

Industry Software Update

by Laura Caiaccia

Few decisions trouble retail custom picture framers (and others in the industry) the way the decision to purchase industry software does. There are, after all, complex factors to consider, and a significant investment in time and money is required. Yet there are few other decisions that can impact a business so positively. So make the decision less daunting by being a prepared shopper.

- First, commit yourself to the decision to automate. It will, in nearly every case, improve your business. Using off-the-shelf software like Quickbooks or Excel can make your life easier, but they don't serve the same purpose as a POS program that can also monitor inventory, send specifications to the backroom, and manage a customer database.

- Next, size up your business. What's your revenue? How many framers do you assemble per week? Do you sell art, also? How will the answers to these questions change in a few years? How can you expect your investment in software to keep up with your company's growth?

- Decide what you need the software to do, what you'd like it to do, and how you expect it to change your business, both in the every-day sense, and in the long-term. Will you use it to take orders at the design counter? To integrate with your computerized matcutter?

- Get demos of the program or

visit suppliers' booth at a trade show—just see the program in person! You shouldn't need more than 20 minutes for an introduction.

- Now prioritize your needs. You might find a program that meets all your requirements. If not—don't give up! Decide what's *most* important, and choose a program that

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offers that. You will *still* see a significant improvement in your business.

- Now consider the supplier. Will a customer support line be available? Are upgrades released regularly? You will most likely have a long-term relationship with your software vendor—make sure you choose the right one.

- Finally, once you've had all your questions answered and you're satisfied with not just the program, but with the vendor as well, make your purchase!

Suppliers

The list that follows provides information on suppliers of software to the art and framing industry who responded to our request for information. For more, consult our Annual Directory issue.

Computer Management Assist. Co.
104 N. Ninth Street
Mt. Vernon, IL 62864
618-242-4020

Products include: EKO Systems, which runs on Windows 95 and 98. A POS program with management functions and (supplier) purchase modules.

CerTek Software Designs, Inc.
933 Grant Ave.
Plainfield, NJ 07060
908-561-7775

Products include: Artisan Storefront, which runs on either Windows 95, 98, or DOS. POS and management software functions, as well as vendor database.

Eagle Computers Inc.
700 Kendrick Rd.
Zebulon, GA 30295
800-742-3255

Products include: FullCalc, a POS program which runs on DOS v6.0 or later; WinCalc, a POS program which runs on Windows 95, 98,

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2000, and NT; EEZ-Order, an electronic frame, mat, and supply ordering system for retailers which runs on Windows 95, 98, 2000 and NT; Central Frame Shop, a complete production/distribution software package for suppliers; and FullCalc Enterprise Edition, a compilation of WinCalc, EEZ-Order, and Central Frame Shop. Programs can be integrated with both the Fletcher-Terry and Wizard mat cutting systems and with Quickbooks software.

FerenSoft

2522 W. Fulton Street
Seattle, WA 98199
206-282-1775
www.ferensoft.com

Products include: Ferensoft Trio! Gallery and FrameShop Management Suite, which run on all versions of Windows and DOS. POS and management software functions, with an international version available; networking and computerized matcutting interfaces are optional.

InterWeb Designs

P.O. Box 1616
Rincon, GA 31326
888-ART-FRAMing
www.frameware2000.com

Products include: Frameware 2000+, which runs on DOS or Windows

95, 98, or NT. An order entry system for the wholesale framing distributor who offers chop service. Integrates with other management software.

Lambert Systems, Inc.

Envision Marketing
3110 Laurie Ave
Panama City Beach, FL 32408
877-656-6059
www.virtualframer.com

Products include: Virtual Framer, which runs on Windows 95, 98, and NT. A POS system with "on screen" framer, management functions, and computerized mat cutter integration.

LifeSaver Software

2643 Klondike Rd.
Green Bay, WI 54311
800-381-0600
www.lifesaversoft.com

Products include: a POS system with management functions, network options, mat cutter and other software interface options. Requires current operating system software.

NuTech

2432 Milan Road
Sandusky, OH 44870
800-404-0634
www.ezFramer.com

Products include: ezFramer, a pro-

gram with POS and management functions which runs on Windows 95, 98 or NT v4.0. Networking available.

SoftTouch Solutions, Inc.

P.O. Box 1349
Petrolia, Ontario
888-281-3303
www.frameready.com

Products include: FrameReady, a program which runs on Windows 95, 98, or NT, or Mac OS 7.1 or higher. A POS and management software; networking available; can integrate with Wizard computerized cutter.

Specialty Software Systems

P.O. Box 15413
Wilmington, NC 28408
910-794-4013
www.specialtysoft.com

Products include: Sellpoint, a retail POS system and Corpoint, a centralized corporate production system. Both run on Windows 95 or 98, include POS and management functions, and can integrate with computerized mat cutters and Quickbooks. ■