



B&L NEWS

APRIL 2022 | VOL. 32 | NO. 2

ENTERPRISE RESOURCE PLANNING FOR METALCASTERS

IN THIS ISSUE

1

Spectrum 2022
CEO's Corner

2

Q2 Classes
Nick's Promotion
Q1 Go Lives
Q1 Signings

3

Farewell to
Windows UI
Customer Spotlight
Economic Impact
Award

4

Upcoming
Webinars

Editor:
Shelby Lentz
Phone:
269.465.6207

Website:
www.BLInfo.com



Spectrum 2022 Live and In Person

Kristine Craft, Vice President – Professional Services & Support

The B&L staff is excited to announce this year's Spectrum 2022 users' conference! It will be held at the beautiful MGM Grand Detroit beginning on Sunday evening, September 25th through Tuesday afternoon, September 27th. Spectrum is a user conference like no other. It is the largest gathering of metalcasters using the Odyssey ERP software.

Spectrum offers two full days of mini-classes and networking opportunities. Learn about the new features and enhancements being deployed in Odyssey. Take time to discover what metalcasters are facing in a post-pandemic environment.

Every attendee and their guest are invited to a Sunday night Welcome Reception to enjoy great music, food, drinks and possibly, some "friendly competition". This is the time to socialize with other customers and the wonderful B&L team. There will be fun activities for everyone!

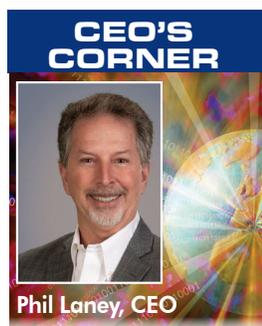
The MGM Grand Detroit has beautiful hotel rooms that have received both AAA Four Diamond and Forbes Four-Star awards. The hotel and casino are located in the newly revitalized downtown area of this vibrant, progressive and charming city.

Early registration will begin on April 18th at \$745 per person.



When groups of three or more register from the same company at the same time, a \$75 per person discount will be applied.

Please stay tuned, additional details will be shared with our customers soon by visiting www.blinfo.com and going to the Events page.



Phil Laney, CEO

People, Process & Product

Marcus Lemonis has a reality show on CNBC called The Profit. A business philosophy he invokes is People, Process & Products. I was pondering this relative to B&L Information Systems and would like to share my thoughts.

1. **People** – B&L staff eats, drinks & sleeps metalcasting ERP software. Our team is a

blend of senior and young professionals, with our average length of service at 9.5 years. It is their intelligence, technical savvy and dedication that creates and continuously improves our processes and products.

2. **Process** – In all departments across the organization, process is emphasized. Most customers initial exposure to B&L's disciplined processes is the implementation project. Decades of experience and fine-tuning have enabled B&L to share best practices and results oriented steps to support an ERP implementation that is on-time and on-budget. Our Support team methodically handles customer service with a process-centric ticketing system. R&D uses the Angular

framework and Agile development principles to delivery high quality software solutions.

3. **Product** – The Odyssey ERP system is the leading solution for metalcasting operations. Web enabled and cloud based, Odyssey has built-in features designed for foundries, die casters and investment casters that other generic ERP systems, and even some metalcasting systems, would require work arounds or 3rd party integration. Simply put, it's the finest metalcasting ERP software in the world.

Nevertheless, it all starts with people. Our team members are at the heart of everything we do for our customers.

Thank you for your business,

Phil

Will we see you at Q2 classes?

Bootcamp
May 9-10, 2022

Crystal Reports
May 11-12, 2022

Inventory
June 7, 2022

Scheduling
June 8, 2022

Classes will be held both in person, at our new training facility, and virtually. Please see our website for full details. (BLInfo.com/Classes)

Staff Promotions



We are pleased to announce the promotion of Nick Goodman to Controller - Administration. As stated by Phil Laney, "Nick Goodman joined B&L in 2020 and has quickly adapted to the SaaS ERP software model we employ here at B&L. We're excited about his promotion to the Controller position in that he brings a business process focus to his work

with great attention to detail. Holding prior positions in the manufacturing space enables Nick to understand our customers businesses as well. We look forward to Nick's fresh perspective balanced with a disciplined approach to accounting and administration. Congratulations Nick!"

Nick Goodman is an Alma College graduate with a bachelor's degree in Finance. He received his MBA from Northwood University in 2018. Nick started his professional career in recruiting before moving into a cost accountant role at a pontoon boat manufacturer. Outside of work, he enjoys spending time with his wife and dogs.

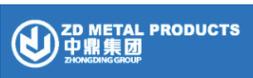
Odyssey Go-Lives

The following three companies went live with new installations of Odyssey ERP in the 1st quarter of 2022:

- **Blue Ridge Pressure Castings Inc. of Lehighton, PA.** Blue Ridge Pressure Castings has become the go-to expert for clients with challenging aluminum parts and components for over 60 years. In addition to world class production and delivery, Blue Ridge also offers all the in-house services to complement their manufacturing production including engineering, prototyping, tooling, casting, and more.
- **Grede – St. Cloud of St. Cloud, MN.** Over a century ago, Grede opened as a single foundry in Wauwatosa, Wisconsin, and today leads the industry with 10 facilities across America and 3,800 team members, each an artist of their trade. As the industry's premier ductile, gray and specialty iron casting provider, they proudly design, engineer, validate and manufacture safety-critical components for their partners across automotive, industrial, and commercial trucking markets.
- **Liberty Technologies of Delaware, OH.** Liberty Casting is an American Cast Iron Foundry carrying a long history of producing high-quality gray and ductile iron castings. Customers are their driving force, and as the manufacturing industry faces significant pressure to meet the ever-changing demands in today's global economy, Liberty Casting is here for their customers. Their facilities are equipped with state-of-the-art manufacturing equipment as well as computerized process control systems. These processes allow them to provide their customers with continued high-quality, cost-effective iron castings.

Signings

During the January – March 2022 timeframe, new metalcasting companies signing to the Cloud-based Odyssey ERP software system included:



- **ZD Metal Products of Petoskey, MI.** ZD specializes in light-weight castings for the automotive, agricultural, recreational, and commercial industries. Their customers include OEM and several large Tier 1 automotive suppliers, as well as off highway, material handling, electronics, sports equipment, and other industrial companies – both domestic and international.



- **Spectro Alloys Corporation of Rosemount, MN.** Founded in 1973, Spectro uses industry leading technology to turn what's used into what's new by recycling aluminum for regional die casters and foundries. The recycled material is then made into new products people use every day in the

automotive, power sports, home, turf and snow maintenance, and many other industries.



- **AmeriTi Manufacturing of Detroit, MI.** AmeriTi's business consists of utilizing recycled materials to produce titanium metallurgical products for use by the producers of titanium, steel, stainless steel, aluminum, and powder metallurgy products. AmeriTi is also a producer of titanium metal parts for use in firearms, medical instruments, tools, recreation, and a variety of other industries.

- **ARISTO CAST • Aristo Cast, Inc. of Almont, MI.** The Aristo-Cast INVESTMENT CASTING team can provide you with your product in any state that you choose. From raw castings to complete to print including machining, heat treating, coating, assembly, and packaging if you choose. This team brings not only the experience to provide you with unsurpassed quality and service but a can-do attitude for all projects they undertake.

ODYSSEY UPDATE



**Brad Clark, Manager
Research & Development**

Goodbye to Windows UI

Goodbye, Dear Friend.

In 2022, B&L will give a fond farewell to the Windows UI. First released in late 2001, Odyssey Windows UI faithfully served B&L's customers for 21 years. Odyssey brought B&L from the world of iSeries mainframe RPG code to Microsoft Windows and the Progress RDBMS. Based on traditional Windows applications, Odyssey's user interface didn't change much over the years. Tweaks to the look and feel were made, but the bulk of the enhancements to Odyssey were core foundational enhancements.

In 2009, B&L realized the software world was moving to the cloud. Our first iteration of the cloud was to host Odyssey through Microsoft's Remote Desktop Protocol (RDP). This was a good start, but it was not where we needed to be. In 2010, a new project was kicked off to re-envision Odyssey running through the web, and in 2016, Odyssey Web UI went live. Running exclusively in a web browser, the Odyssey Web UI marked a dramatic change in how B&L delivered applications to customers. B&L could now offer customers a high-performing web-based, zero-client solution.

As with all technology, there comes a time to move forward. New customers were exclusively running the Web UI; most knew nothing about a Windows version. New enhancements were only added to the Web UI. Although we continued to fully support both user interfaces, the writing was on the wall with the success of the Odyssey Web UI. B&L also needed to move forward with our technology. The framework used to accelerate the Web UI development in 2009 was long in the tooth and needed to be updated. In 2020, Odyssey's internal framework dramatically changed to be API-based using the modern Angular framework. Over subsequent releases, pieces and components of Odyssey's innards were revamped and overhauled, positioning Odyssey for a bright future.

Odyssey 6.4.0 is a major milestone for B&L. It not only marks the end of the Windows era, but it sets Odyssey on a future-proofing path. With a powerful Progress RDBMS backend, a modern API-based framework, Odyssey will be able to better evolve and adapt to new technologies. There is still much work to be done. The transition from the old framework to the new framework will encompass many releases because B&L still needs to provide our customers with new and powerful metalcasting-based core enhancements. Over the next several releases, you will see an evolution to an updated look and feel to Odyssey. The screens will no longer look like Windows in a browser; Odyssey will look like a modern web application. You will see enhancements to our API, such as the ability to receive purchase orders through a single API call. The maintenance management module will be enhanced to include asset management. We will be adding more urgent notes to Odyssey. The tool order system will be updated with a customer-requested tool sample enhancement. The Shop Floor Manager will go through a User Interface and User Experience (UI/UX) overhaul where we will add simplified ways for your plant personnel to report production. We are also laying the foundation for Odyssey BI, an updated version of Data Explorer, to allow you to create dashboards of data more easily within Odyssey.

With all that is happening in the marketplace and the world, Odyssey's future remains bright. We continue to add core enhancements to help all our customers run their businesses better and faster. Our technology improvements will position us for long-term sustainable growth. It is sad to see the Windows UI go away, but in its place is an improved and robust system that will take B&L and its customers into the future.

Brad Clark
Vice President – Research and Development



Wisconsin Aluminum Foundry Expands to Crookston, MN

Congratulations to Wisconsin Aluminum Foundry on their recent acquisition of DEE, Inc. in Crookston, MN.

The acquisition will expand WAF's current operations, increase capacity and will reportedly add 30 new jobs at the Crookston location as production grows.

Upcoming B&L Webinars

Personalize Screens within Odyssey

May 18, 2022

API Overview

May 25, 2022

Pricing Part 1

June 22, 2022

Pricing Part 2

June 29, 2022

Webinars are hosted through Microsoft Teams. Please see our website for full details. (<https://www.blinfo.com/services/educational/webinars/>)



B&L Information Systems, Inc.
4707 Rambo Rd.
Bridgman, MI 49106-9723

Phone: 269.465.6207
www.BLInfo.com



B&L Receives Economic Impact Award

The Southwest Michigan Regional Chamber Economic Impact Award recognizes a local enterprise that has made significant contributions to the economic vitality of the region through business growth, job creation, investment in infrastructure, and participation in other endeavors that benefit that community and its residents. The company must also exemplify excellent corporate citizenship by giving back to the community in which it operates and possess a corporate culture that enhances the lives of its employees. Other qualifications for the award include: resiliency through hardship, a positive and inclusive company culture, reputable customer service, and dedication to community service.

B&L was selected for this award due for many key factors including: their overall growth in recent years, even during the pandemic; keeping their dollars locally led by using local contractors during their company expansion; doubling their office space, increasing staff; and their contributions to local organizations.

“This award is public recognition of the phenomenal job B&L employees have delivered in recent years. B&L has increased all key areas of the business including sales, total customers, employees and facilities. And all this growth occurred during a global pandemic and the building of a new facility,” noted Philip Laney – CEO of B&L Information Systems. “It’s our intelligent, dedicated and resourceful employees, along with our dedicated customer base, that makes B&L the great company it is. I humbly accept this award on behalf of all our employees. Thank you.”