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For help using Help, press the F1 key.

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Template

The Sign Maker uses templates, or guidelines to aide you in creating high quality, low cost signs for your store.   These guidelines are meant to show you where the boundaries of your selected sign dimensions are.

Opening a Sign File

To get started creating signs, select the <u>Open Sign File</u> menu selection from the <u>Open / Create Sign</u>   menu.   A dialog box will appear, prompting you for a file name.   All Sign Maker files have the **.MST** file extension.   Since this is probably your first sign, you will need to type in a new file name (You don't need to type in the extension, The Sign Maker does that for you!).   The Sign Maker will look in the specified directory for the file name you gave, if it can't find it (which will be the case for all new signs created) The Sign Maker will prompt you to create the file.   The next step is <u>selecting a template.</u>

Selecting a Template

Now that you have created a new file, the next thing that The Sign Maker needs to know is which template to use.   A dialog box will appear and give you your choices.   We have provided all of the industry standard sizes, as well as full size letter and legal size for free style signs and posters.

Next, The Sign Maker needs to know how you would like your signs printed.   If you chose 3.5 X 5.5   (4 per Sheet), The Sign Maker knows he has to print in LANDSCAPE   mode.   However, you are free to choose either PORTRAIT   or LANDSCAPE for any other sign template.   If you have any trouble while deciding these issues, there is a help button in the printer setup dialog box that can explain most everything.   The next step is selecting a font .

Changing the Font and Font Size

O.K., now we are ready to be creative.   Select Fonts... from the Font menu   and select the font and point size you want to start with.   Click the "OK" button when you have made your selection.   As you begin typing, you may decide to change the font and/or the size.   You may change the style of characters already typed by highlighting   them, then performing the steps as mentioned above.   Use your creative talents and be thoughtful in your sign layout,   explore the different fonts that come with Windows,   the "Wingdings" font is very interesting.   Keep in mind that more fonts are available through your retail computer dealer.   The next step, after completing your sign, is printing it .

Special note:

There is a program that comes with windows called "Character Map", usually found in the Accessories group.   Using this program is the easiest way to see all of the characters available for a certain font.   For example, look at the "Wingdings" font with the character map.   Help is available within the character map program, as with most Windows programs.

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Landscape Printing

With Landscape printing, the paper is wider than it is tall when you view the printed sign upright. (The sign prints sideways on the paper).

Portrait Printing

With Portrait printing, the paper is taller than it is wide when you view the printed sign upright.

Printing a Sign

Printing a Sign Maker sign is as easy as pressing a button.   If you are like most users, you will use the mouse to move around the menus until you become more familiar with the <u>hot-keys</u> .   The F4 key is The Sign Maker's hot-key for printing, or you could select the print option from the File menu. Once you have printed your sign and made any necessary adjustments to the layout, you may want to <u>save your sign</u>   to a file for future use.

Saving a Sign

Saving a Sign Maker sign file is a good idea.   After spending time creating a sign layout that works best for you, you can save it and use it again and again.   To save a sign you have created to a file, choose the   Save menu option from the File menu .

If you like, you can make your own "sign model" so to speak.   When you load this sign and modify it, you probably want to save it under a different name, so as not to destroy your "model".   To accomplish this, choose the Save As   menu option from the File menu.   You will be prompted for a new name.

It is a good idea to use meaningful names when naming your sign files. Remember you are limited to 8 characters when naming a file (plus the 3 character **.MST** extension).   A good practice is to add a 'P' or 'L' to the end of the name to indicate Portrait   or Landscape   printing orientation, **example**: FEBSALEL.MST .   This naming convention is not required, however The Sign Maker will prompt you for the orientation every time the file is opened.   You do have the chance to change your selection using the Printer Setup   option from the File menu.   The Sign Maker **does remember** what template   you selected when originally creating the sign.

Open / Create Sign Menu

This is the only menu option available to you (with the exception of HELP) when you first start The Sign Maker.

Open Sign File

About Sign Maker

Exit Sign Maker

Exit Sign Maker

Use this menu selection to exit The Sign Maker program.   Make sure all work is saved before using this function.   (Save all of your files first!).

About Sign Maker

This selection displays a dialog box that tells a little bit about The Sign Maker, the version number and copyright information.

Hot-keys

Use hot-keys as a short-cut method to accessing menu options.   If a menu option has a hot-key assigned to it,   the key or key combination will be displayed to the right of the option.   Also, for main menu items, press the   ALT key plus the underlined letter of the option to open the associated sub-menu.

Sign Maker's Help Features

Here are some things you should know about The Sign Maker:

As with most Windows applications, on-line help is only a key press away.   The Sign Maker also incorporates what is known as "Context Sensitive Help ".   The standard function key for obtaining Help is the F1 key.   You may access help from within The Sign Maker (once you have opened a file and are in the edit mode) by highlighting a menu option using the cursor keys and pressing the F1 key.   The use of the cursor keys is required because using the mouse causes that particular menu selection to be selected.   An easy way to get help on a particular selection without going through the help index is as follows:

I would like to know what superscript does, so I click on Fonts   from the menu bar (Hot-key   users would hit the ALT+O keys). The choices available under Fonts are displayed.   I use the down arrow key to highlight the superscript selection.   Now, if I press enter with this selection highlighted, it is the same as clicking it with the mouse, but we want Help so we'll hit the F1 key instead.   The help screen for superscript pops up.

Keep in mind that the Help System is a separate program.   If you would like the Help window to stay on top of The Sign Maker, select the Help menu, then select "Always on Top".   **Note:** This procedure is done from within The Sign Maker Help screen.

Context Sensitive Help

This type of Help system gives you help on the option or topic currently selected.

Registering The Sign Maker

To register your copy of The Sign Maker and receive the lastest,   full featured program, simply send your company check or money order for **$50.00** in U.S. funds to:

Michael Dunn

re: Sign Maker

4342 S.W. Lagrange St.

Port St. Lucie, FL   34953

Sorry, no personal checks or C.O.D.'s.

Please include your complete mailing address and diskette size preference (5¼ or 3½).   Residents outside the U.S. include an additional $5.00 U.S. for overseas mailing.   You can print the <u>order form</u>   by selecting   Print Topic from the File menu.

What is The Sign Maker for?

The Sign Maker is used for.... you guessed it!!!   Making signs.

I do not own a retail store, nor do I have a need for making signs all of the time.   I went to a trade show a while back and saw a machine that makes signs, the type that you see at retail stores.   This particular machine does a great job, uses waterproof ink and has a lot of built in functions that you see in expensive type setting machines.   Well, the machine is not very intuitive to use, rather difficult in my opinion, and extremely expensive.   I don't know how the general public feels, but to me a machine that just makes signs is a little pricey at $2,500.00!   I realize that the signs produced by this machine are of   higher quality than a laser jet printer is capable of producing.   However, how many signs do you hold underwater for 12 hours a day?   If your sign gets wet and the ink runs, print another one!

In today's market of low priced P.C.'s, you can get a substantial system for   less than $2,500.00 (including a laser printer if you don't go nuts with the monitor and hard drive), with more than enough left over to buy software applications.   The point is, the P.C. is much more versatile and can replace a lot of "dedicated" machines.   Anyone who is considering buying a machine like the one described above probably has a major need to spend money (or displays their products underwater!).   Enough said? Good, go back to the tutorial now.

Registration Form

The Sign Maker for Windows ver. 1.0

Name _____

Street_____

City   _____

State_____   ZIP _____

Diskette size preference   3½"_____   or   5 ¼" _____

Please send me _____ copies of The Sign Maker at $50.00 per copy (Residents outside the U.S. add $5.00 for additional postage).   I understand that one copy constitutes one license and that each machine that uses The Sign Maker must have its own license.

Enclosed is my company check or money order in the amount of $_____

Please mail this form with company check or money order in U.S. funds to:

Michael Dunn

re: Sign Maker

4342 SW Lagrange St.

Port St. Lucie, FL   34953

Printer Setup

      This option invokes a printer specific dialog box for the default printer (the default printer selection is made from the control panel of Windows).   You select the parameters from a set of printer specific options.   These options include page size, page orientation, resolution, etc.   **A help button is available within the dialog box if you need help on any of the controls.**   For the majority of users, you will use the default settings, with exception to paper orientation. (You are prompted for this when creating or opening a sign file).

Print

Use this option to print your sign.   You may also choose to print only the selected part of the sign. To print a block of text, the desired text must be highlighted before invoking the print function.

Also, you will be prompted whether or not to print the "guidelines" on the paper.   This is in case you are using a "pre-perforated" stock and do not require the guidelines for cutting purposes.

The print function will print on the default printer selected from the Windows' control panel.   The Sign Maker will select the closest printer fonts that match with the display fonts.   You can alter certain print parameters using the printer setup   prior to invoking the print option.

Exit File

Use this function to exit from the sign editing session.   If the current sign file is modified, you will be prompted to save the modifications.

Please note that this does not exit The Sign Maker, but rather closes the current sign file.

Save File As

This selection is similar to <u>Save File</u> .   In addition, it allows you to specify a new file name for saving the text.   As with the Save function, this feature is disabled with the trial shareware version.

Save File

Use this selection to save the text and format data to the current file name.   If a file name is not yet specified, The Sign Maker will prompt you for a file name.   If a file with the same name already exists on the disk, The Sign Maker will save the previous file with a backup extension (.MS~).   This feature has been disabled for the trial shareware version.

Change Font and Point Size

Use this function to change the font typeface and point size of the current character or of all characters in a highlighted block of text.

If you wish to change the font for a highlighted block of text, highlight the block using <u>Line</u>   or <u>Character</u>   highlighting methods.   If you wish to change the font of a single character, position the cursor on that character, then select the font option from the font menu, or hit the ALT + F10 keys together.   A dialog box will appear that shows the list of Fonts and point sizes available.

This option also allows you to change the default font. To change the default font, check the default font box.   This selection will apply the new font and point size to all the characters in the sign that used the previous default font.

Highlight a Character Block

Use this function to highlight a block of characters.

Mouse: Position the mouse cursor on the first character of the block and depress the left button. Holding the left button down, drag the mouse to the last character of the block and release the button.

Keyboard: Position the cursor on the first character of the block and depress the shift key. Holding the shift key down, use the arrow keys to position the cursor on the last character of the block and release the shift key.

Highlight a Line Block

Use this function to highlight a block of lines.

Mouse: Position the mouse cursor at any position on the first line of the block and depress the right button.   While the right button is depressed, drag the mouse down to the last line of the block and release the button.

Keyboard: Position the cursor at any position on the first line of the block and hit the F8 function key. Use the Up and Down arrow keys to position the cursor on the last line and hit the F8 key again.

Normally, a function that uses a line block (Cut/Copy) will also erase the highlighting.   To explicitly erase the highlighting,   click the mouse one more time or hit the F8 key again.

Highlight the Current Word

Position the mouse cursor on the word to be highlighted and double click any mouse button (left or right).

Italic ON

Use this option to *italicize* the current character or to *italicize* all characters in a highlighted block of text.

To italicize the current character, hit the ALT+ 3 keys together (or select the option from the menu).   to apply this format on a block of characters, highlight a block using the <u>Line Block</u>   or <u>Character Block</u> options.   Now, hit the ALT + 3 keys together (or select the option from the menu).

When you type in on the keyboard, the new characters automatically assume all the formatting characteristics of the preceding character.

To turn off the italic format, select the <u>NORMAL</u>   function.

Reset Character Formats (Normalize)

Use this selection to reset all character formats (bold , underline , italic ,superscript , subscript and strike through) for the current character or for all characters in a highlighted block of text.

To reset the character formats for the current character, hit the ALT + 0 (zero) keys together (or select the option from the Font Menu).   To reset the formats for a block of characters, highlight a block using the Line Block   or Character Block   techniques.   Now hit the ALT + 0 keys together (or select the option from the Font menu).

Underline ON

Use this option to <u>underline</u> the current character or to <u>underline</u> all characters in a highlighted block of text.

To underline the current character, hit the ALT + 2 keys together (or select the option from the Font menu).   To apply this format on a block of characters, highlight a block using the <u>Line Block</u> or <u>Character Block</u> options.   Now hit the ALT + 2 keys together (or select the option from the menu).

When you type in on the keyboard, the new characters automatically assume all the formatting characteristics of the preceding character.

To turn off underlining, select <u>NORMAL</u> from the Font menu.

Bold ON

Use this option to apply the **bold** formatting to the current character or to all characters in a highlighted block of text.

To make the current character appear as bold, hit the ALT + 1 keys together (or select the option from the menu).   To apply this format on a block of characters, highlight a block using the <u>Line Block</u> or <u>Character Block</u>   options.   Now hit the ALT + 1 keys together (or select the option from the menu).

When you type on the keyboard, the new characters automatically assume all the formatting characteristics of the preceding character.

To turn off the bold formatting, select <u>NORMAL</u>   from the Font menu.

File Menu

This menu contains commands for saving and printing the current Sign Maker sign file.

[Save](#)

[SaveAs](#)

[Page Layout](#)

[Printer Setup](#)

[Print](#)

[Exit File](#)

Picture From Disk File

Use this command to read in a picture bitmap from a disk file at the current cursor location.   You may have to use the dialog box controls to change directory and locate your bitmap files.   All of the controls are easy to use and clearly marked as to their functionality.

You can invoke this function by hitting the ALT+F8 function keys together (or select the option from the menu).

Paste (text from clipboard)

Use this command to paste the text from the clipboard at the current cursor location.   If the formatting information is available, this command restores the formatting information properly.

You can invoke this function by hitting the CTRL + V keys together (or select the option from the menu).

Copy (text to clipboard)

Use this command to copy a highlighted block of text to the clipboard.   The formatting information is also copied to the clipboard using a special clipboard format.

Cut (text to clipboard)

Use this command to cut a highlighted block of text to the clipboard.   This means that the previously highlighted area is copied to the clipboard, then deleted from the edit area.   The formatting information is also copied to the clipboard using a special clipboard format.

Undo

The Sign Maker remembers your last edit command.   Use this function to undo the last edit command.

You can invoke this function by hitting the Shift+F8 function keys together (or select the option from the menu).   The editor will display a dialog box containing the information about the edit command to be undone.   The dialog box displays line number, column position, type of undo (delete/insert/edit) and the contents of the undo buffer.   You may modify the target line number or column position.   Confirm the operation by clicking on the OK button.   When reversing a delete operation, the editor will restore the deleted text in its original format.

Normal (Reset Paragraph Format)

Use this selection to reset all paragraph formats for the current paragraph or for all lines in a highlighted block of text.   This function is available depending on the template selected.   If the template you have selected is not compatible, the menu selections will be grayed out, indicating that they are currently not available.

To reset the paragraph formats for the current paragraph, hit the Alt+P keys together (or select the option from the menu).   To reset the formats for a block of lines,   highlight a block using the <u>Line Block</u>   or <u>Character Block</u>   options.   Now,   hit the Alt+P Keys together (or select the option from the menu).

Centering

Use this selection to center all lines in the current paragraph or all lines in a highlighted block of text.   This function is available depending on the template selected.   If the template you have selected is not compatible, the menu selections will be grayed out, indicating that they are currently not available.

To center the current paragraph, hit the Alt+8 keys together (or select the option from the menu). To center a block of lines,   highlight a block using the Line Block   or Character Block   options.   Now, hit the Alt+8 Keys together (or select the option from the menu).

Right Justify

Use this selection to right justify all lines in the current paragraph or all lines in a highlighted block of text.   This function is available depending on the template selected.   If the template you have selected is not compatible, the menu selections will be grayed out, indicating that they are currently not available.

To right justify the current paragraph, hit the Alt+9 keys together (or select the option from the menu).   To right justify a block of lines,   highlight a block using the <u>Line Block</u>   or <u>Character Block</u> options.   Now,   hit the Alt+9 Keys together (or select the option from the menu).

Sign Maker Command Menus

You will see these Menu headings once you have opened a sign file.   Refer to the <u>Getting Started Section</u>   of the help to open a new or existing file

<u>File Menu</u>

<u>Edit Menu</u>

<u>Font Menu</u>

<u>Justify Menu</u>

Edit Menu

This menu contains clipboard functions, picture import functions, undo and copy/move functions.

Cut

Copy

Paste

Picture From Disk File

Undo

Font Menu

This menu contains character formatting commands.

Normal

Bold

Underline

Italics

Superscript

Subscript

Strike

Fonts

Justify Menu

This menu contains line formatting commands.   Only certain <u>template</u>   / orientation combinations support these options.

<u>Normal</u>

<u>Center</u>

<u>Right Justify</u>

Superscript

Use this option to apply the superscript format to the current character or to apply it on all characters in a highlighted block of text.

To superscript the current character, hit the Alt 4+ keys together (or select the option from the menu). To apply this format on a block of characters, highlight a block using the <u>Line Block</u> or <u>Character Block</u> options. Now, hit the Alt 4 Keys together (or select the option from the menu).

When you type in on the keyboard, the new characters automatically assume all the formatting characteristics of the preceding character.

To turn off the superscript format, select <u>NORMAL</u>

Subscript

Use this option to apply the subscript format to the current character or to apply it on all characters in a highlighted block of text.

To subscript the current character,   hit the Alt+ 5 keys together (or select the option from the menu).   To apply this format on a block of characters,   highlight a block using the <u>Line Block</u>   or <u>Character Block</u>options.   Now,   hit the Alt+ 5 Keys together (or select the option from the menu).

When you type in on the keyboard,   the new characters automatically assume all the formatting characteristics of the preceding character.

To turn off the superscript format,   select <u>NORMAL</u>

Strike Through

Use this option to apply the ~~strike~~ format to the current character or to apply it on all characters in a highlighted block of text.

To strike the current character,   hit the Alt+6 keys together (or select the <u>Line Block</u>   or <u>Character Block</u> option from the menu).   To apply this format on a block of characters,   highlight a block using the   options.   Now,   hit the Alt+6 Keys together (or select the option from the menu).

When you type in on the keyboard,   the new characters automatically assume all the formatting characteristics of the preceding character.

To turn off the superscript format,   select <u>NORMAL</u>

Page Layout

Use this option before selecting the <u>Print</u> option to specify the page layout.   This will help in vertically centering your text if you have chosen a 7x11 or similar template, and are printing in landscape. I usually set the top margin to .5 inches.   Your sign may vary.

Margin (left, right, top and bottom) in inches.

You can invoke this function by hitting the Ctrl F4 function keys together (or select the option from the menu).