Editor:
Shelby Lentz
Phone:
269.465.6207

Website:
www.BLInfo.com

CEO'S CORNER

Phil Laney, CEO

Recap and looking forward

Here's a brief recap of 2021 and prognostication for 2022:

2021— Sales up 9% – Total sales increased 9% over 2020, resulting in our 9th consecutive year of sales growth. The chart continues to trend upward, confirming solid demand for B&L products and services.

New Software and Features – B&L released a blizzard of Odyssey features and functionality throughout 2021. Gauge Management, a major new module, was released in version 6.3 Q1 with positive reaction from the user community.

New Building – An office expansion project was completed in February 2021 resulting in a more than doubling of office space. A new customer training center was added, along with many connect spaces for employee collaboration sessions, as well as a visitor hospitality area and employee recreation room.

Awarded Titanium Partner with Progress Software – Progress Software Corp (Boston, MA) is the development environment B&L employs for the Data Base and back-end business logic for Odyssey. B&L is proud to have achieved Titanium Business Partner status with Progress Software. Titanium status is the highest level of partner status, with only a small fraction of over 2,000 global business partners achieving this level.

In Person Meetings – As businesses slowly and safely reopened throughout 2021, supported with widespread availability of a vaccine, B&L began re-engaging face-to-face with our customers and prospective customers. An ERP system is a complex thing, and while virtual meetings were a God-send during the heart of the pandemic, and will continue to serve an important purpose, nothing beats in person meetings for effective, two-way communication.

2022— Implementations – Whether it's an initial go-live implementation project with a new customer or a Phase 2 project with an existing customer, B&L understands the importance of providing you with the resources to support your project. We'll continue to make this our #1 priority in 2022.

Innovation – Odyssey ERP will continue to grow and evolve this year, with the vast majority of improvements driven by you, our customers. We listen to you and provide a platform for enhancement suggestions called The Feedback Community. Odyssey is really a reflection of the business software needs of the metal casting industry, refined over 46 years.

Windows UI Sunset – Software is a lot like a living organism, with a cycle of birth, life and death. Odyssey was born with the Windows user interface in 2001. (fun fact, the name Odyssey was inspired by Arthur C. Clarke novel *2001, A Space Odyssey*) It's time to move on to the latest technology built into the Web UI. We do thank you Windows UI, you provided a stable and trustworthy interface for the metal casting industry for over 20 years.

Staffing – We're planning on adding to our team in 2022. Due to continued growth and demand, we're looking for few qualified candidates in sales, support and software development. Working at B&L involves 3 unique characteristics (in my humble opinion) 1) metal casting industry knowledge 2) ERP software experience, either developing or power using and 3) people skills

Spectrum 2022 – The MGM Grand Hotel in Detroit is the location for Spectrum 2022. Plans have already begun to create an awesome, in person experience that our customers have grown to expect from B&L. At the heart of every Spectrum is the breakout sessions, where attendees can learn the details of a specific module in Odyssey or meet one-on-one with an expert to discuss your company's questions. There are also general sessions where B&L management discuss strategy and our vision of the future. A keynote speaker, networking opportunities and a couple fun evenings round out one of the best user conferences around.

Have a great 2022, and as always, thank you for your business.

Phil Laney, CEO

Will we see you at February classes?

Boot Camp – February 14-15   **Crystal Reports** – February 16-17

Classes will be held both in person and virtually. Please see our website for full details. (BLInfo.com/Classes)

Timeline

JANUARY

H&H CASTINGS — Signing ●

FEBRUARY

○ Crystal Reports Class

○ Boot Camp Class

MARCH

ALPHA — Signing ●

SA — Go-Live ●

○ Odyssey 6.3.2

APRIL

AB ALUMINUM & BRASS FOUNDRY — Go-Live ●

GREDE — Go-Live ●

Omega Castings, Inc. — Signing ●

MAY

○ Boot Camp Class

○ Crystal Reports Class

A QUALITY SERVICE SINCE 1893 — Go-Live ●

○ Patrick McCrevan writes article for ICI

JUNE

○ Dick Laney Memorial Scholarship

● Go-Lives   ● Odyssey Signings

New staff additions

Tiffany Dewes has joined the Support team as a Support Representative. Previous to joining B&L, Tiffany worked as a bartender and manager of a restaurant while working for her bachelor's in Computer Information Sciences from Indiana University. Tiffany plans to work towards becoming a Software Engineer in the future. In her free time, she loves to play video games, develop her coding skills, and play hockey.

Tiffany Dewes

Live with Odyssey

Six companies went live with new installations of Odyssey ERP in Q4 2021.

• **Omega Castings of Battle Creek, MI.** Founded in 1975, Omega Casting's founding mission was to produce alloy castings and assemblies with superior metallurgical and dimensional integrity and to deliver those castings and assemblies in a timely manner to their customers at a competitive cost.

• **Precision Technology of Douglassville, PA.** Founded in 1969, Precision Technology, Inc. is a full-service investment casting foundry. They specialize in creating top-quality castings while providing customers with exceptional service, short lead times and competitive pricing. Precision consists of a combination of three investment casting foundries.

• **Grede – Browntown of Browntown, WI.** Over a century ago, Grede opened as a single foundry in Wauwatosa, Wisconsin, and today lead the industry with 10 facilities across America and 3,800 team members, each an artist of their trade. As the industry's premier ductile, gray and specialty iron casting provider, they proudly design, engineer, validate and manufacture safety-critical components for their partners across automotive, industrial, and commercial trucking markets.

• **H&H Castings of York, PA.** Founded in 1965, their foundry currently consists of two complimentary processes; Green Sand and No Bake. Their No Bake Division was introduced in 2008 to expand their production ability to include large scale molding and castings.

• **Great Lakes Castings of Ludington, MI.** Founded in 1945, Great Lakes Castings is a green sand foundry producing high quality, ferrous castings for a wide range of industrial customers. They produce gray iron castings ranging in weight from 0.5 to 50 pounds, ranging in volume from low-moderate to high.

• **D&L Foundry of Moses Lake, WA.** D&L Foundry was established in 1990 to meet the growing demand for durable, quality, cost effective construction castings in the Western United States. They operate three automatic molding lines, leading edge digital design department, a full-service pattern shop, and state of the art control and testing facilities on site to deliver 40,000,000 pounds of cast iron per year.

Signings

Two new companies joined the Odyssey family in Q4, 2021.

• **Southwest Steel Casting Company of Longview, TX.**

• **Townley Engineering & Manufacturing Co. of Belleview, FL.**

ODYSSEY UPDATE

Brad Clark, Manager
Research & Development

Odyssey 6.3.1

The past two years have been a challenge for many, but challenges are simply opportunities to overcome. B&L has a growth mindset, which means we will change, improve, and overcome any challenges placed in our path. Serving our customers is B&L's number one priority, which means producing high-quality software that meets and exceeds our customers' needs. As we plan out the future of Odyssey, we cannot only look at today's challenges but also anticipate tomorrow's challenges. This allows Odyssey to change and evolve with time, rather than staying stagnant in the past.

The first step in Odyssey's future is to step away from the past. Odyssey 6.4.0 is the first Odyssey release that does not include the Windows UI Interface. Released in 2001, the Windows UI is now over 20 years old and is ready for a peaceful retirement. Removing it from the development cycle allows R&D to focus on enhancing and improving the web browser experience, which is the future of all modern ERP applications. We no longer have to manage parallel development systems; we can solely focus on making the web user experience as powerful as possible.

The future of Odyssey also includes many customer enhancements and user-experience improvements, most of which will come directly from our customers through the B&L Community Feedback Forum. The Feedback Forum is the primary source for Odyssey's new features, so please visit the Feedback Forum to vote on your favorite enhancements. All enhancements in the Feedback Forum are worthy of adding to Odyssey, but those that provide the most impact to the most customers are enhancements looked at first. That is why voting for and commenting on enhancements is helpful to Odyssey's product direction.

We all know that smartphones are not going away, and making Odyssey available through a native App was an important milestone. Released last year, the Odyssey App is available as a native iOS app, a native Android app, and through a web browser. The Odyssey App has two main components – Material Transactions and Quick Clock. Using the Odyssey App for material transactions and Quick Clock has distinct advantages over using Odyssey Mobile or Odyssey Shop Floor Manager. Leveraging the power of the Odyssey API, the Odyssey App is lightweight and extremely responsive. It can be rolled out to nearly any modern device, and it can use that device's human interfaces to scan badges or barcodes. If you are currently using the Quick Clock through Odyssey's Shop Floor Manager, I encourage you to switch over to use the Odyssey App version. B&L Professional Services is ready to assist in any way they can.

Integrating with other applications is no longer a feature but an expectation. This integration is called an Application Programming Interface or API. Odyssey has had a version of an API for many years. First released as Odyssey Open Data (OOD), this API used a technology called SOAP. This is an older technology replaced by our RESTful API. Although the SOAP version is considered a legacy API, it will still be available for the foreseeable future. Moving forward from 6.4.0, the RESTful version of the Odyssey API will continue to be enhanced, while the SOAP version will not. If you are currently using the SOAP version, it is time to start looking at the RESTful version of the Odyssey API. One of the first enhancements we will add for 6.4.1 will allow the API to do a purchase order receipt. This new addition to the API will enable third-party applications to do purchase order receipts seamlessly.

B&L is starting 2022 with a brand-new release of Odyssey, Odyssey version 6.4.0. This version is the first of three scheduled 2022 releases, with 6.4.1 planned for release in May and 6.4.2 planned for release in September. The B&L Cloud is scheduled to be updated in February (6.4.0), June (6.4.1), and October (6.4.2) this year. The change from four releases a year to three releases a year hits a sweet spot that allows B&L to release new features regularly without causing too much downtime for our customers. Each release will not only include performance and stability fixes but will add new and exciting features to allow your business to make better decisions faster.

R&D's mission is not just to write code but also to build and support powerful business applications that help the metalcasting industry run a successful and efficient business.

Brad Clark

Vice President – Research & Development

JULY
- PRECISION TECHNOLOGY — Go-Live
- LAWTON STANDARD — Signing
- Odyssey 6.3.3
- Jim Eaton writes an article for ICI

AUGUST
- Boot Camp Class
- Crystal Reports Class
- Chris Lane joins B&L
- Jake Kickbush joins B&L
- GREDE — Go-Live
- THE SAWBROOK STEEL CASTINGS CO. — Go-Live
- AVALON — Signing

SEPTEMBER
- Spectrum in Orlando, Florida
- ESSEX FURUKAWA — Signing
- ALLIANCE METALS — Signing

OCTOBER
- Jim Eaton promoted to Vice President of Business Development
- Go-Live
- PRECISION TECHNOLOGY — Go-Live
- Odyssey 6.3.4
- Southwest Steel Casting A Greenbrier Company — Signing
- Shelby Lentz writes an article for ICI

NOVEMBER
- Boot Camp Class
- Tiffany Dewes joins B&L
- Andrew Hoesel joins B&L
- GREDE — Go-Live
- GLC GREAT LAKES CASTINGS — Go-Live
- TOWNLEY — Signing
- Tara McKibben promoted to Senior Software Development Engineer.

DECEMBER
- H&H CASTINGS — Go-Live
- D&L FOUNDRY — Go-Live

● Go-Lives   ● Odyssey Signings

B&L Information Systems, Inc.
4707 Rambo Rd.
Bridgman, MI 49106-9723

Phone: 269.465.6207
www.BLInfo.com

Never too early to start planning!

Spectrum 2022 will be held at the MGM Grand in Detroit, Michigan. The dates are September 25th-27th. This year's event will include live entertainment, Topgolf Swing Suite, and even axe throwing!

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 with our customers or you can also visit our website, blinfo.com.