



B&L NEWS

ENTERPRISE RESOURCE PLANNING FOR METALCASTERS

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SPECTRUM 2016

Over 70 attendees from more than 40 metalcasting companies came to the Inn at Harbor Shores in St. Joseph, Michigan to attend the B&L Odyssey users' conference, September 18th – 20th . Spectrum is the largest single gathering of metalcasters at a software conference in the world.

During Spectrum 2016, attendees enjoyed a Tuesday keynote by the President of the American Foundry Society's National Board of Directors, **Jeff Cook** of Muskegon Michigan's Eagle Alloy. A very robust discussion among the industry panel on Monday afternoon allowed attendees a chance to have their process and procedure questions answered from a variety of different viewpoints. The industry panelists included: **Colin McAleenan**, Wilkast Inc.; **Rich Hiley**, Kirsh Foundry; **Nick Fox**, Galesburg Castings; and **John Williams**, Boose Aluminum. Customer-led presentations by **AJ Menefee** of Eagle Precision Cast Parts and **Megan Sokolowski** of Maynard Steel showcased how users are creating success with Odyssey. Well-known industry expert **Mark Danly** of Danly Consulting also conducted a class in the new Odyssey Web UI Shop Planner.



"Spectrum is B&L's premier customer event. The learning and networking opportunities are unparalleled," stated Philip Laney, CEO of B&L Information Systems. "Our staff is available every day to help customers. But, during Spectrum, Odyssey users have direct access to our R&D Department as well as our Professional Services Department. This kind of access and cross-pollination of ideas is what allows B&L to create the best metalcasting ERP available."



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Introducing Odyssey 5.0 MR2 – now with CRM

Doug Hinman, Senior Vice President – R&D, set Odyssey users' expectations high by leading off the Spectrum conference Monday morning with a plethora of coming enhancements to Odyssey overall as well as the specifics of what to expect when Odyssey 5.0 MR2 released from beta. Changes for Odyssey 5.0 MR 2 range from simple user experience improvements to new functions within the Web UI:

Business logic improvements

- ▶ The ability to improve tracking by logging emails sent within the application
- ▶ The ability to override an accrued surcharge at invoicing time
- ▶ The ability to enter no charge requisitions and/or purchase orders
- ▶ The ability to see planned shop orders that are past due within the current day

User experience improvements

- ▶ Graphics improvements within the Intelligent Views
- ▶ Enhanced summary information with the ability to define Company Goals (KPIs) for over 60 types of data (Web UI only)

New functions within the Web UI

- ▶ Quick Quote, based on Quote Templates with automatically calculated field values and assignments
- ▶ CRM Module, harnesses the data about customers and quotes to create a module that tracks the sales pipeline from start to finish

Odyssey 5.0 MR2 information is NOW available via the B&L customer portal (Customer Login) for customers who host Odyssey on their own servers. Any assistance needed in the update process is free for any customers on maintenance with B&L. Odyssey Cloud customers will be contacted by B&L's Technology Department with the update schedule.

Go to www.BLinfo.com

The Age of Ransomware

A number of on-premise customers have recently contacted B&L because their Odyssey database shut down unexpectedly.

Why? The introduction of a ransomware virus caused by a user opening an infected file on a company PC. The virus then spread through the Y:\ drive network share onto the main server, infecting files on the on-premise Odyssey server, which caused critical services – such as the Odyssey database - to shutdown.

How can YOU prevent the spread of viruses like LOCKY or ZEPTO, in your on-premise systems?

- Start with being cautious, and never open attachments in e-mails from an unknown source.
- And, if you are not expecting an e-mail attachment from a known e-mail, be cautious with this as well. The senders of the "Locky" virus are able to spoof e-mail addresses that appear to come from within your own organization, such as administrator@yourcompany.com.

Tech tips for System Administrators to help prevent on-premise Odyssey servers from being infected:

- Keep anti-virus software definitions up-to-date on the client PCs and servers.
- Reduce permissions for the Odyssey share. Standard users only need read and execute permissions to be able to run Odyssey.
- Eliminate the need for the Y:\ drive share for the Odyssey client and use a UNC path instead. (Contact B&L's Technology Team for further information on this procedure).

Note:

This virus issue does not impact Odyssey customers on the B&L Cloud. The structure of the Cloud servers does not allow for the propagation of ransomware viruses and all preventative security for the Odyssey database is handled by B&L's Technology Team.



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ERP Enters the Cleaning Room

from Daniel Wile, Southern Cast Products

(Original Article Published in Modern Casting, January 2016)



Southern Cast Products Inc. (SCP), Meridian, Miss., uses Odyssey software system to help with scheduling tasks in its molding and melting departments. Recently, SCP began exploring the possibility of introducing Odyssey to the cleaning

room, which did not have a strategic solution for increasing efficiency. After shakeout, the goal is to get parts out as quickly as possible, but employees don't actually know if they are on pace for on-time shipment until castings arrive at inspection, which is the last operation.

Odyssey allows for two-way information exchange with employees through customized screens on shop floor computers. Employees can enter production data and look up information about a specific product or order. If production reporting takes place at each cleaning room operation, the system can produce a list of products awaiting a given operation. Each product can have a unique routing that shows the proper sequence of operations.

One of SCP's main concerns about implementing the Odyssey system in the cleaning room was that computers would not hold up to the rough environment in a metalcasting cleaning room. SCP decided to buy desktop computers, which have held up well in the foundry environment. The system uses a work station consisting of a Windows-based desktop computer, flat screen monitor, waterproof keyboard and mouse in a protective cabinet. In addition, a flatscreen monitor was installed in plain view at the entrance to the cleaning room. This dashboard displays the queue of castings for each operation that reports production. The computer screens are highly configurable. Anyone can browse this list of orders and see how many pieces are scheduled, how many have been produced and any associated promised ship dates.

About halfway through its implementation of the new Odyssey system, as of early January, Southern Cast Products had already realized three significant benefits:

1. Process retention through creation of detailed routings.
2. Increased visibility of order quantities and due dates to everyone in the cleaning room.
3. Improved information to help employees prioritize

With any success comes lessons learned. Some of the lessons Southern Cast Products took away from this project include:

- **Talk with Employees** – find out what is being done and why to establish clear goals.
- **Ask for Help** – recognize when outside help is needed (SCP used Mark Danly for training employees and testing the system).
- **Roll Out in Phases** – expanding original operations at a gradual pace to lessen the learning curve.

(See *Modern Casting*, January 2016 issue for the complete article on how Southern Cast Products brought ERP to their steel casting job shop's cleaning room.)

Back to School

The kids are back in school. How about you? Is it time for you to learn a few new things? In addition the on-line video training library available through the B&L website, the Professional Services Department has both classes and free webinars scheduled through the end of the year to help you learn:

More details at BLInfo.com/Events



Not seeing the class you need? Trying to plan for next year? Talk to DJ Medlin about your company's training need.

- **Odyssey Boot Camp (Web UI)**
November 7th and 8th
- **Production Designer Webinar (Web UI)**
November 9th
- **Crystal Reports Class**
November 9th and 10th
- **Production Basics Webinar (Web UI)**
December 14th



B&L Information Systems is delighted to welcome the following new customers to the Odyssey family:

- Canada Alloy Castings Company (Steel and Aluminum Bronze Die Cast; Kitchener, Ontario)
- Fonderie Poitras Ltee (Iron; L'islet, Quebec)
- General Die Casters Inc (Aluminum and Zinc Die Cast; Twinsburg, Ohio)
- Weatherly Casting & Machine Co. (Steel and Iron; Weatherly, PA)

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