

Y2K BUG - WHAT TRUSS PLANTS NEED TO DO?



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You have no doubt read a lot about the Y2K bug and have wondered how this will effect a small business enterprise like a truss and wall frame manufacturer.

All the articles I have read have been pitched at large businesses like banks, insurance companies and the like.

However, it is just as important for small business to take action to ensure that nothing adverse will happen to our businesses with the coming of the new millennium.

What I would like to do in this article is to outline what I think all fabricators should be doing as a minimum to ensure that the year 2000 will not bring with it undue problems.

STEP 1:

List all equipment, software etc. that may possibly contain date related data.

Typically this should include all of your computers in the office and in the truss plant.

Any automated machinery, time clocks, telephone systems other than simple handsets, security systems etc.

A similar list of all software packages on each computer should be compiled.

This should include the version number of each program and typically would include truss and wall frame programs, spreadsheets and word processors,

network software, business systems, etc.

STEP 2:

Once you are satisfied that you have a complete list of potential problem items you must then check each item for compliance.

Problem PCs can be easily identified using one of many Y2K test programs.

These programs will interrogate the PC's BIOS and tell you what needs to be done to overcome any problems.

Some older PCs may require a new board, which costs around \$200 - \$300.

Others may just require the computer to be switched off prior to New Years Eve and switched back on sometime after. These test programs can be obtained from the Internet.

One that we have found useful is DOSCHK.EXE which can be obtained from <http://www.und.nodak.edu/misc/y2k/doschk>.

Software and other hardware devices



are not as easily checked.

In most cases you will need to contact the supplier and request conformation that the item is compliant.

For spreadsheets and word processors, and other utility software, a comprehensive list of compliant software and patches for non-compliant programs is included in the February 1999 issue of PC User.

This is possibly the quickest and best way to handle utility programs.

STEP 3:

If you have been diligent in carrying out

steps 1 and 2 you will be in good shape as far as your internal systems are concerned.

However no business is 'an island' we all rely heavily on suppliers and customers.

So we must communicate with both to ensure that they too have taken steps to avoid any problems with the Y2K Bug.

All major suppliers should be surveyed to determine their state of readiness and ability to maintain uninterrupted supply during this critical time.

Similarly, if major customers are not compliant they may have problems processing your invoices, which in turn creates a cash flow problem for you.

So do not be backward in seeking this information.

It is being sought at all levels of business, therefore, provided that this is handled in a polite and business like manner, most companies will respond accordingly.

STEP 4:

Even the best-laid plans can go astray, so you should consider a contingency plan.

Imagine if your electrical power supply failed or became unreliable.

How would you cope?

These blackouts could be very local, so your customer could continue building while your factory is without power.

You might think that this is not likely, and we would hope that it is, but this is the type of scenario that we all need to consider.

So you should evaluate the risk associated with any one or combination of the failure of major inputs to your business.

Failure to plan for this type of contingency may result in you losing a valued customer or may even result in legal action against you for breach of contract.

I hope I have been successful in providing a clear framework for you to determine whether you are well prepared for the next millennium.

With good planning, some hard work now and possibly a little bit of luck, we should all have a problem free and prosperous New Year.