

B & L NEWS

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Enterprise Software for Metalcasters

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B&L Information Systems Revolutionizes Metalcasting ERP Software with Odyssey Software as a Service

by Matt Gacek, Manager, Sales & Marketing

After a year of research as well as interviews with customers and hardware vendors, B&L is proud to announce our newest product, **Odyssey Software as a Service**, otherwise known as Odyssey SaaS.

What is Odyssey SaaS?

Odyssey SaaS is the exact same software that many of North America's top metalcasters use. What makes Odyssey SaaS different is that the Odyssey software is provided via the internet to end-users. In addition, the cost of hardware and the infrastructure that hosts the software, as well as all maintenance and support services is included in a low monthly, per user, subscription fee.

Why did B&L develop Odyssey SaaS?

Two reasons: (1) Odyssey SaaS is much easier on a metalcaster's cash flow; with Odyssey SaaS, the large upfront fees typically required are eliminated. (2) Odyssey SaaS allows you to focus on your core competency of running your facility and achieving your key business objectives, rather than implementing and maintaining hardware, software, and other internal system issues.

What are some of the advantages of Odyssey SaaS?

- 1. Anytime, anywhere access** – Running Odyssey SaaS only requires access to a browser with a high-speed internet connection.
- 2. Subscription basis** – You pay for Odyssey and all hardware and software support on a monthly

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Congratulations to the Implementers

by Phil Laney, B&L President

B&L's mission statement reads "...to develop, market, implement and support software of the highest quality to the foundry and die casting industries."

These four functions are equally important, in their own unique way, to the success of any software company. This article is about the implementation aspect of our mission. I would like to thank and congratulate all our employees that contributed to the implementations executed in 2008. You might think that would only cover team members in the client services department, but it actually applies to individuals in every department at B&L, from sales to R&D to administration. Yes, client services does most of the "heavy lifting" on these implementation projects, but others contribute as well, especially the R&D group. Congratulations goes out to our customers as well. Customer staff spends many hours learning about B&L software products and how to best apply them to their operations. The bottom line: It is no small task implementing a company-wide ERP system; in fact it's one of the most challenging tasks a business can undertake. You all did an absolutely fantastic job. I'm proud to work with such great associates and serve a great customer set.

Thank you and congratulations.

2008 Implementations

Richmond Industries, Inc.
Cast Specialties, Inc.

Dayton, NJ
Warrensville Heights, OH

continued page 2

CONGRATULATIONS

Littlestown Foundry, Inc., Littlestown, PA, received ISO9001:2000 certification

Odyssey Software continued

subscription basis. There are no upfront software purchase fees!

- 3. Cost Effective** – Odyssey SaaS does not require large systems expenditures for servers, server installation, or other hardware and software. You do not have to hire an IT staff (or an IT Service Provider) to perform many of the tasks associated with in-house systems. B&L Information Systems and their Managed Service Provider, Gramtel, Inc., take care of all system upgrades, maintenance, backups, storage, disaster recovery and security.
- 4. Easy to Maintain** – There are no additional maintenance costs and no maintenance upgrades for you to install. Odyssey is upgraded as needed with no effort on your part.
- 5. Automatic, off-site backups** – We all know you should backup your data on a regular basis; however, this is seldom done. B&L and Gramtel will perform your backup on a daily basis and store the backup in a secure, remote datacenter.
- 6. Secure** – Odyssey is hosted offsite in a limited access facility. With Odyssey SaaS, you will enjoy the same facilities, same level of mission critical security and privacy as those employed in the financial, healthcare, and legal industries. As mentioned, frequent backups of your data are automatically performed at the off-site facility.

So, what are the differences between the traditional approach to Odyssey and Odyssey SaaS?

Odyssey - Traditional	Odyssey - SaaS
You pay the entire costs upfront when you acquire Odyssey.	You pay the monthly Odyssey subscription fee.
You are responsible for installing and setting up Odyssey.	Odyssey is installed and set up for you.
You are responsible for backup of your data and Odyssey. You are also responsible for making sure a copy of the backups is kept off-site and for disaster recovery.	Your data and Odyssey are automatically backed up on a regular basis.
Technical support is limited.	Technical support is included in the subscription price.

Odyssey SaaS is not for everyone. Some metalcasters have the needed IT infrastructure in place. For those customers, we offer the traditional software licensing model or the self-hosted SaaS model. The self hosted SaaS model allows you to pay the low monthly fee based on per user. You provide the infrastructure and the needed expertise.

Watch for our Odyssey SaaS webinars coming in February. To sign up for a webinar, go to www.blinfo.com/pwebinars.htm. If you would like to find out more about Odyssey SaaS, contact the Sales Department at info@blinfo.com or (269)465-6207.

Implementers continued

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|------------------|
| Little Diecast Corp. | Albany, IN |
| International Truck & Engine | Waukesha, WI |
| MetalTek Intl., Southern Centrifugal | Chattanooga, TN |
| Plymouth Foundry, Inc. | Plymouth, IN |
| Boose Aluminum Foundry Co., Inc. | Reamstown, PA |
| Southern Cast Products, Inc. | Meridian, MS |
| Bradken – Atlas | Tacoma, WA |
| Northern Iron & Machine, LLC | St. Paul, MN |
| The Buck Company, Inc. | Quarryville, PA |
| Cast Technologies, Inc. | Peoria, IL |
| Jensen International | Coffeyville, KS |
| Non-Ferrous Cast Alloys, Inc. | Muskegon, MI |
| Sivyer Steel Corporation | Bettendorf, IA |
| Tri-State Cast Technologies Co., Inc. | Boyerne City, MI |

Now it's on to 2009; we have several projects underway and look forward to helping more companies plan more effectively, control costs and boost profits with their B&L software implementation. ■



We are happy to announce that **Spectrum '09** will be held on September 27-29, 2009, at The Westin North River in Chicago, Illinois. The Westin is centrally located in the heart of the business and theatre districts, and is within walking distance of Michigan Avenue, Millenium Park, restaurants, and shopping.

Mark your calendar and watch for details!



Dear Brenda

Brenda Povlock, Manager, Client Services

Encore Column by Brenda Povlock from the October 05 issue of B&L News

BLIS-400

Dear Brenda,

We are considering having someone come in and create user menus. I really don't like the idea, but my boss is pushing me to do something because "some" people are complaining about having to go to 3 or 4 menus just to do the "three" things that are required of them on the computer. Heaven forbid if it takes them an extra three seconds to go to three different menus. Do you have any other suggestions besides doing a special menu for each person? Please Help!!!

On The Edge

Dear On The Edge,

Don't lose it just yet; there is a solution to your problems and no modifications are involved! The answer is "Burl" or technically BRL. It stands for BLIS Report Launcher and it can be used as a user menu. All BLIS reports, except for special forms and reports of pending transactions (e.g., P/S Entry Edit and Physical Inventory Tags), can be selected. You can also run queries and go to entry type screens using the menu command. Each person can have a "favorites" view so they can view only the items they use. Each user-defined program can have its own authority through the BLIS Security Level screen; therefore, the user-defined reports act like standard BLIS reports. Once it's set up, the user signs on and types BRL on the command line and "favorites" automatically come up on the screen. Don't worry, even if the user has limited capabilities on his user profile, he will still be able to use the BRL command. Following are a few steps you can try to get started, but there is too much information to put it all in this letter. You can go to the BLIS

documentation book called Other (Book# 16), or call your consultant for more information.

Getting started:

- ◆ Take option 8 off the BLIS main menu to go to the documentation menu (BLM020) and take option 9.
 - Note:** If you have never been in this option before, what you will see are all of the BLIS reports; if you have and you have put reports in favorites, then the favorites menu will come up.
- ◆ Search for any BLIS report using a key word or a description of the document.
- ◆ When you find the report you're looking for, highlight it and click the Add to Favorites button or type a plus code 9 in front of it and it will be added to your favorites.
 - Note:** Don't worry if you add something to favorites you didn't want, you will be able to delete it from your favorites menu.
- ◆ Now, click cancel or press F3 until you are back to a menu. On a command line type BRL and press enter. What you will see are the reports you added to your favorites.
- ◆ To run the report from here, highlight it and click Launch or type a plus code 1 in front of it. The prompt screen for the report will come up; fill in the prompts and click OK or press enter and you've just sent off your report to the printer.
 - Note:** You could have launched from the reports view also.
- ◆ Using option 10, you can create user defined options that can be available to users.
 - You have 3 command lines, which can be used to enter RUNQRY commands, the menu command, or any IBM command.
 - The naming convention must always have @ in the 3rd character. So, when you press F9 it will default @ in the third character; just type a name for the option that you are creating. For instance, I created MA@ORDINQ with Order Inquiry for the description. I entered MENU MAM210 2 on the command line in this user defined option, and when I launch it from my favorites menu it will take me to the order inquiry prompt screen. Because I created the name with MA as the first 2 characters, anyone with MA security could run this option. Call your consultant for more information on how to use BRL!

Odyssey

Dear Brenda,

I had to void several Accounts Payable checks because they were paid in the wrong period. I want to pay them now, but I can't find them. When I voided them I took the option to "Void Check and Remove Invoice" because I wasn't sure which option to take. What happened to my invoices and how do I get them back?

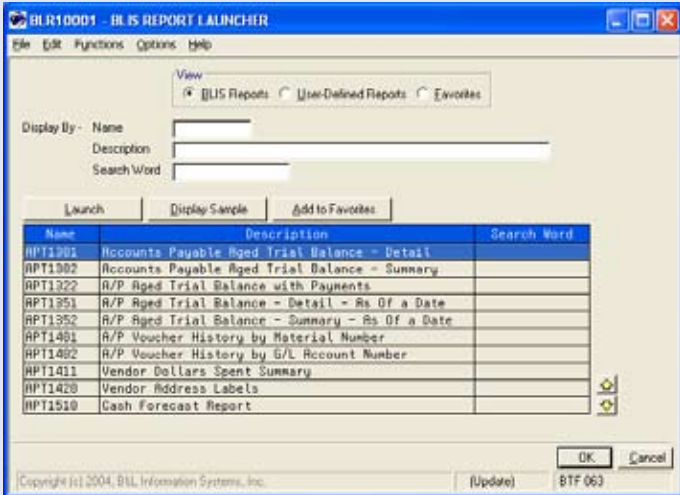
Panicky in Toledo

Dear Panicky,

There is no need to panic; all you will need to do is put the invoices back into the AP Invoice Entry option as if they were new invoices. Then you can go through the payment selection again and pay those invoices. Let me explain the two options for voiding a check. If you have a check that you want to void and you will be paying the invoice on a future date, then you should take the option to "Void Check for Reissue," this will void the check and leave the invoice in the system for payment at another time. If the invoice will not be paid on a future date and you want the invoice to be deleted, then you will want to take the option to "Void Check and Remove Invoice," which will reverse the check and remove the AP Invoice from the system. ■

Crystal Report Tip!

When you start using Crystal 10 with Odyssey, you may want to make sure your File---> Options --> Database tab has the 'Database server is Case-insensitive' checked because most Progress data is not case-sensitive. If you don't check it, then entering something like companyid = "odsy" instead of "ODSY" may result in no records being returned.





R&D DEVELOPMENTS

Doug Hinman, Manager, R&D

B&L is still very busy, even with the current state of the economy. The R&D department has always been busy, even in the worst economic times we've experienced. Enhancement requests for both of our products – Odyssey and BLIS – remain steady and constant. If requests ever do slow down, we would simply shift our time to increase the research side of R&D (developers secretly hope for this because research is more fun).

Something we have seen during economic slowdowns is foundries and die casters put their part costs under the microscope. The effect is we see increased enhancement requests for the Costing modules. Conversely, during upturns we see increased requests for the Production Scheduling module. As far as costing, both BLIS and Odyssey include extensive cost tracking and analysis features. These are centered on the Job Cost and Efficiency areas and the Odyssey Margin Analysis feature. You can do further ad hoc analysis by exporting cost data to spreadsheets. Odyssey has single click exports available from the toolbar of cost-related screens, and BLIS allows creating an output file (for

later download) from the cost efficiency reports. The specific calculations for part manufacturing cost have remained the same for many years. These were developed by our founder, Dick Laney, whose background is accounting and finance. The calculations are obviously proven because of their longevity and adoption by hundreds of metalcasters.

Do enhancement requests provide cost savings for your company? Almost all do, but they are not usually looked at or judged in that direct light. They emerge because of reasons like ease-of-use, added functionality, better data availability, etc. Some that do not reduce costs are simply requirements like Federal regulations or EDI trading partner mandates. Luckily, these are the minority.

The latest trend in information technology (IT) is Software as a Service (SaaS). SaaS actually does reduce your costs in the IT area. You basically rent the software and access it via the internet where it is stored at a secure server farm known as a Managed Service Provider (MSP). You no longer need internal IT infrastructure to still benefit from all the features available in Odyssey. We have a relationship with an MSP in South Bend, IN, who has redundant backups in other locations in the Midwest. This MSP features backup power, fire suppression, redundant internet connections and more. The adoption of SaaS has started slowly but is now gaining acceptance. It's simply something new that needs explanation. We'd be glad to tell you what it is all about. ■

Schedule of Events

Date	Event	City,State
Feb. 7 & 8	Wisconsin Regional AFS • Conference & Mini-Expo	Milwaukee, WI
Apr. 7-10	113th Metalcasting Congress	Las Vegas, NV
Oct. 11-14	Non-Ferrous Founder's Society Annual Meeting	Henderson, NV
Oct. 11-14	ICI 56th Technical Conference and Expo	Indianapolis, IN

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