



Solutions for the retail, manufacturing and food industries



Merit Quarterly News

For all COBS and SOM Users

25 years serving the
industry

Issue 1 - Spring 2010

Team News

As most of you will know Joe Blackham, our Technical Director, had a serious car accident just over a year ago and after a recent operation is now on the road to recovery. Joe now works mainly from the office spearheading our development innovation.

To ease the pressure on Joe and to secure our technical field based work Bill Ward has been employed to assist him. Bill commenced employment with Merit in January 2010. Bill has over 20 experience implementing full ERP systems within the food manufacturing, baking and drinks industries.

Another new addition to the Merit senior team is Reg Bettridge who fills the role of Commercial Director. Reg commenced his employment with Merit in September 2009 and brings with him over 30 years experience of business, operations, sales and general commercial management at senior level.

This newly strengthened team will significantly underpin Merit's commitment to its customers and assist in its future product development and aggressive business growth plans in both the bakery and other sectors.

Breaking News.... Breaking News.... Breaking News.... Breaking News...

- SOM Formats (PDF) - the SOM formats pdf document is now available on the Merit website as a freely available download. Review the file and contact us if you want a format implemented. Updated regularly. Go to www.mtel.co.uk
- SOM data sheets document which covers a variety of FAQs about SOM will be available on the website as a free download during late summer. We will confirm the date in the next issue of the newsletter.

Latest Developments

Although we no longer develop COBS 2000, clients will still have the option to commission new formats. For those customers still using COBS 2000 we would like to assure you Merit has no plans to withdraw support in the near future.

JUST LAUNCHED - SOM Despatch-Packing Module

Some of you will have measures in place to address the important issue of packing errors which happen more regularly than we would like.

The rationale behind this project was to:

- Streamline the despatch and packing process
- Reduce packing errors to an absolute minimum (this type of error can be very costly)
- Retain customers through improved and efficient stock delivery

During the packing/despatch process packers will generally tick off products on a packing sheet or delivery note as they place the products in trays or skips. If for any reason the product is not available at that time e.g. not out of the oven or it needs to be packed in a different area, it is generally packed later by checking what products DO NOT have a tick against them.

Unfortunately this is not an error free process. We have all gone through the costly and inefficient exercise of sending the driver back out on a second delivery with missed products.

If you now add in to this equation that some of you will be part packing orders many hours, if not the afternoon before the actual day of delivery, the possibility of errors multiplies.

Merit has worked with a number of bakers to address these issues and can announce that its despatch-packing module has now been successfully deployed and thoroughly tested within the bakery sector.

The application has been designed on the .NET environment. Without wanting to bore you with pages of text, the module interrogates the SOM database to extract orders to be displayed by Customer orders or Van - Round orders on touch screen monitors.

Features within the despatch module:

- The green, yellow, red traffic light system warns the user of which Customer - Round - Vans requires Packing/Loading or attention to complete the orders.
- Each Customer - Round/Van or Product can be marked as partially, or completely packed. At any time the screen can give a visual prompt as to which products still need to be packed to complete the orders.
- The product quantities can be sorted in numerous ways to suit.
- Filters in place to show: Outstanding, Done or All.

The module has been designed to work with almost any touch screen PC terminal. Consideration needs to be given to the working environment the application will be expected to work in i.e. ambient despatch/packing room or chilled/frozen areas. In regards to ambient conditions it is feasible to utilise redundant touch screen tills (low cost), or as others have done choose a more robust approach with the purchase of semi-ruggedized industrial terminals costing around £1,600 each.

The units can be hard wired to a wall, or take the mobile approach of screens mounted on

trolleys with relevant battery pack installed (battery size will depending on the working life expected, i.e. length of shift). As a point of reference DHL (the parcel firm) have these units hardwired in the despatch rooms, whereas one of our clients has chosen the mobile route.

Under Development

- Product & Ingredient Stock Control
- Interfacing to Electronic Scales
- HR module
- Purchase ordering

**For more information
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Customer Feedback

What features would you like to see in SOM?

We are very proud of our products and love to get feedback about them from our customers. We want our products to be market driven and who better to get future development ideas from but our valued customers.

Help us to shape future issues

We want you to help shape this Newsletter so please send us any ideas you may have on what you would like to see in future issues. After all this Newsletter is for you and we want you to receive completely relevant information not information we simply think you want.

Testimonials

A number of our customers have supplied us with testimonials which relate their experiences of implementing and using our products. With their permission we use these testimonials in the promotion of our business. We would love to hear from you concerning your experiences with your implementation and use of our products as well. These will be placed on our website with your permission of course. See

www.mtel.co.uk/testimonials/

Email your contributions to admin@mtel.co.uk

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