

CHAPTER 2: MY HP CAREER

In The Right Place At The Right Time

THE MISTAKE THAT DETERMINED THE COURSE OF MY LIFE

Being hired by Hewlett Packard was an unexpected stroke of good fortune. Fate had a hand in it by delaying my college graduation by six months while I completed a required political science course that my counselor had overlooked. All of my classmates dreamed of going to work for HP, but the company was not hiring in the summer of 1963. With HP once again hiring in the fall I would become the only one in my class to have that dream become reality.

In those days large companies like HP usually hired people for life and provided a generous benefit package to give new employees the incentive to stay (which is a complete reversal of what is now happening thanks to greed and globalization). My father was very happy when I joined HP. He approved of my decision because it was compatible with the sage advice he had given me just prior to my graduation, "If you want to have a good life go to work for a big company and stay there". He knew what he was talking about. By that time my father was well on his way to completing his 42 year career with Standard Oil of California (Chevron) and during that time they had been very good to him.....he had advanced from being a stenographer working in a tent in the oil fields near Coalinga, California, to Standard's Corporate Credit Card Accounting Manager at their San Francisco headquarters.

Like most of my classmates I expected to spend my entire career in some technical capacity quietly contributing to my employer's success.....and that probably would have happened if HP had not hired me just prior to the job offer that I received from the Stanford Research Institute (SRI). In any event, just having a "white collar" job was a welcomed change. On Friday night, Dec 13, 1963 (my 21st birthday) I was still working at a gas station on 19th Avenue in San Mateo. It was cold and pouring down rain as I waited on the endless stream of rush hour customers. On Monday morning I reported for work at HP's Dymec Division in Palo Alto. The production test department was nice and warm, it was dry, it was beautiful. There were coffee breaks.....and donuts!

As time passed my technical career at HP did not evolve as I had expected. Thanks to HP's rapid growth there were tremendous opportunities for personal advancement and many of those were in management, which is where my career path eventually led me. As I moved on I missed the technical work, which I loved, but didn't complain. Back in those days management positions received higher salaries and with a young family to support that was an important consideration for me.

At the beginning of my HP career I never would have guessed that the simple expectations that I had set for my professional life would somehow turn into multiple international management assignments that would eventually take me to more than 50 countries on five continents. It still boggles my mind to think that I was given such an opportunity.

MY CAREER PATH TO THE MIDDLE EAST

Production Test Engineer – Dymec Division

I joined HP's Dymec Division located at 395 Page Mill Road on December 16, 1963. At that time the Redwood Building was still in use, but HP's headquarters had long moved to "the hill" at 1501 Page Mill Road. Dymec manufactured some proprietary instrumentation system products but mainly handled the production of mature product lines transferred from other divisions. I spent three years at Dymec as a production test engineer specializing in microwave test sets, television frequency monitors, and various phase locking devices. While I was there a large glassed-in area with a big "Authorized Personnel Only"

sign was set aside to accommodate the Data Systems people who had just joined HP and were given the task of developing HP's first technical computer, the HP 2116A. The project was all very hush, hush, but rumors quickly spread that HP was getting into the computer business. My production test station was next to this not so secret development project. On one occasion I recall the cheering that went on when the computer design engineers managed to get the "breadboard" model to play "Merrily We Roll Along" on an audio amplifier that they had interfaced to the new computer. The HP 2116A had a whopping 16 kilobytes of core memory. In contrast, IBM was already producing large mainframe computers.

Instrument Service Engineer – Customer Service Center (CSC)

In July of 1966 I moved on to the U.S. Western Service Center (WSC) as a bench service engineer, working primarily on the same products that I had been testing at Dymec. I remember that Jack Goodwin, who was Dymec's production manager, waved a promotion in front of me to get me to stay but in the end John Walling, the manager of WSC, convinced me that I had a better chance for career advancement in service. Almost as soon as I joined WSC we relocated. Over Thanksgiving weekend in 1966 we moved WSC out of the old dark and dusty basement of Building 8 and into Building 30, a new facility at 333 Logue Avenue in Mountain View. This was the first HP facility dedicated to customer service. We were co-located with HP's Corporate (worldwide) Customer Service management team headed by Chuck Ernst. After the move WSC became the Hewlett Packard Customer Service Center (CSC). This is where I met my future wife, Joella Miller, who was Chuck's secretary.

Computer Customer Engineer – Customer Service Center

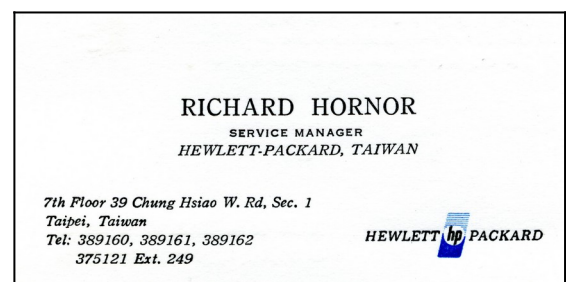
Because I had some minor experience with a page reader, a digital device that was used by HP field offices to submit parts orders to CSC, management seemed to think that I was qualified to receive computer service training. So, in 1968 I joined HP's first computer field service group as a customer engineer. This group was located within CSC at the time and managed by Paul Gearhart, who was also the only employee until I joined him. The two of us provided support to all of HP's computer customers on the Pacific Coast, from the Mexican border to Alaska. I remember that my transition from analog to digital was difficult.....the HP 2115A and HP 2116A computers didn't have any meters, just a bunch of flashing lights!



1969 - Author & Tool Kit

Country Customer Service Manager – HP Taiwan

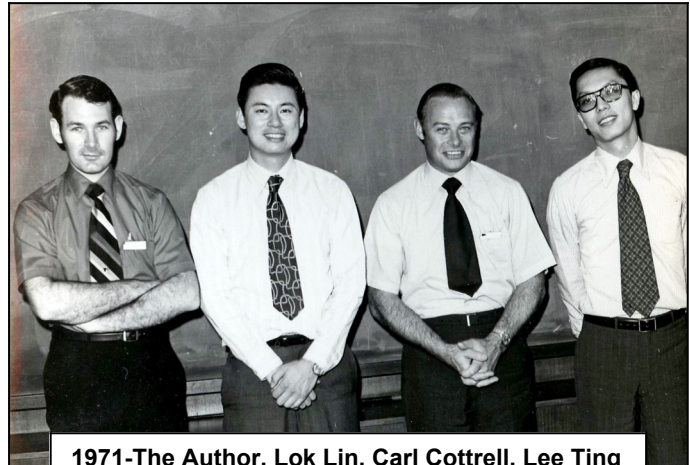
By the late 1960's the market for HP products in the Republic of China (aka, Taiwan) had become large enough to justify replacing our local "representative", Wah Sheng Electronics, with an HP sales office. Business in Taiwan was booming thanks to the many U.S. companies, like RCA, that had begun off-shoring their manufacturing activities. At that time Taiwanese production workers were being paid 25 cents an hour. Because of my customer service background and experience with a broad range of HP instrumentation and computer products, I was asked by John Walling, who had become the Inter-Continental Sales Region (ICON) Service Manager, to join the HP Taiwan start up team as the country service manager. This was in early 1970. With this job offer I had reached the second major crossroads in my career and a turning point that would change the direction of my life.



This was a tough decision for me and, to use an expression common these days, forced me to start thinking "outside the box." John gave me just 24 hours to make my decision. I didn't sleep much that night, but in the end I decided that it was the right move for me. Based on the tremendous growth that HP

was experiencing I knew that if I accepted this assignment it would probably open the door to many more opportunities. I was smart enough to see that like a train just leaving the station HP would continue to pick up speed and I wanted to be along for the ride. Once the decision was made I was ready to join Lee Ting and Lok Lin on this big adventure. Starting the HP Taiwan subsidiary was a first-time experience for all of us and is a good example of the opportunities available to HP employees during this period of rapid growth.

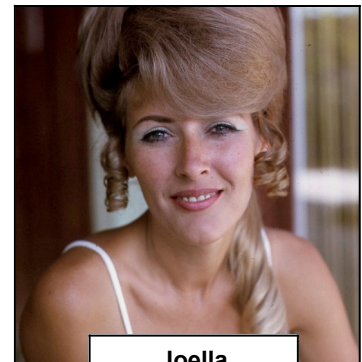
We started HP Taiwan with absolutely nothing. Our first office was a room at the President Hotel in Taipei. Upon our arrival in Taiwan not only was I the service manager but also the only service engineer, responsible for servicing every HP product on the island. Knowing in advance that this would be the case I spent several months prior to our departure from the U.S. receiving additional technical training focused on medical and analytical (chemical analysis) products.



1971-The Author, Lok Lin, Carl Cottrell, Lee Ting

I spent the next two years setting up a complete service operation in Taipei. By the time I finished my assignment I had decided to remain with HP's international operations if I could. Although the creation of HP Taiwan was the most challenging work I had ever done the professional and personal experiences that I gained were priceless. Successfully completing this assignment gave me a tremendous feeling of satisfaction. Like a painter starting with a blank canvas and slowly, over time, producing a masterpiece, I was proud of the results I had achieved. At the end of my Taiwan assignment I asked John Walling to find another service management position for me within ICON. In response he gave me the task of creating a Data Products (computer) service operation for HP in Canada.

Regarding my personal life, prior to my move to Taiwan I had become friends with Joella Miller, Chuck Ernst's secretary. One morning we struck up a conversation during a coffee break and those conversations, which continued on regular basis, gradually developed into a solid friendship. Over time, as the level of trust grew, we began to share personal information. We had both married young. She was 18 and I was 19. After suffering through several years of marital cold war my marriage had ended in 1968. Joella's husband was short-fused and abusive. She was still married to him when I departed for Taiwan, but eventually divorced him. Upon learning of his continued threats, I wrote and suggested that she break the cycle of abuse by getting away...far away. When I offered her a place with me in Taiwan she accepted. After months of living together we were married in Taipei in 1971. Lee Ting was our best man.



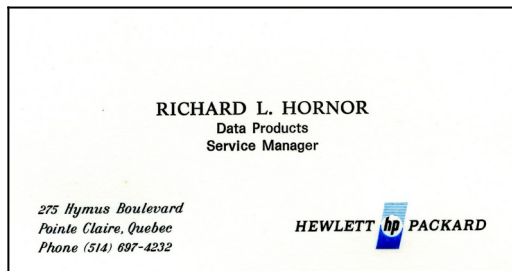
Joella

After my assignment in Taiwan was completed we headed for Montreal. My workload in Taiwan had been so consuming (I did not take a day off for the first three months I was there) that I needed a long vacation. So, we decided to take a two month break in Europe while en route to Montreal. One of our stops was in Athens. Even though it was Christmas time and the weather was cold, we fell in love with Greece and the people that we met. I remember joking that it would great if we could find a way to land an HP assignment in Athens, but Greece was a very small country with limited business potential for HP and our dream would surely never materialize. But it was fun fantasizing about the impossible.

Data Products Service Manager – HP Canada

Joella and I arrived in Montreal in February of 1972. There was snow everywhere. Our flight to Montreal from Dublin, Ireland was delayed 8 hours due to an inch of snow that had fallen unexpectedly the previous night. In contrast, there must have been 6 feet of snow piled up along the runway when we landed at the Dorval Airport in Montreal. Living in snow country was new for both of us. In October, when it was often still 90+ degrees in Palo Alto, we had our first snowfall and from that point on the ground was covered until May. We quickly learned that if we made the

mistake of having our car washed at noon the doors would be frozen shut by the time we headed for home in the evening. Freezing rain was the worst. It was not uncommon to make several stops while driving home in order to scrape the ice off of the windshield. And brakes, forget about them. With an inch of ice on the road brakes were useless.



Our House Buried By A Blizzard

Weather aside, living in Montreal was another wonderful experience. The political problems that had plagued Quebec in the early 1970's had subsided and luckily for us the real estate prices had not yet recovered, which enabled us to buy a lot and build a beautiful home at 3 Durham Road in the small village of Dollard des Ormeau, for less than \$30,000. Although not obvious to most visitors, Montreal is located on an island surrounded by the St. Lawrence Seaway and several converging rivers. The city, which reminded me so much of San Francisco, was very cosmopolitan and thanks to its French and English heritage most of the Quebecoise were bi-lingual, making it a very comfortable and thoroughly enjoyable place to live and work.

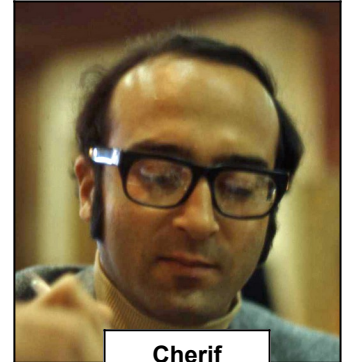
From a business point of view the HP 2100 family of computers had been shipping to Canada for more than five years. Even so, there had not been enough sales volume to justify the creation of a dedicated computer service organization. All across Canada the service engineers who had been trained to service HP computers were doing so as a secondary responsibility. Most of them were primarily medical and analytical service engineers. But now, with the rapid growth of the computer installed base and the delivery of the first HP 3000 outside the U.S. scheduled for April, Dave Lansley, the HPCL service manager, was completely buried. After discussing the situation with John Walling it was decided that I would join Dave in Montreal and take charge of computer service. For me this would be a repeat of my role in Taiwan. The only differences would be the narrower product focus and the much larger territory.

My first day in Montreal was reminiscent of my first day in Taipei.....upon my arrival in the office I discovered that I was not only the Canadian Data Products Service Manager, but I was also the Quebec District Data Products Service Manager and the only Data Products Service Engineer in the district (each Canadian province was considered an HPCL district). It was no wonder that Dave needed help. So, in addition to my management responsibilities I began carrying a tool kit again, but after two years we had dedicated Data Products service personnel in every district office and had successfully installed multiple HP 3000's across Canada. I should point out here that I not only had responsibility for Data Products (HP Product Type 05) but also for Instrument Systems (HP Product Type 02). Dealing with these two different sales forces was a big problem for me, but that story is for another time.

In Montreal Joella went to work for the Medical Sales Manager, Cherif Rifaat, on a temporary basis, while his secretary was away on leave. I got to know a great deal about Cherif before actually spending any time with him.....I had to help Joella sort out a couple of his travel expense reports. He was one of

those managers who did not want to be bothered with the details and upon returning from a trip would dump all of his receipts on his secretary's desk and she would have to use her forensic skills to reconstruct what had actually happened. As Cherif tended to buy many small personal items, usually in airport bookstores, we spent a lot of time looking for places to hide them somewhere in his expense report. Having by that time had a lot of experience with travel expense reports myself, I did most of the work, at home in the evening on the kitchen table. To this day I don't think Cherif is aware that I was responsible for getting his expense reports approved.

One evening Joella mentioned to me that Cherif had accepted a job with HP Europe (HPSA) as the general manager of HP's new Mediterranean and Middle East operation, which was located in Rome but would most likely be relocating to Athens, Greece. Excited about the possibility, even though extremely remote, of being able to return to Greece, I approached him about filling the service manager's position. He was very interested. Because of my experience with startups in Taiwan and Canada I was a perfect fit for the position. I could hardly believe that our impossible dream of living and working in Greece might possibly come true.



Cherif


After Cherif had moved to Europe I received a formal job offer from him in the summer of 1973 and accepted. I would permanently transfer to Geneva, be placed on the HPSA payroll and become an expatriate from Switzerland, initially living in Rome until the operation moved to Athens in late 1973. However, after the inevitable delays caused by HPSA and HPCL arguing over my departure date, I was finally scheduled to report for work in Athens in Feb 1974 after training my HPCL replacement, another American, Bill Thacker (who was soon followed by another American, Colin Hardeman).

Customer Service Manager – HP Mediterranean and Middle East Operations

Setting up a service operation to support customers in the Middle East and North Africa would be a tremendous challenge. To be successful I would have to rely heavily on my strong organizational skills and my previous experiences in Taiwan and Canada. When I joined HP it was an instrument company, HP's primary market was the U.S. and HP's service strategy was bench repair. In the Middle East I would be expected to develop both bench repair and field service capabilities, for six HP product groups, which would meet the expectations of customers in 20 countries. Welcome to mission impossible.

RICHARD L. HORNOR
CUSTOMER SERVICE MANAGER
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With Cherif's job offer I had reached another major crossroads in my career and in my life. Once again, I was off into the unknown. ■

HEWLETT hp PACKARD
S.A.
Co-Ordination Office for Mediterranean & Middle East Operations
Piazza Marconi 25, 00144 Rome, Italy

FROM : Cherif Rifaat, Rome DATE : July 17, 1973
TO : Dick Hornor, Pte. Claire SUBJECT : CONFIDENTIAL

cc. Crawford Beveridge, Geneva

Dear Dick,

It was a pleasure to see you again and I thoroughly enjoyed our discussions.

This is to confirm my offer to you for the position of Service Manager, Mediterranean Operations.


The job pays Lit. 556,000.- (Italian Lires) per month, paid 14 times a year (i.e. 7,788,000.- Lits/year). In addition to this are all the other usual HP benefits, Profit Sharing and so on.

The details of the Transfer Package itself are mostly standard HP. Before we make-up this letter, however, I would like you to meet with our European Personnel Manager, Crawford Beveridge, to discuss pertinent details of relevance to yourself. After this discussion we will officially put the whole thing in writing.

I have arranged a meeting for you with Crawford on Saturday July 28, in Rome.

Please inform me at the earliest possible opportunity (by Twx if possible) of your acceptance in principal.

Best regards,


Cherif

