

The Propagator and the Computer: The Perfect Partnership

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INTRODUCTION

There are many tools that help you to accomplish your job of growing plants. There is another tool that can help you to sell your plants as well as run your business more efficiently. I am speaking of course of the computer. This is a tool that many people use every day, yet there are people out there who are still not taking advantage of these wonderful machines.

For many people, a computer is like a mystic relic, to be looked at and not touched. Yet if you were to sit down and take a few hours of your time, you would find out just how much you can accomplish on one of these desktop wonders. With the advent of home computers there has literally been an explosion of businesses that 10 years ago did not exist. The green industry should not be an exception to this new technology. *If you have a small nursery or landscaping venture, you can perform many tasks with just one machine.*

The obvious functions are bookkeeping, inventory, payroll, and several others that are touted as computer jobs. However, your computer can do much more than what many would term as simple tasks. Did you know that computers are also electronic publishing machines. They are capable of producing catalogs, graphic artwork, and other such items. What this presentation is intended to show you, is how you can produce many types of printed material at your own office.

This is a great revelation, you can control from start to finish, your entire catalog, newsletter, or whatever printed medium you use to reach your customers. Let us consider this, that in today's marketplace, there are many people either producing or selling the same items. You need to make the customers remember your company and your product.

THE CREATIVE EDGE

Just as every person has a particular style, so should your business. What you are and what you do should stand out from the crowd. If you are growing a plant nobody else has, or have a particular collection of plants to sell, then you need to let people know about them. Where and how you present your product or service can make the difference between being noticed and being one of the herd. First decide on how to market your company. Should you produce a catalog, or begin with a simple one page flyer. The impact you make on people will determine their response. This is where a logo or brand name can help flag people's attention. You condition people to recognize your particular sign as one that they can count on for that certain product.

You also of course, have to back up your claims with a reliable product. Remember that the following items go hand in hand: product, quality, and service. Once you can establish yourself in the marketplace, you then have to keep yourself there. You

can make a simple logo from clip art. This is software that has images or drawings in a collection. You can incorporate this artwork into your letterhead, postcards, labels, business cards and envelopes.

With a drawing program you can design your own logo if you wish, and then you will have created a unique trademark for yourself.

FONTS—ELECTRONIC TYPE

It's not only what you say, and how you say it, it's how people read it that counts these days. Electronic typefaces are commonplace in today's computer world. There are literally thousands of type available. Their style and shapes have been developed to match particular types of publishing uses. You can control or influence the way people perceive your work by the fonts you use. For instance, Adobe Caslon is a serif font, that is the letters have brackets and bars to aid in reading them. What these "wings" do, is draw your eye to read across the groups of letters on the page. Since we tend to read words in blocks and not individual words, this can be useful.

Spacing of words, the size of the type, and how far apart the lines of print are, all determine how fast or slow we read. Try reading a contract or the fine print at the bottom of a TV screen, during a car or truck commercial. Compare that to the print used in a newspaper ad. Look further at the print used on candy wrappers and cereal boxes. You will soon discover how advertisers can and do influence your market decisions and how you perceive various products you purchase. When you decide what kind of font or fonts you will use, remember to keep the number you use to a selected few. Your font library can soon amount to several dozen different types of print. This of course can take up quite a bit of space in your computer's memory. What you do by using a few fonts is of course provide consistency to your work. This again brings us around to a recognized style, which people will associate with you and your product. For those of you who are interested in this presentation, and the accompanying poster, I would be happy to send you samples of my publishing or pertinent computer information.

Remember that it's how you say what you mean, that people will remember. In today's business environment that means being better not behind, and if not better then be different.