

Background



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INTERNATIONAL OPERATIONS

Ashton-Tate is a leading microcomputer software company in the international marketplace, offering the largest and most comprehensive line of database and multi-purpose software products translated into foreign languages.

With many foreign language versions of its products, a solid distribution and sales network, and the early success of dBASE II, Ashton-Tate has quickly established its leadership in the global market. International sales accounted for 24 percent of the company's \$121.6 million in revenues for the fiscal year ended January 31, 1986.

"Because the use of personal computers is increasing rapidly in many foreign markets, the potential for our software products is significant," said Ron Posner, executive vice president, sales and international. "Our strong position in Europe gives us an edge in other developing international markets."

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One key to Ashton-Tate's overwhelming success is its dedication to making its products available in several foreign languages. dBASE II has been translated into 11 languages including Dutch, Swedish and Japanese. dBASE III and Framework, introduced in Europe during the summer of 1984, are available in 10 languages including Italian, French, German and Spanish. Framework II and dBASE III PLUS, introduced in Europe during the fourth quarter of 1985, are currently being translated into a variety of foreign languages as well.

In addition, Ashton-Tate is working on foreign language translations of its MultiMate line and will increase international distribution of the products.

"We recognize that the demands on software developers and marketers are vastly different in the international arena," said Posner. "Our firm commitment to translating dBASE II, dBASE III and Framework into many languages has been critical for meeting the needs of microcomputer software users in foreign countries."

Ashton-Tate sells its products internationally through a comprehensive network of distributors, dealers, and microcomputer manufacturers. To further service its customers, Ashton-Tate also has established subsidiaries in the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, West Germany, Spain, Italy and Australia.

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"Ashton-Tate is determined to sell and support its products through foreign nationals wherever possible," said Posner. "Our strategy has been to take advantage of existing sales and distribution channels and to utilize the marketing expertise of those already established in foreign countries."

A central element of Ashton-Tate's successful international strategy is its establishment of "master" distributors. Master distributors are responsible for everything from the production of software and documentation and the organization of sub-distribution and dealer networks, to the arrangement of service and support. Through master distributors, Ashton-Tate offers international users the same high-quality, localized service and support -- including technical hot-lines and informational newsletters -- that it provides in the United States.

Ashton-Tate has signed major agreements with master distributors worldwide including La Commande Electronique, a leading French software distributor; Editrice Italiana Software in Milan, Italy; Arcom Pacific, Australia and New Zealand, and Datalogica in Sao Paulo, Brazil. Additionally, Ashton-Tate has made a strong entry into the Mexican market, signing a distribution agreement with SIGA, located in Mexico City.

As part of its commitment to working closely with nationals in foreign countries, Ashton-Tate has also developed strategic relationships with major microcomputer manufacturers through

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which they distribute their software products. Among them are IBM, Olivetti, Ericsson and Applied Computer Techniques (ACT), Great Britain's largest maker of microcomputers.

The company also has a partnership agreement with Software International, a wholly-owned subsidiary of the Japan Systems Engineering Corporation (JSE) of Tokyo, Japan. Under the agreement, the two firms formed a company, Nippon Ashton-Tate, which markets Ashton-Tate products in Japan.

Other countries in which Ashton-Tate products are marketed include: Argentina, Austria, the Bahamas, Belgium, Brunei, Denmark, Egypt, Finland, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Ireland, Israel, Jamaica, Korea, Malaysia, Norway, Peru, the Philippines, Portugal, Puerto Rico, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand and Venezuela.

Ashton-Tate's international operations employ more than 125 people worldwide. Paul Salzinger, director of international sales and marketing, manages international operations for Australia, New Zealand, Latin America and developing territories from the company's Torrance, California headquarters. The company's international headquarters for European operations are located in Maidenhead, England, under the direction of James Mirrielees, managing director, Europe. Far East operations are headquartered in Tokyo, Japan and headed by James Lewis, managing director, Far East operations.

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