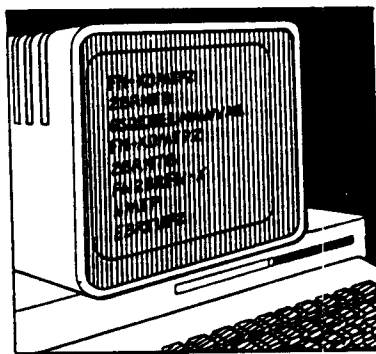


MAKE ROOM FOR MACHINES

Automation In The Workplace



For a computer to be smart, it needs you.

You have mixed feelings when they bring a computer into your office. You have heard it can help with the heavy work load, but you are afraid you won't be able to learn how to use it. You can, however, become comfortable with the automation changes in your work place and turn these changes into an opportunity to grow in your job.

Why Automate?

Automation conjures up science fiction stories about robots and androids running our lives. While there are few androids in the workplace, there are increasing numbers of industrial robots. They help cut costs and can be programmed to do work that is extremely difficult or dangerous for people to do. Robots can handle repetitious work without becoming bored or making errors and they can work in undesirable environments that are too cold, hot or vapor filled. With competition becoming greater, automation will continue to be the wave of the future. People fear automation because there might be less work for them to do, or the working environment might become less human, or the company might need more high technology workers and less unskilled laborers. But because computers can't think they will never replace the need for humans. Machines cannot adapt to changing situations. In order

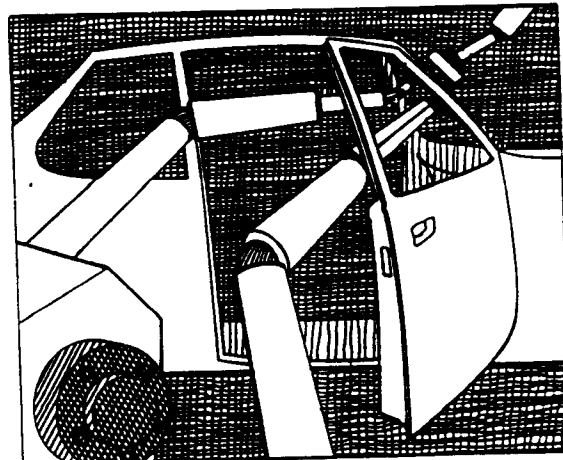
for them to run, they have to be programmed and supervised by humans.

Solutions

If your company has made the decision to automate, there is little you can do but accept the change. Admit your fears to your supervisor, but show your willingness to learn and adapt to the situation. Chances are if the automation is new for you it will also be new for your co-workers. The company will probably train you, but if no program is provided look in your community for assistance. It is your job to keep an open mind about the changes and to work hard on learning the new skills. It is helpful to have a positive attitude. If you see the change as disruptive or intrusive, it will only be harder. But if you see the situation as a challenge and a way to increase your job skills, the change will be easier. Industrial automation has some special considerations. In the auto-making industry they use robots to weld, assemble parts, paint, inspect, transfer parts and do other repetitive functions. These robots have a large number of programmable movements and often need a human close by to program or "teach" them. It is imperative that the environment be safe for whoever is supervising the robot. Your job is to understand the robot you are "teaching," but not to become so comfortable with it that you get hurt. Attend any safety programs to improve your safety knowledge about your new work environment.

Automation Disruption

If automation has disrupted your life to the point that you hate your job and feel incompetent, seek professional help. You need to deal with your low self-esteem in this new situation. Counseling can help you see this change as a way to grow and not as a disruption in your life.



Industrial robots can do work that is difficult or dangerous for people to do.