

Writing Machine Specifications

THE MATERIAL for this unit of the Sales Manual was supplied by the Manager of the Order Department at Brooklyn and edited by a retired sales executive who had worked with him through several tough periods. A depression era, a war (with infinite red tape on the sale of Linotypes), a subsequent prolonged strike with unfilled orders piling up for months—all these conditions tried the patience and seasoned the temperament of your Order Department Manager. But never, through foul weather or fair, did he lose his instinctive grin or his rare ability to keep a *sales* point of view throughout the routine of his work.

So, if the insistence of the Order Department and the many details of our paper work seem burdensome, then remember that the shipment of your order, exactly as planned with your customer, is the basis of his future satisfaction and of your continuing cordial reception when you call on him.

During the progressive stages of your machine sale the specifications have been a general part of the discussion. From the time of the first "what'll it cost?" you have been summarizing the machine and its probable equipment to arrive at an end figure. Some experienced salesmen use a specification form for that purpose of preliminary estimating—it safeguards them against overlooking some important item and avoids the embarrassment of adding a forgotten item.

While the negotiations proceed, any changes in the end figures are of course changes in the specifications. And when the deal is completed, with end figures approved and terms agreed upon, then the Machine Specifications are the very essence of the sales contract.

From the Order Department's angle, the perfect machine transaction embodies clearly defined specifications which remain unaltered throughout the period of preparation of the machine and matrices and their final shipment.

But all hands know that there are many reasons why the customer may insist upon a change in specifications after he has signed an order and it has been accepted and duly entered at Brooklyn. Some reasons we cannot debate: a change in working conditions in the customer's plant, a fire or a removal of the plant—major factors like that must be recognized. But changes due to whims or fancies or a disinclination of the customer to really make up his mind—those not uncommon occurrences are literally costly in their impact on Brooklyn's proceedings.

Not only extra paper work in great volume but valuable factory time in the preparation of a machine and matrices are involved if late changes come in when an order is moving through the factory departments.

It is pointed out that the greatest liability for subsequent changes arises when the customer places a general order, perhaps to protect an anticipated expansion of his production. This may be a good reason to await a more definite idea of a shipping date before preparing specifications. But it is often true that the salesman and the customer's plant executives are so glad to get an order to the actual point of signature by the Big Boss that they agree to defer the detailing of specifications.

What Happens to "Specs" at Brooklyn?

WHEN a salesman visits the home offices and factory at Brooklyn, he studies the routine and procedures of each department of the business. Thus he sees how the Preliminary Agreement and Specifications, which he has sent in on a machine order, are duly "processed." The "Specs," which we are discussing here, are of course the basis for the writing of the Machine Production Order. This is prepared by the Machine Order Department, in full detail on a large form, 11" x 17". Eight copies are made for the following purposes:

1. *Matrix Dept.—File Copy.* Serves reference needs on any future question about the order or on future matrix orders that might involve this machine.
2. *Matrix Dept.—Shipping Copy.* Their working copy to fill the matrix "Specs" and deliver the matrices to the Shipping Department when scheduled.
3. *Machine Assembling Dept.—File Copy.* For reference needs.
4. *Machine Assembling Dept.—Builder's Copy.* Accompanies the machine on the floor of the factory as it moves through the assembling stages to completion and final testing.
5. *Machine Order Division—File Copy.* For reference purposes, frequently consulted by Sales Department on details of pending orders.
6. *Master Order, Traffic Department.* They must know what machines are scheduled for what dates, how they are to be shipped, etc.
7. *Department 72—File Copy.* For reference purposes. This department schedules manufacturing and as-

sembling operations to meet the requirements of machine building schedules that are set up for a period of months ahead. They are the dispatchers and expeditors who must plan and bring through the many thousands of parts and sub-assemblies which become the wherewithal to build a prescribed number and variety of Linotypes.

8. *Department 72—Shipping Copy.* Covers the selection of parts and sub-assemblies to start the specified machine in its building sequence through the factory.

Having observed this activity and the key function of "Specs" in so many departments, the salesman realizes more keenly how important are two fundamentals:

- a. To use all his arts of salesmanship to obtain complete specifications when he closes the order, and to write them accurately.
- b. To avoid, by proper persuasion if possible, any future changes in "Specs"; and if they *must* be made to cover the details completely.

With these observations we go on to the advices and comments which have been detailed by the Machine Order Department.

A great deal of thought and attention are devoted to the promotion of an order up to the point where the customer is ready to sign it. The Preliminary Agreement is prepared with care, the Sales Report covers the details, and the order is ready to send to the Agency, for them to forward it to Brooklyn.

The Machine Specifications are also drawn up and perhaps the machine is not to be shipped immediately and the "Specs" are not complete in every detail. In due course the order is scheduled for factory production (with the eight copies explained above) and then the absence of technical details will make it necessary to refer it back to the Agency. They, in turn, must often request the salesman to go back to the customer's plant to complete the data. Right then the salesman may have hot prospects elsewhere or he may be many miles away at the other end of his territory. Often such complications can be prevented by due consideration at the start for the proper completion of machine specifications.

Clearing machine "Specs" is important to the Agency and at Brooklyn, but it is even more important to the salesman. He it is who must make personal contact with the customer to secure missing details. If it was an oversight by the salesman at the closing of the order such an aftermath will jeopardize the respect and confidence of the customer. A discussion of the various sections of the Specifications form will emphasize the importance of its details:

MODEL. Fill in exactly each model designation, such as Model 32-3-90-2 Auxiliary, or Model 36-2-72/90-4 Auxiliary, or Model 29-4-90. This furnishes positive in-

formation as to molds to be supplied as machine equipment.

MOLDS. Specify the sequence of molds—particularly important if a Six-Pocket Mold Disk is to be applied.

SPACEBANDS. The proper style is important. For example, if the machine is to carry two-letter display matrices do *not* specify J-4391 Wide Range or J-3568 Extra Thin.

HEATER. Show if gas or electric. If gas, indicate the type and B.T.U. content, which controls the type of gas burner tips that must be furnished.

KEYBOARD. Be sure to fill this in. If keyboard is not to be standard, furnish keyboard layout showing changes required. Use an available keyboard diagram for this purpose.

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT. Be sure to include *all* the special equipment to be furnished, such as Self-Quadder, Six-Pocket Mold Disk, Mohr Lino-Saw, etc. All items should be priced—this furnishes a further check against confusion due to slipping of carbon copies, causing poor alignment of the typing.

ELECTRICAL. Electrical data must be complete. If there are any unusual instructions, such as an AC 220-Volt 60-Cycle Electric Metal Pot and an AC 110-Volt 60-Cycle 3-Phase Motor, be sure to confirm them in the Sales Report to avoid a follow-up query from the home office.

STRIPPING OF MACHINE. The proper preparation of the machine for shipment may mean the difference between a quick and efficient machine erection and a longer time-wasting job by the erecting serviceman. A machine should *not* be ordered "stripped to base" if the customer has facilities ample to accommodate the proper delivery of the machine into his composing room in larger crates. Check your S.D.B. for crate weights and sizes, and cross-check every door and passageway through which the incoming machine must pass, for height and width of the openings.

MAGAZINES. Specify the kinds of magazines wanted, using their part numbers. Do not write "Split" or "Full Length," particularly on Auxiliaries, of which we have at least three types. See your S.D.B.—D Section—Magazines.

MOLDS. Under Molds and Liners specify only those to be included in the machine equipment, that is, one mold for each main magazine, as the customer may specify. For example, a Model 5 calls for one mold as it carries

one main magazine; a Model 31-4-90 includes four molds as machine equipment, one for each main magazine; a Model 30-4-90-4 Auxiliary will have four molds, one for each main magazine but none for auxiliary magazines. Always specify point size of liners and length of slug to be cast for each mold.

FIRST MODEL. Be sure to indicate this information as it determines the kind and quantity of free supplies included in the machine shipment.

CUSTOMER'S NAME. This is of the utmost importance, particularly if you are dealing with a firm that may be operating two or more distinct printing activities, such as a newspaper and a job plant. Accurate spelling of names and the proper signature on the agreement must be duly considered, as emphasized in the B Section (B-18 and B-19) of the S.B.I.

SHIPPING DATE. A definite shipping date is preferable to the frequently stated A.S.A.P. ("as soon as possible") which is used so much that it has lost its true meaning. Better to say "shipment desired end of October, 1951" or "December, 1951" so we can schedule them accordingly. Specifying A.S.A.P. when the customer does not actually need prompt shipment may cause added expense in the preparation of the machine. If a definitely urgent need exists for immediate shipment explain the urgency in the Sales Report.

ROUTING. Tell us if the customer has any preference as to routing. For small towns without railroad freight facilities, check the nearest town to which shipment can be consigned and what facilities are available for trucking to the final destination.

MOUTHPIECE. Specify type of mouthpiece required for the molds to be used. This item should be checked against any matrices in use in the plant whose later use on this machine might affect the kind of mouthpiece to be used.

DOUBLE "ee". Check this detail carefully. If the machine is a 42-em model, a 72/90 model, or a 72-channel model, the double "ee" attachment is standard. It will be furnished free on 30-em models when so specified.

SUPPLIES. Always enter under "Extras" any molds and liners desired in excess of the standard equipment allowance. Be sure to give full names and part numbers as well as prices. Full details for the items listed in "Extras" are the best insurance against errors.

SIGNATURE. All machine specifications must be signed by the customer or his authorized representative.

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However, to avoid later changes, the specifications should be first approved by the responsible composing-room executive before the sales agreement and specifications are presented for final signature. See also S.B.I. B-18 and B-19.

If foremen or superintendents are not fully consulted in the selection of equipment they may be tempted to oppose the purchase or to fail to get proper production from the new machine to show "poor judgment" on the part of the purchaser. One notoriously all-Intertype plant is the result of the questioning of the legal authority of its superintendent to sign a sales contract. He was so empowered and keenly resented the question—thus the plant was lost. No one phase of sales diplomacy is any more sensitive than this.

MATRICES. The proper preparation of matrix "Specs" can mean the difference between a successful, efficient installation or a customer who will become a chronic "griper." Properly selected matrix equipment obviously determines the nature and efficiency of the product of the machine, quite apart from the niceties of typographic style that may be involved. The mechanical principles in the selection of matrices that will run properly, without necessitating unusual arrangements that may slow up the operator, are equally important with type style.

The E Section, S.B.I., provides full data on where matrices will run. This is a vital item to check—notably with head-letter, Lining Gothics and other specialized fonts. Indicate the keyboard layout—bearing in mind that Diagram 12 is standard for 90-channel machines.

Always fill in the triangle number and full description of each font. Part numbers are essential on display fonts as they serve to identify the quantity of spaces to be furnished. The unit price is to be filled in as well as the extended price.

Confine the specification, where possible, to standard font schemes. They are sufficient in number and variety to meet most requirements. Font changes mean possible delay in shipment and an extra expense in the preparation of the matrices for machine shipment. You serve both your customer and your Company best by helping him select standard fonts to meet his plant needs.

When it is absolutely necessary to specify any change from a standard font scheme, the desired matrices are to be itemized on Matrix Order blanks, *in duplicate*, listing the exact number of matrices of each character to be supplied. Their total number must of course agree with the number and price of matrices on the machine specification for that special font.

Do not specify a standard font scheme and then request that matrices be added or deducted from that font scheme. The Matrix Department cannot work from a machine specification in filling such an order—they must

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have a Matrix Order form with full details as indicated above. Again, the best bet is to sell standard fonts.

Do not specify fonts of faces that have not been manufactured, as covered by the E Section of the S.B.I. If your customer asks for an existing face, but in a size that has not been made, do not name the font in the specification, but list it instead as "font to be selected." Then be sure to list the dollar value of such a font, as determined by the size of the face and number of matrices. This provides, as part of the contract, that the customer may purchase matrices to the value indicated. But "font to be selected" at a stated dollar value does not cover the *number* of matrices to be furnished, leaving the question open in the event special matrices are furnished, at a special price per matrix.

The use of single distributor Linotypes with auxiliary magazines permits the running of two lower-case fonts with their respective points in one main magazine, with the capitals and figures in two auxiliary magazines. If the fonts are not the same point size, the "Specs" must show which two faces will run in the same magazine, because the font slot must be furnished accordingly. Two different sizes, running thus in conjunction, will not pass the font distinguisher unless both fonts have the same font slot.

The proper specification of Leaders is of the utmost importance. We make more than a dozen different styles of Leaders to meet varying printing and typographic needs. This one item is responsible for many exchanges and credits, and for customer gripes about "wrong shipments." The cause is usually improper or missing infor-

mation on the matrix section of the machine specification. If you are in doubt as to style of Leaders, send a sample of matrices in use, or check against the description of Leaders in the S.B.I. and on Matrix Order blanks.

All matrix equipment instructions should be contained in the specifications and *not* on the Sales Report or other miscellaneous papers.

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In general comment on specification writing, the full price of every item of equipment must be shown for use in Order Department records. Though such figures are reviewed, when the order is entered and written on the factory forms, it is of the utmost importance that they be accurate. They are the basis of the figures used in the Preliminary Agreement—any change necessitates a corresponding change in the figures (made on the contract form in red ink) which go back to the customer when the accepted agreement is returned to him. Such red ink corrections become a source of queries to the salesman and are, in fact, a reflection on his accuracy in preparing the original specifications.

And, finally, if changes *must be made* in the specifications previously entered on a machine order, then write them in the form of a new, revised and complete machine specification, using the standard specification form with the customer's approval endorsed thereon. This use of the standard form recognizes that the clerks who handle this material are not as well informed as the Linotype Salesman—they may readily misinterpret instructions.