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Subject: **short-term update, middle-term thoughts**
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To: Margaret Elliott <maggie.elliott@gmail.com>

Hi,

Got to make this quick - still need at least half an hour to get more together for my guest-appearance in Wadley's "World of Language Class" Wednesday/today right after 3 pm. Topic: "Everything you always wanted to know about German: A Speed-dating approach" (45 minutes, 20+ topics).

Our group did a lot Monday, even if it meant we neglected some other things. We've got the sales-campaign timing pretty well worked out, with the benefit of the one we did for the Xmas cards. There we had lots of help from order-blanks, because many people buy in quantity. Not so the Valentines, so order blanks are almost pointless. We have to be out there selling to single-card buyers. The timing is also different: many people buy their quantities of Xmas cards enough ahead of time that they can write notes on them and put them in the mail. So we're pretty sure that we have to concentrate on selling most intensively the week before 14 Feb. BUT: We're concerned about keeping up with demand (while yet having only so much paper on hand and only so much money to order more with). And we can't ask our people to spend endless hours at sales tables in strategic places.

So here's the idea (and I'm getting to a pedagogical point here): We want to advertise early (posters, Vanguard), then start sales maybe Wednesday, 3 Feb. We have enough leftover paper (120 sheets, = 240 cards) and envelopes (90 red, 50 green) that we can meet initial demand. In the meantime (starting this Friday) we'll use Xmas profits to order still more paper and even more envelopes, for arrival in maybe 10 days. (Since we're not selling fruit or hot coffee, we can always stock up our raw materials and keep them around, even for years.) If first-week February sales are brisk, we can quickly order more stock and get some more cards out for the second big wave of selling, which will be Wed/Th/Fri right before the 14th (Sunday).

And that, my dear colleague, took an hour of palaver, with me pushing for critical thinking and damping down lousy or irrelevant ideas. We also did a little about card development - probably discarding the talking Valentine, but maybe entertaining some other things that we'll want to bring up with our dear French colleagues (if the French-themed refreshments are good).

Big immediate pedagogical point - an insight I got earlier this evening: If we can set up the issues right, the joint departments can hash and thrash out things on Friday in English, and then report in their L2s to other "employees" on Monday. (If we had time to plan all this, it would be written reports ahead of Monday, but we're perfect yet.) So this Friday (and with some prep before) we'll want to get those departments organized and let them know what followup we expect from them.

We need to hinder them from obsessing about all the wonderful (or not so) ideas for cards, because we can lose so much time there that is needed for Big Picture things. Somehow we need to filter that (and deal with hurt feelings when someone's idea is rejected as temporarily impractical or whatever). Maybe we should better organize the "flow" of ideas from insight to suggestion to discussion, including written stages. ANyhow, I've told my group that we are doing the meat-potatoes card (24 languages, and that's it) plus one (maybe two) more variations. It's more complex than that, but I'll tell you later. We simply have to move them on to the planning the sales operation and - this is going to be very important - the advance publicity, so that everyone in PSU knows that we'll be selling this stuff as certain hours in certain places.

Side issue: Can we develop a cheapy Valentine-related printed product that will increase sales. Envelopes