INTRODUCTION

What a great pleasure it is to be together -- with many of you to celebrate your repeated success, with others to celebrate your first Summit. Whichever the case, I hope you are enjoying the "view from the Summit."

I can't remember when or exactly how we decided to hold this meeting in London, and during this particular week. But with the possible exception of the Himalaya mountains, there could be no more appropriate place, or time, to celebrate your achieving the summit of the Control Data sales world.

Thirty-five years ago this Sunday -- May 29th, 1953 -- British Expedition team members Edmund Hillary and Tenzing Norgay became the first mountaineers to set foot on the summit of Mount Everest -- the world's highest mountain at 29,028 feet.

The news of the British team's triumph reached London four days later on June 2nd -- the eve of Queen Elizabeth's coronation. That coincidence was summed up in a wonderful headline in the London Daily Express on Coronation Day: "All this and Everest too."
Think for a moment what it would have been like to be here when that headline appeared in 1953. We would've, "in a span of less than twenty-four hours...lived through one of the most remarkable conjunctures of events in all history." That's the way The New York Times put it in an editorial. The Times added: "Nothing less can characterize that wonderful combination of the conquest of the last unconquered spot on earth and the dawn of a new Elizabethan era."

So I can think of no more suitable thing to do this night than to take a few moments to relive the conquest of Everest.

Not only was it a truly historic moment, the story is as instructive today in its fundamentals as it was 35 years ago.

OF MOUNTAIN AND MEN

The story of Mount Everest had a distinctly British flavor long before the summit was scaled in 1953.

The mountain, known to Tibetans as Chamolungma, or "Goddess Mother of the World", was named after Sir George Everest, a British surveyor who conducted the first scientific survey of the Himalayas in the 1830's.

The British mounted their first formal expedition in 1921. It was a general reconnaissance of the approaches to Everest.
They made a full-scale attempt to climb it a year later, reaching a height of 27,300 feet. That expedition ended, unfortunately, when an avalanche killed seven climbers, the first of many the mountain was to claim.

A British team tried again in 1924. Three assaults on the summit were made. On the second attempt, one climber got within 900 vertical feet of the top. George Mallory, a well-known mountaineer, and Andrew Irvine, a young man of 22, made the third attempt. They never returned.

No trace of them was found until 1933. Their disappearance was cloaked in mystery and there was some speculation they had reached the summit based on when the fourth British expedition team discovered an ice ax at about 27,500 feet.

Expeditions continued until the outbreak of World War II. All of the attempts were from the north through Tibet. That route was closed after the war by the Chinese who had gained control of Tibet.

Meanwhile, Nepal, which is on the south side of Everest, opened its frontiers to foreign mountaineers for the first time.
The British conducted a reconnaissance of the southern approach in 1951. A year later, Swiss teams made two full-scale attempts on Everest from the south side. The first attempt in the spring ended at a record height of 28,250 feet. One of the climbers was Tenzing Norgay. Tenzing commented regarding the attempt, "We could perhaps have gone to the top. But we could not have come down again."

The stage was now set for the dramatic triumph in 1953. The eleventh expedition was led by John Hunt, a British military officer. But before describing the victory, let me tell you a little bit about the mountain itself.

According to Hunt, other peaks demand more actual climbing than Everest. He pointed out: "Alaska's Mount McKinley, for example, measures 19,000 feet from its lowland base, while Everest rises only about 12,000 above the 17,000-foot high Tibetan plateau. Fierce Himalayan winds are a major obstacle, but the Scottish Highlands, battered by the North Atlantic's hurricanes, endure gales as terrible. Everest's crags and crevasses test any man's ability, but half a dozen Alpine peaks offer technical problems of greater severity. Everest can chill a person to the marrow with summer temperatures down to minus 40 degrees Fahrenheit at night; but on the Greenland icecap and elsewhere explorers have lived through cold worse by 30 or 40 degrees."
Hunt explained:

"What makes Everest murderous is the fact that its cold, its wind, and its climbing difficulties converge upon the mountaineer at altitudes which have already robbed him of resistance...

"Above 25,000 feet the climber's heavy legs seem riveted to the ground, his pulse races, his vision blurs, his ice ax sags in his hand like a crowbar. To scoop up snow in a pan for melting looms as a monumental undertaking."

"On Everest," another climber said, "it is an effort to cook, an effort to talk, an effort to think, almost too much of an effort to live."

Why would anyone want to climb Mount Everest?

Mallory answered that question on a lecture tour of the United States in 1923, with his classic reply: "Because it is there."

Mallory is also responsible for one of the more vivid descriptions of Everest. During the 1921 reconnaissance expedition, Mallory viewed from the Tibetan side the crevasse-riven icefall and abrupt ice slopes to the south that would confront the 1953 expedition team. He described the sight as "one of the most awful and utterly forbidding scenes ever observed by man" and concluded that it was unclimbable.
THE CONQUEST AND ITS LESSONS

How do you climb a mountain that for 32 years has defied the world's best mountaineers and, in the process, claimed the lives of at least 16 of them? Put slightly differently: How do you climb a mountain up a route that, in the opinion of one of the best of these courageous mountaineers, is "unclimbable"?

I suspect you know the answers to those questions. We are here at this Summit because we know what it takes. It starts with a sound strategy based on diligently gathered and analyzed data about the objective.

The strategy of the 1953 team was based on all the data and experience of the 10 previous expeditions, as well as data from aerial photographs and detailed meteorological information.

The Swiss pioneering of the route gave the British confidence that the southern approach was, indeed, "climbable".

But ultimately, success of the strategy depended on timing. As John Hunt put it, "The mountain's subtlest defense is the prohibition it places upon climbing it at all except during a few unpredictable days in late spring between the lulling of the [winter] gales ... too brutal for mortal men to face ... and the arrival of the snow laden monsoon." So the timing had to be very
precise. But despite the intense time pressure, Hunt's strategy was to push methodically up the mountain and carefully position supplies at very advanced camps so that the final assault could be made by well prepared and well rested teams. In contrast, the Swiss in the spring of 1952 dispensed with advanced camps and tried to rush the summit. At its highest camp the night before their final assault the Swiss team had no sleeping bags, no mattresses, no stove and nothing to drink except snow melted by candle flames. Exhaustion the next day forced them to abort less than 800 feet from the summit.

So Hunt had a carefully thought-out strategy based on that experience.

THE RIGHT PRODUCTS

And there was the matter of having the right products. For example, the equipment used by his group featured state-of-the-art technology, especially the oxygen apparatus. The oxygen sets carried by Hillary and Tenzing were considerably lighter in weight and more efficient than models used by earlier expeditions. The right products truly helped.
The success of Hunt's strategy finally depended on the people he recruited. In choosing people to match Mount Everest, Hunt said he looked for climbers who combined youth, stamina and Himalayan experience with "a quite unusual endowment of selflessness and patience."

However, the success of those people also involved three other factors: perseverance, risk-taking and teamwork.

The British epitomized perseverance in their 32-year pursuit of the top of Mount Everest. The one person, however, who best demonstrated perseverance was Tenzing. He had been on six previous Everest expeditions, two of them the year before with the Swiss.

The willingness to take risks is vital to success in any endeavor. Of course, none of our jobs demand taking the type of life-threatening risks that are inherent in mountain climbing. But still it's instructive to note a decision Hillary made on a steep, snow-covered ridge during the final climb.

Halfway up it, he turned to Tenzing and said: "What do you think of it?"

Tenzing replied: "I don't like it at all."
Hillary decided to go on, explaining his decision this way: "In ordinary mountaineering terms, the risk [wasn't] justifiable...but this [was] Everest, and on Everest you sometimes have to take the long odds because the goal is worth it."

Teamwork.

That 1953 British group succeeded in large part because, as one climber put it, "No expedition...enjoyed better teamwork."

That teamwork resulted from John Hunt's leadership and the conviction he instilled in team members that each person was doing, as one of them explained it: "...the one vital job of the expedition, even if it was peeling potatoes at Base Camp."

Forgotten by most is the fact that Hillary and Tenzing made their assault after two teammates had blazed a trail to within 328 feet of the top.

That first assault team of Tom Bourdillon and Charles Evans had to turn back at that point because it was late in the day and they were totally exhausted. But they had managed to get close enough to see the final ridge and assess the approach no other climber had ever laid eyes on.
As John Hunt would later write: "...they had not failed. They had...studied the final ridge, cached oxygen bottles, and returned to give the next pair (Hillary and Tenzing) the incalculable benefit of their experience and of their confidence that the true crest could yet be ours."

On the eve of their final assault, Hillary and Tenzing camped at 27,900 feet, 1,128 feet below the top. Early the morning of May 29th, they started out for the summit, confident that they had enough oxygen and strength to finish the job.

After 3 1/2 hours of difficult climbing they came upon a rock step. It was 40 feet (12M) high and lay across the whole ridge. The face was too smooth to climb. At the left end it was 8,000 feet to the valley below; at the right end, a narrow gap between rock and the huge ice cornice that clung to the ridge. This cornice hung out into space over Kangshong Glacier 10,000 feet below!! Although they didn't know it, they were less than 70 feet below the top. Hillary had Tenzing belay him the best he could, wedged himself in the gap, jammed crampons into the cornice and using hands, knees, whatever, cramponed backwards up 40 feet, praying all the while the cornice would hold. Finally he reached over the top of the ledge and dragged himself up onto it and next helped haul Tenzing up. They now had lost the zest and confidence with which they started the day. But, they went on, wondering how long they could continue. Finally Hillary noticed something different.
He described what he saw this way: "There, just above me, is a softly rounded, snow-covered little bump about as big as a haystack. The summit." It was 11:30 in the morning.

First, Hillary, and then, Tenzing, stepped to the top. They shook hands as all climbers do when they reach the summit of a mountain. But, as Tenzing would say later, this was not enough for Everest. He waved his arms in the air and then threw them around Hillary. They thumped each other on the back until they were almost breathless. And then they looked around.

Hillary was filled with a sense of wonder. As he put it: "Nothing above us, a world below."

Tenzing now looked at Everest not as "a lifeless thing of rock and ice, but warm and friendly and living." To Tenzing, Everest "was a mother hen, and the other mountains were chicks under her wings." He said it made him feel that he, too, could spread his own wings to cover and shelter the brood that he loved.

Hillary and Tenzing spent only 15 minutes on the summit of Everest.
CONCLUSION
The willingness to take risks. Perseverance. Teamwork. Those three human factors -- combined with the fundamentals of quality people, the right technology and products and good strategy -- enabled Edmund Hillary and Tenzing Norgay to conquer Everest. Many others have since followed in their footsteps.

Those same qualities have brought us here together at our summit.

Our strategy must be based on knowledge of the customer, what forces are at work in the market, and what causes customers to make the decision to buy.

Like mountaineering, having the right technology in the computer industry is critical to competitive advantage -- or even survival. The product momentum that we gathered in 1987, and have added to this year, is not only the result of a better understanding of key factors in the market. It comes from a base of much improved technology compared to that available to our "expeditions" of two or three years ago. Today nobody has any better products than we do. I am committed to keeping up a steady infusion of new technology into all the products and services of the business.

Our success, like that of the Everest expedition, involves perseverance, risk-taking and teamwork.
I don't think any group of people have demonstrated perserverance to a greater degree than Control Data's sales people during the years of 1985 and 1986 when the question in the prospect's mind didn't have anything to do with "features and benefits."

It was: "Will this person's company be around tomorrow?" And for that matter selling FSD II's wasn't any great sport about this time last year. Yes, it has taken some perserverance.

And no one of you would be in this room tonight if Control Data had not taken some big investment risks in the past few years. And no one of you would be here if you had not shared Control Data's risk. I assure you we will continue to take risks in moving Control Data forward. To borrow from Hillary: the goal is worth it.

Edmund Hillary is now 68 years old, and New Zealand's Ambassador to Sri Lanka. Since that May day 35 years ago, he has achieved many goals and demonstrated that there are more ways to reach the summit than just climbing mountains.

He went on to lead a successful expedition in Antarctica, and to help build schools, and bridges, hospitals and airfields high in the Himalayas for the Sherpas of Nepal. Next month he'll receive the 1988 Charles Lindbergh Award in recognition of a lifetime of contributions to a balance between technological advancement and environmental preservation.
Hillary didn't stop with the summit of Everest. He achieved other summits, time and again.

Now that each of you has reached the summit of Control Data's sales world, the challenge is for you to do it again — pushing even higher this time. The higher the climb, of course, the more difficult the task. But you've already demonstrated the qualities to do it.

I'll leave you with this quote from Hillary's autobiography, "Nothing Venture, Nothing Win."

Hillary said: "...what really counts (is) not just achieving things...but the advantage you have taken of your opportunities and the opportunities you created."

I know you will create and seize many more opportunities.

Thank you.