

HEWLETT-PACKARD

The HP-41 – Productivity 'On the Move'

How does the world's largest moving company improve the speed and accuracy of the cost quotations it gives its customers? Allied Van Lines uses the HP-41 Advanced Calculator to clinch sales and realize efficiency gains.

The Challenge: An Accurate On-The-Spot Quotation

When prospective customers want to move, Allied Van Lines moving counselors must prepare accurate, detailed inventories of their possessions. From these, they must correctly project relocation costs. Normally, the moving counselor goes to the customer's home or office and does a room-by-room inventory, recording the contents of each room on a checksheet.

Once the inventory is complete, the moving counselor usually determines the cost of the move right there in the customer's office or residence. Because Allied generally guarantees the price quoted, the accuracy of the quotation is critical.

Traditionally, after a moving counselor recorded items to be moved on a checksheet, the cost of the move was determined manually using a formula which converted the approximate cubic feet of an item into weight.

The cost of the move is based primarily on the weight and distance to be traveled, but other factors affect pricing as well:

- Origin and destination of the move
- Whether or not there is insurance, the type of insurance and dollar amount
- Packing methods
- Location of the possessions – are there stairs to go up and down?



- State and government regulations
- Number of items to be relocated
- Whether or not storage will be required

With so many variables to consider, it could take a moving counselor as long as half an hour just to calculate the price of a "simple" move, and much longer for major moves. In the meantime, the customer was left waiting.

The HP-41 is the Solution

Allied now uses a bar code reading system built around the HP-41 to produce accurate estimates, make an effective sales presentation and quickly provide the customer with an itemized sales quotation. Closing the sale on the spot is the best way to assure that Allied gets that customer's business.

The HP-41 System

Allied automated relocation quotations with a system it calls ALLFAX.

The ALLFAX system includes:

- HP-41
- Bar code wand
- ThinkJet Personal Printer (with Allied letterhead paper)
- Data storage cassette drive
- Bar code directory filled with optical bar codes corresponding to every item normally found in a home or office

The HP-41 system emulates the manual estimation process, so moving counselors do not need extensive training to use it. It speeds and simplifies the estimate so their time can be spent more effectively discussing the needs of their customers.

With the HP-41 system, the Allied moving counselors quickly record the items to be moved using a bar code wand. The wand scans the appropriate code from the bar code directory identifying the item and its size.

When the inventory is complete, the HP-41 calculates the total cubic feet and weight of the customer's possessions and develops the cost to move them. Competitive pricing is also determined through pre-programmed rate files for every selling situation. An itemized sales quotation is then printed out on the ThinkJet printer and the quotation is in the hands of the customer in about 12 minutes. The customer can then make an informed decision about the level of service needed. Comparative prices can be rapidly calculated for the number of items being moved, insurance, packing and other options.

Everyone Benefits

Allied's use of the HP-41 produces benefits for everyone. The pricing process used to be mysterious to customers. Now, because Allied can leave an itemized quotation that is easy to read and interpret, the mystery is cleared up.

Customer Benefits:

- All costs are known – packing costs, costs of materials and services.
- The customer may choose to eliminate some items to fit a budget.

Benefits to Allied:

- Service can be provided at reduced prices because of increased accuracy.

- Quotations can be revised quickly to fit the level of service requested.
- Less time is spent calculating, and more time communicating, with the customer.
- Accuracy of estimates increases while the time to produce them decreases.
- Only one customer contact is required to wrap up the sale.

Why Allied Chose the HP-41

Allied selected the HP-41 over the competition because of its:

- **Size** It weighs only 7 ounces.
- **Portability** It can be carried anywhere in a house or office to inventory items; the whole system fits in a briefcase six inches deep.
- **Alphanumeric Display** Both numbers and letters can be entered.

But the two most important factors influencing Allied's decision were:

- **Wand Entry** Using bar code increases the accuracy of entries.
- **Single Vendor Service** HP's reputation for quality and reliability means that the system will work when it's needed and service is readily available.

With the HP-41 system, Allied agents can now inventory a home with greater accuracy and speed. They save time in figuring the price and printing an itemized sales quotation. In turn, they have more time to address the specific needs of their customers.

In a competitive area like the moving business, pricing and service levels are important. The HP-41 system is helping the Allied agents stay ahead of the competition.



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