**The State University
in Northern Virginia**

4400 University Drive
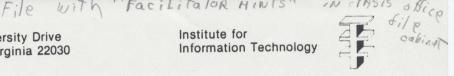Fairfax, Virginia 22030

Institute for
Information Technology

George Mason University

November 16, 1985

MEMORANDUM

To: Aleco

From: John Warfield

Facilitator Training...or Pilotos Training.

There is an aspect of our current facilitator training that is very unsuccessful, and that has to do with moving a group along. It is especially true that busy executives will not tolerate the kind of process we are running with ISM. It has to go faster.

Here are ways to make it go faster:

1. The facilitator should almost never invite someone to talk who is not showing a desire to do so.

   Exception. If discussion has gone on for an hour and the person seemingly is too shy to talk, then an invitation might be appropriate.

2. The participants should be instructed to say right away "yes" or "no", and especially should always preface any kind of comment with their tentative vote; so the audience has a way to better assess what they are saying.

3. The Pilotos needs to shut off discussion when there is already a consensus formed. There is no need to allow twenty minutes of discussion, whenever the participants already know how they are going to vote. The only time prolonged discussion is really important is when the participants simply don't have any idea of the question's meaning, or when they are almost equally divided. The Pilotos must have a way to determine this.

   If it can't be done with the Pilotos' own head, then we are going to have to invent some mechanical device, so the facilitator can assess the state of the participant's thinking. For example, we might have some kind of three-sided block, one side saying YES, *one* side saying NO, and one side saying UNDECIDED. Then we would ask the participants to "reset" the block every time after a question has been asked, and set it to yes or no as soon as they have formed a position. I hope we don't have to go to this.

   I am convinced that this process as I have seen it go fairly often frequently is not distinguishing between discussion that is critical to getting an insightful vote and discussion that is simply serving social purposes.

4. Such statements as "who would like to comment on that?" must never be used by an ISM facilitator. It is a signal that the facilitator is allocating time to discussion that no member has seen fit to provide, and thus wasting the whole group's time.