

# Part I Information—A Vital Resource

Information is vital to effective business management. Knowing what is happening, where and when and its effects on the business is essential. This can only be achieved if the user's needs are understood, analysed and met in an efficient manner. There are many problems in doing this. These problems are concerned with an understanding of the use and value of information as well as the people seeking to design systems—systems upon which most organisations become dependent. The realisation that this has happened is usually brought about by a failure in a part of the system. Suddenly those in management are aware that they rely heavily on the system.

This phenomenon occurs mostly in large organisations, especially those using computers. The cost of maintaining these systems is very high and the investment in equipment and people can be enormous.

No other resources have been subject to the technological advances of information processing during the last twenty-five years. The expenditure in human effort has been vast. The impact on everyone's daily life has been quite dramatic. Yet we are still in an elementary stage in the efficient use of this vital and valuable resource.