



ROCC KEEPS THE H

... "At anytime I can get a complete picture of the state of our operation".

Promotional handling and fulfilment is hardly a phrase on everybody's lips, but it is an activity that most of the population regularly come into contact with. Anyone who has ever replied to an advertisement requesting more information, handed in coupons at their local supermarket, written for a money-back offer, or has had free samples of a consumer product posted through their letterbox will have dealt, albeit indirectly, with a

promotional handling and fulfilment house.

Part of the Marketforce group of companies, Marketforce's handling house in Sunderland, is just such an organisation. Situated within their enormous 75,000 square feet purpose-built premises, is a ROCC 2830 videotex system complete with 16 terminals. The system plays a crucial role in Marketforce's fulfilment processing, mail order and dealer agent servicing activities. These are

carried out on behalf of numerous clients. One of the first clients to go live on the system is the Solid Fuel Advisory Service, the function of which is to promote the use of solid fuel, and they have a national network of sales offices.

The primary purpose of the system, known as HEATLINE, is to follow up enquiries about solid fuel heating made as a result of newspaper advertisements or special promotions. HEATLINE, which has



EATLINE HOT

been specifically tailored to the Solid Fuel Advisory Service's requirements, replaces a paperwork system which involved the completion of a seven-part form, a task previously performed by typists specially employed to do the job.

The use of computers to increase operational efficiency has long been company policy within the Marketforce group of companies. Sister company, DDM Advertising, a specialist direct marketing agency,

has been highly computerised for many years. Marketforce at Sunderland, however, is the group's first use of videotex.

"A videotex system was ideal for our needs, it offered easy links anywhere in the country through the telephone network and cost-effective terminals," says Joyce Brum, Marketforce's group development director. "We knew we could rely on ROCC in particular because of their proven data entry capability," she added.

The system can capture data at source from promotional fulfilment, automatically prepare labels to a 24-hour turnaround period, list residents for follow-up mailings, monitor campaign progress in real-time and relay information to branch office terminals, answer queries online and transfer data in coordination with major telephone answering services. What this means in effect is that a complete computerised follow-up service can be given to the corporate customer once an enquiry has been received.

"Operators can be trained to use the system in around 20 minutes . . ."

The man in charge of the ROCC installation at Sunderland is Des Deery, computer systems manager. He oversees the operation of the system and its terminals, 14 of which are housed, with their operators, in a "central data capture area". Deery is enthusiastic about the application of videotex at Marketforce.

"Operators can be trained to use the system in around 20 minutes" he says, "but videotex still offers a sophisticated interactive system which meets our needs entirely."

For the Solid Fuel Advisory Service the system works like this: the



The man in charge of the ROCC installation at Marketforce's handling house in Sunderland is Des Deery - computer systems manager. He is enthusiastic about the application of videotex at Marketforce



Judy Tiridie - clerk/demonstrator at the Solid Fuel Advisory Service office, Sunderland is seen keying in sales enquiry details

potential customer, upon replying to an advertisement, or other promotional aid, has his reply directed to Sunderland. The requested information, 'a fulfilment pack', is then sent to the prospective customer, appearing to come from the local SFAS office. At the same time the local Solid Fuel Advisory Service office is informed of this on its own videotex terminals. In excess of 100,000 leads every year result from advertising.

If, as the result of receiving a fulfilment pack, the enquirer wishes to proceed with a solid fuel installation, then they are directed to contact their local SFAS office. The enquirer's details can be accessed on the videotex terminal, and arrangements will be made for a nominated Registered Heating Contractor to visit and give a quotation. HEATLINE also monitors the progress towards an

installation. Within this procedure the system can produce a number of styles of letter to follow up an enquiry, as many times as required, until a quotation is requested.

"The installation of the ROCC system has led to a marked increase in efficiency," said Nigel Byrne of the Solid Fuel Advisory Service. "It has proved a very powerful marketing tool," he added.

Originally the system was piloted in the northern region of the Solid Fuel Advisory Service, but after the success of the pilot the SFAS has pushed ahead with its plan to have a videotex terminal in every office in the UK. For Byrne, however, the system's main advantage is as an aid to management. "We can now monitor every stage of follow-up as it happens," says Byrne, "right down to customer satisfaction and the



"The installation of the ROCC system has led to a marked increase in efficiency. It has proved to be a very powerful marketing tool" says Nigel Byrne pictured in the Sunderland SFAS showroom

effectiveness of different advertisements. At any time I can get a complete picture of the state of our operation."

Looking to the future, the system has one further advantage for the SFAS. Follow-up can be extended for years to come as each installation needs servicing and finally replacing. Customers can be kept informed of the latest developments in pricing and technology. If the customer wishes, however, their name can be erased from the system at any time.

The final word on the system must come from Nigel Byrne. "For some people coal is a thing of the past but by using advanced technology like the ROCC videotex system, the Solid Fuel Advisory Service aims to make sure its product is the fuel of the future"



The central data capture area at Marketforce, Sunderland, where a 14-terminal ROCC 2830 is installed. Pictured checking the sorting of mail with an operator is Hilda Knowles - junior manager of the department