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Headline News

Best Software recently held its first annual company-wide business partner conference, Insights 2003 which took place in Orlando, Florida. The conference offered Best business partners in-depth training, product workshops, and networking sessions.

BusinessWorks Gold Version 4.0 was one of the main highlights of the conference and we will be featuring in-depth reviews of Version 4 and its new capabilities in the next issues of *info for BusinessWorks Gold.

Backing
Up Your
Data!

See page 4
for more info!

BusinessWorks Gold Job Cost

Capture Expenses and Maximize Profitability in All Projects

Every task you undertake in your business either costs you money, makes you money, or both. Consider a phone call from a customer. The expenses involved in that call include: the labor of the person answering the call, the cost of maintaining the phone line and equipment, the overhead costs of the office space where the call is answered, and so on. Revenue involved in such a call might be the value of the order they place. Tracking the revenue and expense involved in each daily task is of course excessive, if not impossible.

However, many of your business projects do lend themselves to such tracking, and the result is knowledge. The knowledge gathered can help you answer tough questions and make better future business decisions. Are you charging enough for a particular service? Is it cost effective to continue offering that service? Is there a more efficient way of doing something? Is it more cost effective to outsource a project rather than use inside resources?

The BusinessWorks Gold Job Cost module is engineered to help save your company money by accurately estimating and tracking the costs involved in your projects. Let's take a closer look at what it can do for you.

Broad Usability

If your company is a contractor or subcontractor, you are already taking advantage of the power of the BusinessWorks Gold Job Cost module. From bid creation through change orders, charge accumulation, billings, and cash receipts, Job Cost can help you track all your job-related activities. Many other organizations can benefit from Job Cost's ability to track revenue and expenditures by project. Job Cost can prove its value in any company that manages discrete projects,

either internally or for your customers. Using that definition of a project, virtually every company can utilize Job Cost. Some examples of internal and external projects are: an office remodel, preparation of an employee manual, installation of your product at a customer's site, the company picnic, and research and development of a new product. The data collected

can be viewed and reported on in a variety of ways, giving you valuable information and enabling you to make strategic decisions affecting your company's bottom line.

Select the Detail Level You Need

The production of a newsletter such as this is a fine example of an internal project that could be efficiently tracked using the Job Cost module. First, consider the phases involved: content devel-

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Get your projects on target with the BusinessWorks Gold Job Cost module



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BusinessWorks Gold Job Cost continued

opment, proofing, layout, production, and distribution. Each of these phases involves different types of costs and multiple discrete tasks.

To achieve this level of detail, Job Codes are used. For example, our Production Phase might involve Job Codes for labor, materials, equipment, and overhead types of expenses. We would set up specific Job Codes for each discrete task (such as copying), each item used (the paper), and the use-time of a piece of equipment (copy machine).

You may set up as many Job Codes under each Phase as required to establish the level of detail you wish to track. If a project is a simple one, just use the Phases, without activating any Job Codes beneath them. You will still be able to track revenue and expenses at the Phase level. For each Phase, you may indicate a start date, completion by date, overhead method, suggested price, and estimated cost.

Applying Costs to a Project

As we mentioned, your project's costs might involve labor, materials, overhead, subcontractor, and/or equipment charges. To facilitate the accumulation of these costs, Job Cost is integrated with the Payables, Payroll, and Inventory modules. You can easily associate a project with transactions from these modules, and the cost will post automatically to the Job Cost module. From the Inventory and Payables modules, a separate Job Cost posting screen will appear after you post a transaction. The Payroll and Job Cost integration is a bit different, as you will read below. You also can enter charges and adjustments to a project directly from within Job Cost.

Using Payroll and Job Cost Together

Within Payroll's Time Card Entry, you may associate each earnings line with a Job ID, Phase, and Task Code. During the printing of payroll checks, the information you entered for each line item posts as a detail charge to the Phase in Job Cost. You can even add an employee's company-paid payroll deductions or taxes to the overhead of a job. This is an efficient way to track the labor associated with each project.

Applying Revenues to a Project

If your project is a billable one, you will be creating invoices for the project, and receiving cus-

tomers payment against those invoices. In addition to providing a complete internal billing system, Job Cost is integrated with Receivables and Order Entry to allow invoices from these modules to be associated with a project. For non-billable projects, such as our newsletter, you can post your revenues directly to the project from within Job Cost.

Tools

Job Cost's toolbox is full of handy features and tricks adding power and flexibility to the module. Here are just a few:

Attachment Manager

The Attachment Manager feature allows you to associate various documents with a job. Scan in a signed contract, change orders, or blueprints, then save them and attach them to the job record for convenience and safekeeping. They'll be available for viewing and printing directly from the Maintain Jobs page.

Copy Function

Quickly create new jobs using the Copy function. While viewing an existing job, simply press the Copy icon and enter a new Job ID. All phase information will be copied; you need only enter a job description and the appropriate customer-specific data.

Job Notes

The Notepad function is prevalent throughout BusinessWorks Gold, and it adds tremendous functionality to the Job Cost module. Limited only by your imagination, Job Notes can hold: a list of employees assigned to the job and their tasks, customer feedback, installation instructions, messages to other users, or instructions to the job site.

Internal Versus External Projects

As in our newsletter example, the Job Cost module lends itself well to tracking the costs and revenues associated with an internal job, meaning a job for which you do not intend to bill a single customer. Since each job must reference a customer, create a new in-house customer ID to assign to your internal jobs. To prevent this in-house customer from appearing on any of your standard receivable reports, and to easily isolate internal jobs on Job Cost reports, consider using an ID that differs from your normal naming convention. For example, if your customer IDs

are all letters, add a 99 in front of your in-house customer (e.g. 99-IN HOUSE).

Reports

The Job Cost module provides more than a dozen standard reports providing various views of your project data. The Job Transactions Report lets you examine all charges, billings, payments, and adjustments. The Profit/Loss Report compares estimated and actual cost to price and arrives at your project's profit amount. Get a handle on the status of your projects with the Work Completed and Work Outstanding Reports. A favorite with managers is the Flash Report, providing a summary of the detail provided in other reports. In addition to the standard reports, a Custom Reports option guides you through the process of building a completely customized report tailored to your unique business needs.

Not Just for Contractors Any More

The Job Cost module has long been considered a tool for contractors and subcontractors, yet a multitude of businesses can use Job Cost to track the revenue and expenses of a variety of internal and external projects, providing insight into the profitability of such ventures, and allowing you to achieve a higher profit potential. ☆

Six Ideas For Using Job Cost

- ▷ **Internal Marketing Campaigns**
Monitor costs for trade shows, conferences, and meetings.
- ▷ **Plant Equipment Maintenance Cost Tracking**
Track labor, repair parts, and outside service providers.
- ▷ **Warranty Service Cost Tracking**
Use Job Cost to track labor and material cost to repair products under warranty.
- ▷ **Custom Manufacturing**
Track materials and labor for one-time job shop orders.
- ▷ **In-House Web Development**
Track labor and outside vendor costs.
- ▷ **Product R&D**
Use Job Cost to monitor your labor, facilities, and material costs.

BusinessWorks Gold Reporting Tools

We all strive for the goal of working smarter, better, and faster. Two reporting tools available for use with BusinessWorks Gold can help you do just that. *Crystal Reports* and *F9* are practical tools that can result in immediate time-saving benefits, productivity increases, and first-class output. Let's take a closer look at these tools.

Crystal Reports

Crystal Reports is an industry-standard graphical report writer. It is easy to learn, easy to use, and amazingly powerful. Beyond just report writing, by using Crystal Reports you can create customized forms and exports as well. Using Crystal Reports with BusinessWorks Gold together, you have access to features and capabilities unheard of just a few years ago.

Crystal Reports includes over 160 built-in functions and operators as well as user-defined functions for complete control over report formatting, complex logic, and data selection. The powerful *Formula Workshop* lets you create valuable summary data that might not be present in your BusinessWorks Gold database. Different users can view the same data in different ways without creating multiple reports. Users can select pre-defined parameters for a single report to receive customized data. Sub reports may be embedded in a main report allowing you to insert information from different tables with different formats into any section of a report. For example, you can embed your income statement into the balance sheet and pull the net income figure into the balance sheet. You'll be able to customize the look of your reports by adding logos, pictures, shapes and colors, or simply vary the font. Choose from 12 types of graphs, or add hyperlinks, drill downs, underlines, and running totals. Crystal Reports includes customizable templates and more than 100 formatting options for virtually unlimited control over the presentation of your data.

Publish your reports to the Web with automatic HTML output, export the report to Microsoft Word or Excel, or Email the reports in one of 15 file formats. Publish your finished reports to a variety of formats including: XML, PDF, Word, Excel, and text.

Create Custom Forms

You can use Crystal to customize your company

invoices. The tremendous flexibility it provides allows you to include data elements from related files, and even carry out *if/then* statements. You can add your company logo in the corner, or include a picture of your headquarters. In addition, you can create a customized customer statement form using Crystal and include context sensitive messages and detail not present on the standard statement. Make a lasting, positive impression of your organization with custom Crystal forms.

Mail Merge in Crystal Reports

With Crystal you can combine database information with letters or other text objects, and specify selection criteria to target specific groups of customers. Use this mail-merge feature to announce the new salesperson to the northeast region, or to notify customers of a new product, in a product line from which they often purchase.



Most businesses use "standard reports" to monitor business activity and other key financial indicators. Go beyond the basics with BusinessWorks Gold's suite of extended reporting tools.

It's Easy

A built-in tutor and an on-line help system offer context sensitive help and tips for successful report writing. You can quickly design interactive reports using an intuitive drag-and-drop interface. Experts and Wizards guide you through common tasks such as connecting to the data source, selecting fields and records, grouping, sorting, and formatting. Reports created with Experts and Wizards can be further customized using easy drag-and-drop operations.

Make F9 Your Gold Standard

How many busy financial managers use spreadsheets to create and edit budgets, perform calculations, and generate financial reports? It would probably be easier to count how many do not. Excel has become the standard tool for

such operations. A downside has always been getting current data into and out of Excel from your accounting software. *F9 Financial Report Writer* by Synex eliminates that drawback and dramatically increases the power and productivity of Excel.

F9 works by dynamically hot linking your spreadsheet to your BusinessWorks Gold General Ledger module, using DDE (Dynamic Data Exchange). Simply, F9 creates formulas within your spreadsheet, based on the parameters you enter. Those formulas tell F9 what data you want in that cell (Southeast Division Sales of Product X for January 2003, for example). Due to the dynamic nature of the relationship, F9 always will have the most current data available.

A Time Saver and Productivity Booster

You will never have to type another general ledger figure into your spreadsheet again. Charts and graphs you create in Excel can be updated at any time without rebuilding. Create consolidated financials easily as F9 provides access to multiple BusinessWorks companies simultaneously. Define flexible periods to be included on your reports—a quarter, a week, even a day! Create HTML documents easily for posting reports on your company's intranet. Drill down from a number on your spreadsheet, all the way down to the individual transaction level. Pass budgets back and forth from Excel to BusinessWorks, saving you hours of data entry. Quickly create what-if analyses, utilize flexible features such as the wildcard character. For example, include all 100-level departments with a 1*. The Analyze feature scans your entire spreadsheet and helps to identify missing or duplicate account numbers, speeding up the process of troubleshooting of your report.

User Friendly F9

F9 is easy to use. A friendly Wizard guides you through report creation. You can create a complete financial report in mere seconds. Moreover, you can put your existing spreadsheet knowledge to use creating effective, informative reports.

If you are interested in learning more about the benefits of Crystal Reports or F9, please give us a call today. ☆



Spotlight on BusinessWorks Data Backup Methods



The amount of time lost to data corruption or a system crash can be phenomenal. Any computer or network can suffer from periodic problems: power outages, bad hardware, software bugs, viruses, and operator errors. If the backup of your computer systems is only performed occasionally, chances are that it would take many days and countless hours to research and recreate data after a computer crash of any type.

How often do you backup your BusinessWorks data? If you are like many companies, you don't backup often enough. Protect your data and your business by using the built-in backup tool BusinessWorks provides you. While there are many considerations in developing a backup regime, the most important aspect of any system is to make sure it's performed on a regular basis. Resolve now to make a habit of routine backups to lessen or eliminate the expensive and unproductive task of recreating your books.

Backup Media

You can backup files to a secondary hard drive, another location on your network, a writable CD-ROM drive, removable disks, or tape. A Zip Drive® is a convenient method to perform quick backups of BusinessWorks Gold data during the day and week. Tape backup systems still represent the most viable method for storing a company's complete data and program backups. They are capable of holding a large volume of data, and may be stored off-site for a greater measure of security.

How Often and How Long

If you use BusinessWorks daily, it is a good idea to back up your data every day. At the end of the week, perform a backup and store it away along with the other weekly backups until you have completed a full backup for the month. Perform your monthly backup just prior to closing the current month. Store this backup in your long-term archive. At the very least, you should keep monthly backups for the current year and one backup of the prior year.

BusinessWorks Backup Made Easy

The BusinessWorks Gold Database Backup Wizard guides you through each step of the backup process. To backup company data, click the company ID of the company you wish to copy and select the drive designation and filename. Once the backup is complete, the wizard will ask you if there are other databases you wish to backup. If you wish to back-up system data such as passwords, security, and custom forms, click system and continue. BusinessWorks will create the backup file in a zipped or compressed (.zip) format.

The BusinessWorks Gold backup method is designed to work with either a Zip Drive or another storage location on your computer or network. Choose a backup file naming convention using the date, for example: ABC Company #25.BWB would be used for the 25th day of the month. Just change the file name to represent the day of the month. Using this method, you could store 31 different BusinessWorks backup files (space permitting) before over-writing an existing backup file.

Backup All Valuable Business Data and Programs

Is the BusinessWorks data backup method the only backup you need to perform? No, and by not backing up the balance of your BusinessWorks program files and other important data such as your Email and calendar, word processing, and spreadsheet documents, you put your business at a much higher risk. In determining how often you need to perform a full system backup, first analyze the risks you're willing to take.

Consider how much time and effort you just spent entering valuable data, and how difficult and costly it would be to replicate that effort. For most businesses, daily backup of your computer systems should be a central element of a risk management plan.

Develop a Simple Tape Rotation Scheme

There are many backup strategies, select one you can easily stick with. Here is an example of a simple backup tape rotation scheme. Process a complete backup of all hard drives—data and programs, twice in one week—say on Monday and Thursday. On every other day of the work-week, select an incremental or differential backup method. This backup methodology will select only the files that have been changed or added since the last backup. It is a good idea to keep at least one of the full backup tapes off site or at a minimum in a fireproof safe. Of course, this tape must be rotated at least weekly, to assure that your backup is current.

Test Your Ability to Restore

Tapes and disks have a finite life span, usually one year or less. It is a good practice to periodically test your ability to restore a file from a tape. Create a test word processing file or spreadsheet file and test restoring it. Mark the start date on each tape, and then you'll know when it's time to replace them. After all there is no point backing up your data to faulty tape. If you have any questions about backup procedures, please give us a call.



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