Growth in M Technology Continues

by Ken Wagner

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The two most frequent questions I hear are: "Where are all the MUMPS professionals hiding?" and "Will my skills remain marketable if I stay in the M community?"

The answer to the first question, often asked by employers, is that you are in a growth industry, which means there is a shortage of skilled professionals. If the industry were not growing, there would be an abundance of unemployed M programmers. The answer to the second question, often asked by employees, is an emphatic *yes!*

That completes my article. But I'll elaborate and offer a commentary on the expansion of the M industry and the value of M Technology professionals.

In order for an industry to endure, it must have a solid foundation. We have that foundation since the M Technology industry is rooted in large, stable organizations. An industry also must be diversified. We are found in almost every conceivable industry from banking to distribution to health care. Look at the M Technology Association's *M Sources '94* and you will see what I mean.

The following are examples of why M Technology professionals are in great demand:

- The M Technology industry continues the trend toward being less segregated from other computer software. It is being integrated with other technology so that the combination can meet the user's requirements. In countless situations, M Technology is still the solution to a company's information systems needs.

- Due to extensive growth, some companies in M Technology do not have the time to train new employees without related experience. Therefore, experienced M professionals are in demand.

- Several spinoff companies using M are emerging.

- Consultants continue to develop custom software, and many employees are able to work as consultants in addition to their full-time employment.

Furthermore, the success of the M-related software vendors ensures future growth: Success allows them to put revenue into research and development. I can't think of an M-related vendor who isn't experiencing growth. The M community vendors and companies that employ M professionals have high standards and are selective in their hiring practices: They rarely compromise quality just to fill a staffing requirement. M professionals with a strong work ethic, who desire to expand their knowledge base and are flexible, will always be in demand.

As many of you readers know, my organization has chosen to specialize in placing temporary and permanent M professionals, giving me a vantage point many others do not have. Eleven years ago, I was placing computer professionals with a variety of technology backgrounds. I witnessed the continuous growth in the M computing field; while other technologies were experiencing roller-coaster-like markets, M's growth was steady. The decision to specialize in M has been a great success. There is also a great sense of commitment on the part of the users of M Technology.

M Technology is growing in several ways. Conversions to M are common; non-M clients are adding M installations, and existing M users are expanding their present systems. Look at how Greystone, Micronetics, IDX, SMS, HBO, Sunquest, InterSystems, Antrim, Compucare, CoMed, and countless others have grown in just a few years. Look at the major organizations such as the large health maintenance organizations, medical centers, banks, schools, credit unions, distribution organizations, research companies, etc., that have chosen M. Using M Technology has influenced their growth.

As the major vendors continue to install new M Technology systems for formerly non-M customers and many existing M Technology customers have additional needs, our future is a bright one. The area in which I see M Technology needing improvement is in self-promotion. We don't want to be the best-kept information systems secret, but we *do* want to be the best information systems solution. **M**

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