

SELECTING YOUR FIRST COMPUTER

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SELECTING YOUR FIRST COMPUTER

There are still a lot of mail order dealers and regular everyday people performing their daily office and accounting duties by hand. This is unfortunate because a computer system will cut your workload up to 80% _ thereby leaving you more time to market and develop new products. Plus _ it's fun.

There has not been one single person that I have trained or knew, that after learning what a computer could do for them, thought it was a bad idea. In fact, everyone couldn't understand "how" they did without one and will never go back to the old method again.

Of course, most people are either "afraid" or don't feel they have the time to learn a computer system. They like the old way of doing things because it works for them. But _ if you want your business to boom _ you must invest in some type of computer system.

For the beginner to the world of computers, you really don't need a system with a lot of "frills" to complicate your learning process. There are lots of older XT's and word processors on the market in the \$250-\$400 range. That's about the same amount you would pay for a typewriter and it's much more efficient.

A basic system will handle mundane tasks without error, keep your mailing lists updated, labels printed and basic accounting functions. The best place to begin looking for a computer system for YOUR particular needs is a national, monthly publication entitled "Computer Shopper." Their address is PO Box 51020, Boulder CO 80321 and a 1-year subscription is currently \$21.97. This gigantic book/magazine is packed with over 700 pages per issue of the lowest prices and highest quality computer services around. In addition, if you study the contents you will gain a terrific computer education. Don't be afraid to call manufacturers and ask specific questions on a system they are selling. Explain your needs (and possible future needs if you know them) and ask the sales person for advice.

Don't take everything the salesperson says as "gospel" and call around. Don't be worried about not understanding computer language. If you study the ads in your "Computer Shopper" things will begin to make sense. (To a lot of people, this magazine is the bible of the computer business.)

Check with other manufacturers to find out what they have to say. Compare prices. The only thing you need to keep in mind is determining exactly what you are planning to use your computer system for. Not everyone needs desktop publishing, engineering functions and costly word processing software. You may be able to obtain your software programs through Shareware and Freeware (low-cost or free programs). Take your time and ease into your new

computerized office very slowly. You'll love the change!

In the meantime, here are a few low-cost computer systems you may want to check out. Just keep in mind that things change over time and these prices may not be current at the time you are reading them. However, they will give you some type of starting point until you get your hands on a "Computer Shopper":

286/12 Computer System with 40 megabyte hard drive, 1 megabyte of RAM (random access memory), 3 1/2" floppy drive, 5 1/4" floppy drive, 14" black and white monitor. \$499 from H&J Electronics, 800-275-2447

386SX/40 Computer System with 125 megabyte hard drive, 2 megabyte RAM, 3 1/2" floppy drive, 5 1/4" floppy drive, 14" color monitor. \$799 from Midwest Micro, 800-572-8844

486SX/25 Computer System with 120 megabyte hard drive, 4 megabyte RAM, 3 1/2" floppy drive, 14" color monitor. \$1,295 or \$50 per month from NCR (an AT&T Company), 800-398-6346

Used Computers and Equipment. Just call General Electric Rental/Lease, 800-875-3396