

# Become A Platform Agnostic And A Customer Zealot

by TERRY L. BROCK

Mac vs. PC? Unix vs. BeOS? Linux? What is the best platform to use? Is it Mac or PC? In today's environment it doesn't matter. I've come to believe that we need to be agnostic about which platform to use but religious zealots when it comes to serving customers.

Recently I reviewed the new MS Office 2001 for Mac. I have used MS Office for many years and currently am using Office 2000.

Office 2001 for Mac provides Word, Excel and PowerPoint, along with Entourage, a nice e-mail program and personal information manager. This program, similar to Outlook 2000, syncs with the Palm platform, which has become almost essential in today's computer environment.

If you're familiar with Office 2000 on the Windows platform, you'll be comfortable with the Mac counterpart. One feature that is handy is the ability to move the toolbar around the desktop to adjust it best. I found that I could place the formatting and standard toolbars on the side, configure my screen to 80 percent and fit the entire page for viewing on my Mac G3. This helps in layout and actual work to see how much was accomplished.

As a Windows user, I'll have to admit that I was a bit apprehensive initially about using the products on the Mac. However, after a bit of work, I was able to make the transition. The biggest challenge was having no "right click" as on Windows. However, I found that in many cases other key-stroke combinations helped to solve the problem.

PowerPoint performed slightly faster than on my Dell 500 Mhz

machine. The transitions and animation slides performed a bit faster on the Mac side. I found that I could take slides created in Windows and easily bring them into the Mac for viewing.

Excel was a no-brainer. I found that the formulas I knew worked the same. The transition time from Windows to Mac was about 30-60 seconds. Files created in Windows were imported easily into the Mac version of Excel. Mac Office comes in a useful hard clamshell with instructions and one CD. This simple approach is better than the much larger Windows presentation of numerous manuals and 4 CD-ROMs. In a world with a lot of clutter, simple is often better.

If you're familiar with Windows and want to inquire about the Mac capabilities, this new version of MS Office will please you.

But the bigger issue is that it doesn't matter which platform you're using today. Long, long ago (back in the 20th Century, remember?), we would fight over Mac vs. PC. Now that argument is moot for the most part. The key is to access the Net.

For most computer users, getting access to Word documents, Excel spreadsheets, an occasional





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PowerPoint program, and most important e-mail, are mission-critical applications. I can now access e-mail from my Windows machines, Mac or Palm, and read the same messages in whatever platform is most convenient at the time.

We have to be religious zealots for the customer. That is the key. Smart businesses deploy whatever technology is necessary to serve the customer.

I like the Japanese approach. They are known for their high-tech advancements. A visit to Akihabara or Shinjuku in suburban Tokyo will show some of the

latest in high-tech gadgetry. Yet, in the office of a Japanese company the people are just as inclined to use an abacus as a calculator or a spreadsheet. It just depends upon what is most effective at the time. That is the approach to take.

Focus on what is going to serve your customers best at the time; the platform doesn't matter. What does matter is your attitude and willingness to use whatever is available and necessary to get the job done. This is the approach of the customer zealot.

How much of a zealot for customers are you? ☐

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