WITH DEPLOYMENT OF PAM STILL IN PROGRESS, AON CORP. WONDERS ABOUT WINDOWS

AON Corp. has found itself confronted with some minor delays in its effort to deploy Princeton Financial Systems Inc.'s DOS-based Pam for Securities portfolio management and accounting system. Meanwhile, officials at the Chicago-based holding company are looking at the feasibility of implementing the vendor's Microsoft Corp. Windows-based version of Princeton's software to be released later this summer. In the interim, Aon is hedging all bets and shopping around to other vendors for the Windows-based functionality it needs.

Aon selected Pam last fall to support some 50 of its accounting and investment management personnel at three locations worldwide (*IMT*, Oct. 14, 1994). At that time, the firm expected to roll out the new system by June of 1995. Though that deadline was since replaced by another one, Pam is now en route to production: Specifically, the firm plans to give the new platform to 25 users at its Chicago head office; to 15 users at Aon's Life Insurance Co. of Virginia subsidiary in Richmond, Va.; and to some 10 users at Aon Advisors of the U.K. in London.

According to an Aon official close to the rollout, the initial June target date was not set in stone. "You might say it was an optimistic date," says the official. "We re-scheduled due to the usual reasons, like allowing for normal business operations such as month-end closes and quarter-end closes, as well as allowing for summer vacations."

While Aon finalized its selection of Pam last year, the firm did not begin its conversion process until May. "There were whole blocks of time where people were not able to devote all of the attention to the conversion process because they were doing their jobs," says the official.

The official says Aon is now interested in Princeton's upcoming release of Microsoft Corp.'s Windows-based functionality for Pam. "Windows has been a consideration, but we are still uncertain as to when we would actually want to switch to their Windows-based version," says the official.

Ready in June?

According to a Princeton spokesperson, "Windows-based portions of Pam will be available in late June, early July." The spokesperson says the modules in the mid-summer release include Windows-based versions of Pam's Perspectives executive information tool and Pam's Impromptu report writer—but the total port still won't be available yet.

Princeton will be providing Aon with the Windows-based Impromptu once it is released. However, the Aon official says, "Since we haven't seen the one they are going to be providing us on the upcoming release, we started to look for one on our own." The official says Aon will probably select Borland International Inc.'s Reportsmith—a Windows-based report writer—to augment Pam.

It may be in Aon's best interest to proceed cautiously. Last fall, Princeton prematurely announced the release of Windows-based versions for Pam for Securities, Pam for Mutual Funds and Pam for Trading. In reality, the closest the vendor has come to offering a Windows-based version of its portfolio management and accounting software is a single Pam module: a front-end executive information tool (*IMT*, Feb. 3).

Three Sites

Aon has purchased all of the required hardware for its Pam deployment, and the equipment has been delivered to each of the three sites. According to the official, Pam will run on a Pentium-based server; the server will reside in Chicago and will be connected via Novell Inc. Netware to PCs on users desktops in both Chicago, Richmond and London via a wide area net-