

# WESTERNER

Omaha Works  
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# Contents

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**2** **Read this now,  
not tomorrow**

**6** **Grab your film,  
shoot a photo**

**7** **Service  
anniversaries**

## On the cover

Assembler Jane Bohline is just one of the employees in Dept. 249 who help manufacture one of the Omaha Works' newest product offerings — the 800 series DSX system. Bohline does preliminary testing of DSX units, checking to see if all of the circuits are open or if all of the LEDs are functioning properly, for example. In this photo she's cleaning dust particles from a circuit path. A story about the DSX system starts on Page 4.

## WESTERNER

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# Time abusers live for tomorrow

**T**his article was supposed to have been written several months ago. It's a perfect example of a bad habit in which we all indulge at one time or another: procrastination.

Procrastination is probably the most important cause of our misuse of time. Besides creating unnecessary delays, it gives rise to the "last minute syndrome" — that rush to complete tasks that we should have finished yesterday.

Psychologists have shown that the roots of procrastination can run deep. You're nervous about dealing with strangers, so you put off calling them. You're afraid that you won't succeed in a project, so you never start.

People even procrastinate because they enjoy deadline panic. They consider the frenzy of last-minute work exciting.

Marlene Sedlacek, who is taking some college courses, isn't sure if that's the reason why she has a tendency to "burn the midnight oil" before a test. But the merchandise service clerk in the customer service department (Dept. 536) admitted that "the routine things are the hardest things to do "without some kind of motivating factor.

Her co-worker, Joan Herre, agrees that a little bit of pressure can make an otherwise boring situation interesting. On those days when the workload is relatively light (which isn't

## Can't keep a customer waiting

**E**mployees in Jack Harper's customer service department (Dept. 536) leave their procrastinating habits behind them when they come to work each day. It's a means of survival in a competitive world.

The department fields calls from AT&T's regional centers and Account Management, ranging from requests for special orders to complaints. These are our customers, and to procrastinate on addressing their needs is to risk losing business — even if we all are part of the same company.

Workers like merchandise service clerk Marlene Sedlacek may handle as many as 60 calls a piece — easily — on a heavy day. A customer may want

an order sooner than scheduled or may be missing parts on an order received.

Sedlacek said there are instances in which she may have some time before she must act on a call. Procrastinating would be easy, but the department rule of thumb is to "try to get a response back to a customer within 24 hours," she said. "We like to start fresh the next day."

The only time the department runs into problems with this kind of response interval is when workers must deal with procrastinators in other departments. "We have to wait for people to get back to us with answers, and if they procrastinate, it makes the situation worse," she explained.

A key to avoiding the procrastination trap is to "organize and adhere to procedure," Sedlacek said. Also, "you know that phone is going to ring again, so you had better get going."

Finally, there is motivation in knowing every call will be different — there's never a dull moment.



often), not only is Herre tempted to procrastinate on the job but she's also irritable.

"My husband tells me he wishes I'd get more work so I wouldn't be so crabby," she said.

Fellow merchandise service clerk Gene Baier said he's sure he's an irritant to his neighbors, because he habitually postpones the routine job of mowing his lawn. So he invents some deadline panic to motivate him.

"I set a ridiculous deadline, like trying to cut the lawn in 20 minutes," he said.

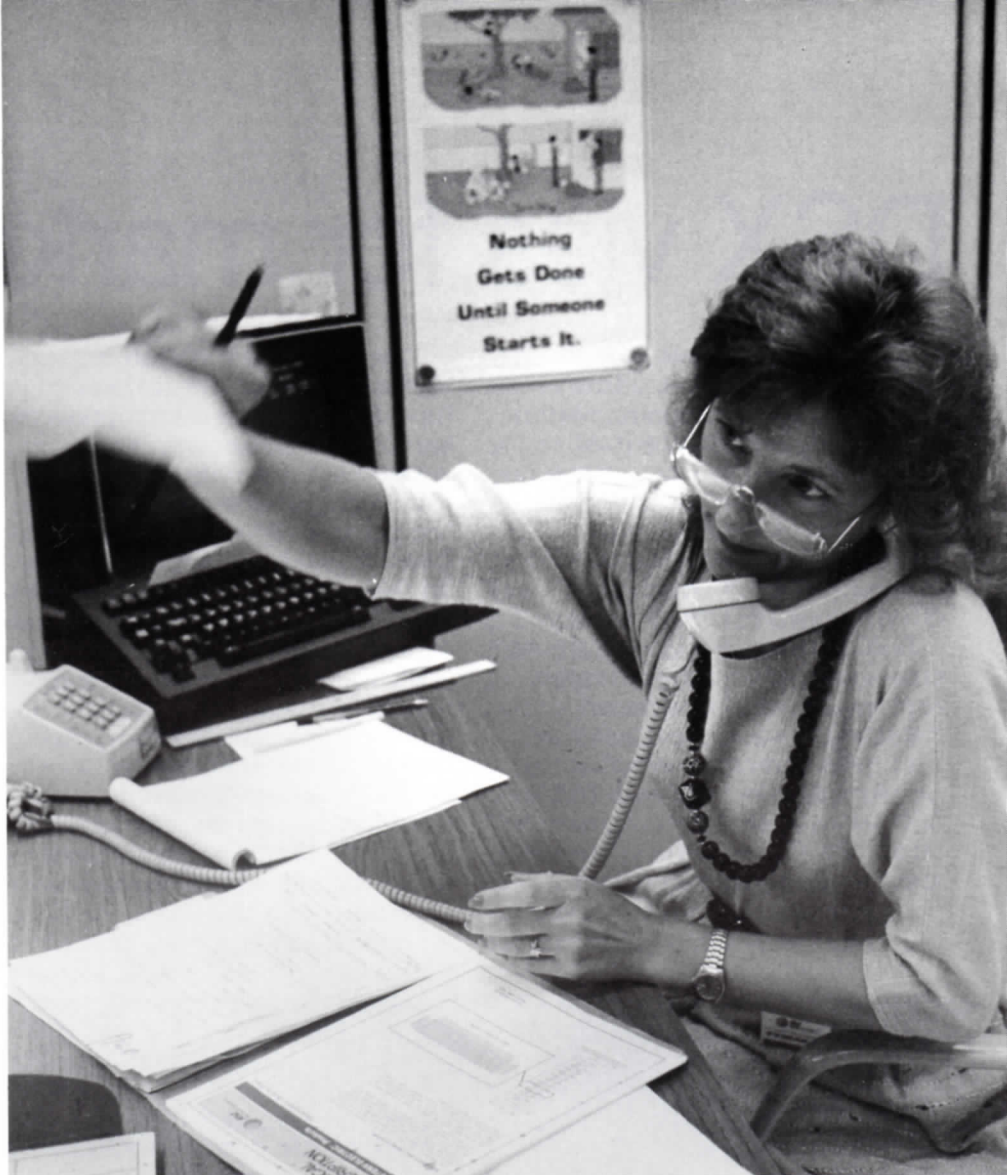
There are many reasons behind why a person puts things off, most of which are trivial when analyzed. There are, however, some myths about procrastination that must be debunked before one can break out of the grips of habitual delaying tactics.

One is that procrastinators are lazy. Not true. Even workaholics procrastinate. The procrastinator's problem is that he or she doesn't tackle the right task at the right time. What's lacking isn't initiative, but priorities.

Another myth is that a rigid schedule is a cure for procrastination. Although experts disagree, a tight schedule can be an excuse for putting off important projects. Leave some flexibility so that you can concentrate on high-priority tasks when necessary.

Some people accuse procrastinators of looking for an easy way out, but this usually isn't true either. Often, procrastinators are perfectionists who figure if they can't do something exactly right, they'll wait. But with many tasks, doing them right away takes precedence over absolute perfection — like mowing the lawn.

Procrastination is a tough habit to overcome, but not an impossible one. Here are a few tricks you might try to break



*DON'T PUT IT OFF . . . Marlene Sedlacek admits to waiting until the last minute to study for a final exam, but procrastinating is a definite "no-no" in the customer service department in which she works.*

out of the "mañana" syndrome:

- Set mini-deadlines. An inventory report is due next month. Break the project into smaller parts — collecting the data, making the calculations, outlining the report. Set a mini-deadline each week. Don't look on the report as a big project for which you lack time.

- Try leading actions. If you have "no time" to read a technical article in a trade journal, for example, at least take the magazine out, open it and read the first paragraph. You might just go ahead and read the whole thing.

If you're thinking of putting off making necessary phone calls, pick up the receiver. This initial action will lead you into the task.

- Organize for action. A constantly cluttered work space is a breeding ground for procrastination. You can't find materials you need and you're continually distracted by non-essentials. Make sure your tools and materials are handy so you won't have another excuse to procrastinate.

- Assign action units. An action unit can be as short as five or 10 minutes of time. When you face a big task you're tempted to postpone, commit yourself to work on it for one action unit. Maybe your momentum will carry you through a second or third action unit. Even if it doesn't, you've made a start.

For a procrastinator, that's progress.



# DSX vies for market share

**T**he product name sounds more like a gasoline additive than a type of equipment used in telecommunications central offices. But instead of putting zip in your gas tank, DSX — or rather, the 800 series DSX system — is putting zip in the Omaha Works' product line offerings and customer sales.

DSX stands for digital systems cross-connect. It has an important role in the process of handling voice and data signals that pass through a telephone network central office. AT&T's 800 series DSX system is used to terminate, cross-connect, test and maintain digital signals.

The beauty of the system is that it can perform these functions with no interruption of service to a customer, said senior engineer John Wilkening, the Works' lead engineer for the product. It comes with its own patch plugs which allow an installer to manually bypass a circuit without interrupting a signal's path.

DSX systems are particularly invaluable today as central offices become highly computerized to handle multiple calls on a single line. If there is trouble on a line, service to many more people can be jeopardized today without such a system

to bypass circuits while repairs are being made, Wilkening pointed out.

## A unique situation

DSX equipment in itself isn't new to the telecommunications industry, however. AT&T's first DSX equipment was introduced in the early 1960s, and since then several competitors' versions have been on the market. But technological changes in the industry and pressure from competition prompted a restudy of AT&T's product. The outcome of the study was a decision to redesign our DSX system to make it





both more compatible and competitive. AT&T selected the Omaha Works to manufacture the new system.

Wilkening said our involvement with the product is unique for a couple of reasons. One of them is that earlier production of DSX equipment didn't involve the Omaha Works at all.

"Parts were fabricated at the Columbus Works and assembled at Merrimack Valley," Wilkening said. These two manufacturing locations traditionally have been associated with switching and transmission equipment.

The Omaha Works was selected to produce the new DSX system because its product technology "closely followed our capability to produce connector systems," he explained.

The new design incorporates injection-molded parts, stamped metal contacts, printed wiring board fabrication and sheet metal hardware accessories, all of which the Omaha Works has the capability to provide. Additionally, this kind of capability under one roof promotes better quality control and customer service.

The other unique aspect of our involvement with the product pertains to the way the new system was designed and manufactured. In the past, AT&T Bell Laboratories completely designed a product before manufacturing facilities were set up in a factory. In order to keep pace with today's rapidly changing technological environment and to better compete in today's marketplace, a team

approach consisting of Omaha engineers and operating personnel working alongside Bell Labs people was introduced.

"We were involved in the product from the beginning," Wilkening said. Design work, planning and building operations were intermingled. As changes were made to designs, Works engineers modified assembly fixtures. If those modifications weren't practical or cost-effective, Bell Labs designed around the situation.

The team approach has proved to be vital to meet a tough first deadline, Wilkening said. The project was allocated to the Works in December 1984 and the first shipment of the newly designed DSX system was due in Tampa, Fla., by October 1985.

The DSX equipment was needed for a "point of presence" office, where AT&T Long Lines long-distance equipment ties into the local telephone network. It was the first such installation in Tampa to meet a deregulated environment, and making the deadline was critical. Wilkening said if we couldn't supply the DSX system that was needed, the customer — AT&T Communications — would have turned to a competitor.

### Competitive features

We met the deadline, despite the extensive designing, planning and retooling that was going on simultaneously. The new 800 DSX system differs considerably from AT&T's earlier product. It offers features which

Wilkening believes will give us solid footing in the marketplace.

Chief among those features is the system's ability to handle many more circuits while taking up much less space. "Eight DSX units in a sheet metal panel handle 80 circuits," Wilkening said. Ten of these panels fit into a frame or "bay" to handle 800 circuits in all. Previously available AT&T equipment accommodated just 250 circuits.

That feature alone positions AT&T favorably in the market compared to our competition, Wilkening noted, but other features are strong selling points, too. The system provides complete access from the front for easier cabling and to take up less floor space. Its units have a unique flexible printed wiring board that is bonded to a rigid printed wiring board, eliminating the need for manual cross-connect wiring.

The system incorporates a geometric circuit layout which minimizes cross-talk and ensures a reliable path for voice and data signals. A series of patch cords is available to easily change, repair and test circuits without interrupting service.

Since the Tampa installation, the Works has shipped other DSX systems to places throughout the country including Little Rock, Ark., Dallas and Phoenix. These early shipments have been fabricated largely from purchased parts until retooling is completed here at the Works. All molding operations and stamped metal contact operations should be conducted in-plant by the end of this year, Wilkening said.

But even when these operations are secured, it won't mean an end to modifications and retooling, Wilkening said. "We're always looking at ways to enhance — ways to introduce new codes of product so we can better meet customer needs."

*READY TO SHIP . . . Charley Morgan of Dept. 249 packs a complete panel kit consisting of DSX units, a mounting shelf and apparatus, and label kits.*



## Shutterbug contest

# Snap a winning photo

Omaha Works employees and retirees are invited to participate in the Westerner black and white photo contest. Even if you think you lack photography talent, enter anyway — you just may take a winning photo. Prizes will be awarded and winning photos will be published in a future Westerner issue. So ready, aim, shoot! Below are the rules:

**Subject matter:** Anything goes, such as mood-setting, humorous or candid shots of people, places or things.

**Entries:** Only **black and white** photos will be accepted for best reproduction in the Westerner. Photos may be mounted but not framed, and no size larger than 8x10 inches. All photos will be returned. Write your name and department number on the back of each photo (don't press hard), and attach an entry form to each photo entered. You may enter as many photos as you wish, as long as you yourself took them.

**Who is eligible:** All active employees and retirees of the Omaha Works, except members of the public relations department, and anyone who could be

considered a "professional" photographer who takes a fee for services.

**Judging:** A professional non-company photographer will judge the contest.

**Deadline:** All entries must be received by Oct. 15, 1986. Winners will be announced in the January Westerner.

**Prizes:** First place — AT&T Answering System 2500 (\$229.95 retail); second place — Touch-a-matic® 6000S telephone (\$149.95 retail); third place — Feature Telephone 1600 (\$109.95 retail).



## Photo contest entry form

Attach one form to each photo. Please print.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Dept. No.: \_\_\_\_\_ Work phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Occupation: \_\_\_\_\_

Photo title: \_\_\_\_\_

Send (or bring) entries to:  
Linda Ryan, Public Relations  
AT&T — Omaha Works  
P.O. 37000  
Omaha, Neb. 68137

**Deadline: Oct. 15, 1986**

## Retirements



Harold Walker  
42 years



L. B. (Timm)  
Timmerman  
42 years



Dick Baker  
42 years



Walter Wolff  
29 years



Sarah Standifer  
17 years



Robert Haselton  
15 years

Not pictured:  
Darrell Woods — 27 years

## Figures delayed

A new method of calculating the value of AT&T savings plans accounts has caused a delay in the release of plan figures for April, May and June. The figures are expected to be out in late summer or early fall. Savings plans participants also will receive worksheets and instructions on how to keep track of individual balances.

# Service anniversaries

## 40 years

E. Fuller	8/21
L. R. Hartman	8/28
L. V. Campbell	9/3
M. E. Szymanski	9/23

## 35 years

E. M. Banner	8/22
V. C. Barry	8/7
C. E. Struble	8/13
M. W. Carstens Jr.	9/4
B. L. Kinnaman	9/17
L. H. Parker	9/5
W. R. Stoner	9/11

## 30 years

C. D. Brown	8/28
G. C. Coleman	8/1
A. E. Drozda	8/13
M. J. Hendricks	8/29
W. A. Juds	8/20
E. F. Palczynski	8/24
J. Stalker	8/7
R. D. Anderson	9/26
R. E. Barnes	9/18
R. G. Harrison	9/17
E. C. Kief	9/27
E. M. Kriz	9/16
R. B. Midlik	9/22
R. L. Nielsen	9/10
H. W. Novak	9/21
K. L. Parker	9/10
I. Ulpis	9/7
J. H. Wahl	9/4

## 25 years

V. D. Andrews	8/2
L. D. Arp	8/14
N. F. Blanchard	8/9
R. W. Brown Jr.	8/6
J. D. Cain	8/8
R. Carmona	8/29
B. P. Eraas	8/28
A. N. Fitzpatrick	8/16
J. R. Fleming	8/24
G. J. Groves	8/29
A. D. Hankes	8/3
V. M. Hedges	8/21
J. E. Kimble	8/7
G. L. Lemonds	8/30
G. R. Lynch	8/28

J. R. McCallum	8/18
T. J. Miller	8/28
J. R. Perkins	8/21
K. B. Thomas	8/7
C. R. Allner	9/11
H. A. Anderson Jr.	9/25
R. Armendariz	9/27
J. M. Dey	9/19
A. K. Harvat	9/6
R. E. Johnson	9/6
G. I. Johnston	9/6
R. K. Kamin	9/11
R. E. Knoblauch	9/11
D. J. Kovar	9/8
A. M. Lutz	9/20
S. D. Mason	9/6
L. S. McMahan	9/7
L. M. Nissen	9/4
D. S. Norquist	9/26
F. F. Phelps	9/12
V. R. Pleskac	9/11
J. Puente	9/28
G. E. Siggers	9/19
E. J. Sterba Jr.	9/20
J. M. Stoddard	9/5
P. C. Trimble	9/12
G. C. VanFosson	9/22
C. N. Velasquez	9/26
E. J. Wesolowski	9/26
A. L. Witherell	9/18

## 20 years

J. B. Byers	8/1
R. B. Carstens	8/16
G. D. Coleman	8/11
R. R. Douglas	8/15
A. Z. Frics	8/30
H. G. Hayes Jr.	8/15
D. L. Hochstein	8/8
C. A. McCoy	8/16
M. B. McGuire	8/11
D. E. Meisinger	8/11
R. R. Miller	8/11
K. S. Moon	8/31
J. E. Murphy	8/15
J. V. Murphy	8/1
B. E. O'Donnell	8/22
E. J. Pierce	8/15
C. H. Placzek	8/24
H. C. Rhodes	8/1
M. H. Rohwer	8/8
J. E. Travnicek	8/1
P. A. Traynor	8/1
G. A. Wischmann	8/16
F. J. Bogatz	9/28
L. M. Carnicle	9/14

R. W. Duley	9/13
F. T. Ferrucci	9/25
J. M. Fiala	9/12
C. N. Haar	9/26
P. F. Heim	9/19
C. T. Maholmes	9/26
M. L. McAhren	9/13
T. A. Murray	9/12
M. J. Olsen	9/20
J. Opryszko	9/22
R. D. Roh	9/9
T. A. Scheef	9/7
L. D. Secret	9/15
J. T. Sternard Jr.	9/13
J. J. Synowicki Jr.	9/6
C. R. Torson	9/20
J. S. White	9/29
B. M. Williams	9/26
P. P. Wright	9/15

## 15 years

S. S. Hayes	8/17
J. L. Green	9/25
L. K. Windels	9/28

## 10 years

E. K. Hess	8/16
G. J. Macrander	8/12
O. H. Bright	9/20
D. G. Pegel	9/23

## Mark your calendar

Leave Sept. 14 open on your events calendar for the annual Omaha Works WEOMA Club picnic at Peony Park. The fun starts at noon and lasts until 6 p.m. Bring along a picnic lunch and enjoy games, rides and refreshments. The picnic planning committee has promised a few new attractions will be featured this year. Tickets are on sale in the cafeteria.





## Last frame

When the vice-president of manufacturing for Network Systems Media visited the Omaha Works in August, he had words of praise for wirer Flo Sledge (left).

John Smart (center) was impressed by Sledge's accuracy

as she wired a 9A1A 25-protected unit in Dept. 244. Near Sledge was her personal quality results chart, a daily record of an operator's quality performance. Hers charted an excellent work record, for which Smart commended her.

Smart's tour of the shops was his first since being named to the vice-president position on Aug. 1. He is responsible for manufacturing operations at Nassau Metals and the Atlanta and Phoenix Works locations

as well as at the Omaha Works.

He began his AT&T career in 1964 as an accounting supervisor with Long Lines and has held a variety of assignments in operations, engineering, personnel and marketing. He was AT&T vice-president of Business Markets and Services before his current assignment.

Accompanying him on his tour of Dept. 244 were section chiefs Betty Nath (right) and Dave Svengaard.



**AT&T**  
Network Systems

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