Merit Quarterly News

25 years serving the industry

For all COBS and SOM Users

Issue 2 - Summer 2010

Welcome to issue two of Merit's quarterly newsletter

The purpose of these newsletters is to fully open communication channels with you, our customers, and to keep you informed of key events within Merit in particular the technical developments that we are working on.

To improve our communications with you even further we have taken full advantage of available social networking technology and created a presence on Twitter. Visit us at www.twitter.com/MeritTech or click on the button at the bottom of this newsletter. If you have a presence on Twitter too please let us know.

This quarter we have so much technical development to tell you about that we have devoted most of this issue to it. But before we get to that we have some news items that will hopefully be of interest to you.

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

SOM Training Courses

Continuing its quest for superior service to its customers Merit has launched a series of 1 day training courses for SOM. Details were emailed to all SOM users on Friday 9 July 2010. However just in case you missed it go to our website by clicking here for full details.

SOM User Guide

For the benefit of all SOM users we have now finalised the first issue of the SOM User Guide. This is now available as a pdf download on our website. Please bear in mind that this is a living document which is continually evolving so check the website regularly and ensure that you have the most recent version downloaded. To get your copy click here.

SOM Presentation

We have now put together a presentation covering the major features of SOM. This again is available as pdf download on our website. To view this please [click here](#).

Latest Developments.... Latest Developments.... Latest Developments....

Home Deliveries

We are pleased to announce a go-live in two stages at D & D Dairies, Perthshire, which has led to much-enhanced retail functionality for home-delivery customers. This was a complex project involving data migration from two SQL-server-based systems via Business Objects and Excel that included some new enhancements that will extend SOM's capabilities into the Dairy and Home Delivery industries. At the client's request almost all of the training, consultancy and project management was carried out remotely, so reducing the costs all round and adding considerable flexibility - i.e. one- or two-hour training sessions at short notice, rather than a full day at two week's notice.

As well as having 400 wholesale and leisure industry customers, D & D deliver milk and other dairy produce to roughly 600 doorsteps. This means that SOM needs to generate a packing list "rounds book" for each van which shows whether the customer is on holiday ("off") based on the customer and order hold status. For booking actual quantities delivered, the Van Return has new ease/speed-of-use keys – F5 to charge and go to the next customer, and F4/F3 to go forward/back through the customer list. This means that the admin staff can zip through a complete round in a matter of minutes, even though being continually interrupted by customer phone calls!

A further customer service improvement is to allow zero quantity standing orders, which display on the packing list and are visible on both the *Daily/Weekly Ordering* screens and the *Van Return*. This means that opportunities for add-on orders aren't missed by the staff or the delivery drivers, so helping to top-up milk sales.

The SOM product definition now allows "liquid" products, to take into account the UOM cost-conversion issues associated with products such as milk.

A new *Price Scan* report (format: default) allows you to see all prices, or just the special prices, for a specified product. Also, checks have been placed on the price maintenance screens (*Special Prices* and *Price Tables*) to prevent users accidentally adding zero prices or changing an effective price.

Finally, the driver collects the cash and it saves a lot of time if he can book it into SOM, but safely. So at D & D's request Merit have developed a new cash booking screen that presents the cash customers on the driver's round (in delivery order) so all the driver has to do is enter the value. The batch total is displayed so it's simple to check cash values have been entered correctly, and just one click updates the customer account and allocates the payment. So what used to take an hour takes 10 minutes, with improved accuracy to boot.

In case payments are made but not allocated there is a new *Cash Report* Format (S0001) which shows all remaining payment balances, to save you time keeping accounts up to date.

More SOM Enhancements

Order Search

Customers who phone up and ask for details of deliveries can be satisfied quickly thanks to a new development which arose from a customer's requirement. *Find Orders* allows you to enter any part of the PO number or GRN, or all of the delivery note or transaction ID, and displays the

orders that match those criteria. Double click on the order and the delivery note is displayed.

Delivery Status

The order status screen has been enhanced to highlight orders delivered but not invoiced, so allowing you to tighten control over order progression and cash flow.

SOM "Data Mining"

Most SOM reports can be exported to csv format and a further step is to directly access the database tables using the standard functions within Excel and MS Access. This feature has been used by several customers to support ad-hoc enquiries and to keep databases neat and tidy. For example, to list all EDI products which are not set for delete and that don't have a valid price, or to generate list of current customers that have no default category - in fact, the list of potential reports is endless, limited only by your imagination. The spreadsheets can be left on the desktop and the data can re-fresh when it is opened, so there is no need to go onto SOM, display the report and export it to Excel.

Another use is to generate pivot tables and graphs to review sales totals by region by period, for example, using inbuilt Excel functions. So instead of spending two days a week transposing data from reports into Excel you can use Excel to directly access the data and update the spreadsheet cells automatically.

For those interested in using these features, Merit offers advanced, cost effective training courses and tailored on-site consultancy.

Food Management System - FMS*NET*

Work has been proceeding apace in re-writing the web-based FMS module - FMS*NET* to take full advantage of the latest .Net technology and thus transform the look, feel and performance of the system. The first few screens to be developed are *Fast Order Entry* and *Shop Bookings* which are now being trialled by JG Ross Bakers Ltd of Aberdeen, who are closely involved in the product design. We will continue to drive this development through in the next few weeks, with *Standing Orders* and shop reporting next on the list.

On the Stocks

Over the next quarter, Merit will additionally focus on developing links to weigh-scales applications, specifically Vantage from the Stevens Group. The scope of this development will be:

- Download of SOM recipes and SOM ingredient batches to the weigh-scale database
- Upload of mix quantities to the SOM stock control module

The advantages of the interface are self evident in terms of product quality control, significant cost savings by accurate ingredient scaling, and increased efficiency by reducing data double - entry. We look forward to seeing our first few customers using this new feature in action.

Purchase Invoice Matching is another exciting development, which will complete the comprehensive Purchase Order module. This will enable invoices to be registered, matched and authorised, as well as exported in a format suitable for commonly used purchase ledger systems such as Sage, Pegasus and AccPac.

General.... General.... General.... General... General... General...

Help 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.

Email your thoughts to admin@mtel.co.uk

Testimonials

Testimonials/Case study information has been slow to arrive so please help build our archive of testimonials and case studies and reap the benefit of being part or our marketing and PR campaign. See www.mtel.co.uk/testimonials/

Email your testimonials/case studies to admin@mtel.co.uk

What features would you like to see in SOM?

We are very proud of our products and love to get feed-back 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.

Email your thoughts to admin@mtel.co.uk

For more information contact us:

admin@mtel.co.uk

01795 418900

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Merit Technology (Europe) Limited
935b CornForth Drive Kent Science Park, Sittingbourne, Kent ME9 8PX
(P): 01795 418900 | (F): 01795 418929
(Website): www.mtel.co.uk