

# B & L NEWS

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Enterprise Software for Metalcasters

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## B&L Reveals New Odyssey Supplier Portal Module!

Your supply chain is absolutely critical to your success. You run out of pouring sleeves, you have a problem. Castings not machined or painted properly, you have a problem. Inevitably, too many of these problems leads to dissatisfied customers. Dissatisfied customers are not good for your long-term business.

So how do most metalcasters manage their supply chain? Phone calls, e-mails, faxes, and just about every other source of communication known to man. The results? A disjointed, inconsistent effort that is very expensive to manage. Various studies have shown that office head counts are increased by up to 35% just to manage the supplier chain!

How to fix this problem is pretty simple; you need a way to convey schedules, shipping information, inventory quantities, requisitions, quotes, purchase orders, information that is in Odyssey to your supplier. This is why the Odyssey Supplier Portal came into existence. The Odyssey Supplier Portal opens up the information in Odyssey and allows your supplier and you to share information in a secured environment. What information to share? How about:

### For Material Suppliers

- Viewing new or changed purchase orders for the supplier and printing the actual purchase order. The new or changed purchase orders can either be accepted or rejected by the supplier. This action (accept/reject) updates the purchase order in Odyssey with the status.
- A/P invoices from the supplier to you can be displayed.



**Matt Gacek**  
Vice President -  
Business  
Development



## All About the Cloud

I recently attended a conference called "All About The Cloud" with Joe Harmon, B&L's VP of Technology. As the title indicates, the conference focus was on cloud computing, with particular emphasis on enterprise software migration to the cloud. What's the Cloud? Definitions abound. Simply put, it's deploying software on servers other than your own on-premise hardware and accessing it through an internet connection. There are public clouds, e.g., Amazon, Microsoft, IBM, where you "rent" resources and let the provider handle where your data resides. And there are private clouds, where you can rent specific hardware in a specific location, or NOC (Network Operations Center). Both flavors are realizing tremendous growth, and it's by far the fastest growing segment of the software industry. The most dominant method small-medium businesses are using to get into the cloud is subscribing to a SaaS (Software as a Service) offering. Following are some key quotes from the conference (note: I can provide sources for all these quotes, just give me a call or e-mail) – "By 2014, 65% of companies with < 100 employees will deploy their business applications in the Cloud." "At Intuit (think QuickBooks) in 2010, 60% of our sales were SaaS, 40% on-premise." "The business manager is the one buying cloud, not IT. The business manager understands the inherent value of a cloud application. IT sees it as a way to lose control or worse, to lose their job." "IBM and Microsoft are going after the Cloud in a huge way. Setting up huge NOC's, offering public or private options, and partnering to offer complete development and deployment options in the cloud. Why does this matter? It is solid confirmation that the Cloud is here to stay and will become mainstream."

If you'd like to explore your cloud options with B&L, give us a call. ■



**Phil Laney**  
President  
& CEO

Continued, page 2

## B&L Welcomes New Clients

**Kotobuki-Reliable Die Casting, Inc.**  
Xenia, OH  
Odyssey

**Kirsh Foundry, Inc.**  
Beaver Dam, WI  
Odyssey

**Custom Aluminum Foundry Ltd.**  
Cambridge, ON  
Odyssey

**Smith Foundry Co.**  
Minneapolis, MN  
Odyssey

Supplier Portal, Continued from page 1

- All materials supplied to you by the supplier can be displayed.
- New quote pricing can be entered by the supplier and submitted to you via the portal. When the supplier submits the new quote, you can optionally be notified via an email.
- Allow the supplier to view inventories, activity, and upcoming demand as well as replenish stocking levels by creating requisitions.
- Shipments against open purchase order releases can be created by the supplier.

**For Service Suppliers**

An outside supplier can do most of the options described above for the material supplier plus:



- The service supplier can view and/or print product information such as process specification or images associated with the outside service
- Inventory at the supplier can also be adjusted or scrapped as required
- Outside shipments to your suppliers can be viewed and received by your suppliers
- Shipping – Using the shipping options within the Supplier Portal will allow for better communication between you and your outside suppliers as to when a shipment is made and what is included in the shipment.

The Supplier Portal is a browser-based product. This means your supplier simply needs an internet connection and a browser (including Internet Explorer, Chrome, Safari or Firefox) to access the portal. Supplier Portal licenses can be purchased individually and utilize the named user convention. If you have questions, please contact B&L's Business Development group. ■

In last month's article I discussed the new "Intelligent Views" and "Supplier Portal" products' release and the "Odyssey UI" rewrite that is currently underway. In this article I would like to discuss some challenges with integrating the new User Interface and tying it to existing Odyssey backend code and what we did to handle the challenge.

When integrating different platforms, Odyssey Web UI verses Odyssey backend in our case, you begin to share existing and new code between the two products.

The challenge is when changes are made in one of the products, the other is affected as well. This means that every time we release a maintenance release to Odyssey, we also have to update the Intelligent Views, Supplier Portal, and new Odyssey Web UI too.

So we created a utility program that will detect when new maintenance releases are installed onto your Odyssey system, named Odyssey updater. It will check

**On The Horizon**

Joe Harmon  
Vice President — Technology



B&L's update servers and see if your web interfaces need to be updated. If so, the system will automatically go out and download the compressed version of the web maintenance release and update the required web programs.

Once the update is complete, you will be prompted to log into the newly updated application.



For those who do not have the new Intelligent Views installed, please contact support to arrange an installation. It is strongly suggested to be at 4.3 Maintenance Release 7 or higher before installing. ■



**R&D DEVELOPMENTS**

Doug Hinman  
Vice President — Research & Development

Release 4.4 of Odyssey is currently scheduled for September 1st. Release 4.3 changed the versions of both Progress and Crystal Reports, making upgrading from 4.2 fairly significant. Upgrading to 4.4 will be very straightforward from a technical perspective because the underlying technologies are the same as 4.3.

Major enhancements for serialization make up a large portion of release 4.4. We heard loud and clear from several clients the need for robust serial number tracking. The project to expand Odyssey's serialization ended up being even bigger than we anticipated at the start. It affects the very foundation of many modules; not just Quality, but Production Reporting, Outside Inventory, and Shipping. Plus, we needed to make sure you can still do everything you need to do for products that aren't serialized. Here are some of the enhancements to look for in 4.4:

- Pre-assign serial numbers to shop orders.
- System Configuration option to prevent reporting a routing step if that serial

- number has not been reported thru the prior step. Note that this feature was pre-released in 4.3.7.
- Report production for several non-consecutive serial numbers on a single transaction.
- See serial numbers available to job on to in the Shop Floor Manager.
- Job on and off one or more serial numbers in the Shop Floor Manager.
- A new "Find" filter in the Shop Floor Manager for serial numbers.
- The ability to enter serial numbers for parent products as well as the components absorbed when doing manual relief (52 transactions).
- System Configuration option that requires entering tracking data when shipping parts flagged to create lot tracking information (not necessarily serialized parts).
- Identify serial number in outside inventory when shipping and receiving parts. This includes receiving different part numbers.
- A new Outside Receiving Different Product option will make it easier to do outside receipts when a part went out as a component and came back as a parent (e.g., raw part out, painted part back; components out, assembly back).
- New Heat Treat operations. Identify Heat Treat types (cycles). Create Heat Treat batches with different parts in the batch (and by serial#). Shop Floor Manager options to start a batch and end a batch, which automatically creates production transactions for all parts in the batch. This allows both heat treat and quench.

Continued page 3

**CONGRATULATIONS to the following B&L customers who won awards in the AFS 2011 Casting Competition!**

**Castings of the Year**

Front Cab Support Bracket  
Lethbridge Iron Works Co., Ltd.  
Lethbridge, AB

Hybrid H40/50 EP System Stator Housing  
Eck Industries, Manitowoc, WI

**Best-In-Class**

Exhaust Manifold  
Stahl Specialty Co.  
Kingsville, MO

Timing Gear Cover  
Grede II LLC  
Columbiana, AL





# Dear Brenda

Brenda Povlock  
Vice President — Client Services

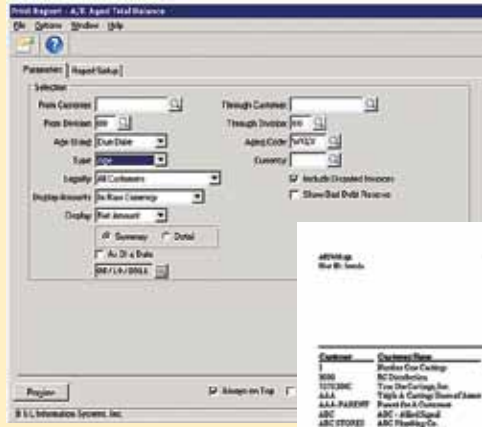


Screen Shot 1

## Odyssey

Dear Brenda,

We want to be able to run a report that will show us what customer invoices are coming due and also what supplier invoices will need to be paid each week for the next month. We are really trying to get a handle on our collections and debits and want a more detailed look than the usual 30, 60, 90 day aged trial balance report. Can you help me create a report?



Screen Shot 2

Atypical

Dear Atypical,

It's always a good thing to dig into the details because you never know what you'll find! There's actually a quicker way to get the information you're looking for, and the aged trial balance is exactly the report you need! What you can do is create an aging code with column headings of 0 (for past due), 7, 14, 21 & 28 (see screen shot 1). Then run either the A/R or A/P Aged Trial Balance Report. Make sure to select your new aging code in the prompt screen and age using Due Date (see screen shot 2). See the sample report screen shot 3 that shows how your report might look. ■

Screen Shot 3

Customer	Current	7	14	21	28	Over 28	Total
1001	1,000.00						1,000.00
1002	2,000.00						2,000.00
1003	3,000.00						3,000.00
1004	4,000.00						4,000.00
1005	5,000.00						5,000.00
1006	6,000.00						6,000.00
1007	7,000.00						7,000.00
1008	8,000.00						8,000.00
1009	9,000.00						9,000.00
1010	10,000.00						10,000.00
1011	11,000.00						11,000.00
1012	12,000.00						12,000.00
1013	13,000.00						13,000.00
1014	14,000.00						14,000.00
1015	15,000.00						15,000.00
1016	16,000.00						16,000.00
1017	17,000.00						17,000.00
1018	18,000.00						18,000.00
1019	19,000.00						19,000.00
1020	20,000.00						20,000.00
1021	21,000.00						21,000.00
1022	22,000.00						22,000.00
1023	23,000.00						23,000.00
1024	24,000.00						24,000.00
1025	25,000.00						25,000.00
1026	26,000.00						26,000.00
1027	27,000.00						27,000.00
1028	28,000.00						28,000.00
1029	29,000.00						29,000.00
1030	30,000.00						30,000.00
1031	31,000.00						31,000.00
1032	32,000.00						32,000.00
1033	33,000.00						33,000.00
1034	34,000.00						34,000.00
1035	35,000.00						35,000.00
1036	36,000.00						36,000.00
1037	37,000.00						37,000.00
1038	38,000.00						38,000.00
1039	39,000.00						39,000.00
1040	40,000.00						40,000.00
1041	41,000.00						41,000.00
1042	42,000.00						42,000.00
1043	43,000.00						43,000.00
1044	44,000.00						44,000.00
1045	45,000.00						45,000.00
1046	46,000.00						46,000.00
1047	47,000.00						47,000.00
1048	48,000.00						48,000.00
1049	49,000.00						49,000.00
1050	50,000.00						50,000.00

## BLIS-400

Dear Brenda,

We have many orders that have anywhere from 10 to 50 releases or more. It's very difficult sometimes to try and find a specific release or just scroll down to the bottom so I can add more. Do you have any tricks up your sleeve to make this easier? I've tried using Order Status as a substitute when searching for a specific release, but it doesn't help when I'm adding.

Labored & Crying in Michigan

Dear Labored & Crying,

We heard your cries and have come to the rescue. In release 7.2 there is now a new function key (F5) on the Customer Order Item screen that will toggle between showing 5 and 13 releases. It allows you to continue to view the Order/Item#, Product, UM and Customer Part Number. Try it out, I think you'll like it! ■

Release	Release Date	Release Status
1	5/26/11	200
2	5/27/11	200
3	5/28/11	200
4	5/29/11	200
5	5/30/11	200
6	5/31/11	200
7	6/1/11	200
8	6/2/11	200
9	6/3/11	200
10	6/4/11	200
11	6/5/11	200
12	6/6/11	200
13	6/7/11	200

## FREE CUSTOMER WEBINARS

To sign up for a webinar, go to B&L's online community.

**July 14** BLIS Internal Holds; Odyssey Crystal Tips and Tricks

**Aug. 11** BLIS Invoicing; Odyssey Accounts Payable Entry

**Sept. 15** BLIS Scrap Control; Odyssey Simple Cash Receipts

### R&D Developments, Continued from page 2

For BLIS, look for major changes to the Standard Cost module in release 7.3. We plan to ship 7.3 sometime in the fall. Standard Cost has always been an unforgiving module. It still is in the cost definition and production reporting areas, because there's really no way around that in order to get value added costs. But, running your monthly steps will now be more flexible and forgiving. There is a new date control file where you

tell BLIS month ending dates, when physical inventories will be taken, etc. We also keep the cost files for prior months so you can run reports for the current open period and any closed period. Another big advantage is the ability to reopen the prior period to include corrections and missing transactions. ■

# SPECTRUM '11 IS HEADIN' TO TEXAS!

**Spectrum '11** (B&L Information Systems' annual users conference) will be held at The Westin Riverwalk Hotel in San Antonio, Texas, on November 13th-15th.

Spectrum is B&L's premier educational event of the year and is the largest gathering of B&L software users in North America. It is also the only place where you will find mini-classes, annual release classes, several networking opportunities, and much more in one place. Every component of Spectrum is designed to increase the ROI on your investment in your B&L software even further. You will gain product knowledge, and learn best practices from your peers as well as the B&L staff.

Of course Spectrum would not be complete without a little fun, so we have some of that planned as well. In addition to our Sunday evening welcome dinner-reception, we have a great Monday evening event planned at the Enchanted Springs

Ranch in Boerne, Texas, where attendees will enjoy an authentic Texas BBQ meal, some wild west entertainment, and a few surprises. You won't want to miss it!

To register for Spectrum '11, make your hotel reservations, see a tentative agenda, or download a FAQ sheet, go to <http://www.blinfo.com/events.cfm>. If you have any questions, please contact **Sandy Warren at 269-465-6207, ext. 310**, or [swarren@blinfo.com](mailto:swarren@blinfo.com).

See you in San Antonio! ■



## Under Construction

Amber Layman  
Marketing Coordinator

In the coming months, B&L is undergoing a modern makeover. You asked for a more modern look that mimics the products and services you use in your everyday life; and we are answering. Our goal is to make it easier for you to locate the information you need and want faster. As we work on updating the look and feel of our newsletters, website, Facebook page, Print materials, and software, we wanted to give you a sneak peak at the direction of our creative process: ■



## Upcoming Events

Show/Event Name & Location	Date & Booth #
Die Casting Congress & Tabletop 2011 Columbus, OH	September 19-21 • Booth 202
ICI 58th Technical Conference & Equipment Show, Covington, KY	October 9-12 • Booth 127
NFFS Annual Meeting Amelia Island Plantation, FL	October 14-18
SPECTRUM '11 San Antonio, TX	November 13-15

**TRAINING** - There are recorded training videos available on-line at no charge to customers. For access to these videos you will need to sign up for the B&L Community. Contact [support@blinfo.com](mailto:support@blinfo.com) for assistance. For any other training needs, contact **Brenda Povlock at ext. 321**.

Crystal Reports Class  
is scheduled for August 23-24.

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