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SEPTEMBER 1994

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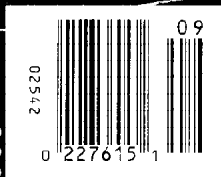
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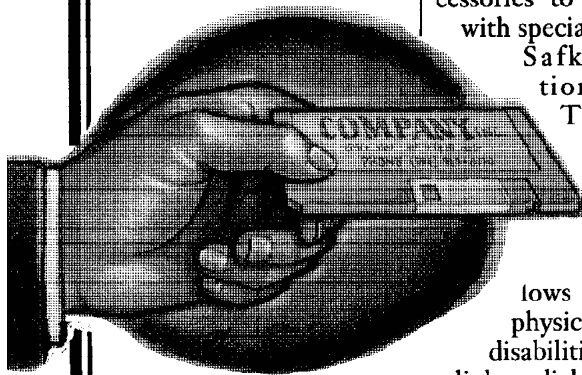
# TECH NOTES

By ERIKA KOTITE

## Card Tricks

**T**HE LOWLY business card could have a new life in the digital age. Instead of a few words on a stiff little piece of paper, tomorrow's business cards may be miniature feature films, complete with sound and high-resolution images.

Ernest Padilla, director of marketing and education at Gadabout Day Spas Inc. in Tucson, Arizona, sent out 157 "cards" to editors announcing a new line of spa products last



winter. "It was a very innovative way to get attention," he says.

Essentially floppy disks with pictures, text and sound, the cards can be passed out just like ordinary business cards. "People really look at them," says Langdon Hill, president of DigiVideo Productions, the Tucson company that creates the cards. "In fact, we've heard of people taking their cards to an electronics store just to play them." The company charges \$199 to produce one master floppy

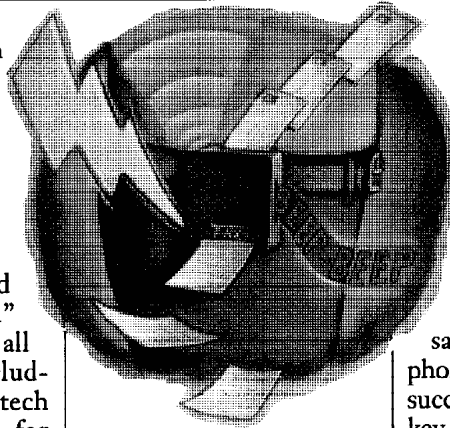
disk and \$1.99 for each additional floppy.

## Technical Support

**"F**IND A niche and serve it well" holds true for all small businesses, including those in the high-tech industry. Consider, for example, the success of small companies selling "assistive technology"—hardware, software and accessories to help people with special needs.

Safko International Inc. in Tempe, Arizona, offers a hardware and software system that allows people with physical and mental disabilities to turn on lights, dial a telephone, lock doors, and control the VCR. A head movement controls the cursor, and a puff of air signals the computer to execute the command.

"Small computer companies are more innovative," contends owner Lon S. Safko, who says his company comes out with new products every quarter. Other companies have developed special keyboards for people with cerebral palsy, switches that control entire Macintosh systems with one button, and software for the visually impaired.



## Page Ahead

**A**PAGER IS a pager is a pager, right? Not if promising young designers have anything to do with it. The winning entry in Motorola's first Pager of the Future contest, held in January, is a pager with a computer interface.

Designed by Memmet Ergelen, a student at the Rochester Institute of Technology, the prototype pager (called "Hermes") acts as a central mailbox for sending and receiving E-mail, voice mail and fax messages. Ergelen won \$5,000 and a three-month internship in Motorola's paging division.

Other Pager of the Future entries emphasized compactness, ease of use, and a greater ability to store and display detailed messages and other information.

Look for them... some time in the future.

## Call Now!

**Y**OU MAY have a cellular phone—but are you using it as well as you could? In a 1993 survey of cellular users, 74 percent of respondents said owning a cellular phone has made them more successful at business. The key is using it creatively. Try these winning ideas:

•Ron Rago, owner of Ron's Gourmet Catering in Yorba Linda, California, has had several new customers call after spotting his cellular phone number on the side of his van. They don't wait, either. One woman called and motioned him to pull over because she wanted to place an order for an upcoming holiday party. Rago has installed phones in each of his three vans, and his employees all have portable phones.

•Time is of the essence in Stephen Nagel's business. That's why the Santa Ana, California-based locksmith has all his calls forwarded to his cellular phone. "People who [need a locksmith] won't wait," he explains. "They'll call around until they reach a live person." E

