JGIM: Will you tell me about Compaq, Japan, and how you came to lead it?

Murai: Compaq just announced record sales and profits for the third quarter. If current trends continue, worldwide sales this year will approximate 700 billion yen, or US$6 billion or more. Compaq Japan, being newly established, has obviously grown faster than the rest of the world.

I worked at IBM for 29 years. During my tenure, I worked in several areas, including communications, networking and on-line banking. I was an originator for on-line banking in 1964, so I have been in all aspects of the networking business.

Because of this, I was an advisor of the computerization of IBM Japan sales headquarters at Hakozaki. That took almost two years to accomplish. We installed multiple 3090s with networking and E-mail. I was proud to demonstrate these functions to our customers.

Customers were very interested but they never purchased. I could never figure out why until I joined Compaq and established the similar network in a week. The difference is that in the client server environment, you can build networks in a modular form, and then expand quickly.

When using MVS/VM, the whole network must be designed at the outset. Functionality in both systems is identical. I have seen changes in computer industry trends, and I have joined Compaq. Besides, IBM became too big to respond to the environment. I was, however, shocked to see the magnitude of technical changes after I joined Compaq.

JGIM: What is the history of information systems use in Japan?

Murai: There is a fundamental difference between Japanese and American organization structures. I do not want to oversimplify the comparison, but I believe that senior management in Japanese companies is not sufficiently involved in the details or trends of their businesses.

Heads of major Japanese corporations do not understand the basic nature of changes that are rapidly occurring. I was very lucky to be involved since the beginning of computerization. The IBM 1401, 1440, and 1410 had been announced in the early. That was the beginning of computerization in Japan. The IBM 360 was introduced in 1964.

The 1964 Tokyo Olympic Games in Japan were the first Olympic games to be totally computerized. The press could receive instantaneous results of all ongoing activities. As an example, Seiko installed an automatic timing system for swimming events. When swimmers touched a specially designed pad, a signal was automatically transmitted via computer to the press center.

IBM, NEC and NTT worked together at the Tokyo Olympics. NEC and NTT were in charge of developing the modem and network technology. This was difficult because at that time only low-speed telex machines were available in Japan. Modem technology could have been imported from the U.S., but NEC and NTT committed to developing the necessary technology. This was a critical technology, and they were successful in completing the project.

At the conclusion of the Olympic Games, the banking industry took the lead in adopting computer technology. Many of the computers used at the Olympics were purchased by large banks, in particular Mitsui Bank and Shizuoka Bank. Mitsui Bank installed an online system for use with time deposit and savings appli-
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