



**THE
DITCHBURN
ORGANISATION**

HANDBOOK

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WELCOME TO THE DITCHBURN ORGANISATION

We are pleased to have you join our ranks and we hope that you will find your work here profitable and enjoyable.

This booklet is intended to tell you about our Organisation and to describe to you what you may expect from us and what we will expect from you.

We intend that you should get good working conditions, fair treatment and consideration of your point of view and a good reward for the work you do.

In return we expect from all our workers a reasonable speed and quality of work. In particular, we like everyone to take a keen interest in the quality of the things we make and the services we give. This is what our business and all our jobs depend upon.

We have to have some rules to control behaviour on our premises. We try, however, to have as few as possible and you will see that they all have some good reason concerned with the safeguarding of the Company's property and interests or with the well-being and protection of the people who work here.

We hope your association with the Organisation is a long and happy one.

THE DITCHBURN STORY

In September, 1947, Mr. G. Norman Ditchburn left his position as Managing Director of one of the country's largest distributors to the building trade and began his own business.

He bought the machinery and manufacturing and selling rights of the Music-Maker Phonographs, so Ditchburn Equipment Ltd., the first of the Ditchburn Organisation Companies, was born. Until early 1949 the only coin-operated phonographs in this country were the pre-war American "Juke Boxes" associated in the public's mind, rightly or wrongly, with low dives and high living. It was, therefore, an extremely controversial product to choose, and presented a social problem of prime importance. With this in mind the Company decided on a policy of operating only and not selling. Despite criticism, the Company continued this policy for many years, preferring to control where its equipment went and how it was used.

Business began in small premises in Blackpool and during the first 12 months over 500 machines were placed on sites. With business continuing to expand it became obvious that new premises must be found and in 1949 the Company moved to its new home and an office staff of three headed by Mr. Norman Lever; production began in the new premises and business continued to expand.

A good thing is usually copied sooner or later and eventually competition arrived in the form of the Bel-Ami machine which played 40 records—severe competition to the Music Maker, still offering only 16 plays. Sites became vulnerable because in the rush to "jump on the band wagon" competitors were selling their equipment whilst Ditchburns maintained its policy of operating only, despite intense pressure to sell.

Because it was unable, at short notice, to produce a machine with many more selections, the Company turned its attention to a new concept—the Hideaway, which gave it

the entree into a tremendous number of small locations that could not accommodate a cabinet model machine. This was well ahead of any of its competitors and led to a further expansion and a need again for larger premises. These were obtained in the shape of the old Ribble Laundry, the building which is now the Music Factory without the general office extension which was added at a later date.

1955 was a significant year for the Ditchburn Organisation as two events of major importance occurred. Early in that year the first tentative steps into the automatic vending field were taken when a business making a machine for the sale of bottles of milk was bought. There followed two visits overseas by Mr Ditchburn and his staff which were to have far reaching effects on future development. The first was to America, where Mr Ditchburn attended the National Automatic Merchandising Association's Annual Convention in Chicago and saw for himself the tremendous variety of vending equipment already in use in America and the scope which it offered for development in this country. There were already a number of cigarette and chocolate machines in use in this country and so it was decided to tackle the cup drink vending line, a field which was new and virtually unexplored. The practical outcome of Mr. Ditchburn's visit to America was an agreement signed with Cole Products Corporation of Chicago to manufacture their Hotspa and Colespa under licence in this country, the agreement also giving the company the exclusive right to sell in certain export markets, including the whole of Europe and most of the British Commonwealth.

The second overseas visit was to a phonograph firm, Tonomat Automation, who had brought out a new machine offering 100 selections. An agreement was made to import these machines in a largely finished state and add the final touches in Lytham. Around May, 1956, the first machines were available and Ditchburn were once again leaders in the field. The Company took a further leap forward, to the surprise of its competitors, when it produced a 200 selection machine making our position in the forefront of the market assured.

In the meantime in Lytham, space was again at a premium and the extension which now houses the general office was added to the existing factory to be used in those days as an assembly shop and store room. The building still known as the Dockyard building was leased for use as a paint spray shop. The General Office was housed in the area which is now the Board Room.

In the early days of our vending machine manufacture, a great deal of money was spent to acquire the "know-how" and considerable research and development was required to adapt the successful American machines to suit the British market. The first Development Engineer was employed to work on the early stages of the now successful range of machines.

In the years that followed, the two companies developed side by side. Among the major achievements of D.V.M. Ltd., were the launching of the very successful "Mini" line of machines with the introduction of the Minispa in 1963, the pioneering of a range of snack machines and probably most spectacular of all, the achievement of the so-called impossible—a machine to make tea from the leaf instead of powdered tea. Introduced in April, 1965, this break-through came months ahead of all competitors and made its place in the fore-front of automatic vending assured. Then came the revolutionary new Tablespa machine which opened up a whole new market in the smaller establishments, commercial offices, banks, hotels, etc., after its introduction at the beginning of 1967.

Meanwhile the Music Division became the sole distributors in this country of the American Wurlitzer machines, considered to be the Rolls Royce of phonographs. In 1961 manufacture of a new concept in background music equipment began as an extension of the coin operated phonograph division. The demand for this developed so rapidly that in 1964 Ditchburn Equipment set up a new division and began the manufacture in this country of the Symphonaire, a very effective but comparatively cheap tape playing

machine. This had a rapid rise to fame in a market which mainly consisted of the licensed trades and clubs. To enable this rapid rise to be maintained, a whole new vista was opened up by the introduction in 1967 of the Symphonette—the little brother of Symphonaire. Here was a brand new market for background music. Now the background music story could be told to people like doctors, dentists, small retailers, small hotels and guest houses—in fact, the list of prospects became infinite. Thus the tremendous growth continued.

During this period of expansion several new buildings were added to the Ditchburn premises. The general office grew from the Music Division assembly shop and the directors' offices were added. The building in the very centre of the site and affectionately known as the "sheriff's office" because of its veranda and hitching rail so reminiscent of an old "western" was bought for use as a canteen and housing for the advertising, development and training departments.

The new Vending factory, built on the site of a coffin manufacturer's warehouse, was completed in two stages, the final two bays being added when more space was required. The latest addition, in the form of Bridges Transport, has been altered to provide two floors and a new canteen.

A long range planning committee was formed as the company entered the next phase of expansion. Part of its immediate function was to rationalize the Organisation by forming a new structure to co-ordinate operations under Sales, Manufacturing and Services. It also has the important task of making long range objectives for the Organisation which have to be interpreted into individual and working objectives.

In January, 1967, the Ditchburn Organisation acquired the business of B.E.L. Fitments Ltd., at Accrington, this company had long been the main supplier to the metal

casings for the vending machines and it was a move towards greater efficiency when the company became part of the main Organisation.

In 1970 the whole of the issued share capital of the Company was acquired by The British Electric Traction Company Limited ("B.E.T."). The B.E.T. group of companies comprises many well known companies predominantly in services industries. For example, the group has large interests in television through Rediffusion Ltd., in Laundries and cleaning through Advance Laundries Ltd. and Initial Services Ltd. and in the building contracting industry through Boulton and Paul Ltd. There are further group companies in such varied fields as transport, freight, plant hire, open cast mining, films, music recording studios, entertainments, electronics and computers, investment trusts and even property. Ditchburn is, therefore, now part of a large international group of companies with all the many advantages that this entails. In particular it opens up a whole new and exciting future for the Company.

In February, 1972, the Vending Division of the Organisation was sold to U.M.C. Industries Inc. of America and became a separate company. The Ditchburn Organisation remained a part of the B.E.T. Group in its present location on the north side of Dock Road in the original buildings occupied in 1949, where it continues the reconditioning, assembly and sale of phonographs, background music machines, records, tapes and cassettes.