



This article has been contributed by Roxanne Brown, CQA – Professional Business Solutions 4U, LLC & Contributing Editor - IDNAC Newsletter **April/2006**

Getting Automated & Wrapping Up Introduction to Ecommerce

The first several months this year we have discussed many powerful programs to assist the ProAdvisor, or business owner, in the process of creating a new QuickBooks file. We have discussed when and why a new file may be needed, various ways to create the file in the most efficient manner, and ways to automate many tasks throughout the year. If you missed any of these articles, please be sure to check out the Newsletter Archive (www.idnac.org/news-archive.html).

We left off last month with automating payroll tasks using PayCycle (www.paycyclecpa.com), and featuring the robust Certified Payroll & AIA Billing programs from Sunburst Software Solutions (www.sunburstsoftwaresolutions.com).

Contact Management

Now that tax season is over, you have undoubtedly collected quite a bit of updated and new client contact information. Now what? Now is a great time to take all of that information and enter it into a great **Contact Management** program so you can use this updated information throughout the year and get a head start on next year. This month we are featuring a very powerful and affordable program from **Legrand CRM** (www.legrandcrm.com). Be sure to read the ProAdvisor case study provided by Bonnie Nagayama of McWilliams & Associates, and the Developer article that outlines all the great features of **Legrand CRM**.

Inventory Control

Another great product that is featured this month is **Fishbowl Inventory** (www.fishbowlinventory.com). Once a client needs a robust inventory management system outside of QuickBooks, **Fishbowl Inventory** is definitely a product that deserves consideration. Don't miss the Developer and ProAdvisor articles featured in this month's issue.

Ecommerce

We are starting our series on Ecommerce, what is it and how is it different from a regular business model. I have been very fortunate the last five years to work closely with a great company that truly understands Ecommerce, Stone Edge Technologies, Inc. (www.stoneedge.net) and I would like to introduce our Guest Writer of the next two months; Barney Stone. A bit about Barney...

Barney Stone, founder and President of Stone Edge Technologies, Inc., built his first computer from an assortment of kits, traded it in for an early Apple][, and hung out with computing pioneers like Steve Wozniak, Andy Hertzfeld, Bill Budge and Captain Crunch at the San Francisco Apple Core.

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Barney co-authored a database program called DB Master and since then he's made a successful career out of writing software for small businesses. In 1999, a friend asked Barney to write a program to help manage his Ecommerce business. That program turned into the Stone Edge Order Manager and six years later, the feature-rich back-office system has over 1,000 users and 8 wonderfully talented and devoted staff members supporting it. Barney gets satisfaction out of helping small companies like his own grow and become as successful as possible. We are thrilled that he agreed to contribute a few articles with his 'unique' perspective.

Definition of Ecommerce

Ecommerce, or electronic commerce, is the business of selling on-line by harnessing the power of the Internet, either with or through a website, or by means of e-mail. With the growth of commerce on the Internet, Ecommerce often refers to purchases from on-line stores located on the Web; they may also be referred to as "virtual" or "cyber" stores.

Typically Ecommerce (electronic commerce) can be broken down as follows:

- B2B (Business to Business, known as wholesale),
- B2C (Business to Customer, otherwise known as retail)
- C2C (Customer to Customer, such as auctions and information portals)

One of the main differences is the intense use of technology and the Internet; information technology is applied to **all** aspects of a company's operations.

- CRM (Customer Resource Management ... also known as Customer Relationship Management)
- ERP (Enterprise Resource Planning)
- SFM (Sales Force Management)
- SCM (Supply Chain Management)
- EP (Electronic Procurement)

Based on recent statistics, some 56% of B2C and 70% of B2B Ecommerce operations in the U.S. are profitable and online revenues may reach upwards of \$218 billion by 2007! However, gone are the days of 'immediate profit' with little work or investment. Ecommerce is a demanding business, and good management skills are just as essential as a good website, good customer service, excellent time management, automation, and understanding the 'virtual' world of shopping and its' customers. Ecommerce is constantly evolving and requires dedication on the part of the business owner to be successful. As a ProAdvisor or Developer you are in a unique position to help these businesses to succeed and reach their full potential.

Over the next few months we will be profiling various Order Managers and additional ways of working with your Ecommerce clients. Personally, I have specialized in working with Ecommerce business owners, and add-on products, over the last 7 years, and I love it. Approximately 80% of my business is working with Ecommerce clients, all supported remotely, and who are located all over the globe ... how exciting to have the ability to work in such a diverse arena!

Next month Barney's article will break down what a full-blown Order Manager is meant to do, and I will be discussing the various levels of Order Managers; from the needs of a new business owner all the way to the needs of a Fortune 500 company.

Until next month,
Rox ☺

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