



The Light Bulb Lady Shines with TRAVERSE

Kay Newell is known as "The Light Bulb Lady" in her neck of the woods. The Portland, Oregon businesswoman owns Sunlan Lighting, Inc., and she lights up the lives of thousands of customers. Sunlan sells every kind of light bulb you can think of; not only standard bulbs used in homes and offices, but also colored bulbs, bulbs for growing plants, heat lamps, full spectrum bulbs to help those who suffer from Seasonal Affect Disorder (SAD or "winter blues"), bulbs in lighted signs, and many, many more.

Kay started her company in 1989. It was small at first, with an office in her home and a warehouse down the street. Before long, however, her inventory swelled to include thousands of light bulbs, which she purchases from approximately 100 vendors. It was far too much to try to keep track of without software, so Kay began looking at packages. "I went to a lot of seminars, trying to find something that would work for my business. I looked at Peachtree, Quicken, and other out-of-the-box programs," says Kay. "They're really good programs, and they do a good job if you're a small business like a lawyer, a dentist or a real estate office. But when you have thousands of inventory items like I do, those systems won't begin to handle it. I also looked at Real World, which was large enough to handle my needs, but those programs are complicated and difficult to learn."

After trying two or three different programs, Kay found that each system was missing the key components she needed. Eventually, she purchased UA Business Software. "It had everything I needed, and I really liked it," she says, "but then they started to change the program from the business premise that I operated on to a format that removed many of the features I wanted and needed to operate my business." When a new version was released, Kay asked her reseller, Walt Pearson of CCP Solutions, to find another program. When Pearson showed her TRAVERSE from Open Systems, Inc., she was very pleased. "It did everything UA did, and some things they didn't," Kay says. "What's more, Open Systems seemed to be going in the same direction that I needed to go with my business. I bought it. I didn't want something just for today; I also wanted something for tomorrow because I don't like change. I like growth, I like development ... but I don't like change."

One of the things that Kay likes most about TRAVERSE is its ease of use. "It's so easy to learn," she says. "After I purchased TRAVERSE, my son joined me at the company. He was a 34-year-old man who had never even turned on a computer. He has good management, retail and marketing skills, but to him a computer wasn't even something you played games on. TRAVERSE is something he could work with. He quickly learned to take customer orders, order stock, and use the program to be more productive. There was a very small learning curve."

Kay also hired a high school girl to do some data entry for her. "It took me less than a half of an afternoon to teach her everything she needed to know. There were just specific tasks that I was having her perform, but she could do them correctly, and I was able to easily check her work. That is a tremendous advantage over other programs. And in today's world, everyone needs those skills. Even if you don't have much of a computer background, you need to have certain computer skills, and with TRAVERSE, they're easy to teach."

Kay spends her day "lighting up" her customers. TRAVERSE makes it easier for her to serve her customers by enabling her to find information quickly, take orders easily, and meet customer demands effortlessly. "At the same time, all the other paperwork a business requires is seamlessly being done by my staff and me, with a program that links all the information from all of my computer stations together," says Kay.



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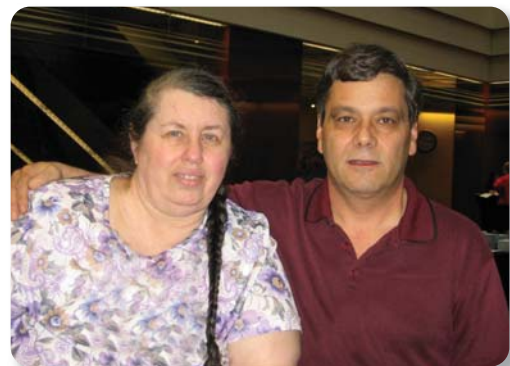
TRAVERSE®

Over the years, Sunlan Lighting has evolved into a multi-level business. It is both a wholesale and a retail operation, with direct sales to other businesses such as restaurant franchises and electrical contractors, but also to walk-in customers who come into Kay's store on the north side of Portland. "People will just come in looking for high-quality, unusual, strange, fun, wacky, funky light bulbs. I have them," says Kay. "When most people think of light bulbs, they think of the standard round light bulb, or maybe the long fluorescent bulb in their office. But there are probably a hundred different variants of each, by wattage, color, finish, etcetera. When you add in all the specialty bulbs, it's a tremendous inventory, of which you need to have knowledge, the ability to locate, and the ability to sell."

TRAVERSE enables Kay to handle it all. "I like the way I can identify things. I can create information so that someone who is totally unfamiliar with light bulbs can learn to speak 'light bulb-ese'. I can use aliases in TRAVERSE to make my own formulas and codes. That flexibility is really, really important. I can create a system that will allow me to reference and find things so easily. The 'Lookup' functions in TRAVERSE are fantastic. You don't have to know everything, you just look into what I call my 'square brain': the TRAVERSE system on my computer." Kay also appreciates being able to have multiple screens and multiple fields open simultaneously. "I can be talking to someone who is giving me an order, and maybe they don't remember exactly what they ordered last time, but they know they want the same thing again. Or, they may say, 'I want the same thing I ordered last June.' I can open that screen with one click and see what they ordered. I can copy and paste the item into the sales order, click a few times, my inventory moves into the packing list and it's pulled, packed and shipped in the same day. All of this can be done when I'm on the phone. If I'm hung up on the phone for five minutes, there may be two customers on hold on the phone that I can't get to. Time equals money."

The icing on the cake for Kay is that Pearson is able to log onto her system remotely if she has a question or needs help with something. She recounts a time when she had a payroll problem. "County taxes were being taken out when I did my check run, and they weren't supposed to be," she explains. "I called CCP Solutions. They were able to look at my screen, hit a few buttons, and the problem was gone." In addition, CCP Solutions backs up all of Sunlan's data nightly. "I have tremendous backup support because I have a real-time connection to Walt," she says. "He can go into my system and install updates and upgrades. I don't have a lot of technical knowledge—or the desire to get it. I want to sit there and push the buttons that create the orders that generate the dollars. With TRAVERSE, I can do that."

Four of the five people employed at Sunlan Lighting are now using the software. The company uses TRAVERSE Accounts Receivable, Accounts Payable, Payroll, Inventory, General Ledger, Sales Order, and Purchase Order. Kay is also adding the Customer Relationship Management (CRM) and Info-Alert modules. "I like what I've seen there. CRM will help me get my sales orders out faster and more efficiently. Info-Alert will be my invisible employee - one who will work nights and give me some of the information I need to work smarter. Mr. Info-Alert will not ask for a raise in a year, and I expect to make my time worth more."



Kay Newell, Sunlan Lighting, and Walt Pearson, CCP Solutions