



# ONEIR SOLUTIONS HELPS PAINT AND DECORATING RETAILER MAKE CHILD'S PLAY OF EXPANSION

*Decorators Choice Paint Store Ltd. of Ottawa migrates from Vigilant accounting software to the Oneir Solutions' Linux-based platform, enabling the company president to manage two stores from her home office*  
by Andy Shaw

It's not as if Decorators Choice Paint Store president Silvana Pace and her co-owner husband didn't like what Vigilant was doing for their original store. A loyal Vigilant user since 1992, Pace had come to rely on Vigilant's rock solid point-of-sale, accounting, and inventory management package. But there was this dream -- of a second store in Ottawa's expanding east end in Orleans, where construction of new homes and consequent demand for their products were booming.

"So as good as Vigilant had been for us, we were prepared to consider other software that could handle multiple locations," says Pace. "We looked seriously at one accounting package in particular that was designed by one of our major suppliers specifically for our industry."

But even though that package was designed with paint retailers in mind and, indeed, slightly cheaper in price, Pace and Decorators Choice still opted for a

solution from Oneir Solutions.

"There were some things that the supplier's package couldn't handle very well like 'layaways', which are very important to us and which our Vigilant software did," says Pace. "Also, Oneir is far more familiar to us because we've been with Vigilant for so long."

*"With Oneir Solutions we can gain access and get the information we want right away."*

Jane Giggall, president of Oneir Solutions Inc. says Pace and Decorators Choice took a natural step that put them in step with other Vigilant customers. "When they start bursting at the seams or have other reasons to want more than one location, Oneir Solutions is the software product that most Vigilant users are migrating to. Now, as independent businesses they may do it for quite different reasons; some may be looking to make their accounting system more industry specific which Oneir Solutions does well; while others may want tighter management control no matter how many sites they have or add which Oneir does superbly. But

either way, they pick Oneir Solutions to realize their dreams."

Pace says her only reservation about moving over to Oneir Solutions was that it depends on Linux as its operating system.

"I admit I was a little nervous about it, but Josh Hayter (head of marketing and sales) at Oneir Solutions and also our own computer hardware suppliers helped us understand that Linux is first of all very stable, which is especially important when you're running a business," says Pace. "We also felt a lot more comfortable when we found it that we could still have access to all our Windows applications. And that works perfectly."

"What Pace has found is that when you combine our Linux server with Windows workstations you get the best of both worlds," says Hayter. "You get the speed and stability of Linux while keeping the Windows programs you know. This makes migration dead easy. We simply add the Oneir-Linux server to their existing network, set up the users, convert the data, connect the printers, and the system is ready to go."

That also closes a gap that even as a Vigilant user Decorators Choice couldn't bridge before.

"Especially with opening up our second store, we needed to have full and easy access at any time," says Pace. "With the one store we were using a remote access application to get us to Vigilant but it was very sluggish. And if I wanted to print up a report, for example, I had to go into the store.

"Also, with the other industry-specific package we were looking at, it could only poll for accounting information overnight. But with Oneir Solutions we can gain access and get the information we want right away -- and even print it here in our home office."

Technically that's possible because of the nimbleness and speed of the Linux server that is purpose-built for Oneir and which now sits unobtrusively in Pace's home office. It carries out real time communications between sites over a regular telephone-line connection to the internet. (Pace became even more mobile when Josh Hayter helped equip her with a wireless laptop that via the Linux server can also communicate with her two stores.)

"Even if the internet communication is lost, Oneir is uniquely able to continue making sales at each site. If the line is cut, Oneir transfers to a 'remote mode' with no sales loss or customer inconvenience. Our zero downtime design allows the clerk to resume sales with the touch of the space bar," explains Hayter.

Pace says the anytime remote access to their different business locations is what sealed the deal to migrate to Oneir Solutions. And the move proved easy.

"Josh gave me a complete itinerary and that was another reason I wanted to go with Oneir Solutions. They took care of everything," says Pace. "So there was really no significant downtime. It took not much more than half a day. We had one or two little glitches with our printers and with one of our computers. But Oneir Solutions quickly took care of those. It looks a little different from Vigilant but it operates the very same way. So overall I was able to go from Vigilant to Oneir with virtually no retraining of our 15 people who use the system."

Not even Pace's seven-year-old child.

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"At the end of the day at home, my daughter often tracks sales from both our stores and writes the results down for me," admits Pace, who can now also easily track more complicated statistics from home on Oneir.

"I was concerned that opening up a second location would be too much work; put too many demands on my body going back and forth. But what's really nice about Oneir Solutions is that I can log in from home and take care of everything," says Pace. "I can access the Accounts Receivable data, for instance, and see what each of our customers has bought. That CRM (customer relationship

management) Sales Analysis tool is something new that Oneir Solutions has added to what Vigilant could do - and that's proving very profitable too."

Like Vigilant did, Oneir Solutions also gives Decorators Choice stores General Ledger, Point of Sale, and Inventory Control systems. And while Pace has high praise for the support she receives from Oneir Solutions, she's had no reason to call them for any problems with their Oneir Solutions setup in more than 10 months of operation.

"What Oneir provides is a very sophisticated business solution but one that keeps its complexities in the background," concludes Giggal. "We have designed a high level analytical tool that's easy to use. With it, customers don't need to think about the technology and can focus on the business opportunities and growth that fulfill their dreams."

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