

Synchronize 1.3 manages time

When you have 1,000 details to remember (and who doesn't), forgetting just one of them could lead to chain reactions of small disasters that ruin an entire day. And the more humans on a project, the more complex scheduling gets. CrossWind's (Felton, CA) new release of Synchronize 1.3 task-management software is a relatively inexpensive product to meticulously plan a business day.

Not to say old-fashioned personal daytimers should become extinct, although Synchronize does offer a shared address book in which entries can be marked private. While it can schedule thousands of users, it also gives each individual a customized workplace.

What a personal workplace means to CrossWind is the ability to organize meetings, tasks, and projects by user-defined categories that can be color-coded, grouped, and tracked on either a personal or corporate level. For instance, upcoming urgent events could appear in red. The user does this by selecting the options from the menu, which has a two-fold purpose, according to Vice President of Marketing Chris Knudsen. It makes the task of customizing the envi-

ronment very easy for the user, and it saves the system administrator time. And system administrators, Knudsen added, often carry buying power.

The 1.3 release is the most stable product CrossWind has released, Knudsen said. For this reason, it may soon be shipped on CD-ROM rather than the current diskettes it comes on. Besides the customizable GUI, improvements include refined task-management features. "It's more than a to-do list; users can see who has completed what in a [shared] project [in different cities]," Knudsen said. Other functions include distributing agendas and memos, assigning and tracking tasks and sending out reminders. Beside private and group calendars, Synchronize features Pop-Up Notes, a nifty option to conceal or pop up personal scrawl.

Typical sites are about 100 people, although Knudsen said some handle up to a 1000 users. These larger customer bases include the likes of Motorola and Intel. A feature that facilitates 1000-user sites is the distributed database. Users can assign databases to certain

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corporate divisions (such as marketing, engineering, etc.) as well as geographical divisions (Norway, France, etc.). The database, with support for multiple time-zones will automatically reflect the day-to-day operations.

Knudsen said main rivals are WordPerfect Office, and Sun's CalendarManager, though the Sun product "is lower level," she said.

Synchronize costs \$100 per user and is currently shipping on IBM RS/6000, SunOS and Solaris, DEC Alpha AXP, the DECstation series, Hewlett-Packard, and Silicon Graphics.

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