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THE ROLE OF MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEMS IN FOOD DISTRIBUTION

by

Al Bates

Management Horizons, Inc.

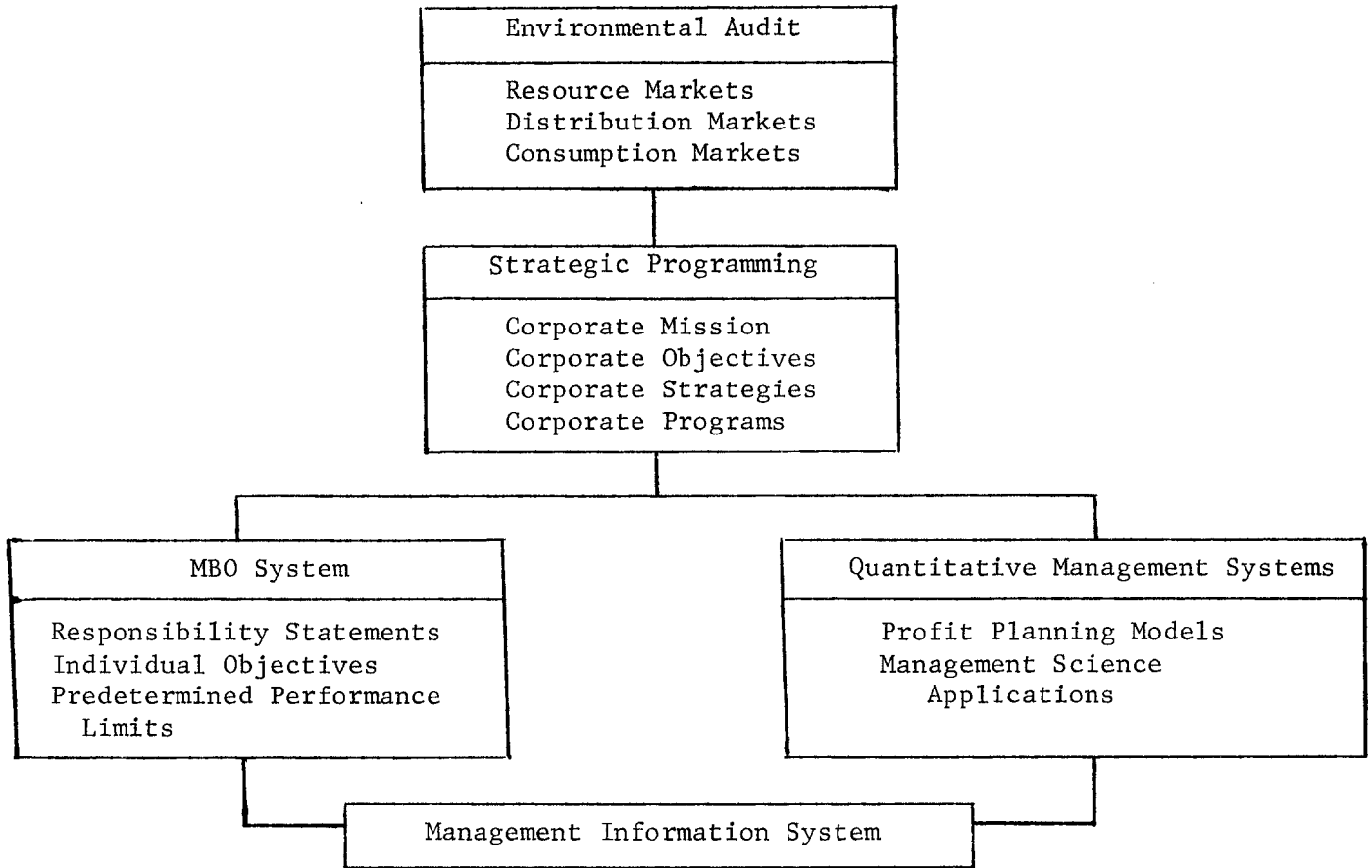
Columbus, Ohio

This talk is presented in outline form, because no formal written statement was available. However, it is a timely subject and useful even if it is only in outline form.

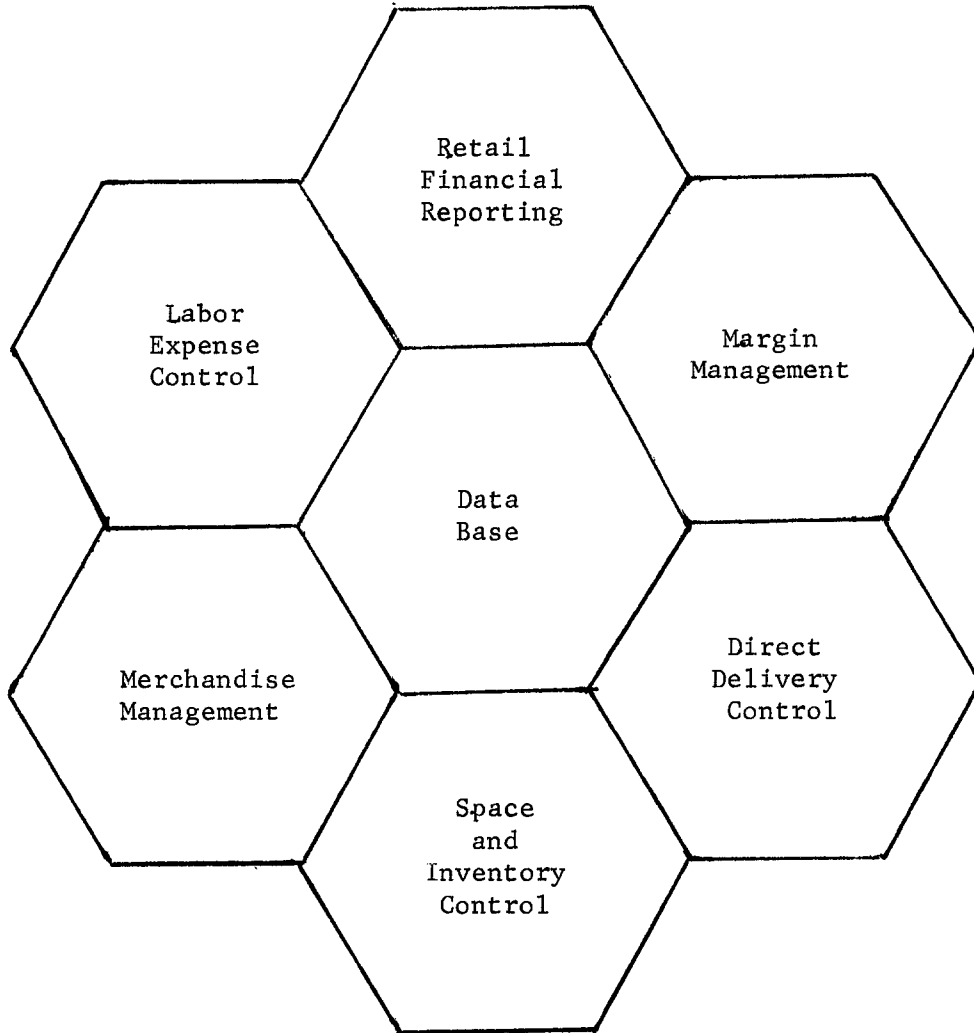
I. Critical Operating Problems for Supermarket Executives.

Operating Problems	Important Characteristics
Lagging Sales Volume	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Changing Market Characteristics- New Types of Competitors
Employee Productivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Rapidly Rising Wages- Inability to Increase Output per Man Hour- Unionization Pressures
Space and Inventory Utilization	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Too many Duplicative Items- Stagnant Inventory Turnover Ratios- Declining Sales per Square Foot- Excessive Stockouts

II. A Systems Approach to Management



III. Minimal Components of a Food Distribution Information System.



IV. Major Information System Challenges for the Future.

Improved yield -- and in many cases, survival -- is dependent upon an advanced management system which focuses management attention on the critical profit variables and which provides a reporting system that supports the new technology of management, enabling the executive to secure information in every needed level of detail...in some cases without prior knowledge of his information needs...

Advanced systems are not effective, and that they often have negative payout, unless executives, managers, and operators have an in-depth knowledge of their systems and of the specific applications of their systems to their particular problems and opportunities...

Management must meet the challenge of linking the manufacturer, the distribution center, and the retail store (or other customers) together in a tightly structured, vertically integrated system of information and product flow...

The system must be changed on a continuing basis to meet new conditions as they arise...

Executives must recognize that a computer -- in and of itself -- is not an "information system". The first point of wisdom about computers is that they come from the factory empty.