

The New York Times

Financial Desk; D

BUSINESS PEOPLE; 3M-Harris Venture Fills Top Position

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382 words

3 January 1986

The New York Times

NYTF

Late City Final Edition

English

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The Minnesota Mining and Manufacturing Company and the Harris Corporation yesterday announced the formation of a joint venture company for the worldwide marketing, sales and service of copiers and facsimile machines.

The companies said that Gene G. Milner, a Harris board member and former chairman and chief executive of Lanier Business Products Inc., a Harris subsidiary, had been named chief executive of the new company, Harris/3M Document Products Inc.

Mr. Milner, who is 60 years old, retired last July from Lanier and Harris, where he served as a senior vice president. At the time he retired, Lanier was reorganized into the Harris Business Information Systems unit. Harris acquired Lanier in 1983. Creation of the new company, which will be based in Atlanta, furthers a relationship between 3M and Lanier that dates from the mid-1950's, when Lanier began selling 3M copying machines.

"3M went in the copying machine business about 30 years ago," Mr. Milner said, "and initially we were appointed their dealer for the New Orleans area. We have done a good job for them and have been awarded with additional territory ever since."

Securities analysts said yesterday that the move made sense, but was unlikely to greatly increase profits at either 3M or Harris.

"Melding these operations together should allow them to realize economies and enhance a coordinated approach to the market," said Charles Di Sanza, an analyst at Drexel Burnham Lambert. "And there is a worldwide sales element to this that 3M brings to the party. But this move doesn't look earthshaking in a bottom-line sense."

Based on current sales figures, Mr. Milner said yesterday that in its first year the new company should record revenues of more than \$400 million. "If we can complete the absorption of 3M's international distribution system quickly, we could do more than that," he said.

According to Mr. Di Silva, Mr. Milner is well suited to generate enthusiasm and increase sales. "He understands what it takes to motivate people," Mr. Di Silva said.

A graduate of the Georgia Institute of Technology, Mr. Milner joined Lanier as a dealer 35 years ago. He was named chairman and chief executive in 1979.

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Text	
Date	All Dates
Source	Newspapers: All

Author	All Authors
Company	3M Company
Subject	All Subjects
Industry	All Industries
Region	United States
Language	English
Results Found	4,351
Timestamp	17 July 2018 11:24