



# B&L NEWS

JANUARY 2020 | VOL. 30 | NO. 1

## ENTERPRISE RESOURCE PLANNING FOR METALCASTERS

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### CEO'S CORNER



Phil Laney, CEO

2020 is going to be an exciting year at B&L, both for our customers and for our employees. B&L customers can look forward to many new and exhilarating things to come, including:

- Over 300 new enhancements are planned in the 1st half of the year, culminating with the release of Odyssey 6.3, targeted for summer of 2020. This release will include major items such as a new screen designer, new menu system, and the new Dashboard Builder.
- Over 15 classroom training events in Southwest Michigan.
- We'll continue to build our library of on-line Odyssey training videos, which currently stands at over 30.

- More options for fast, efficient, self-service, specific task learning opportunities through B&L's Rapid Support, which now boasts over 1,150 step-by-step articles.
- A new mobile app! Initially targeting shop floor clock in/clock out functionality and supporting both Android and iOS.
- The annual Odyssey Users Conference, Spectrum 2020, will be held September 27th – 29th at Marriott Orlando World Center, the first ever Spectrum in Florida.

We are also doubling our office facilities in Bridgman, with completion date targeted for September 2020. This will include new office and conference facilities not only for employees, but new customer venues, including training conference facilities.

2019 staff additions have increased our personnel by 24% over the last 18 months. I'm excited about the many new, talented, energetic people who are now serving and supporting our customers.

All of these efforts are part of B&L's unwavering mission to design and develop, market and sell, and implement and support the finest metalcasting ERP software in the world. 2020 will be one of the best years in company history!

Wishing all a productive and happy 2020. As always, thank you for your business.

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### Will we see you at one of the Q1 classes?

Crystal Reports Class – February 10th – 11th, 2020

Odyssey Boot Camp – February 12th – 13th, 2020

Inventory Control Workshop – March 10th, 2020

Classes are hosted at B&L's Bridgman, Michigan office. Please see our website for full details. ([BLInfo.com/Classes](http://BLInfo.com/Classes))

**JANUARY**



- New GLDC (a Mumford Company)
- Shawnee Specialties
- Calhoun Foundry Co.
- West Philadelphia Bronze Inc.
- Berntsen Brass & Aluminum, Inc.
- Inventory Control Workshop

- Matt Gacek writes article for Foundry Management & Technology, "Transparency Through technology"

**FEBRUARY**



- Pace Industries – Chihuahua division

- Taylor Petersen promoted to Senior Support Representative
- Odyssey Boot Camp
- Crystal Reports Class
- NADCA Executive Conference

**MARCH**



- Michigan Die Casting LLC (a Mumford Company)
- Alcon Industries
- Texas Die Casting

- Chris McNeil moves to R&D department

**APRIL**

- Bremer Manufacturing Co. Inc.

- Odyssey 6.1 MR3 released
- Case Study from Dyersville Die Cast featured in FM&T
- Costing Workshop
- Dashboard & Data Views Class
- CastExpo

**MAY**



- Phil Laney speaks at ProgressNext

- California Metal Coalition Conference
- Odyssey Boot Camp
- Crystal Reports Class

- Tiffany Metal Casting Ltd

- Debbie Wishart joins the HR department



**JUNE**

- Scheduling Workshop
- Odyssey 6.1 MR4 released

**JULY**



- Aaron Stovall writes article for Foundry Management & Technology, "Managing Maintenance to Boost performance, Productivity"

- Dashboards & Data Views Class
- Matt Gacek joins Professional Services department



**That's a wrap!**

In 2018, B&L's CEO Phil Laney decided B&L's management team would visit every B&L customer company individually – outside of the usual implementation project phone calls and visits. During these individual company meetings, B&L management would take the opportunity to listen to the customers' current status and challenges.

Phil kicked off the first visit in early 2018. And as of Q4 2019, Phil closed out the final customer visit in November at California Casting in Richmond, California. Thank you all. Our team enjoyed the experience of re-acquainting at the management level and seeing the many amazing products our customers make. (The teams came back with loads of pictures and videos to share).

The Team at B&L

Phil (2nd L), Mark Quilici (3rd L) President CCI, CCI Staff and Company dog



**Live with Odyssey**

In Q3 and Q4 of 2019, our Professional Services team brought six customers, 3 new and 3 legacy BLIS conversions, into the Odyssey family of customers.

The new companies that went live with Odyssey in the second six months of 2019, include:

- Horizon Metals Inc. of Nephi, Utah went live with Odyssey. Horizon Metals is an iron and steel foundry and machining facility.
- Cast Metal Technologies (CMT) of Winchester, Indiana went live. This is one of three Cast Metal Technologies facilities, owned by Delaware, Ohio-based Liberty Casting Company, going live this year with Odyssey. CMT is a jobbing foundry specializing in aluminum and zinc castings and machining.
- Wear-Tek of Spokane, Washington went live with Odyssey. Wear-Tek is a high chrome white iron and

steel castings foundry and machining facility.

In the last six months of 2019, three early adopters of metalcasting ERP converted from B&L's legacy software to cloud-based Odyssey. Those conversions include:

- Texas Die Casting of Gladewater, Texas finalized their Odyssey conversion in September 2019. Texas Die Casting is a leading aluminum die cast manufacturer in the U.S. and produces aluminum die cast components for a wide range of markets.
- Berntsen Brass & Aluminum of Madison, Wisconsin completed their Odyssey conversion in December 2019. Founded in 1946 and family owned, Berntsen is a world-class provider of aluminum, bronze and brass casting services.
- Manitowoc Precision & Machine, a division of Wisconsin Aluminum Foundry, went live with Odyssey in December 2019.

**Signings**

Three new companies joined the Odyssey family in Q4, 2019. Welcome!

- Duraloy Technologies, Inc. of Scottsdale, Pennsylvania
- Precision Technology, Inc. of Douglassville, Pennsylvania
- Wabtec Foundry Ltd. Of Wallaceburg, Ontario

**ODYSSEY UPDATE**



Brad Clark, Manager Research & Development

**Odyssey 6.2MR 4**

Every eight to ten weeks B&L releases an update to Odyssey in the form of a Maintenance Release. A Maintenance Release (MR) is different than a full version, mostly in scope and size. Both MRs and full versions have enhancements and fixes, but the scope of the enhancements in MRs tends to be smaller in vision and breadth.

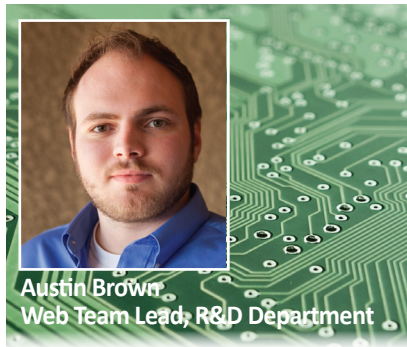
For Odyssey 6.2 Maintenance Release 4, this is not quite the case. Along with the 100+ productivity and performance improvements, 6.2MR4 will contain a handful of high-profile enhancements that will offer new functionality, improved performance, and enhanced security.

Odyssey 6.2 MR4 will include some notable function improvements:

- A molding line enhancement that integrates with the Shop Floor Manager. In its simplest form, this enhancement allows you to report molds poured or molds not poured. In its most advanced form, this enhancement allows integration with automated molding lines. The Odyssey API is being enhanced to include additional production endpoints to support the Shop Floor Manager integration with automated molding lines.
- 6.2MR4 will also include additional tweaks and improvements to the new vacation tracking enhancement previously released in 6.2.

- A new printing option will be added to all printing prompts. This option, Print as PDF, will render the PDF document produced by Crystal Reports and display the PDF as a separate browser window similar to the current Preview option. Unlike the Preview option, all printing actions including updating internal print flags and printing multiple form copies, will be processed. Once the PDF is displayed, the document can then be printed within the browser's window.
- The Data Explorer Wizard has been tweaked for performance improvements and a new Save As option has been added.

Additionally, the security improvements in Odyssey 6.2 MR4 include the ability to require multi-factor authentication (MFA) for logging into Odyssey. When MR4 is installed, MFA will be turned off for all users. This can be activated on a user-by-user basis from Odyssey's User Master. Another security improvement is the removal of Internet Explorer as a supported and recommended browser. Microsoft is offering minimal support of IE11 as long as Windows 10 is active. B&L will no longer be supporting IE. If you log into Odyssey with IE, you will now see a warning message on the login screen. *(Although you can use IE to run Odyssey, it will no longer be supported, nor is it recommended).*



## Your Next Best Technology Adoption – a Modern Browser

Web applications (social media, picture editing software, ERP software) have become so embedded into our lives that we often take how we access them for granted. You might browse social media, check the news, or log on to online banking all in the span of just a few minutes!

However, we should consider **which** web browsers we choose when accessing these sites. This is especially important to think about when using the Odyssey web

interface. Because Odyssey is such a robust and complex piece of software, older browsers are not capable of providing the best user experience. Modern browsers (including Google Chrome, Mozilla Firefox, and the Brave browser) will offer the best Odyssey experience. Each are available in a variety of platforms such as Windows, Mac, Linux, and mobile, and will offer a superior Odyssey experience.

These modern browsers outshine the older options in virtually every category. Each offers incredible speed, security, and features when compared to older web browsers, like Internet Explorer. And unlike Internet Explorer, which is no longer actively enhanced, these new browsers are constantly being updated to enhance features, improve usability, and increase security.


Out of the box, modern browsers have better security practices than their older counterparts. They also offer advanced configuration options that give you further control over security-related settings and information. However, if those options don't give you the control that you would prefer, browsers like Chrome and Firefox have a diverse community of free extensions that can enhance your security and privacy and expand within the features of the browser. These extensions range from discounts at online stores to the prevention of advertisements – including the prevention of websites from tracking your private data – and everything in between. When it comes to security and privacy, these extensions can have a major impact on how much data websites are able to collect from your device.

Examples of tracking information include browsing history, search history, and even your shopping details. There are extensions available which can entirely prevent this kind of data-gathering or can restrict the types of information that can be collected. *(On the other hand, Internet Explorer does not offer any supported way to protect your data in this way – which is part of why we are not recommending it any longer).* Another popular type of browser extension is known as an “ad-blocker.” These ad-blocking extensions can reduce the number of advertisements you see while browsing the web, and in many cases, can entirely prevent them from appearing. Ad-blockers have become hugely popular, because advertisements on the web are not only annoying, but can sometimes interfere with your ability to use a site and can even be the source of malicious software.

One of the most crucial reasons to use a modern browser, however, is speed\*. When compared to an older browser such as Internet Explorer, Chrome is over twice as fast at rendering web pages and giving you access to your web applications, like Odyssey. As browser developers continue to improve the speed, security, and features of these tools, the impetus to move from a legacy web browser will continue to grow. And Odyssey is ready to support you in other browser options.

\* If you are using Internet Explorer + Odyssey Web UI and experiencing slow load times, try one of browsers I mention above.

**AUGUST**



Josh Scott joins Technology department

Odyssey Boot Camp

Crystal Reports Class

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Don Milham joins R&D department

Horizon Metals


Cast Metal Technologies (a Liberty Castings company)

Effort Foundry Inc.

Kimura Foundry USA

Wisconsin Aluminum Foundry Co.

**SEPTEMBER**



Austin Brown promoted to Software Development Engineer Team Lead

AFS Leadership Conference

Odyssey 6.2 released

Odyssey Administrators Class

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Alexandria Trusov writes article for Foundry Management & Technology, "You Cannot Afford Complacency (in legacy ERP)"

Texas Die Casting

D&L Foundry

**OCTOBER**



Jonny Appel joins Customer Support Desk

Costing Workshop

Inventory Control Workshop

NADCA Tabletop

Investment Casting Institute tabletop

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Jim Eaton joins Business Development department

Wear-Tek

**NOVEMBER**



Phil Laney and B&L featured in NFFS newsletter

Odyssey Boot Camp

Crystal Reports Class

Odyssey 6.2MR3 released

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Alexandria Trusov writes article for Modern Casting, "What is CRM?"

Duraloy Technologies, Inc.

Precision Technology, Inc.

Wabtec Foundry Ltd.

**DECEMBER**

Dataviews & Dashboards Class

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Manitowoc Precision & Machine (a division of Wisconsin Aluminum Foundry)

Berntsen Brass & Aluminum



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## Never too early to start planning!

Spectrum 2020 kicks off a fresh decade at a beautiful location, Florida! We'll be at the fabulous Marriott Orlando World Center on September 27th – 29th.

Spectrum is a user conference like no other. Held for over 25 years, Spectrum is the largest gathering of Odyssey using metalcasters. 2 full days of mini-classes and networking. Breakfast, lunch and dinner included. Fun activities to strengthen industry bonds. You won't want to miss this!

Additional details will be shared to customers or visit our website, [BLInfo.com](http://BLInfo.com).



## In the Field

Eagle Alloy Group hosted a group of new B&L staff up for a foundry and investment casting tour in early November.



Pictured from left to right: Vance Curtis (R&D), Chris Ticen (Customer Support Desk), Jonny Appel (Customer Support Desk), Amanda Sullivan (Customer Support Desk), Jim Eaton (Business Development), Josh Scott (Technology), and Don Milham (R&D).