

Welcome to Multiflex

Thank-you for choosing Multiflex software. Whenever we start working with a new client, we are frequently asked questions regarding the whole process of computerization. Inevitably, certain questions crop up again & again – so much so that we have put together this fact-sheet which hopefully will answer some of the questions you may be asking yourself.

How long will it take to get us up & running ?

This is probably our most-asked question and depends on the nature of your business (how busy you are, number of staff etc.) and also on yourselves. Obviously, the more time you spend getting to know the new system, the faster things will progress. There are basically two stages involved; **installation** and **integration**. The first stage depends on the size of installation involved but typically goes like this:

- Install tills, cabling & other hardware (2 days)
- Configure software, stationery, security etc. (1 day)
- Transfer data from existing system(s) (1 day)
- Training in Point-of-Sale & Back Office (3 days)

That was the easy part - the new system now has to integrate with your business and its established practices. Trying to race ahead and do everything at once is one of the most common mistakes made by people endeavouring to computerise their business. To do the job efficiently, certain steps must be followed in the correct sequence as each step depends on those before it. The exact order of events will be dictated by your circumstances, but might go as follows. The figures in brackets are typical times in weeks from initial installation.

- Process all sales through the till(s) using a "dummy" product code for goods. Cash-up each day ensuring that lodgement agrees with figures obtained from the till. Charge to customer accounts if applicable. (1-2 wks)
- As stock is added, aim to be selling everything through the till by barcode or product code. Check selling-prices against marked price on products. Discontinue any further use of the "dummy" code. (2-8 wks)
- Booking-in of all goods into Multiflex through Goods Inward. Start using the system to place forward orders to suppliers. (2-8 wks)
- Print stock-sheets and carry out a Stocktake. Enter levels into computer, check cost-prices and obtain valuation report. (8-12 wks)

Remember, these are only guidelines. Setting up of the Purchase & Nominal ledgers, Bank Reconciliation, Payroll etc. can take place at the same time as the stock & tills. A lot depends on how much time you have (or make) available.

Does Multiflex need Microsoft Windows to operate ?

No, Multiflex is a DOS program. DOS (also known as MS-DOS) is considerably less complex than Windows meaning that there is less to learn - It is also more reliable. Multiflex is however fully compatible with all versions of Windows including 31, 95, 98 & NT and will operate correctly on a computer with Windows installed.

Does this mean learning complicated DOS commands ?

No. It is our policy to shield our users from the quirks of MS-DOS. Instead, we use a simple menu system which guides the operator to the required function whether that be running Multiflex, carrying out a backup or whatever. When accessing Multiflex from a Windows computer, icons are provided to select the various functions.

Does Multiflex need a lot of disk space ?

No. Compared to many Windows programs (which sometimes require hundreds of megabytes just for the program) Multiflex is fairly compact – just a few megabytes with empty datafiles.



Is Multiflex software difficult to learn ?

No. The development of Multiflex has always been directed by the needs of the retailer and simplicity is a prime requirement. Point-of-Sale is a case in point - many retailers employ part-time or weekend staff who may have to use the system only occasionally. Screens are kept simple and uncluttered to avoid overwhelming new or infrequent users. If you can use a normal cash register, you can use Multiflex.

Can my data be transferred from the old system ?

Yes, If your data is presently stored on a computer. If you use one of the popular accounts packages (like Sage, Pegasus or TAS) then this is quick and simple. However, we can extract your information from *any* computer (whether PC compatible or not) in any format including spreadsheets, text files, databases etc. although it may take a little longer. Normally only static information is transferred (ie. customers, suppliers, product headers etc.) with opening balances being produced by entering outstanding invoices although past transactions can also be transferred.

Can I use any of the hardware components from my old system ?

In principal, there is no reason that your old computer equipment cannot be utilised in a new system as Multiflex will operate correctly on any IBM-compatible hardware of any age. However, it should be borne in mind the pace at which things change in computing – the lowest spec. computer available today is literally hundreds of times faster than what would have been bought for the same price only four or five years ago - even the screen and keyboard may not be compatible. Reliability is another consideration. Often, it is better just to completely replace old hardware.

What does the Network Server do ?

In a networked system the information is stored at a central location and accessed or updated by all the tills and workstations using special cables- the network server is a special computer whose task it is to store this information. The server cannot itself be used for any other purpose and is normally installed in an out-of-the-way location.

Do I need a separate computer at each till ?

Yes. In a networked system, each till or workstation is effectively a self-contained computer, capable of running Multiflex. Each has its own processor and disk-drives although the program being run and your data are stored remotely on the server.

How long should I keep running my old system once Multiflex is installed ?

This will depend on how fast everything else progresses. Generally, your old tills can be taken away a week or so after the new system is installed. Most new users run two systems concurrently for at least a whole month to compare month-end totals - two or three months is not uncommon. A lot will depend on how timeconsuming running two systems together proves to be.

What if I need changes made to the Multiflex Program ?

We like to think that Multiflex already has enough features to satisfy the needs of most customers. Multiflex was developed by listening to what you wanted – much of what you will ask for has been asked for before and added. Many features in the standard modules are not suited to everyone and can be “switched” on or off – switching on the appropriate features is part of the initial setting-up procedure. If you really need some unsupported feature, however, this can normally be added at a reasonable cost.

Where and when is training carried out ?

Training is carried out on your premises; normally immediately after the system is installed. When will depend on the nature of your business - if you are always very busy, then it may be necessary to arrange training sessions in the evening. Training is normally carried out in conjunction with setting-up, giving you “hands-on” experience working with your own information rather than some made-up company.

Is there a “training mode” where we can practice ?

Yes, all Multiflex systems have a “practice company”, basically a copy of your entire system where you can “try things out” to see what happens. Nothing you do in the practice company affects your real data in any way and all the screens are displayed in a different colour to avoid confusion.



What if I find that I need extra training ?

Many people worry that they won't learn enough to operate Multiflex properly in the allowed training time and that additional training will be very expensive. The time we allow for training is based on our experience with other clients. It is important to us that you be up and running as efficiently as possible – this is good advertising for Multiflex. Normally, we don't charge for extra initial training (within reason) – if you have more questions later, and everybody does, then our staff are only a phone-call away.

Can I work at Home ?

Yes, in a limited way. If you have a computer at home, we can install the Multiflex programs – you can then load a backup of your office system at home anytime. This will allow you to view accounting and Point-of-Sale information as well as running reports, carrying out mail-merges etc. The limitation is that you cannot carry out any postings at home since there is no simple way of updating only the changes back to the office. However, it is a good way to learn the system.

Can I add to my Multiflex system in the future ?

Yes. Multiflex is fully modular – you can buy only the modules you need to begin with and add further modules later. In addition to the standard components, there are also many add-ons for Multiflex which cater for specialist requirements – picture framing, bookings & appointments, warranty records for example.

What does it cost to add extra tills or workstations ?

Apart from the cost of buying extra computers (and possibly cabling), the charge for adding additional tills or workstations is based on the licensing rules of both Novell networking and Multiflex software – in both cases users are added 5 at a time. So, a system with 6 - 10 users will cost approximately twice as much as the same system with 2, 3, 4 or 5 users. The network server itself does not count as a user.

What happens on 1st January 2000 ?

Nothing, as far as Multiflex is concerned – all Multiflex modules are fully-tested and guaranteed 100% millenium compliant. You however may wake up with a hangover.

Do I need to backup my data every day ?

Yes. The time it takes to backup your data is insignificant compared to how long it would take to key-in again all the transactions and amendments for even a single day. When you first start, your Multiflex system will be quite small and may be backed-up to a single floppy disk. However, as you add stock, customers and transactions, your data will quickly grow in size. Another medium, with a much greater capacity – Zip cartridge or tape for example- will then be required.

How do I get Software Support ?

Software support is provided primarily by PC Solutions and is available 9am-5pm, Monday to Friday with coverage to 1pm on a Saturday. Two forms of support are provided; *voice* where your queries are answered over the phone and *modem* where a member of our staff can dial into your computer and carry out adjustments, update files and programs etc. Accessing your computer in this way requires that you place your computer in a special dial-up mode so no-one can "hack into" your system without your knowledge.

And what about Hardware Support ?

In order to operate reliably, every Multiflex system must be properly maintained by a suitably qualified hardware service provider. In addition, where networking is installed, the services of an accredited network engineer must be available at short notice.

