

Poor marketing strategies lead to forgotten products

From page 24.

"I guess the consumer wants more," she said. "In the long run they (Nintendo) will probably sell a DVD with it."

Ms. Balboul said sales have revived recently since the company allowed their GameBoy — handheld video games — to be played on the Game Cube.

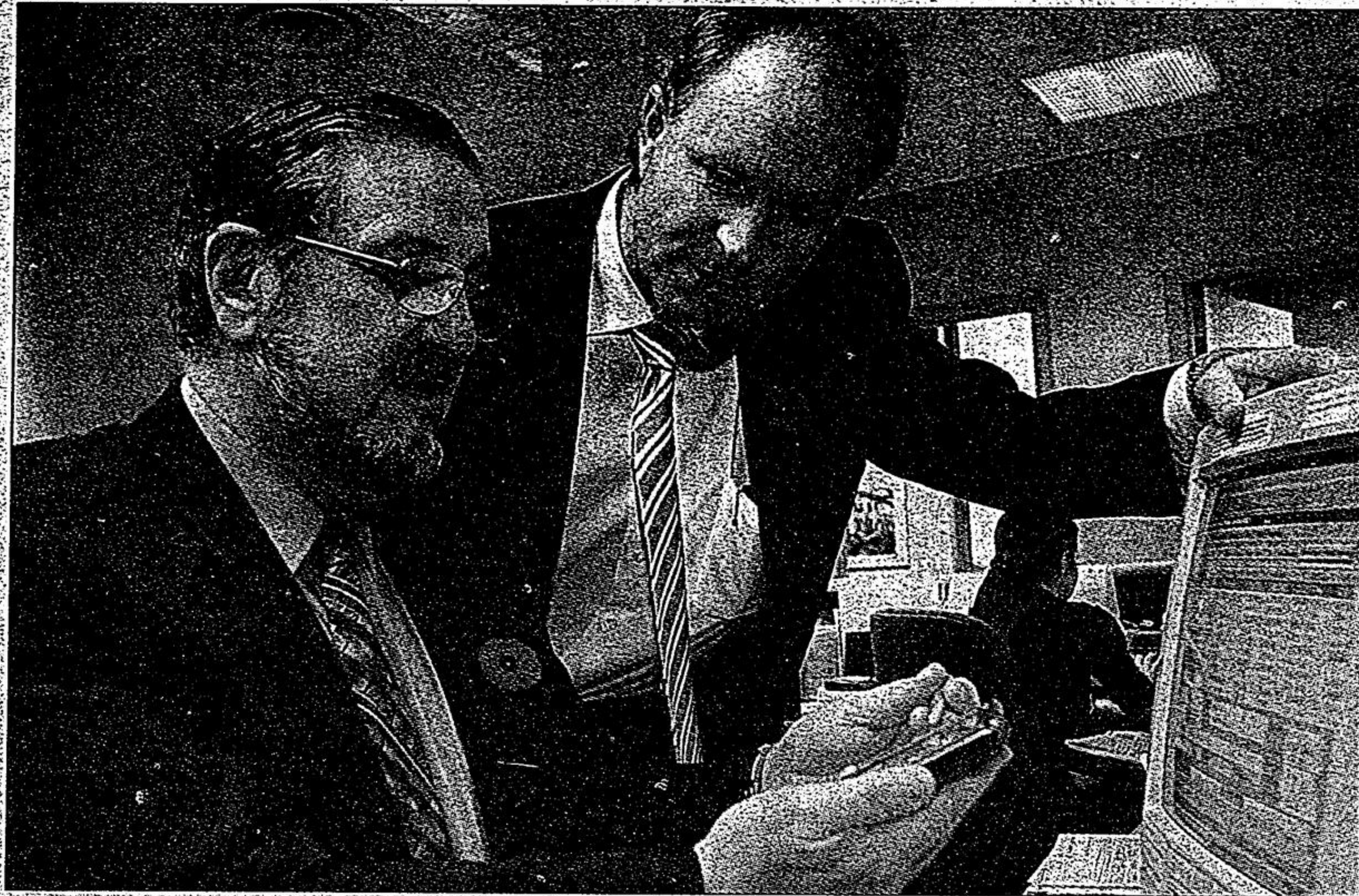
Many devices and applications end up forgotten because of poor marketing strategies, according to Keith Thirgood, creative director at Markham's Capstone Communication Group.

"A smart marketer will sell the value and won't hype (a product) up. When you oversell yourself, you do yourself in."

"Certainly, with a lot of software, they over-promise and under-deliver," he said. "They attract people with the (promise) of ease, of simplicity."

When consumers discover a product isn't as easy to use as promised, he said, they end up setting it aside.

While such a strategy might end up selling a lot of the product, the second time around, consumers



STAFF PHOTO/STEVE SOMERVILLE

Tony Pamment and Chris Paterson use technology in their jobs in real estate. Mr. Pamment is known as the computer guy in his office.

won't buy. Even worse, he said, is word of mouth among users can kill a product if it doesn't deliver what it promised.

Even with splashy ads and brochures, if the "early adopters," i.e. techno geeks, don't create a buzz about a product, the general popu-

lation won't want to use it.

Palm pilots are an example of a technology that has taken off.

"It works and functions well," he said.

It's best to under-promise and over-deliver, Mr. Thirgood said.

"When the consumer gets the

product, they say, 'Wow!'," he said.

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Mr. Thirgood said cell phones that take pictures may not take off.

"I don't know what might hap-

pen with those," he said. "They might catch on with the younger (generation), not the older."

Even in low-tech industries, such as gardening, sometimes technology doesn't deliver on its promises.

All a high-tech scarecrow has managed to do is scare away buyers so far, said Dave McFadden, manager at Maple Garden Centre, although sales have picked up recently.

The tool, which uses a water device and motion detector to scare away animals, hasn't sold well.

"(Those) things aren't flying out the door," he said.

Even natural and biological products, designed for pest control, never really took off.

"Eight to 10 years ago, everyone was talking about safer products and not using chemicals," he said.

"That whole product line didn't go great."

Part of the problem is people want chemicals that have an instant effect and can be seen working, he said.

Care needs to be taken in choosing equipment, Mr. Pamment added.

Don't buy too early or too late. If you buy too early, you could be paying too much and if you buy too late, the equipment could be on the verge of being obsolete.

Same thing applies to second-hand equipment.

"It (could be) out of date," he said. "That's why they're selling it."

Use lawnmower to cut leaves, then spread on soil

From page 24.

take this precious cargo to a compost yard, where it is chopped and piled to naturally decompose.

Next spring, when you're working in your garden and realize you need some compost to boost your soil, you can go to the same compost yard where they will be happy to sell your leaves back to you for \$5 or more per bag.

Personally, I'd rather spend all this money on new plants.

Instead of bagging leaves this fall, put them right where they were

intended to go, in your garden to feed the soil, which will, in turn, feed your plants.

All you need to do is speed along the decomposition process a bit by chopping leaves to make an attractive and highly nutritious mulch.

When most of the leaves have fallen, rake them into a huge pile in the middle of your yard and go at it with your lawn-mower.

Move along in circles, working in from the outside edges, aiming the exit hole of your lawnmower to the inside of the pile so the chopped leaves remain in a pile and are

chopped ever finer with each pass.

Most people think they have too many leaves for their garden to consume, but you'll be amazed at the small mound that remains when you're done. From personal experience, I know a pile of 40 or more bags is reduced to just a small pile that would fill maybe two or three bags.

Spread the resulting rich and attractive material in a two-inch blanket over your soil and around your plants.

If you have enough, also spread a very fine layer over your lawn. This is all you need to do for the entire

year to keep your plants well fed and other than the cost of a tank of gas for the lawn mower, this gardener's gold didn't cost you a cent.

Making sure your garden soil always has a fresh supply of organic material is, perhaps, the most important thing you can do in a garden to ensure long-term success.

The organic material portion of the triple-mix your garden started with a few years ago is consumed by now and without an annual replenishment, there is no food for worms or the millions of other smaller micro-organisms that are an essen-

tial part of the amazing underground chain reaction that is a soil's own eco-system.

Plant life feeds on the nutrients that result from all of this busy underground activity.

Think of the microscopic forms of animal and insect life underground as your much-beloved pets and garden allies that help your garden thrive.

Evelyn Wolf is a local gardening expert and owner of Garden Possibilities Bookstore in Newmarket. She welcomes questions and comments at newsroom@erabanner.com



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