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CORPORATE INHOUSE: AND WE DON'T DO APPLES!



GLENN JOHN ARNOWITZ IS ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF WYETH CORPORATE GRAPHICS, THE INHOUSE CREATIVE SERVICES DEPARTMENT OF WYETH, A RESEARCH-BASED PHARMACEUTICAL COMPANY. HE IS ALSO, ALONG WITH ANDY EPSTEIN, CO-FOUNDER OF INSOURCE, AN ASSOCIATION DEDICATED TO ADDRESSING ISSUES OF IMPORTANCE TO THE IN-HOUSE DESIGN COMMUNITY.

CONTACT: WWW.IN-SOURCE.ORG

Help, I need somebody / Help, not just anybody / Help, you know I need someone / Help!
— Lennon/McCartney

When I was a kid growing up in the 60s, there were The Beatles and then there were The Rolling Stones. The teen magazines always had a field day creating a rivalry between the two bands. Beatles: nice boys. Stones: trouble. You were either a Beatles fan or a Rolling Stones fan. But rarely both. And there were always endless discussions comparing the songwriting talents of Lennon/McCartney versus Jagger/Richards. Well, it's kind of like that with Apples and Windows PCs. You're either in one camp or the other. Passions often run deep.

This becomes even more prevalent when you take that big step inside corporate America. One of the many differences between the agency and the inhouse corporate design department is the heavy Windows presence that dominates the office landscape, along with that is the general lack of internal technical support for the Macintosh platform. In the corporate world, Windows rules. Let's face it, we're outnumbered! Not only that, many corporate IS groups are generally very condescending towards Apple for a variety of reasons (Jobs is too pretentious, Apple is all style, blah, blah, blah), but mostly because they don't understand them — and don't really want to, either.

Well, it's up to you to bridge the gap. Be proactive and open a dialogue with your internal IS team. Invite them over; let them take your G4 out for a spin and experience the beauty of OS X. The 22" cinema display is usually enough to get anyone hooked. Make them aware of your needs and challenges regarding tech support, and they may be able to assist you in locating a resource. Check out the Apple Consultants Network. There you will find independent technical experts skilled in the setup, use and maintenance of Apple products and solutions. They can also help you locate a consultant that specializes in your industry and is conveniently located as well. Shop around and look for someone who can provide the support you require and the diplomacy needed to work with your internal IS group. This is very important, because at some point your external techie will need to work with your internal techie and it would be great if they played nice.

Because our internal IS department was not equipped to manage the Macintosh computers in my department, I had to find an external resource that could provide reliable support. I was fortunate to find an outside vendor that was well versed in both MAC-speak and PC-speak. And because of this, they immediately gained the trust and respect of the IS group with their knowledge of Apple, PC and Unix platforms. Their basic philosophy was that Apples are good at some things and PCs at others. They both have a place in this world, and people need to accept that and move on. Once you establish a solid relationship with an outside consultant, set up a PM schedule so they can periodically tune-up your Macs and keep them operating at an optimum performance level. It takes a lot of time and effort to keep your systems in tune and up-to-date with the latest software, and having a reliable and solid support network in place will enable you to focus on the important stuff: your work.

I've developed a good relationship with our internal IS team over the years because I respect their knowledge of all things Windows. They, in turn, have come to appreciate the beauty and function of Apple computers. Although The Beatles were my first love, the Stones and everyone else in between, from the Dave Clark Five to the Young Rascals, all had a place on my turntable. And even though I was weaned on the Mac, I've learned to make room for the other guys.

You can't always get what you want / But if you try sometime you just might find / You get what you need.

— Jagger/Richards