

# MacWEEK

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THE NEWSWEEKLY FOR MACINTOSH MANAGERS

## Org Plus gets your organizational charts flowing

### Tool outperforms MS-DOS cousin

#### ON BALANCE

#### Org Plus

Banner Blue Software Inc.  
List price: \$195



Org Plus is a sophisticated organizational chart-drawing tool that automates the otherwise tedious process of redrawing and refitting charts in response to organizational change. While it doesn't support color, it has no real competition on the Mac, and it is very well-implemented.

By Keith J. Thompson

Companies of practically every size use organizational charts to graphically depict their corporate structure. Organizational charts are not only effective tools for illustrating existing management structures, but also for performing "what-if" scenarios on the impact of management changes.

Org Plus from Banner Blue Software Inc. is a powerful charting tool that outperforms the company's text-based DOS version. Org Plus on the Macintosh is not a simple DOS port. The code was completely rewritten, and it makes full use of the Mac's graphical interface.

**Using Org Plus.** Anyone can create an organizational chart with Org Plus in minutes. When you open a new file, a single box appears in the chart window along with four icons at the top of the window labeled Subordinate, Co-

worker, Manager and Assistant. You first choose one of these four job icons and then click in the organizational chart on the box to which you want to connect the new job. For example, if you need to show that Judd Gregg has four subordinate managers, you would click the Subordinate icon four times (once for each manager) and then click on Judd's box itself to tell Org Plus where to draw the boxes. As it adds the four boxes, Org Plus automatically makes size adjustments to the entire chart to accommodate the new boxes.

The text in each box can be customized. For a simple chart, you could just define universal labels for names and titles, or you could configure individual boxes to hold additional information, such as a person's name, region and the like. For example, you could define a salary field label so that every box would have a place to type the person's salary. You can show or hide box information without having to edit each box, so that if you wanted to print one version of a chart showing salary and another without salary information, you could tell Org Plus to hide whatever labels you want.

After you draw a chart, Org Plus makes it easy to update or play "what-if" with the company's organizational structure. For example, if you want to move another department under Judd's box and Org Plus will redraw the new organizational structure. Whenever you make changes that affect chart size, Org Plus redraws the chart, maintaining proper sizing and spacing for the page size you have set.

**Chart intelligence.** What's impressive about Org Plus is not that it simply plunks boxes on a page, but that it makes some intelligent decisions about how the chart should look when it is finally printed. For example, its Make Fit command forces the program to redraw a chart to fit a user-defined printing size. If you had to constrain a chart to a single page, this command would resize a chart based on a user's options such as globally replacing first names with initials to save space, maintaining the same box width while wrapping long text to another line, or even substituting a smaller type size to squeeze the chart into the prescribed space. You can make a chart as small as a single page or tile it across several pages up to a 10-by-10-foot spread.

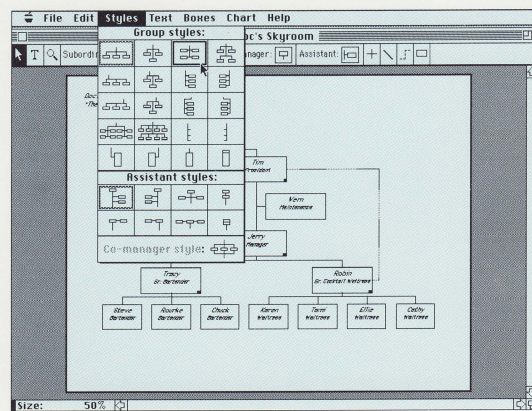
Org Plus boasts an excellent on-line help facility that has both a table of contents and a full index. If you prefer, you can use help interactively. Finally, each help screen refers you by page number to the User's Tutorial and Reference manual. If you still have a problem, Banner Blue provides free technical support if you pay for the call.

#### Chart formatting flexibility.

Once Org Plus draws your chart, you still have almost complete control over how you want the

chart to look in its final printing. For the chart's overall design, you can choose from any of Org Plus 20 built-in chart types. These include commonly used styles, in which boxes are horizontal according to level within the organization, and more esoteric designs that accommodate complex structures.

In addition to controlling overall chart style, you also can control the appearance of one or more individual boxes or lines. You can easily set box spacing defaults or selectively change a box's size. You also can change box line widths or styles and add drop shadows. Org Plus does not support color, however.



The Org Plus Styles menu contains a plethora of chart types. Boxes also can be customized for size, line width and line style.

**Import and export.** Org Plus completely supports the file format of its DOS counterpart, and Org Plus PC now supports Macintosh files. This interchangeability is important in mixed-platform environments and for those who wish to embellish the relatively ugly text-based IBM PC charts on the Mac for final printing.

Org Plus lets you cut all or part of a chart to the Clipboard for pasting into another application. However, you cannot reliably paste a chart into MacDraw. Banner Blue is about to release an update to Org Plus that will let you save files in PICT format. These could then be imported directly into a drawing or page-layout application.

**Conclusions.** Org Plus is a sophisticated tool that we highly recommend for anyone

who produces more than an occasional organization chart. It makes good use of the Macintosh user interface while packing enough features and functionality to satisfy almost all users. We just wish it supported color for presentation slide making.

Banner Blue Software Inc. is at P.O. Box 7865, Fremont, Calif. 94537. Phone (415) 794-6850; fax (415) 794-9152.

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## Facing the competition

Strictly speaking, Org Plus has no direct competition on the Mac. MacDraw is probably the most frequently used tool for creating organization charts, and MORE and Persuasion provide some automated charting features.

However, as anyone who has used Claris' MacDraw for organizational charts will testify, it can take an interminable amount of time to make a presentable chart, especially if changes need to be integrated.

Symantec's MORE partially automates the drawing process, but you are forced to alternate between outline and chart modes for the final product. MORE does not give you nearly the same ease of use and speed when it comes to tweaking your chart, and it lacks the graphic customization features of Org Plus.

Aldus Persuasion can create basic organizational charts, but they are crude compared with the features and functionality of Org Plus. — *By Keith J. Thompson*