

# The Technical Representative

By GENE SMITH

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Looking for flaws in the corotron assembly used in a copier. This assembly gives the selenium drum a positive charge that prepares it to receive the electronic image.

The Xerox Corp. Tech Rep is a trouble preventer, troubleshooter, customer educator, goodwill ambassador, and engineering consultant whose reports and suggestions lead to important design changes.

By GENE SMITH

## The Technical Representative

STEPHEN Levit is a technical representative for Xerox Corporation, and he is proud of being one. If he worked for *International Business Machines*, he would be known as a customer engineer. And if he and his IBM counterpart had been working in the immediate post-World War II years, they would have been called servicemen.

But Levit really is much more than that. His very appearance points that up. He makes his calls in a business suit; there are no coveralls for him with the company name embroidered on the back. He carries the tools that he needs in two sleek-looking attaché cases. He is clean-cut, neat, well-spoken, for when he calls on a client he *is* the company.

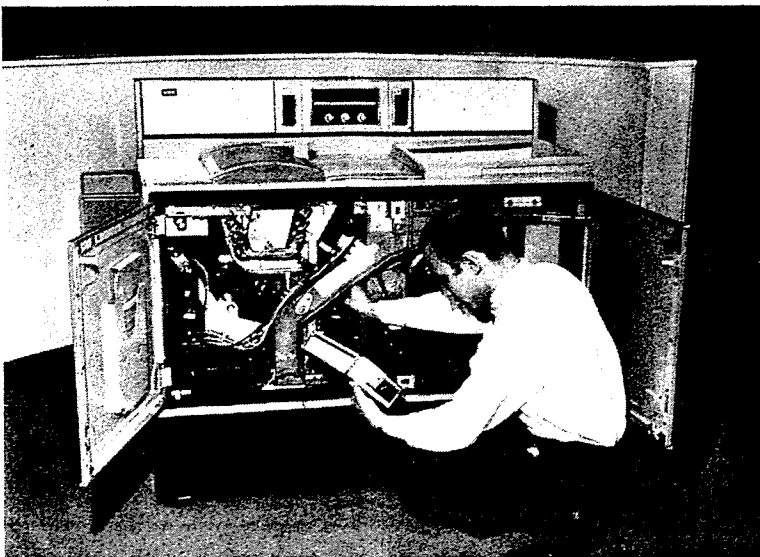
The tech rep is actually a vital member of the company's marketing team. The work he does, the service he renders, the contacts he establishes, go hand in glove with the efforts

of company salesmen. It is up to the TR to maintain customer satisfaction and to help promote the other machines and services offered by his company.

Levit is typical of this new breed that has sprung up to service the complicated business machines that are today leased all over the country in ever-increasing numbers. Company revenues depend on all the Stephen Levits it employs, since the leased machines are metered, with the customer paying only for the copy that is actually produced. Downtime, when a machine is out of action, is thus an important item in the balance sheets. How well the TR's do their work is reflected in the all-important earnings of the company.

So, an accurate description of what Levit does proves the importance of his position. He is at one and the same time a trouble preventer, a troubleshooter, a customer educator, a

Using a pyrometer to check the temperature of the fuser heat pressure roller. This roller fuses the toner into the paper.



Steve Levit (center, front row) joins other tech reps in an after-hours class in electronics conducted by the company.



goodwill ambassador, and an engineering consultant, whose reports and suggestions lead to design changes incorporated in new machines or retrofitted into earlier models.

### Background and Training

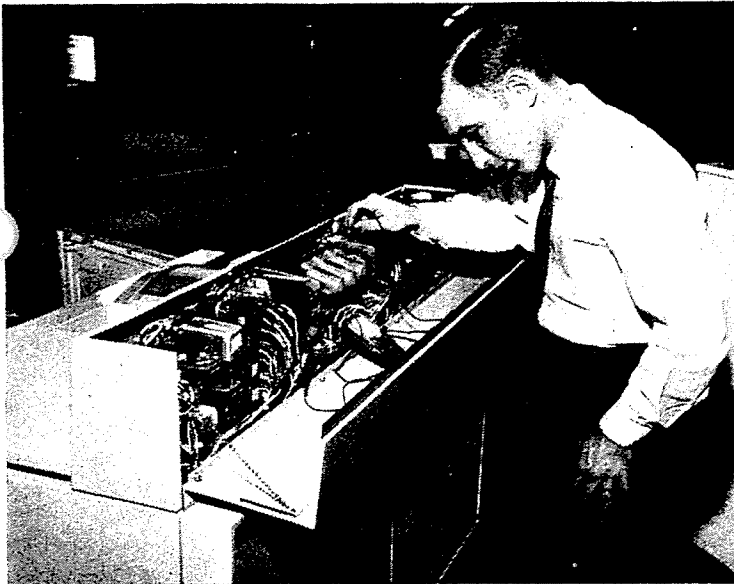
He joined the company five years ago upon his release from the United States Navy, in which he had been an Electronics Technician Second Class. It was only natural that a young veteran should seek work in a field in which he was best qualified, so he tried to locate a job in the radar field. There was little available. So he went to an agency and they told him about Xerox.

His electronics training fitted him neatly for the job, and he went to work as one of about 20 TR's whose territory then covered the entire uptown area of New York's Borough of Manhattan, above 42nd Street. Their responsibility: to maintain customer installations of copiers and equipment for producing offset printing masters.

Levit spent his first two weeks in intensive training on the fundamentals of xerography and the machines. He learned all about corona discharge of positive ions and the corotron units that produce it to put an electrostatic charge on a selenium drum or plate. He learned about photoconductivity, the property that enables a material like selenium to act as an insulator and store an electrical charge in darkness and then become a conductor, surrendering the charge in the presence of light. He was thoroughly indoctrinated in the electri-



Preparing to tune up a long-distance xerography scanner, Levit traces a supervisory signal through the computer logic schematic.



Employing a v.o.m. to check programmer assembly on copier. This assembly sets up a relay switching sequence in the copy cycle.

cal, mechanical, and optical complexities of the devices for which he was to be responsible.

The next two weeks saw him in the field, actually working with an experienced tech rep on machines at customer installations.

So well did he take to his job that he was subsequently the first TR selected to attend a new company school at Garden City, Long Island, for instruction in the then-new desk-top copy machine. After two weeks there, he was placed in charge of maintaining the first such machines that were installed in New York City.

Today he is also qualified on a number of other machines. These include the highly sophisticated electronic facsimile communications system known as LDX (long-distance xerography). Levit is as much at home troubleshooting the circuitry of an LDX scanner (transmitter) or an LDX printer (receiver) as he is checking out the bias voltage adjustment on a more conventional copier.

Typical of many TR's, he has shown that he wants to advance himself. He is working hard to earn promotion and to prepare himself for it now by acquiring extra skills. Twenty-six-years old and married, he is an evening student at City College of New York. His company foots half the bill for such outside courses if they are job-related, and more than half the company's TR's take advantage of the opportunity.

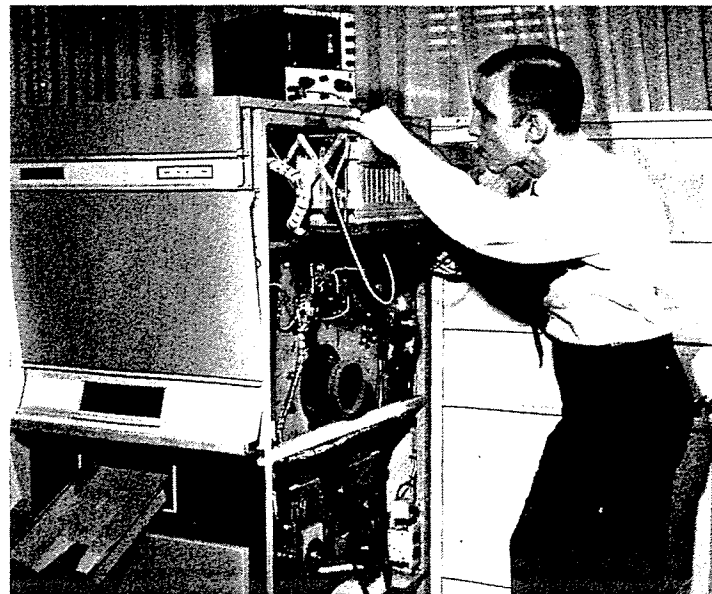
While Levit at first aimed at a major in engineering, he has switched to psychology. "I changed because it fits in with the possibilities of getting into management work," Stephen explains. "I have found that a great part of my job is really customer relations. I feel that I have the proper technical background, and this new field teaches me how to deal correctly with people problems."

He points out that this was a personal decision. Other tech reps might prefer to go ever deeper into the technical side, perhaps with an engineering position as a goal.

Even to him, "the most important thing is to have a good background in electronics."

This is truer than ever today for tech reps. The company recently announced that it will market and service a product designed and produced by *Magnavox* to make

Using an oscilloscope to check the width of video blanking pulses that are employed in long-distance xerography unit.



facsimile communications available to anybody with a telephone. This is a self-contained, desk-top transceiver that connects to any telephone simply by resting the handset in a special receptacle.

Farther into the future, tech reps can probably look forward to new types of output devices for electronic computers.

For this reason, employment standards are high. The average TR competes with about 50 other applicants for his job. He must be highly qualified in electronics, mechanics, and optics. Applicants are usually young men who have an associate's degree or diploma from a community college, training at a recognized technical institute, or advanced training and service in electronic-mechanical fields of the Armed Forces.

### A Typical Day

A typical day for Levit begins at 8:30 a.m. when he reports on the job. If he has a service call to make, he goes directly to that. He then calls his office for his next assignment unless he has a full schedule ahead of him. If there are no real service calls, he drops in on the office of a customer to do preventive maintenance. This includes installation of any new components or parts in order to keep the machine up to date.

If he has no service calls and no scheduled preventive maintenance, the TR helps others, either on their calls or back in the office by making sure that all spare parts and equipment are in proper order. In a normal day, Levit averages between five and six service calls.

In slack periods when there are no service calls or when he has finished his work on a machine, Levit finds it worthwhile to talk with users of the company's equipment. He tells them of the latest models and suggests how such equipment could help in the user's own operation. The company has found that many solid leads for its salesmen come from such a casual approach.

The independence that the TR develops also gives him a good chance to make suggestions as to how to improve equipment. One tech rep, for example, developed a special switch that permits the testing of a copier's corotron current without actually turning the machine on. Another suggested a wiring modification for the LDX printer that materially reduced service calls. Levit himself is responsible for two modifications that were adopted by the company.

Xerox maintains a committee to evaluate new designs and ideas submitted

from the field by its TR's. One of its goals is to lighten the load in the attaché case that the TR carries on the job. Part of the TR's job is to serve as sort of *ex officio* member of the committee. He must always be on the alert for new ways to improve his product and the way in which he performs his duties.

While the workday ends at 5:00 p.m. there are often in-house lectures and discussions on new developments, and training periods whenever new products are introduced. For many, there are also their night classes in nearby colleges and universities. Their goals are promotions and personal development.

Levit's office manager, Donald T. Forlenza, who is Manager of Service and Sales Administration, started as a TR himself after graduating from Staten Island Community College. He became a supervisor, then a Marketing Team Technical Manager, prior to his present position. His career could lead him to the position of Branch Manager, or "almost any position in any route you want to take."

The rewards for Stephen Levit have already been good and steady. An added bonus in his case is his wife of three years. He met her while working on one of the machines in her office. ▲