objectives (the meta-level of performance) and its actual operations in serving its customers and its markets.

Recursive Use:

Attach CB-PD Modules to triggers throughout the Reflexive Operating System to determine the areas where particular uses succeed and where any difficulties lie. Go into the IDR to select or adapt interactions and triggers that overcome the difficulties, download the new interactions to the systems used by appropriate employees, and employ recursive assessment to confirm that the problems are solved. Iterate with any remaining difficulties until they are overcome.

Thus the present invention may yield many types of specialized systems that may enhance an organization's current abilities to improve its operations (such as specialized systems that assist R&D, product design, product testing, marketing, sales, customer support, training, etc.); and it also offers a spectrum of innovative systems to assist in redesigning organizational structure, processes, architecture, performance, behavior, etc. (such as Interactive Market Audit Systems and Reflexive Operating Systems). In an information age, such specialized and innovative systems may assist in adjusting to rapid change or even to stimulating it.

By "waking up" an organization's product interfaces and its internal information infrastructure, by adding multi-level feedback systems that provide continuous (and manual and/or automated) customer-based and user-based course corrections on how and when to improve in many areas, the organization gains (1) meta-awareness advantages in setting objectives, improving performance and achieving goals; and (2) reflexive micro-operating advantages in numerous local areas that may be as small as individuals, but can certainly support work groups and business units.

Operating Environments

This CD-PD Module invention is not dependent on a specific type of hardware or on a specific software operating system, manufacturer, product or service. Some environment options include:

This invention may be included as a product feature within or attached to a variety of types of products and services (such as by a CB-PD Module that is built into a product and connected by a transmission means with the product's Vendor; by a desktop computer that links a user with a software vendor or a consulting service; by an interactive television and a connection to a transmission means such as a cable TV line or a telephone line; or by other means that link a Customer's product with a Vendor and turns that product into a Customer Directed Product). It may also be built into products by means of software operating system-level components or utilities, so that all products across the platform of that operating system (such as a computer operating system or an embedded operating system within a physical product) are enabled with this technology and its capabilities. It may also be built into products by means of custom integrated circuits that can be installed as an embedded component or sub-system within a product, so that all products with this set of (one or more) integrated circuits are enabled with this technology and its capabilities.

The Customer can communicate with the CB-PD Module by utilizing any one of many media such as a LCD panel, video display screen, speaker/microphone, keypad or by other output/input means. The CB-PD Module can interface with the Customer by means of various formats and media such as a videotext format, a print format, a touch-sensitive format, a visual format, an audio format, etc.

Customer Directed Products (CDP) may be developed by means of combining a number of different technologies in one specific product, and by combinations of them. Therefore, at any one time it is conceivable that a Customer Directed Product (CDP) may be configured differently depending on the needs of the Vendor; the type of product or service; and the available hardware, software and means of transmission. Nevertheless, the CB-PD Module is fundamentally a computing and networking module that is incorporated into, embedded in or attached to a product or service to provide the means for Customers to use the module or the basic interface of the product to provide quantitative and qualitative data, new ideas, suggestions, etc., during the product's use to guide the Customer Directed Product's (CDP) Vendor in designing and evolving the product to better fit the Customer's needs and desires. Although it is possible for the configuration of the hardware, software, communication services, and other components to differ among the Customer Directed Products from different vendors, the purpose and general interactivity of the CB-PD Module remain similar from the point of view of both the Customer (who is looking to improve the product or service), the Vendor (who is looking to improve the relationship with that Customer and the associated sales and customer satisfaction produced by that relationship), and the combined system of Customer and Vendor (who are looking to benefit jointly as a more efficient and effective team in providing and consuming goods and services, at least in part by means of the inquiry, design, interactive or communications capabilities of the CB-PD Module).

Environments altered by this invention: The application of this invention to various environments, such as markets and information infrastructures, may cause material transformations in their participants, components, processes, architecture, services, etc. Several of these examples were was discussed above (in "Summary of the Invention"). To illustrate the scope of the invention for contributing to new and emerging environments, the example of "Value-Driven Digital Environments" will be presented here.

New Digital Environments

The present invention may also extend the capabilities and qualities of new types of large- and small-scale digital environments. This illustration of the flexibility and scope of the invention may be described with an example that improves the accessibility and value of these digital environments such as (1) integrated corporate-wide information resources, (2) the Internet, (3) combined corporate and external information resources such as an integrated digital environment that includes a firm's internal information resources and a spectrum of resources outside itself—as a single integrated environment, (4) the proposed National Information Infrastructure (NII), and (5) even larger global digital environments.

Conversely, digital environments may be small. Examples include (1) the users of a single brand of word processing software within one workgroup, (2) all users of one brand of one type of software (such as all users of Lotus 1-2-3 for Windows), (3) the users of one type of software (such as all users of desktop publishing software), (4) the users of an internally developed software application, (5) the workers in one department of a business unit such as in a division's customer service, sales, accounting, R&D, or other departments, (6) etc. Thus, small-scale digital environments comprise many types of groupings of users of computer systems.

Similar to the latter examples, the digital environments described here can include physical products served by the present invention (such as all the users of one particular physical product referred to by the preferred embodiment, or any particular group of users of any group of physical products envisioned by the preferred embodiment). The internal functions and features of those physical products may be