A Quarterly Newsletter for our Clients & Affiliates

Winter 2008

In this Issue

Enhanced Business Reporting

Enhanced Business Reporting (EBR) is focused on improving business reporting by developing internal reporting of value drivers, non-financial performance measures, and qualitative information. Companies that wish to enhance business reporting understand that they need to customize reports beyond those "out of the box" or "canned" reports that are typically delivered by commercially available off the shelf ERP systems.

Executives and investors alike recognize the importance of non-financial measures of business performance. A benefits to EBR is having more timely and relevant reporting enabling better

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Welcome!

All of us at SystemLink wish you and your family a wonderful holiday season and a happy, healthy and prosperous New Year.

In this issue, we are thrilled to introduce our Executive Consultant, Scott Watts, an invaluable member of our team. In addition, we wanted to let you know about some year end Accpac tips and some other information we hope that you will find interesting.

We will be closed December 25th and January 1st.

Meet the Team: Scott Watts, Executive Consultant

There is a reason that Scott Watts' job title at SystemLink is "Executive Consultant." Dave Beck, SystemLink's president, points that reason out as a specific and intentional hiring point—"SystemLink hires *business* consultants with information technology skills." The difference, remarks Dave, is in a person's focus: "An information technology person can only focus on the technology—a business consultant understands business processes and then attempts to leverage technology to make a difference in a business. That's what we do here at SystemLink, attempt to make a meaningful difference in the way our client manages their business." Scott's successful business relationships demonstrate that he has indeed succeed in making a difference and that makes him a big asset to SystemLink.

His expansive background has given Scott a feel for the business realm as well as his technical expertise. In the 80's he worked in the Accounting branch of a company selling copper tubing. As PC's began to take prominence, he caught on and quickly became the company's go-to-guy for their questions. Leaving that company, he started a consulting business that he ran for about 11 years. In 1998 he sold that business and worked for some new firms before joining SystemLink in February of 2007.

All that experience helps quite a bit, but, when it comes down to it, Scott just seems to have a knack for relationships. That is further demonstrated by the excellent relationship he has with his own family—his favorite way to spend his free time. He enjoys traveling with his wife Christine. Just recently they had the opportunity to return to Hawaii, something they had been hoping for since their honeymoon 25 years before. Also, his son, Eric (16), and daughter, Brittany (10), keep him active. He's even started hitting the gym with Eric, who is playing football. "He's forcing me to get back in shape," remarks Scott.

Having grown up in Chicago, Scott is a self proclaimed "die-hard Chicago sports fan." So much so, in fact, that he considers the most outrageous thing he's ever done to be camping out for tickets and watching a World Series game in 1980 featuring the Phillies—because he wasn't sure his Cubs would ever make it. He also enjoys cooking, mostly doing a bit of experimentation with pasta and vegetable dishes. He's even gone to New York to watch Emeril Lagasse tape his show for the Food Network and succeeded in getting his autograph.

Family man, sports fan, amateur chef—it's little wonder that Scott does well with business relationships, a repertoire like that could let anybody get along with him. As Dave puts it, "he's a great addition to the team—because of skills like his, we deliver." And the biggest bonus of all is that Scott enjoys what he does. When asked what he was most proud of he answered his family—but when pushed for second place, he replied "I'm proud when clients appreciate the job I've done."

SystemLink smart

Noted & Quoted

"We consider SystemLink to be our integration partner, and when we face IT challenges we call them for help. SystemLink has partnered with us during the installation of Sage Accpac ERP and SageCRM. Since these implementations we have reduced cycle times by 20% and tap into the smaller markets, maintaining the same level of quality without as many people ultimately; increasing revenue and profitability. SystemLink provides us valuable direction on how to integrate these systems and answers to a lot of 'what if' questions. They give us huge insight on how to make the system best work for our needs. What continues to pleasantly surprise me is the knowledge the SystemLink team has of our business and the value they add to our team. They make suggestions and offer alternatives rather that just saying 'yes' to whatever we think is the best solution. Whenever we have a question or a need, they consistently drop what they are doing and always know where they left off with us. I know we are not their only client, but they make us feel like we are."

Bill Dean, CIO
US Home Systems

Accounting Services from Beck and Company CPA's

Beck and Company is a full service public accounting and consulting firm providing a full range of audit, accounting, tax and consulting services. We offer personalized, cost effective, accurate and dependable services, tax planning and return preparation for corporate clients, partnerships, non-for-profit and other companies. Give us a call if we can offer assistance.

http://www.beckcpas.com

Year end Accpac Time Saving Checklist

SystemLink made a list and checked it twice to help prevent Year-End from being naughty, but nice. Here is your Year-End Sage Accpac Time-Saving List. We encourage you to read through this and contact us if you need any assistance along the way.

- **Back up your data!**
- **Update your date.** Before processing transactions in 2009, be sure to create a new *fiscal* calendar in Common Services.
- **Double-check your settings** (to avoid deleting your history). Before closing your fiscal year in the General Ledger, check your settings for the number of years of fiscal sets and transactions that will be saved. *Any fiscal sets and transactions that are older than the number of years noted will be deleted.* You can find this setting in your General Ledger Setup Options.
- **Import your budget.** You can import your budget into the Sage Accpac General Ledger using an Excel Spreadsheet. Save hours of tedious data entry by using this feature in Sage ACCPAC.
- **Prepare your 1099.** Print your 1099's right out of the Sage Accpac Accounts Payable. Use this time saving feature even if your 1099 amounts aren't correct as you can easily correct the values prior to printing.
- **Update Your Payroll Tax Tables.** If you subscribe to the Payroll Update Plan, you can download the current payroll tax tables for 2008 by visiting www.sageaccpac.com.
- **Activate the latest Tax Tables.** Be sure to go to Administrative Services and activate your tax table *after* you downloaded and install the latest tax tables!

Budgeting for 2009? Accpac offers a variety of solutions to help you be more productive. Company wide sales and relationship management, business to business web-store integration, budgeting, commissions and productivity reporting and so much more.

This holiday season let us talk about your "wishes" and see how we can help you shine in 2009. If you need help planning for next year or want assistance with making an archival backup for your database, creating a new fiscal calendar, closing prior fiscal year or any of your yearend processes please give us a call at your local office listed below.

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decision making within and across the company. Information about such qualitative aspects of operations as strategic planning, employee turnover, forecasting and customer loyalty are not typically not reported, yet the opportunity to better manage operations through EBR can create a competitive advantage and even enable survival in today current economic environment.

EBR involve both financial measures (i.e. gross margin analysis, cash flow returns, return on invested capital, net working capital to total assets, current ratio, days in receivable, payables turnover, weighted average cost of capital, interest coverage, debt ratio, revenues from new products introduced in prior years and retail sales per square foot) and non financial measures (i.e. customer churn rate, occupancy rate, return on investment, employee satisfaction , competency, absenteeism and tardiness rates, customer satisfaction, speed to market, effectiveness of product launch and production time lost).

Implementation of EBR will leverage a variety of tools collectively referred to as Business Intelligence (BI) tools. They typically include a mix of components such as data mining and data warehousing, ad hoc On Line Analytical Processing (OLAP), business alerts, dashboards and other more common reporting systems.

SystemLink is available to assist you with your EBR efforts. We can provide consulting on determining which reports offer the best value and guide you through an analysis of the various tools and deployment strategies.

Customer Satisfaction - Foundation of Business Growth

Satisfied Customers are the Foundation of a Healthy Business

Satisfied customers are the foundation of a healthy business. They provide stable revenues through consistent, repeated purchases and help to grow your customer base through favorable word-of-mouth. Conversely, discontented customers require more customer support, can negatively influence other prospects and yield little, if any, profit. Forward-thinking executives are challenged to institute business strategies and the right corporate mindset that enable their companies to seek out and win the most profitable customers. Implementing customer-centric best practices and arming your sales, marketing and customer service teams with Customer Relationship Management (CRM) technology places your company firmly on the path to a loyal and profitable customer base.

"How much could a person spend with you in the course of a lifetime? That's the question we ask every time we meet with a customer. You don't want to deal with somebody just once; you want his/her business forever."

Carl Sewell
Author of Customers for Life

The most powerful argument for investing in customer relationships is the profitability of lifetime customers. It costs much less to sell additional products or services to your existing customers than to attract and close a new prospect. If you have treated a customer right, you've earned trust and that puts you a step ahead of your competitors. Satisfied customers also drive new business through word-of-mouth referrals to colleagues. You should already know who your most profitable customers are, how to best contact them, and their purchasing preferences. If you don't have a way to collect and manage this information (and more) about your customers, your company needs a customer relationship management strategy - and fast!

In a perfect world, marketing and sales professionals would have time and resources to communicate in a highly personal way with each individual customer, creating nearly perfect relationships by offering a customer the right products or services, and making contact at the precise moment the customer realizes a need. In marketing, the term 'one-to-one' describes this ideal relationship - an exclusive loyalty between your company and the customer, focused on meeting each customer's needs in the way that best matches his preferences and expectations.

Don Peppers and Martha Rogers, the pioneers of 'one-to-one' customer relationship theory, have created a set of best practices to help businesses focus in on what matters most to customers - creating ideal conditions for business growth and competitive advantage. Traditionally, companies could not find Cost-effective ways to create personalized, relationship-strengthening communications with customers. But today, Peppers and Rogers argue, automated CRM software and fast, flexible marketing channels (such as e-mail and the internet) enable companies to create sustainable, interactive relationships with customers. Before delving into how CRM software helps executives maximize profitability, let's examine the four basic steps outlined by Peppers and Rogers for ensuring customer loyalty:

1. Identify your best customers - those that purchase from your company again and again.
2. Differentiate your most profitable customers from prospects who are unlikely to purchase. What common preferences do your most important customers share? What characteristics in prospects are good indicators that they will not purchase from you? Understand that some customers have a higher value to your organization than others.
3. Interact with your customers. Don't talk at them with your marketing - start a conversation. Learn their preferences and motivators (and record these). Interacting with customers will help you build on your knowledge to increase your rate of success.
4. Customize the messages you present to each customer. Instead of asking customers to purchase from your company in the way that is easiest for you - invite them to purchase in the way that is most satisfying to them. Use the information you gathered while interacting with your customers to attract new customers.

Measuring Success

No company consistently increases customer satisfaction by guessing. To fully embrace a CRM strategy, it is necessary to set goals for sales, marketing and customer service and hold each department accountable for results. To customize your sales and marketing efforts, you'll need to test different tactics and measure results. Discovering the proper metrics to monitor, track and analyze marketing and sales success will play a huge role in your CRM initiative.

Too often, companies measure marketing effectivenes s solely through the total number of raw sales leads generated. Or define sales success solely by the ratio of deals closed. While important, these metrics do not require marketing and sales to answer and be accountable to equally fundamental questions such as:

- Do we deliver personalized content to customers most of the time, or hardly ever?
- How many of the leads generated by marketing are likely to purchase?
- Does advertising, web marketing, direct mail, or telemarketing produce the most leads?
- Of all the sales closed, did we land a large percentage of high lifetime value customers or concentrate more time on quick, low value deals?
- Is response higher when we combine multiple marketing channels into integrated campaigns (for example, direct mail followed by an e-mail newsletter)?
- Could marketing generate the same number of leads on a smaller budget?
- Would the close rate increase if we hired more sales people?

Technology is a Tool - PEOPLE Satisfy Customers

To reap the benefits of customer loyalty, you must first create a customer-focused culture across your business. CRM software is only a tool in the strategy. It does not change corporate mindset or set values and objectives for your employees. Only executive leadership can elevate the status of the customer by emphasizing strategic objectives that create a customer-centric sales and service organization. Too often, executives implement CRM software without making the necessary organizational and process changes to promote the company-wide adoption of CRM technology. That approach will not yield desirable results - for CRM to enhance the customer experience and yield substantial return-on-investment, all customer-facing employees must share a motivation to use the new CRM tools. "Building customer loyalty requires more than CRM tools; it first requires a vision for customer relations, and a mindset that demands the need for CRM tools," says Dave Batt, General Manager of Global CRM for Sage Software. "Then the tools need to provide flexibility to execute on that vision."