BRIEFINGS
PUBLIC RELATIONS

At First Glance

by Rita Mincavage

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Have you ever considered what it might be like to be on the outside of the M Technology community looking in at this very moment? As I settle into the role of new communications director for the M Technology Association, this is my current perspective. From this point of view, I would like to share a recent memorable and somewhat troubling experience.

To immerse myself in the world of computer technology experts, I spent an afternoon at the Software World USA Exposition at the Washington, D.C. Convention Center recently. Talking with exhibitors provided an instant education of sorts. One software remarketer said to me, "You M Technology people have a good product but no one out here in the general marketplace knows what is going on with it currently." Clearly, we in the M community need to educate the market more thoroughly about what we have to offer and why it is vigorously competitive.

In the most unsettling encounter of my day, an exhibitor commented that M programmers at recent expos have been telling him in an, as he related to me, "awkward, almost embarrassed way" that they are programming in M. He said to send M people the message that they should be proud; the computer world respects their work in M and needs to hear more about it. He added, "M may not be the cutting-edge language-of-the-week, but it is solid and respected." A lack of pride on the part of M professionals represents a most troubling comment on the current state of the M community if this denotes even a tiny fraction of individual attitudes. We must believe in what we are doing, individually and as a community, in order to convince others of the value of M.

Perhaps the exhibitor was misreading the state of mind of the M people he had met. Perhaps the awkwardness he recalled was a reflection of modesty, not embarrassment. But we also cannot be shy or modest in the highly competitive computer marketplace of today, nor do we have a reason to be. We are associated with a cost-effective, highly productive and flexible computer language/database product, which is based on and continually measured against a rigorous national standard.

It is time to tell M success stories with pride to the larger computer community and potential end users. While you regularly share your achievements with associates, I also want to hear about these successes so that I am well armed for media opportunities. Won't you please take a minute out of your busy day to call me at the MTA office when you have an M project to brag about? I look forward to being your MTA communications professional who transmits a strong, well-documented, proactive M message to the marketplace. **M**

Rita Mincavage brings to the position of MTA communications director more than 12 years of public relations and marketing communications management experience.