Creating the next generation in stealth mode

Digital Equipment Corporation made its start by designing standard logic modules using discrete components, essentially creating the function of integrated digital circuits before integrated circuits were made in a single package. The modules, called "Flip-Chips", were inserted into a rack with a backplane, and wiring was added on the backplane to make useful digital apparatus.

Recognizing in the early 1960's that the modules included all the logic needed to make a digital computer, the company put a sample computer together and attached it to a large graphic display screen. Not wanting to call attention to themselves as a computer company, DEC called the computer a Programmed Data Processor – the PDP-1.

The PDP-1 revolutionized the computer business by making digital computer technology affordable for laboratory and scientific applications, thereby significantly widening the market for computers. Typical computing machines from IBM had been priced in the $1 million range, while DEC was offering PDPs at one-fifth of that price.

The market for minicomputers, as the lower-priced machines were first called, grew much more quickly than the mainframe computer business for the next 20 years.

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Get Out of the Way!
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