

THOSE SUPPORT *People*

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Arrogance, Ignorance, and Learning: Here's How It All Works

by T.H. Floyd

"Oh, yeah, I knew that; it's obvious." How many times have you heard such a remark? It's common for people to think that they already know how things work. We don't take the time to really think about how we learn so quickly. I believe it's our innate arrogance that makes it possible for us to learn at all. Even if we've never thought about something before, we can "see" where new ideas fit into existing concepts. For people born after 1970, the idea that astronauts have been to the moon and back seems obvious, but even old folks born in the 1800's before mankind flew said, "Of course, I knew all the time that we'd do that someday. It was obvious."

Maybe arrogant is too strong a word for this feeling that we all have, considering that we were born helpless and knowing nothing. Ignorant is the correct word for how we all begin life. Making mistakes is second nature to human infants; there is no alternative. We make so many mistakes when young, and continue making them all the way through life, that it is a wonder we are not all too continuously depressed to go on. But, not only do we somehow go on, we bravely charge onward into the unknown future confident that we will prevail. Utter arrogance. It's not too strong a word.

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The Truth About the Manufacturing Calendar

by the tSGi Support Team

We've had several problems reported lately where we wasted some time trying to figure out why Work Order start dates were not correct. Our first question was whether the Manufacturing Calendar was current. We've learned that when dealing with scheduling, a common cause of problems is an expired MFG Calendar. After being assured the Manufacturing Calendar was set up properly, we worked on other possible causes for the symptoms only to eventually discover that it really was the first thing we had asked about. So, here is a full explanation of

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Trusted Advisor

Agility, Agility, Agility

If last year was the year of SOA, SOA, SOA, then this year will probably echo that theme by focusing on what end users get from Service Oriented Architecture: Agility.

Defining agility may sound easy since everyone is familiar with the word, but narrowing the scope of its application is not so simple. I often begin discussions of what we do by saying, "We here at tSGi are focusing on Manufacturing," but it's my own oxymoronic inside joke because manufacturing is such a broad category. So it is with agility (as in it being so broadly applicable, not it being a joke). Agility in a person could mean being able to jump out of the way of a bus in a crowded city—or avoiding crocodiles in a prehistoric setting.

There's a direct link to business survival if I ever saw one!

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Arrogance

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And that's what makes us different, so unique on the Earth. We act like we know how everything works. Even the least educated people you know think they know a lot about how everything works and how everything should be. How did they gain this knowledge? The answer is simple: they didn't. We can just fool ourselves into believing anything. It's innate—we are born with it. It's the ability to ignore the facts and make astonishing assumptions, then quickly assimilate a new fact into our world-view as if we always knew it.

It's fortunate that we are wired this way. If not, we'd be too tentative to make any progress at all. We'd be scared to leave the house, too afraid to proceed with any actions. If we waited until it was safe to go ahead, we'd never go anywhere.

Large, complex computer applications like MAN-MAN are so difficult to understand that, when faced with hiring a new person to learn all the ways to use them, we wonder how we'll ever replace someone who's gone. But progress in all things occurs one step at a time. That's how our learning works too. We make mistakes and the accumulation of many such events makes even a five-year-old a formidable force for understanding how the world works.

That's why we know that people will eventually figure out how their computer applications work. If there's no formal training opportunity, they'll use trial and error, just like they learned everything else. Even if formal training is available, trial and error testing makes ideas fall into place where they belong in our understanding of the world or a complex computer application.

The reason we know this method of learning a new system will work is that we assume the software will work; we, like infants, have no option. Even if we don't know exactly how, we assume that it will work somehow and that's what gives us the perseverance to keep working until we understand.

It's just like real life. Most of us make the basic assumption that the world will always "work" the way we assume our software must "work." That's just how people tick. Arrogant, aren't we? But, of course, you already knew that. It's obvious!❖

Manufacturing

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how the MFG Calendar works (on the MAN-MAN/MPE version) and maybe even some inklings of why it is so screwy.


Here are the pieces of the puzzle: a flat MPE file called MDCL.MDATABxx, two Function subroutines called MDFJD and JDFMD, and an obscure COMIN Variable, 17.

Let's start with the "system maintained" COMIN Variable 17. It says in the manual that it's Today's Manufacturing Day. But if you actually look at what's stored in there, it's a number like 218 or 510. How can that be today's date? Well, it's actually the offset into the Manufacturing Calendar. Oh, yeah, I knew that. It's obvious (see related article in the other column on this page).

If we explain what the two subroutines do and how CV 17 gets set, it'll begin to clear up this mystery. Every time you do a Manufacturing Shutdown (UT,999) and then do a Startup (UT,990), CV 17 is set. The line of FORTRAN code would be something like this:

```
CV17=MDFJDC(JDMPE(IDUM))
```

The first thing to know is that JDMPE(IDUM) just returns today's date in ASK Format (where, for instance, my birthday this year, February 3, is day number 12515). Passing this number to MDFJD (there's a special version with the C on the end of the name—it's not a typo—that is only used in this one place, but it works like the regular MDFJD) returns the "day number offset" into the Manufacturing Calendar. So that's how you get the COMIN Variable 17 setting. It is returned by MDFJD when passed an ASK date (today in this instance). A convenient way to think of "the day number offset into the MFG Calendar" is by considering it to be the MPE file's RECORD NUMBER for a particular date. More on that later.

Now let's look at the file MDCL where the Manufacturing Calendar is actually stored. It's a 1 word (two 8-bit bytes) record size with the EOF (End of File marker) set at 768. So there are 768 1-word records. Each record holds 1 integer number; it is a series of ASK Integer Dates. Because 

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it's a file of binary integers, you can't look at this file with the EDITOR or the PRINT command. In fact, there is no standard ASK program to look at this file (an oversight that has caused an untold number of issues over the last 30+ years since it was invented).

Most of you already know something about creating a new Manufacturing Calendar (some of you have been performing this task every year for several decades). According to the Appendix of the MANMAN/MFG Manual, you run MKCAL.MPUB, enter the starting and ending dates and answer the questions about working Saturday and Sunday and it creates an ASCII file called CLNDR (or whatever you want to call it) that you can modify with EDITOR deleting the holidays when your plant is not in operation.

Of course, we could go off into a discussion at this point about how just one calendar is not enough for an entire manufacturing plant. Some departments, like shipping and receiving, might be working Saturdays and holidays; others might work 24x7x365. With MANMAN, however, there is only one manufacturing Calendar and it applies to every function for every involved department from receiving to manufacturing to shipping.

Back to creating a Manufacturing Calendar: after editing the CLNDR file, use program MDCAL.MPUB to create the final MDCL.MDATABxx. The MDCL file has binary integers (ASK Date format), one per record, for each day you will be working. The starting and ending dates you choose when running MKCAL.MPUB cannot contain more than 768 dates. That's a weird number, huh? It's a few more days than 2 full years. It's exactly 256 times 3. Hmmm. 128 times 2? Shades of Buckminster Fuller...

It's not really important why it's 768, but it's probably a more reasonable number than you'd think and may not have been just randomly selected. If you include Saturdays and Sundays (i.e. your shop works every day), the calendar will last a little over 2 years. If you exclude Saturdays, Sundays, holidays, and shutdowns, the calendar will hold about 3 years of date data. The rule of thumb is to create a new Manufacturing Calendar every year. I think the point is to try to stay somewhere "near the center" of the calendar and away from the end.

Why not just start a new MFG Calendar with tomorrow's date? Why would you want to be "near the middle" of the calendar rather than right at the start? The answer is related to cycle counting (did I hear everyone say "Oh, yeah, that's obvious"?). When the dates to cycle count 'C' parts (determined by Comin Variable 142) are spread backward over their time frame, dates in the past will have been set. Those dates really should be covered by the Manufacturing Calendar, according to "the experts" who create the lore we pass on from generation to generation. Whether or not they are correct, you cannot run MGUT806 (Initialize Cycle Count Dates) if 'C' part's dates will fall before the start of the MFG Calendar. You'll get a warning message and exit to the COMMAND prompt.

As an even better rule of thumb than "every year," just look at MFG Comin Variable 17. That will tell you where you are in the calendar. If it's between 200 and 500 you are probably in good shape. If it is above 760, you are not using a Manufacturing Calendar at all—you are working every day. Yes, that's what happens when your Manufacturing Calendar expires. All the calculations just assume you are working every day. Actually maybe not all of the calculations; very weird things happen to UT308 and Capacity Planning reports when due dates are out beyond the end of the MFG Calendar.

Let's do an example to show how subroutines MFDJD and JDFMD work. Assuming not working Saturdays or Sundays, a slice of the calendar that contains records in the MFG Calendar beginning at 02/03/06 and going for the next 10 working days would contain records like: 12515, 12518, 12519, 12520, 12521, 12522, 12525, 12526, 12527, 12528. That's 10 dates: Friday, 2/03 through Thursday 2/16. This is how these dates are loaded into the MDCL file: Record Number 1 is 12515, Record Number 2 is 12518, etc. See that 12526 (2/14/06) is in Record Number 8? Notice that 12516, 12517, 12523, and 12524 are missing because they are Saturdays and Sundays.

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Maybe a short table will help clarify:

MDCL DATE	RECORD NUMBER	CALENDAR DATE	DAY OF WEEK
12515	1	02/03/06	Friday
12518	2	02/06/06	Monday
12519	3	02/07/06	Tuesday
12520	4	02/08/06	Wednesday
12521	5	02/09/06	Thursday
12522	6	02/10/06	Friday
12525	7	02/13/06	Monday
12526	8	02/14/06	Tuesday
12527	9	02/15/06	Wednesday
12528	10	02/16/06	Thursday

A typical line of code for calculating the start date of a Work Order, given the due date and using the back-scheduling method looks like:

```
STARTDATE=JFDM(DUE DATE,0)-WORKTIME
```

WORKTIME is the number of days it takes to “build” the assembly, and DUE DATE is the date to complete the Work Order. The 0 is an option for subroutine MFDJD that tells it to move backward to the prior date, not forward to the next available date. That way if the calculated STARTDATE falls on a holiday, the Work Order will be scheduled to start the day before the holiday, not the day after the holiday.

Let’s say the DUE DATE is Valentine’s Day and WORKTIME is 5 days. Using FORTRAN algebraic expression evaluation logic, the first thing that is resolved is MFDJD(DUE DATE,0). MFDJD looks up DUE DATE (02/14 is integer 12526) in the MDCL file and sees that it is RECORD NUMBER 8. So the value 8 is returned from subroutine MFDJD. (Obvious, right?) Then, as another intermediate step, FORTRAN would subtract 5 (WORKTIME), leaving an answer of 3. Finally, subroutine JFDM looks up RECORD NUMBER 3 in the MDCL and returns the date 12519. So, the Work Order would start on Tuesday 02/07.

Wonderful, maybe; obscure, definitely. Just be sure to keep your eye on MFG COMIN Variable 17 in all of your manufacturing databases. Oh, and remember to run MGUT999 and MGUT990 every day at 12:01 a.m. to keep CV 17 set properly.❖

Please join us for CAMUS RUG Day, a nationwide Regional User Group meeting hosted by CAMUS Midwest, CAMUS SouthCentral, CAMUS Northeast, CAMUS Northwest, and CAMUS SoCal.

This may be the last year that CAMUS sponsors RUG events, so it could be your last chance to meet with MANMAN, MK andMaxcim users in your area.

Terry H. Floyd Blanket Enterprises/tSGi/Entsgo/asp4edi 512-266-4400

Trusted Advisor

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Have you read recently about agility on the manufacturing floor? In scheduling and planning? In the manufacturing processes themselves? In the engineering design area? In marketing and demand management? In procurement? In IT? Yes, Information Technology professionals are bombarded by messages from HP and IBM saying that it is adaptable infrastructure that brings integration agility. And that leads us back to SOA.

Stories about SOA are everywhere, but they should be focusing on the S (Services), not the A (Architecture). In the context of SOA, services are computer programs (more accurately, probably sub-routines). The great thing about SOA is that such software is developed as what IT calls 'components' that are deployed as what users call 'services.'

We at tSGi are lucky to have been affiliated with our sister companies, Entsgo and asp4edi.com because we have not just been isolated working on MANMAN for all these years; we've been involved in many exciting projects together. asp4edi.com has implemented the Pervasive Business Integrator (BI) as a middleware tool doing EDI and B2B integration for MANMAN. Entsgo has used BI as the migration tool of choice for moving data from MPE environments, particularly MANMAN, to any target system. Our Entsgo team has also seen the IFS Applications™ evolve for the last 8 years.

IFS has been on the cutting edge of application software development, using techniques originally called Object Oriented Programming. Service Oriented Architecture (SOA) is the new name for some of the component-based methods IFS has used for the last ten years. We know that the SOA approach works because we've seen how rapidly IFS handles new technologies as they become standards, and how fast they create entirely new subsystems from scratch (like the new Max OEE—Overall Equipment Effectiveness module). Their output has been amazing; fresh applications and outstanding improvements in every new release.

What is the difference between software agility and mere configurability? It's like comparing being flexible to being nimble. They are related, but there's a difference. Flexibility is a measure of the capability

to move in a particular direction or manner, while nimbleness is about how quickly or how precisely one can move. Being able to select options from menus is flexibility, it is not agility.

From a technology perspective, SOA brings agility to software development. But what could bring agility to learning a new system, the most expensive and time-consuming part of implementing a new system to replace MANMAN? How can you get the most from the deployment of your new ERP Package? Is agility applicable to implementation? My answer is Yes and the methods are already known because it's the PEOPLE who really bring agility. It's the same answer that applied to MANMAN: participate in the Users Group, attend the Conferences, and continue to schedule regular classroom training in your applications. My recent experience concerning migrating from MANMAN to a newer technology is all with IFS, Industrial and Financial Systems, whom we represent through our Entsgo division.

Comparing IFS to acquisitive conglomerates like Microsoft Business Systems or Oracle (or even SSA) is like comparing lions to gazelles. Gazelles are renowned for their agility, but lions don't rely on that characteristic as much as they do on stealth. Aside from the fact that they just don't get along, lions want to get close to gazelles, but the feeling isn't mutual. Every now and then the lion catches a slow or sickly gazelle, but there are far more gazelles than there are lions and the fastest ones probably don't worry about lions much at all.

My point is not that some software companies started as innovators but then became ruthless predators, devouring innovators instead of innovating themselves. The inescapable truth is that, unlike animals competing in the jungle on a daily basis, individual companies (and individuals in those companies) change as they get large. They are rarely able to maintain innovation or control of their founding principles. Everything takes too long. In the last five years, it seems that getting large is the primary strategy for survival, because the major ERP providers have decided that size matters. To just drive this animal analogy too far, I can ask if there is some lesson of the dinosaurs that's being ignored?

How many people attended the big SAP Conferences last year? Or Microsoft's or Oracles's? The answers are unbelievable. 35,000 people attend-

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Support Services Available From the Support Center

LEVEL I (Basic Phone-in Support)

This value-priced service is meant for those companies with a good working knowledge of MANMAN who require minimal support. Our goal is to work with the original documented MANMAN reference and training manuals.

Level I includes:

- Standard phone-in hours: Monday through Friday, 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. (CST)
- Skilled technical support representatives personally handling each call
- Support for The Core 4 modules: AP, GL, OMAR, MFG, (additional modules may be added)
- Special Pricing for Training, Modifications and Consulting
- MANMAN support for the FORTRAN-coded system, including basic MPE/iX support directly relevant to the execution of MANMAN (Image and Query are considered part of this process)
- Hardware and Systems Recommendations
- Support for modified software, provided FORTRAN source code and full documentation are available

Prerequisites for this service:

- HP Support or equivalent for hardware; HP Support or equivalent for MPE/iX and FOS Subsystems
- FORTRAN Compiler and efficient modem access to the HP3000
- On-site HP System Manager and System Operator proficient in the use and application of MPE/iX
- Users adequately trained and proficient in the use of MANMAN Applications to perform their functions and discuss their problems

LEVEL II (Extended Phone-in and Disaster Recovery Support)

This service is intended for companies that need extended hours of phone-in support, more detailed help, and our Disaster Recovery Services. Disaster Recovery service is consid-

ered a warm site for major disasters and will cover business-critical operations. This level of support is recommended for companies with minimal IT support in their organizations.

Level II includes:

- All Level I services
- Enhanced MPE/iX support
- Extended phone-in hours: 24x7x365
- Secure HP3000 back-up system on which to run business-critical operations remotely until system has been restored
- Periodic testing to make sure data is restorable and usable
- Performance and availability guarantees
- Reduced pricing for services not covered

Prerequisite for this service:

Co-developed identification and documentation of your Business Critical operations.

LEVEL III (Remote Management/ Outsourcing of Systems and Application Operations)

This service is intended for companies with little or no MANMAN knowledge or expertise, or for companies who are migrating to another system and have shifted MANMAN resources in support of the new system.

Level III includes:

- All Level I and II services
- Database capacity monitoring and associated maintenance
- Batch processing
- MANMAN application management (Fiscal period “month end” close, etc.)
- Security Audit and Maintenance
- Installation and implementation of HP3000/MANMAN third party software on the host system
- System Configuration
- Performance and availability guarantees
- Reduced pricing for services not covered

Prerequisites for this service:

- ADAGER or DBGeneral database management utility

- MPE/iX from VeSoft (not required but highly recommended)
- Details of customer usage and expectations for batch processing

LEVEL IV (Off-site Management/ Outsourcing of Systems and Application Operations)

This service is intended for companies with no MANMAN expertise. Companies that prefer to completely outsource their operation and companies who are migrating to another system will benefit from this service.

Level IV includes:

- Hardware housed at tSGi Datacenter
- All Level I and III services
- Secure off-site tape storage and library management (labeling, archiving, changing, etc.)

LEVEL IV-B (Audit Response/ Open Access)

This service is intended for those companies who have made the transition to a new ERP system but still need to periodically access historical information and/or respond to potential audits.

Level IV-B includes:

- Hardware housed at tSGi Datacenter
- Timely processing of requests to Customer by Outside Entities or Individuals (Banks, Governments, Attorneys, etc.) to perform audits of information contained in the MANMAN system;
- Access and Processing Services for any versions of MPE/iX and MANMAN programs and data on your hardware
- Complete end-to-end service requiring little or no involvement from your IT staff
- Guaranteed Performance, Quality, Scheduling, and Timing expectations

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News from HP: Itanium is Integrity, not Itanic

Integrity is the HP product line that uses Intel IA-64 CPUs in servers from high-end Superdomes and mid-range racks (including blades) all the way down to entry-level backroom tabletops. Due to noise and environmental factors these servers are not intended for desktop use in office areas.

HP Integrity Virtual Machines (VMs) is a robust soft partitioning and virtualization technology that provides operating systems isolation, shared CPU (with sub-CPU granularity), shared I/O, and automatic, dynamic resource allocation that is built in.

This type of virtualization technology provides:

- Increased system utilization and scalability
- Flexibility of server provisioning
- Isolation of operating environments
- Improved system availability that enables:
 - Practical consolidation on enterprise-class servers
 - Rapid deployment of new environments
 - Improved performance and productivity

A single HP Integrity server, or nPartition, running HP Integrity Virtual Machines can create multiple virtual servers or machines with their own separate “guest” operating system instances with different operating system versions, applications and users. The physical resources of the HP Integrity server are shared among any of the virtual machines it hosts, based on demand and entitlement. Each virtual machine hosts its own applications in a fully isolated environment.

Integrity Virtual Machines 1.0 will support HP-UX 11i v2 guests. Support of Windows, Linux and HP OpenVMS guests are planned for the future.❖

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Trusted Advisor

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ed Oracle's Open World event at Moscone Center in San Francisco last year. 9,000 were at "the small" Sapphire '05 in Copenhagen. How many conference attendees is too many? How can anyone get any real attention at such an event?

I've attended some large conferences and think that these events have a different purpose than the MANMAN Conferences of days gone by. These huge vendors completely control and dominate their events. When ASK held their original MANMAN Conferences in the '80's, there may have been 1500 people, which seemed like a huge crowd, but the users still had a major influence.

Today, the real differentiator for IFS is access to their people. It's not a huge company where you can get lost in the crowd. IFS, as a company, as a group of individuals, "feels" like ASK felt. They are a truly agile company. Innovation seems to be their culture. It's not often you see an elephant turn on a dime, but smaller companies like IFS do it all the time because their agility comes naturally. This capability is designed into their products from the beginning.

What is agility? It is a word that can be applicable to many aspects of life. From your physical health to the health of the company for which you work, the quality of agility is a key indicator of a wide range of abilities that enhance performance. 'Feature/option-rich', 'lean', and 'flexible' are words that are often applied to both manufacturing capabilities and to software, but they are not agility.

You might think flexibility is similar to agility, but in a software context, flexibility means you have several ways to do something, for instance many options for performing business process flows. That's just items on a menu. The primary attribute of agility is the ability to change to something completely new and innovative, to something that isn't already in use somewhere else. Agility in software is the ability to assimilate new standards.

That's a big problem for MANMAN and many other systems: they have not or cannot embrace interoperable SOA. It's too difficult to change simple things, much less fundamentals, like IFS has been able to do. Business agility is the ability to quickly change

how you operate in response to customers' and partners' requests. Because tSGi is in the business of doing major modifications to MANMAN and because there have not been a lot of these large projects in the last year, we assume most companies have decided not to invest in major enhancements to MANMAN. No wonder—if you start now, by the time you really get it all working, it'll be obsolete.

Some of you have been able to bend your customers and partners to doing business in ways that MANMAN can handle. Others have modified MANMAN to accommodate necessary changes. Unless your company was in a stable, static, or stagnant environment, you did both or you wouldn't be in business today. How long you can keep this up is the real indicator of your company's need for a new system. Those who needed true agility went through some painful conversions, spent a ton of money, and left MANMAN and its FORTRAN/QUIZ/UDMS methodologies at least five years ago.

It seems that 2006 is already shaping up as MANMAN Migration time. If you don't look for a system to replace MANMAN that already future-proofs agility, you might as well stay with MANMAN and see what Oracle, Microsoft, and SSA really can produce before 2010. There's still time for them to get to where IFS was in 1998.

—Terry H. Floyd, Chairman and President,
Blanket Enterprises

tSGi will be hosting the
CAMUS South Central
Regional Users Group
Meeting in Austin
on
Friday, April 7, 2006.

Make plans now
to attend!



Auld Lang Syne

by Bill Langenbahn, Sales Support Facilitator

When I take the time, I enjoy reading history. I like to read the histories of companies when the book is written by the founder. I recently read the history of ASK, as told in *CEO*, published by Harvard Business School Publishing and written by Sandra Kurtzig. Her story, like so many others, contains the ingredients that I find fascinating. There are some common themes in the histories of some companies that make their stories great reading.

First, these histories are inevitably stories of great people making great efforts and sacrifices to achieve their dreams. The founders and authors seem to have no idea of their greatness and look back on all of their work as “the Good ol’ Days.” Their commitment to the goal was often recognized and even adopted by other interesting people.

The second common point is how these histories of great people building great companies are often intertwined with other great people and companies. For example, Thomas Edison had a winter home in Fort Myers, FL and was friendly with Henry Ford. A.O. Smith, Midwestern inventor and founder of the company of the same name, rubbed elbows with early car makers including the Dodge brothers and Ransom Eli Olds. The Wright Brothers collaborated with A.O. Smith to make an automobile from two bicycle frames. And the history of ASK is intertwined with that of Hewlett-Packard.

As I read the interesting story of ASK, I extracted some interesting historical trivia. While I realize that tSGi’s charter is not to ask but to answer questions about MANMAN, I believe that “turnabout is fair play,” and so I have a few questions about ASK and MANMAN to test you MANMAN historians, and I hope that you find them interesting.

Why was the company named ASK? (starting off easy)

When was Sandy born?

Why was the product named MANMAN and what was it first named?

From what university did Sandra obtain her Bachelor’s Degree?

What was the name of Sandra’s first employee?

When was ASK incorporated?

What are the names of Sandra’s children?

What was the first assembly used to demonstrate the MANMAN Bill of Materials capability and what important part did the assembly lack?

What was the name of the first company to buy MANMAN, and on what computer was it purchased?

What was the name of the first company to install MANMAN and on what computer was it installed?

How many software modules were included in the first release of MANMAN and what were they?

What does Sandra claim was the turning point for ASK?

What was the name of the company who first demanded financial software be included into MANMAN and what was the product called?

What was the first published, list sales price for MANMAN ?

Who was the first sales person hired at ASK and what became of him?

Who was ASK’s first customer on the HP 3000?

When did ASK first go public and what was the asking price for a share of stock at the IPO?

That concludes your test. All of the answers are in the book and so I have no plan to distribute them. The important thing is not how well you do on the test but having had the opportunity to participate in the success story that was ASK, as many of you did.❖



Business Continuity and Disaster Recovery— Planning

by Rob Gentry

Last quarter I ended my article on disaster recovery with the question, “Do you have a DR/BC plan?” If yours is like most companies, you have thought about it but have not really done much about it. Here are some more ideas to think about when putting your plan together.

The development of a DR/BC plan should begin with reviewing or identifying all business unit strategic IT requirements. Before you can mitigate disaster, you need to understand which business functions are critical. Understanding and documenting the criticality and risk, then doing cost/benefit analysis of providing alternate capabilities for each functional department’s IT needs will lead to strategies for continuous business activity even in the face of disaster scenarios. The final plan will eventually be a combination of these selected strategies that will mitigate disaster and receive the business unit’s approval and funding.

Strategies should be identified that address business recovery issues of the overall business as well as individual functional areas. The BIA (Business Impact Analysis) process should be a big part of the process of developing a plan. A BIA uses the method of assigning a numerical value to an event or function that can then be used to measure the impact of a disaster or disruption to the business. Dependencies can be established between events and recovery strategies that will make the planning process intuitive and reasonable.

The issues being measured must include the identification of time frames needed for recovery. Realistic Recovery Time Objectives (RTO’s) can minimize the impact of the event at an affordable cost. Location is also a critical part of the algorithm, as in what personnel are needed, and where are they needed. Don’t forget which of your distribution channels might be affected, both from the vendor/supply side as well as the customer/demand side. How are communication issues going to be handled? What data and information are going to be required? Where will the data input come from and to whom will it be distributed? Included in this research is the identification of alternatives to each question in each category.

Each alternative or strategy should be processed through some type of cost/benefit analysis. As different scenarios are tested, the total estimated cost/benefit will determine which combination of strategies will be the most economical to the overall company. These reviews could be very methodical, using a practical and understandable approach so that all of the alternatives are measured the same way.

The subject areas can be analyzed from the technical standpoint, but they should also be reviewed from the non-technical standpoint. What contracts and agreements have been signed, or should be signed. Do the existing agreements contain conditional clauses that require action? Have any reciprocal agreements been made that would be critical during a disaster, or a disruption of business? An important intangible issue is: how will the event impact the reputation of your company?

The personnel most knowledgeable in each of the areas of concern should be in charge of, or at least be major players on the team(s). This particular facet of the process will be the hardest to pull off as these people are usually the ones running the show and cannot be spared. Ask yourself where the knowledge base is and how to use it to be best prepared for a disaster. These ARE the people you have to have on the team, both to create it and to execute it.

As I said last time, if you have a plan, you have begun the process to protect your company from a disaster. If you have gone as far as to test it, you are a minority among your peers. If you would like to discuss these issues, or use tSGi to assist in creating a Disaster Recovery plan, contact Rob Gentry at **800-798-9862**.❖



INTEGRATION INTERCHANGE NEWS

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Why do your Customers want you to be EDI Capable?

There must be a cost savings for them in there somewhere, perhaps even more than one. But is there a cost savings for you? Probably not, at least when dealing with your customers. Why not consider doing to your suppliers what your customers who demand EDI are doing to you?

For the same reasons you want your Vendors to be EDI Capable!

The main driver for EDI in manufacturing and distribution is related to logistics: shipping and receiving functionality in your ERP system (OMAR and MFG/Purchasing for MANMAN). How you can streamline your shipping is based on how you can react to your customer's demands for more customization in packaging and labeling: they are gaining more and more control over your outbound logistics. So, you can take that same control stance with your primary suppliers by demanding they use your packaging and labeling. This enhances your Receiving functions. By far the most opportunities for innovation improvement are found in processing Receipts and integrating Warehousing "put-away" plans and production schedules with Inbound ASNs (Advance Ship Notices) that are really just electronic packing lists. Call us to discuss your options for improving MANMAN's MGTR400 and MGTR402 processes.

Some comments from a few of our customers:

MICHAEL BUI OF MEADE INSTRUMENTS CORPORATION in Irvine, CA is the first MANMAN IT manager to be responsible for overseeing the implementation and use of our new Pervasive Business Integrator™-enabled EDiX™ application. asp4edi.com has combined aspects of EDiX™, which we've been installing and supporting exclusively at MANMAN sites for almost 15 years, with the modern Business Process Modeling development environment, XML, and SOA technologies inherent to Business Integrator™. Mr. Bui selected this new technology because "we want to begin to phase in modern tools for this EDI project that will work with MANMAN now but allow us to move to a new system and keep at least 60% of our investment in business-to-business integration."

MIKE ANDERSON, IT MANGER FOR THERMA-WAVE in Fremont, CA chose EDiX™ several years before asp4edi offered the new Pervasive capabilities. When it came time to add new capabilities to his EDiX™ interface between MANMAN and his CRM applications, we used XML rather than flat files so his staff could start using new technology on a stable in-house process. According to Mike, "EDiX™ runs like we expect it to day in and day out."

JOHN MUNNS, IT MGR FOR SPAN AMERICA: "Terry's group responds to our customers' quirky specifications for our OMAR-transaction EDI interfaces. Every customer seems to require something that is special or a little different from the next customer but this has never been a problem for the EDiX™ guys. Their EDI experience and MANMAN knowledge lets them handle any situation."

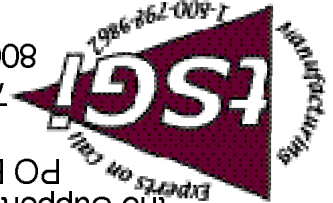
KERRY GILLIGAN, EDI ANALYST FOR G&W LABS: "EDiX™ is flexible enough to handle differences between our trading partners. Our customers expect many data points not found in the standard OMAR, but asp4edi finds a way to do it for us, without modifying OMAR databases. Terry's team was able to help us interface EDI purchase orders, invoices, and advanced shipping notices when OMAR could not handle it alone. His support team is top notch!"

asp4edi.com 5010 Doss Road, Austin, TX 78734 Call us at 800-798-9862 about your MANMAN integration needs

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in April

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