMMANDER™
All Commander phone systems offer three–way conference calls, with a hands-free option. Abbreviated dialling can store up to 90 numbers with 30 digits maximum each. The Commander BN systems have three to 24 incoming lines, eight to 64 extensions, and most systems have a switchboard option. Commander E systems have six to 16 extensions. You can buy, lease or rent.

CONFERLINK™
Conferlink is an audio teleconferencing service that allows you to conduct a meeting over any telephone. Telecom Australia handles all arrangements through the Operator-Assisted Service. Up to five organisations can be connected through your work telephone. If you want to control your own conference, Conferlink 6 allows you to connect up to five companies and include them all or by selection.

DIGITAL DATA SERVICE™
The service sends large volumes of information between computers around Australia. Permanent on–line connection to the DDS network is at a fixed cost a year.

FAXSTREAM™
With this digital service, all faxes travel at maximum speed. One fax can be sent to as many as 3200 different numbers simultaneously with only one call. Transmission costs are reduced, especially if STD is used regularly, and faxes have fewer transmission errors. No extra equipment is needed. The private mail box facility ensures message confidentiality.

GOLDPHONE™
Buy a payphone and earn extra money. It is tough, and faults are virtually eliminated by its liquid crystal microchip technology.

PABX SYSTEMS
9600VS PABX, the PABX designed for smaller organisations, is extraordinarily flexible to suit your business now and as it expands. It can handle eight to 40 outside lines, and has a choice of handsets.

SERVICE ASSURANCE
Telecom offers Enhanced Service Assurance Packages for more urgent responses to service calls. Service coverage ranges from office hours five days a week to seven days a week around the clock.

V.MAX™
This voice mail bureau handles messages, answers your extension and interacts with information services.

TELEMARKETING

TELEMARKETING
Telecom uses specialist techniques that increase the sales potential and customer service of the telephone. We train your staff to become more effective when dealing with customers on the phone.

FREECALL 008™
A Freecall 008 number can be promoted locally, statewide or nationally. Calls can be answered at a central answering point or directed to other nominated locations. All calls are free to the caller (mobile call charges apply), encouraging greater response.

TELEMAGIC™
Telemagic V.11 is a software system to make more sales more efficiently. It is a database, word processor, notepad, calendar, mailer and communicator in one. It runs on IBM or compatible PCs with 640K RAM.

TELEMART™ BUREAU
Telemart staff are an extension of your business, handling inbound and outbound calls. You can quantify sales leads, record sales information, prospect for new business, conduct surveys and update customer files.

INFORMATION SERVICES

AUSTPAC®
For businesses that regularly send varying volumes of data, Australia's packet switched data network gives accurate, cheap access to national and overseas information or real-time data distribution. Transfer between terminals and host computers over dedicated and dial-up lines is high quality.

EFTPOS
Electronic funds transfer at point of sale allows customers to shop with a banking card and PIN number.

ELECTRONIC WHITE PAGES™
Instead of maintaining an up-to-date library of more than 50 phone directories, use EWP. The software package includes a floppy disk with instruction manual and a quick reference guide.

KEYLINK™
Messages can be sent on the office PC to computer terminals around the world through phone lines and a giant computer.

TRANSEND®
Transend is the network that links EFTPOS terminals. The transaction switching network can be used for inventory control, voucher replacement, electronic bookings and distributing service information.