

# Secret Order of the Mac

## Mac-Driven Manufacturing

A plant manager and his iMac keep things running smoothly.

**K**OREY JEROME THOUGHT Macs were for kids. As plant manager of Kadant Solutions' facility in Portland, Oregon, he oversees the manufacturing of blades used to clean giant rollers at paper mills. Although the division's employees number 150, Jerome does everything from managing the budget to surveying machine performance to visiting customers. And for 17 years, he did it all on a PC. Then, one bright summer day in 2008, he decided to take a chance.

Jerome had been a Windows user since 1985, when the Intel 386 was the premium PC CPU. "I built my own computers until Dell started to sell them for less than I could build them for," he recounts. In June 2008, he was thinking about replacing his home PC when he heard Leo Laporte, speaking on the nationally syndicated radio show *The Tech Guy Labs*, say that say he used a Mac at home. Laporte knows his stuff, Jerome reasoned; maybe he should give the Mac a chance. Worst case, he figured, he would buy a Mac and run Windows on it, thanks to Apple's recent decision to use Intel processors.

He didn't take the change lightly. "I always thought Macs were for schools," he says. "I

didn't think they were powerful enough for me." But the MacBook Pro changed his mind as soon as he opened up iMovie. "I loved how, when rendering a movie, both cores of the processor were maxed out but I could still use the computer," he says. "On a PC that wasn't possible." It took only six months of alternating between his Mac at home and his three-year-old Dell desktop at work to convince him that the latter needed to go.

Giving the MacBook Pro a trial run at the office, Jerome found he was able to use all the programs he needed to do his job. He ran Microsoft Office, sent email through the company's mail server, and used the Oracle database to

manage inventory, sales orders, and accounts. "The Mac made many of my tasks more user friendly," he says. "It's just more fun work on."

With a successful beta run, he convinced Kadant Solutions to supply him with an iMac, the first within the company. Now, within seconds, Jerome can pull up price quotes filed away in emails using Spotlight. He snaps screenshots of Oracle screens to alert his colleagues to emerging business issues and uses QuickTime to make training videos for co-workers. He finds that updates of Apple software—unlike many Windows upgrades—don't require gigabytes of additional hard-drive space. And his Mac is turning ever more routine

tasks into fun as increasing numbers of software vendors release Mac versions of what once were PC-only programs. These days he works in Mac-native versions of Outlook and Autodesk, and he uses a free 2D package from SolidWorks rather than paying several hundred dollars for the Windows program AutoCAD LT. And his presentations are wowing his office mates like never before. "Even our sales guys have asked how I'm making my reports," he says. (He uses PowerPoint, in case you're wondering.)

Sure, his daily tasks are now child's play—but that's only because the Mac has proven to be a mature business workhorse. ■



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