

## **SMALL BUSINESS COMPUTERS FOR FIRST-TIME USERS**

Many small businesses are keen to take advantage of modern computer technology but do not know how to proceed. This book is designed to help the small business through the various stages involved in computerisation.

In Part 1, **Guidelines**, the author discusses the dilemma of the first-time user and focuses on such aspects as computer appreciation, the feasibility study, going out to tender, and evaluating the various proposals. Topics dealt with include: hardware and software, whether to use a consultant, selecting a list of suppliers, and how to evaluate particular system features. System implementation is also considered. Part 2 describes **Common Types of Computer Applications** — payroll, sales ledger, purchase ledger, sales order processing and nominal ledger.

Six appendices are also included: sample study questionnaires, cost elements of computer systems, sample study report, specimen tender document, a suggested letter to suppliers, and a glossary of terms.

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**I R Beaman**

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# Preface

This book is designed to help the small business through the various stages involved in computerisation. It is also designed to remove much of the mystique associated with anything related to computers. It is intended as a tool to help people to help themselves. This does not mean that there are not stages in the computerisation process where the professional experience and knowledge of a consultant may be required. What it does mean is that with the help of this book, you, the first-time user, can successfully undertake the daunting task of deciding which computer to install and ensure that the implementation runs smoothly.

It is meant as a supplement, rather than an alternative, to asking sales representatives from various computing suppliers to come in and explain their particular system. What the first-time user really wants is unbiased information in a format that will assist the evaluation of computing needs, and of the ability of each supplier to satisfy them.

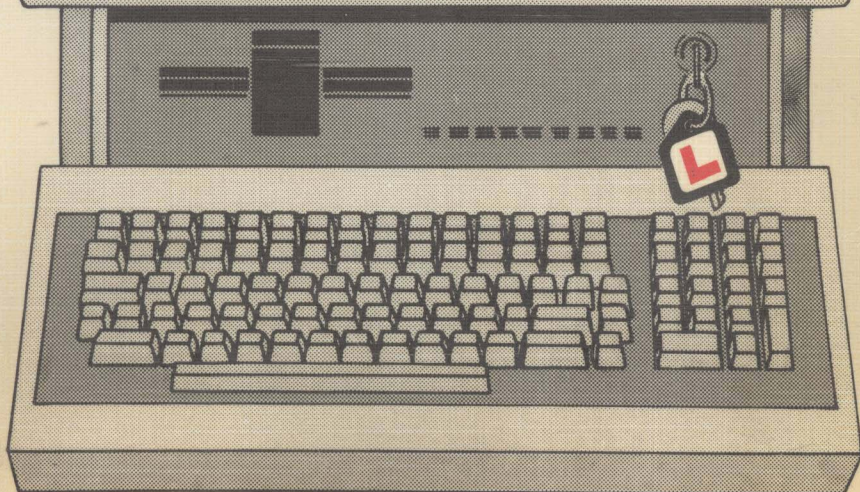
Alternatively you could hire a consultant, but how would you go about selecting him? You still do not have enough knowledge of computing to evaluate the consultant's integrity and ability. What is more, consultants can be rather expensive.

If at this point you admit that you really do not know enough about computers, either to make a valid analysis of what a computer can do for you, or to choose the best computer system for your needs, then you have taken a first solid step forward. You have also avoided the trap that so many first-time users fall into, which is to take the 'easy' way out, suggesting to themselves that anything having to do with a computer is highly technical and therefore something that they should not be concerned with.

At any rate, with the realisation of what you don't know and what you need to know, you are now ready to take your second positive step forward.

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# **PART 1**

## **Guidelines**

