

MALLS & MAINSTREETS

Planners like special store

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STAFF WRITER

"Benjamin Franklin was one of the first people to use a book to get his values in line," explained Robert Brownell, manager of the Franklin Quest store in Twelve Oaks Mall. "He listed 13 virtues, and he managed to do 12 of them. The 13th was humility, and every time he got to feeling good about the first 12 he'd accomplished, the humility went right out the window."

The Franklin Planner was created in 1933 by a Salt Lake City-based company hoping to simplify the busy executive's schedule with an all-purpose organizer. Today, it's common to see these black or burgundy notebooks pop open at PTA meetings, after club tennis matches, and during shopping mall lunches — almost everyone has one.

"The Franklin Planner will help you become the kind of person you want to be — whether it's a better parent, a citizen more active in the community, a successful executive," said Frank Foley, a sales associate. "Most of our customers come from the corporate world, but you'll see Franklin Planners in all walks of life."

A Franklin Quest store opened in the Novi mall six months ago to meet the growing demand on the "west side of the city" according to Foley. There are also shops in Dearborn and Troy.

The planner is based on Franklin's 13 virtues, and the company adopted Franklin's portrait as its logo. They renamed the virtues "governing values" and by using the planner, personal values are identified and developed, time is managed, and careful use is on the road to success. The company has grown to 26 outlets throughout the country from an original store opened in 1986. Their competition is the day planner and the ordinary calendar, but Franklin Planners have an edge.

"We sell a system," explained Frank Foley, sales associate. "We're not just product based, we are education based. We care about helping people set goals and we show them how to work towards achievement."

Foley described the Franklin Planner as a comprehensive time

management diary that includes a personal finance section, extensive reference material, a five-year planning calendar, and pages for dates, addresses and phone numbers.

Some contain road maps and dictionaries of the 7,000 most misspelled words. Add-on modules are available to help those interested in project planning, sales forms, exercise logs and menu planners.

Andria Sitar of West Bloomfield keeps a hectic schedule as manager of a personnel department. She has relied on her Franklin Planner to manage time and note appointments for the past three years.

"My planner allows me to track things on a daily basis," she said. "There's also room for personal data so both business and home contacts can be kept in one spot. The best part of the planner for me, is that the history of events can be kept so you can trace what went on later. It's a tool."

Patrick Calhoun of Northville, works in retail. He bought a Franklin planner this year after noticing how much his girlfriend relied on hers.

"I carry it with me all the time now," he said. "It's all you need right in your hand, plus your watch. Years ago I had one and it was stolen from my car. The company replaced the inserts for free and gave me 10-percent off a new binder. Now that's customer service."

The store offers seminars and sells cassette tapes and books to help new customers use the planner most efficiently.

"The seminars are offered twice a month in the Detroit area and you register through the stores," he said. "The \$195 fee includes a full day seminar and of course a Franklin Planner. Twenty-thousand people a month take the course throughout the country."

That's quite a following and Foley joked that some people see devoted Franklin planner users as members of a cult.

"One does carry a lot of information in the planner and it becomes vital to the smooth operation of a day," he said. "Once you discover what it can do for you, you become vehement about having one."

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wouldn't take "no" for an answer.

"We had the Moscow circus in town and we wanted to promote the circus and the mall by having a few of those Russian bears on display," he said. "Well, we had no place to keep the bear until showtime, so we lured him into a rear corridor used for loading."

"The door had no lock, so we stationed a security guard outside. Along comes this devoted UPS delivery guy who insisted on

using the corridor to make a delivery. We told him no because there was a bear inside and he just wouldn't believe it. I wish you could have seen his face when he opened that door and came nose to nose with our furry friend."

Summit Place Mall

"A word of wisdom to other promotions directors," advised Rita

Bowles of Summit Place in Pontiac. "Never book guests more popular than Santa. I remember a few years back when our Santa Arrival featured appearances by the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. Well, all the kids were fighting for a chance to hug the turtles and no one was over at Santa's workshop. It was awful."

Somerset, Laurel Park

For two feathered friends with

an attitude, the tree upscale Somerset Collection and the stately Laurel Park Place must resemble Palm Springs.

"We were hoping the double doors would eliminate birds flying into the mall," explained Tom Miles, manager of the Somerset Collection. "But every once in awhile we still find one flying around and nesting in our palm trees. We've got to catch this one before he disturbs the diners in the open air Cafe Jardin."



Everything is ducky: Steve and Cindy Gray of Garden City rescue a mother duck and her 10 ducklings from a dangerous nest near the parking lot at Laurel Park Place.

"We need a fishnet," mall housekeeper Rhonda Sunn yelled to her associates as they crept up on the startling drinking water from the mall's pool. Spying their approach, the bird hopped into the poolside greenery and vanished.

The management staff at Laurel Park Place in Livonia recently called a pair of wildlife enthusiasts to relocate a mother duck and her 10 ducklings squawking near a high automobile traffic area on the shopping center's property.

When the babies hatched, many of the mall's employees, including Joe Shevala of Y Not Yogurt fed the feathered family.

"Croissants and water seemed to be the favorite snack," joked Shevala.

Linda and Steve Gray of Garden City, volunteers with the Howell Nature Center, moved the family to a more rustic residence at Hines Park.

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The mall recently added After Thoughts (an accessory boutique), FootLocker (athletic shoes and apparel), August Max (big style for larger sizes), and Anton's has freed some floor space for the Barrie Pace line of career wear for women.

Westcott, Shafir and Diner Saurus have plans to expand the mall's involvement with the com-

munity and create more of a family atmosphere within the center. Guest appearances by Garfield and the Bernstein Bears are pending.

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