

# Business as Usual or Change?

by John F. Covin



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## Change Is Inevitable

Change. It's the dominant business theme of the decade. Everything is change. Russia. South Africa. Congress of the United States. IBM. Digital Equipment Corporation. Microsoft. Telecommunications. Health care. Your company. My company. The footprints of change are all around us.

## MTA Is Impacted by Change

MTA (our organization and broader community and technology) is not immune to the forces of change. MTA's call for change is found in the numbers: flat membership and Annual Meeting attendance, and a declining number of revenue-producing exhibitors and advertisers. Additionally, there are those that doubt the future of M Technologies in light of the developmental pace of mainstream technologies. Others believe our technology to be sound, but question its ability to fully integrate with mainstream technologies and therefore question its ability to meet enterprise needs.

## The MTA Response

The MTA Board of Directors is conducting ongoing strategic planning sessions to determine our response to these challenges. Over the next weeks and months, you will be hearing from MTA on various topics concerning MTA's response to change. This article will give you some background on the issues and the mindset for addressing those issues.

## Business as Usual Will Not Work

Some in our community respond by saying the MTA is as good as dead. Passed by. Finished. The MTA Board of Directors thinks differently. The Board has met this issue head-on in strategic planning sessions and concluded:

- Change is inevitable.
- MTA is impacted by change.
- Business as usual will not work.
- A commitment to meeting members' evolving needs is our response.

## Meeting Evolving Needs

It is clear that your needs are undergoing enormous change. It is also clear that the dominant need today may not be the dominant need in six or twelve or twenty-four months. Thus, MTA is prepared to transform itself into an organization that expects change from its constituents and is prepared to deliver. For example, reengineering is running rampant throughout the United States. Central to the success of reengineering is quick hits with in-

formation technology. This undoubtedly will generate some of the needs we will discover.

Our belief is that the MUMPS databases will live long and thrive. We also believe the suite of technologies that integrate with M will grow. Just as MUG was the place to go in the '70s and '80s to learn about MUMPS, MTA will become the place to learn about a broader suite of technologies and services. The Association will still cater to those with MUMPS databases, but expand services to include information and education about other compatible technologies.

MTA is committed to transformation. What will that mean to you? To begin with, based on membership surveys and Annual Meeting evaluations, we already know that our Annual Meeting in 1996 will be greatly expanded. The number of non-M attendees seeking to learn about M will likely exceed the number of M-enlightened attendees. Likewise, the number of M-compatible technologies will likely exceed the number of M Technologies. The date of the meeting is also likely to change. There's that word again.

By 1996's Annual Meeting, MTA will be acting like an organization that represents a mainstream technology. Stay tuned. ■

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