

Tracking Your Fasteners

by:

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Process & Computing — Apple is Defining the Future

Steve Jobs and Apple Computer got it right when they created their iOS devices. These include the iPod, iPad and iPhone. This product line makes technology delightful. They have bright screens and easy-to-use icons. They make it possible for even the youngest child to have access to the immense world within. The design of these devices is unbelievably simple, yet the power of them is astounding. There are hundreds of thousands of Apps that will do everything such as help you maintain a healthy diet, keep your calendar, entertain your children, check the weather, chat and share pictures with your friends, etc., simultaneously. Until Apple made this remarkable technological breakthrough, computers were considered boring, and working with them was laborious.

Also, they're not slowing down with the development; rather they're speeding it up. The time between new releases of Apple products seems to get shorter and shorter. All the while, the new capabilities are even more dramatic in each release. The iPad 3 just came out, and there is a huge demand for it. This is in spite of the fact that they've quite recently sold millions of iPad 2s. The advances are a direct result of Apple's commitment to create devices that are exactly right for a particular group of processes. The reason that the new models are so willingly accepted is because they are refining their truly useful functionality.

Business Systems Will Follow

The future of business computing is going to look more and more like Apple devices in the near future. We are already seeing the direct use of iPods iPhones and iPads and Android devices in business applications. The successful in-house business applications in the future will make extensive use of similar technology. The system will be easy to understand and it will guide the user intuitively, through his or her job. No longer will the computer do this or that, but rather it will be able to do this and that, and that and that, simultaneously. All of this will happen without confusing users, and yes it will be delightful.

Supply Chain Integration

Ever since the advent of the World Wide Web, computers have become connected. More and more people are finding ways to use that connectedness to simplify work and to change where that work is done. A very good example

Dennis R. Cowhey, CEO – Started Computer Insights in 1981. He served for many years on the Illinois CPA Society Computer Information Systems Committee. He is a frequent author of articles for industry trade magazines. Before starting Computer Insights, he served as Central District Manager for a division of Litton Industries (now part of Rockwell), that offered inven-

of supply chain integration can be found in Computer Insights' iOS and Android-based Vendor Managed Inventory System (VMI System). Using this system on their iPhones or iPads, vendor sales people take orders by reading barcodes on their customers' bins. They upload the orders to the company computer system with the touch of a button. Once the orders arrive at the company, they are processed through an automatic replenishment system. The automatic replenishment system creates requests for quotes and purchase orders. If the order is going to Brighton-Best International (BBI), the user can check price and availability at BBI, and place the order directly on the BBI server. All of this happens without anyone ever entering in a part number. It's not as delightful as *Angry Birds* or *Cut the Rope*, but it sure does take a lot of drudgery out of everybody's life.

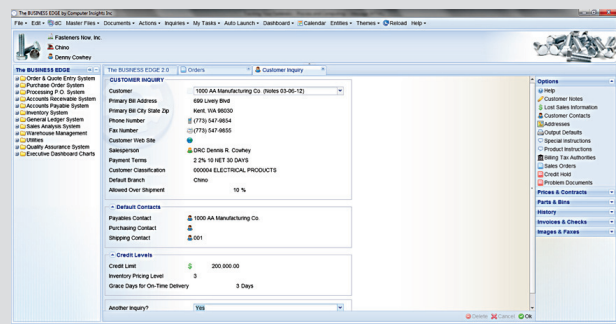
End Use Drives Replenishment Directly

Using this method enables the end use of the item to be the driver for its replenishment. Wasted inventory is squeezed out of the supply chain and many steps are eliminated. The advantage of this seamless connection is obvious, but the key to its success is its simplicity. Vendor sales people learn how to use it in minutes and not hours or days. They enjoy using it. It is infinitely easier than what they had to do before and it has a definite "cool factor". In short, in its own way it is delightful.

Icons Show the Way

Modern systems are beginning to use icons to visually lead users to make correct decisions. It's much easier on the eyes to follow colorful little pictures than to read monotonous text. Users can change the look and feel of their screens. They can choose their style and even which fields they look at in a list on the screen. These touches are attractive, but they are much more meaningful than that. They are the beginning of intuitive business software. The design of the screens reduces the need for training dramatically. Users have far less anxiety when they are trying to get up to speed in a system with a design like this. The system adheres to the process rather than vice-versa.

The illustration below shows how easily the user can be guided using these icons. The days of the three book manual are gone forever. Those manuals won't be missed. The more accessible we make the power of these computers, the easier it will be for everyone concerned.



The BUSINESS EDGE 2.0 Order Entry screen.

tory control systems to retailers. Prior to that, he was a Credit and Financial Analyst for National Credit Office division of Dun & Bradstreet, Inc. Cowhey received his education at Chicago City College and DePaul University.

Computer Insights provides the fastener industry with The BUSINESS EDGE 2.0 software for efficient tracking of fasteners.