

THE MAC STORE

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Who would have expected a business to thrive when its biggest competitor (Microsoft) almost put it out of business?

The Mac Store President Joel Lukache fills a niche for Apple diehards and other geeks intent on resisting Big Brother Gates. Mac users are a loyal bunch, and need a place to go to update their wares, Lukache said.

"When I started with Mac in the mid-'80s, you'd walk into a computer store and it was like a clubhouse – it was a real community," he said. "It was a place you could go to hang out with people who enjoyed computers as much as you did, and that kind of disappeared, with minimal staff now at many computer stores."

Two weeks of "intense" training just doesn't do the trick, according to Lukache, who added that the transition to retail from a primarily commercial business has spurred the growth at The Mac Store.

The Mac Store's revenue grew by 266.7 percent, from less than \$1 million in 1998 to \$2.2 million last year.

"We've always been service oriented, even when we were business-to-business," he said. "Since we've moved into

an office more visible for retail sales, the response has been fantastic and we've put more people on."

While the firm's roots are in the printing, graphics and publishing industry, its Digital Direction unit also handles networking, Internet, multimedia and education. A hot sector right now is video and video editing suites – a loyal customer base that Lukache said "hangs its livelihood" on Mac and its cutting-edge products.

Price quotes, delivery, installation and training on both software and hardware products, networks and server solutions are offered by its staff, which Lukache says has more than 20 combined years of graphics and pre-press experience.

"We have a saying around here," Lukache said. "If you don't get to the phone by the third ring, heads will roll."



Mac Store President Joel Lukache.

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