ABSTRACT
The Eastman Chemicals Division (a division of the Eastman Kodak Company) has several hundred active SAS® users. Educating these users and keeping them informed of new developments would be impossible without a strong support structure. This paper will explain how an in-house user group serves as the foundation of the support structure. Many education needs are satisfied through regular user group meetings which are devoted to exploring topics in an in-depth manner. New developments and product evaluation information can be covered in the same way. Information will be shared about specific user group meeting topics, and advertising methods. Additionally, information about a sample program library will be provided. This paper will be useful for anyone supporting the SAS System or with a desire to start up an in-house user group.

INTRODUCTION
The Eastman Chemicals Division (ECD) is a major supplier of chemicals, fibers, and plastics in both domestic and international markets. The division consists of manufacturing sites in Tennessee, Arkansas, South Carolina, and Texas. Tennessee Eastman Company (TEC) is based in Kingsport, Tennessee and is the largest site within the ECD employing approximately 10,000 people. I am a member of the Systems and Computer Services (S&CS) organization within TEC. The ECD has an extensive computer network with the SAS System running in both the VM/CMS and MVS/TSO environments. Over 1,000 SAS users are supported by the Information Development Center (IDC) which is part of the S&CS organization. The in-house SAS user group started up in August of 1981 and has remained an active organization to date.

WHY A USER GROUP?
Anyone attending SUGI 14 knows there are benefits to be gained from regular meetings of people with similar interests. Additionally, specific goals have been developed for our in-house SAS user group at Eastman Chemicals Division. These goals are to:

1. Promote more efficient use of the SAS System.
2. Provide a means for communicating new information about the SAS System.
3. Encourage sharing of ideas among SAS users.
4. Act as a vehicle for soliciting user feedback.

WHO'S IN CHARGE?
There are two basic approaches to running an in-house user group. One approach says that, since it's a "user" group, the users should run the show. The other approach says that, since the "user" has a primary job function other than that of writing SAS programs, some central figure should run the show. While the former approach works very well for SUGI, the ECD SAS user group takes the latter of these two approaches. End users graciously agree to present topics and share program ideas but the main responsibility for keeping the group going lies in the Information Development Center (IDC). The IDC, of which I am a member, performs the traditional information center roles of education, consulting, technical support, product development, and new product evaluation. Coordinating and conducting user group sessions falls into the "product development" category.

Being the one "in charge" certainly does require a commitment of time and effort. For our in-house SAS user group, the tasks range from distributing the meeting notices to developing and delivering the meeting presentation. On the average, I spend 20 hours per month on user group related work.

KEEP IT SIMPLE
Our user group doesn't have a president. It doesn't have by-laws. We don't elect officers every year. Basically, at our first meeting we answered the tough questions about how often to meet and what topics were of the greatest interest. The group meets monthly (although we've been known to skip a month here and there) and there is no set meeting day and time. In fact, the meeting day and time change each month to allow for anyone one who might have a conflict with another standing meeting. The only real scheduling rules that we follow are 1) avoid Mondays and Fridays.
and 2) avoid the first week of the Kodak period. Since the meetings take place during normal business hours, we limit them to 90 minutes in length.

THE USER GROUP NETWORK
Identifying key SAS users is critical to the ongoing success of a user group. Many methods are used to identify SAS users. Anyone who takes a SAS course or who contacts the IDC for support is automatically added to the user group database (using the SAS System of course!). Also, systems programmers can provide a list of userids which have SAS programs on their mini-disks.

At ECD, there are over 900 CMS userids which have at least one SAS program on them. However, as the saying goes, "a SAS program does not a programmer make." In reality, the active group can be narrowed down to about 500 people who have expressed an interest in being kept on the user group roll. To narrow things down even further, almost 200 of these active users have attended at least one user group meeting.

GETTING THE WORD OUT
The key to getting any type of user group off the ground is a successful advertising plan. The more methods used, the better. The mix varies from month to month but these distribution methods are all used: PROFS notes (via IBM's electronic mail system), hardcopy mailings (usually with "catchy" SAS/GRAPH® designs), the Eastman Business TV network (monitors are located throughout the plant), and on-line news files and bulletin board messages.

Electronic communications seem to be most effective but are also resource intensive. Every-member mailings serve as our means for getting to the most people. In most cases, the hardcopy notices are generated with SAS/GRAPH and serve as an educational tool as well as an information vehicle. Electronic communications are reserved for more active members (those who have attended at least one meeting). The use of PROFS allows us to send a meeting notice which can automatically be posted to a member's electronic calendar.

QUALITY NOT QUANTITY
It's difficult to not get discouraged when the turnout at a meeting is small but numbers aren't everything. Granted, we are interested in getting the information to the greatest number of people, but when it comes to an in-house user group, one has to keep in mind that a user's primary job function has to come first.

To ensure everyone of an equal opportunity to stay informed, we make it a point that any user group meeting topic must have a handout to go with it. Furthermore, that handout must "stand alone" so that someone who did not attend the meeting can still learn from it. The handouts become extremely valuable to our users outside of Tennessee. So, we may have only 35 people attend a meeting but distribute 150 copies of the corresponding handout.

Another thing to keep in mind, while we're on the numbers subject, is that some topics will appeal to a greater number of users than others. The introduction of a new product like SAS/QC® or SAS/AF® draws many more participants than a tutorial on advanced SAS/GRAPH features. We try to indicate which types of users will benefit most when announcing a particular meeting topic. As long as the information gets to the people who are interested, don't worry about the numbers!

WHAT TO TALK ABOUT
What would you talk about at a user group meeting? Does your mind go blank? If you are an information center consultant and keep track of the types of questions you are most often asked, you probably already have a long list of topics to cover. Just to get you thinking, here is a list of topics that were presented over the period from September of 1987 through December of 1988:

An Overview of SAS/AF
We had just licensed this product and wanted everyone to be aware of what it could do.

An Overview of SAS/QC
Again, we had just licensed the product and it was a "hot" topic. We had a standing room only turnout and ended up offering a make-up session.

CMS Helps for SAS Users
Using temporary disk space and the VM/Batch facility.

First Annual Debugging Derby
Users worked as teams to solve 14 common SAS programming problems. This meeting also served as a Christmas party.

A SAS/GRAPH Overview
Many SAS users had not used SAS/GRAPH. This gave them a chance to see what they were missing.
Report From SUGI 13
A summary of the sessions I attended and tips that could be shared with the group.

A Macro Tutorial
Many users had not used the macro facility and were eager to learn. This tutorial session served as a preview for those who later took the Macro Language course.

SAS Programming Guidelines
A review of a document put together by the information center. Very popular!

IDPLOT, QPRINT, TIMEPLOT, CALENDAR
Short overviews raised the level of awareness of these procedures.

CMS/XEDIT/FLIST Tips
Surprisingly, this was the biggest turnout ever. Covered shortcuts like splitting the screen, looking at the source and listing on the same screen, etc.

Evaluation of SAS Release 6.03
Reported on the evaluation of SAS release 6.03 at our site.

What's New in Release 5.18
An overview of changes and enhancements.

SAS Utility Procedures
Many people had not used the DATASETS and COPY procedures.

Second Annual Debugging Derby
A new set of problems to solve. These exercises teach users the logical thought process needed to debug programs.

As you might guess from browsing this list, many of the presentations required considerable preparation. For example, just developing the SAS Programming Guidelines document was a mammoth task. Was it worth it? You bet! Several users have let me know how they are incorporating the guidelines into both new and existing applications.

WHAT BENEFITS CAN WE COUNT?
There are many indirect benefits that come from an in-house user group. We in the information center have found that being accountable to an organized body of users forces us to get some of those bottom-of-the-to-do-list items done. Also, issues and concerns are brought up that IDC members had previously been unaware of. Many training needs have been satisfied. Let’s take a look at some tangible items that resulted from user group participation.

The SAS Sample Library - This program library is made up of the 400+ sample files provided by the SAS Institute in addition to approximately 90 programs provided by the information center and active users. It is really a SAS/AF application that allows users to use FSBROWSE to view a data base of program names, descriptions and key words. There is also an option to list the sample files and from there, to copy desired files to one's own CMS mini-disk. A third option allows users to print a summary report of the available sample files. This took quite a bit of work at the front end since all of the program information had to be entered into the SAS data set. However, it's always a joy to be able to answer someone's question with "there's a program to do that in the sample library!"

SAS/GRAPH Guide to Output Devices - As many SAS/GRAPH users know, the SAS/GRAPH User's Guide takes care of your programming needs. But, what most users don't know, is what GOPTIONS are required to get hardcopy output at their site. This guide was developed to answer the countless questions that start with "why won't my graphs display on my screen?" or "can I send this graph to a plotter somewhere?"

SAS Programming Guidelines - This document was developed to give users a checklist to go through as they develop an application. It addresses naming conventions, documentation practices, programming hints, and testing methods.

Better Training - By far, one of the greatest benefits of the user group meetings has been the opportunity for users to express their training needs. We have been able to solicit the users' needs and to let them know what's available. As a direct result of this interaction and working with our Training Department counterparts, we were able to offer two on-site SAS Processing classes and two on-site Macro Language classes in 1988.

Macro Tutorial - This presentation and handout gave novice SAS users an easy-to-follow introduction to macros. It was useful in preparing several people for the on-site Macro Language courses which followed.

CMS/XEDIT/FLIST Tips - Though this was not specifically related to the SAS System, our key advertising phrase was "in order to be an effective SAS user, you must also be an effective CMS user". This must have worked since we haven't been able to keep copies of the handout in stock. People are so thirsty for
shortcuts - this topic quenched that thirst (for a while anyway).

**Release 5.18 Implementation** - Compared to previous implementations of new releases, this one was a breeze. A key contact list was provided with access to the new release for testing purposes. This testing was extremely critical since we were also going to a new release of the VM operating system at the time.

**New Product Implementation** - In 1987, we licensed both SAS/QC and SAS/AF. In both cases, having the user group in place made the implementation much easier. We had the network in place to get the word out and the meeting format lent itself to doing overviews of the products.

**IN SUMMARY**

To sum things up, here's what makes our in-house user group successful:

1. Someone with a maniacal desire for the group to succeed (that's me if you haven't guessed by now).

2. A variety of communications methods (hardcopy mailings, electronic mail, posters, etc.)

3. A relaxed view of things. If you can't think of a worthwhile topic - skip a meeting!

4. A sincere desire to get to know your "customers" and to help them be better SAS users.

5. An emphasis on quality rather than quantity. A solid, useful handout will live a long life. Don't fret over how many people came to the meeting - send them the handout!

Overall, being "in charge" of the ECD in-house SAS user group is one of the most rewarding and enjoyable parts of my job. I think any SUGI 14 participant will agree that SAS users make a great group of people to work with and are definitely the "cream of the crop"!

For additional information contact:
Candy Habich
Tennessee Eastman Company
P.O. Box 1973
Kingsport, TN 37662

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