

NEWS

October
2006

Consultant's Corner



Photo: Vivian Frazier, Accordant Consultant

Welcome to the Consultant's Corner, dedicated to providing you with tips and hints for more efficient and effective use of Sage Timberline software. Each month, one of our certified, professional consultants will provide you with tips on how to get more bang for your buck!

Our Consultant's Corner expert this month is Vivian Frazier. Vivian has been consulting/training on Timberline since 1994 and has been certified since 1998 in the



Accordant Company, LLC

SMART SOFTWARE: Managing Information Overload

Since the late 1970s, waves of software and technology innovations have dramatically increased office productivity and provided easier, faster access to critical information.

But, too much information can easily become too much of a good thing. Being buried in details can be as unproductive as having no information at all. However, help is on the way.

Now, smart software can turn your tons of data into nuggets of information you can use to improve your company's bottom line.

SOFTWARE & BUSINESS PRACTICES: The Latest Waves of Change

The mid-1990s brought the Internet, a technological innovation with capabilities and uses that continue to emerge.

In June 2000, there were an estimated 17,200,000 Web sites; as of January 2005, the estimated number reached 58,000,000 and 85,500,000 as of June 2006.¹

In addition to offering virtually limitless information, the Internet has made e-mail the de facto means of communication, both at work and at home.

Construction Accounting modules.

Tips this month from Vivian:

When you need to modify the Setup screens of the master file records (e.g., Vendors, GL accounts, Jobs, Customers, Employees, etc.) you can use Conditions to filter the records. Then, as you click the Next button, you will scroll through only the records you need to modify. For example, let's say you need to change the telephone zip code for all vendors in the city of Yonkers. Go to the vendor setup screen and click conditions. Scroll down the field list on the left and double click "City". Choose "Equal to" as the operator and type "Yonkers" in the value field. Click OK twice. Then as you click the "Next" button (or "Previous" button to go backwards), only vendors with Yonkers in the city field will come up and you can modify them as necessary. Keep an eye on the lower left hand corner of the status bar at the bottom of the screen as it will tell you when you have reached the first or last vendor.

The following list shows which keyboard keys correspond to which buttons on the screens:

F1 = "What's this?" help
F2 = OK or Save
F4 = List
F5 = Conditions
F7 = Previous
F8 = Next
Esc = Cancel
Space bar = Toggles radial buttons on and off

Want to schedule Vivian as your

While exciting, these innovations have come with a price. Do you ever have so much information that you can't see the forest for the trees? Do you find it difficult to triage what needs your immediate attention and action?

Waves of software innovation, followed by mass adoption, have addressed inefficiencies and bottlenecks in the past. This article addresses how new innovations in smart software can provide relief to today's information overload.

SMART SOFTWARE IN TODAY'S OFFICE

So what exactly is smart software? And, most importantly, what does smart software mean to the construction industry?

Smart software makes sophisticated assumptions about the information you need, or an activity you want to perform, and proactively assists your efforts. Smart software can turn your computer into a "personal assistant" that knows what you want and provides it before you even ask. Smart applications are already showing up in word processing, e-mail, construction accounting, and project management solutions.

SMART SOFTWARE IN CONSTRUCTION

Depending on how long your company has been in business, you may have purchased and implemented several different computer systems. With each new system, you upgraded to newer technology and sought increased efficiencies by automating additional processes, accessing more information, and integrating redundant data.

In spite of these efficiencies, are you working less? Or, are you still swamped with administrative tasks? A new generation of smart software is emerging that can help you step away from the day-to-day details and focus on managing the business.

Specifically, smart accounting and project management software allows you to outline specific situations where appropriate parties should be notified when certain situations occur. Once the smart software notes your specific hot buttons, it silently performs each check on a predetermined schedule and notifies the appropriate party about what has been found.

Currently, smart software can link with Outlook to monitor business transactions and documents, and alert CFMs and PMs to issues they deem important. As shown in Exhibit 1, a CFM

consultant? Contact Judy Yannotta at 800-363-1002 or email JYannotta@accordantco.com.

About Accordant

Welcome to the Accordant Newsletter! Our goal is to educate Sage Timberline Office users by providing valuable information on products, training, and tricks of the trade. We also plan to share Accordant & Sage Timberline news and upcoming events.

Accordant provides leading-edge business solutions to construction, service & real estate businesses in New York, New Jersey, Connecticut and Pennsylvania. We specialize in the implementation, consulting, and training of Sage Timberline Office Solutions.

We've Moved!!

Our new address is:

**110 South Jefferson Rd.
Whippany, NJ 07981**

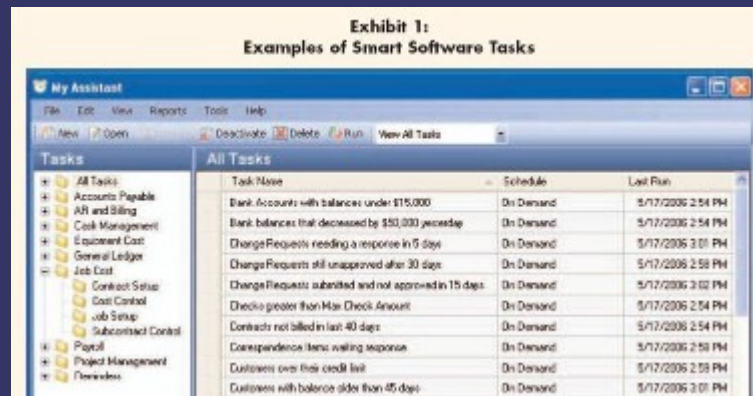
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-Bob Sandelands, *Managing Partner*
-Rob Nappa, *Director of Estimating*
-Bruce Dominick, *Manager- CT*
-Judy Yannotta, *Office Manager*
-Kathy Morris, *Marketing Coordinator*

can be alerted to:

**Exhibit 1:
Examples of Smart Software Tasks**



Task Name	Schedule	Last Run
Bank Accounts with balances under \$15,000	On Demand	5/17/2006 2:54 PM
Bank balances that decreased by \$50,000 yesterday	On Demand	5/17/2006 2:54 PM
Change Requests needing a response in 5 days	On Demand	5/17/2006 3:01 PM
Change Requests still unapproved after 30 days	On Demand	5/17/2006 2:58 PM
Change Requests submitted and not approved in 15 days	On Demand	5/17/2006 3:02 PM
Checks greater than Max Check Amount	On Demand	5/17/2006 2:54 PM
Contracts not billed in last 40 days	On Demand	5/17/2006 2:54 PM
Correspondence items waiting response	On Demand	5/17/2006 2:58 PM
Customers over their credit limit	On Demand	5/17/2006 2:58 PM
Customers with balance older than 45 days	On Demand	5/17/2006 3:01 PM

- Customers with past due receivables
- Cash balances at a specified level
- Projects where committed costs exceed budget
- Bank balances that decreased by a specified dollar amount within a certain period
- Employees who may have been left off a time sheet
- Jobs that have not been billed in a specified number of days

Smart software can also notify PMs about:

- Project cost codes that are near or over budget
- RFIs that have not been answered after a specified number of days
- Change requests that have not been approved after a specified number of days
- Over due submittals
- Miscellaneous communications that need follow-up

By determining the frequency that specific items should be checked, smart applications allow you to coordinate the timing of your alerts with your business processes. For example:

- Should the status of project budgets be checked daily, weekly, monthly, or on a particular day of the month?
- What frequency would you set for cash balances or contract compliance items to suit your business practices?

With smart software, once you've determined the details you want to monitor and the frequency your computer will check them, it lets you set what action should be taken and then executes it. For example, it might send an e-mail to a contractor whose insurance is about to expire or a customer with past-due receivables.

Regardless of the action, most smart applications will keep a log that provides valuable information. For example, which jobs, customers, or vendors do you have the most trouble with?

-Plus our Consultant Team

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SAGE TIMBERLINE OFFICE

SAGE MASTER BUILDER

Which areas are generating the most alerts? Who is following up on items and who isn't?

SMART COMMUNICATIONS

Communication is critical to any construction accounting departments need to communicate with and follow-up on numerous items with PMs, other contractors, suppliers, and business partners.

Proactive, timely communication can make the difference between an accounting group running smoothly or being in a constant state of disarray. Properly deployed, smart accounting and project management software can proactively send email messages to the appropriate recipients based on where the issues are discovered. (This includes architects, owners, vendors, or PMs.)

MICROSOFT OUTLOOK

Here's more good news: Microsoft Outlook e-mail messages are getting smart! Smart e-mails recognize specific parts of messages and provide options to act on that information. For example Outlook recognizes:

- Addresses, and provides an option to map them.
- Names, and provides an option to send individuals an e-mail or look up their phone number.
- Notifications from smart accounting or project management software, and provides the option to mark an item complete or access additional information from your accounting software.

Each wave of computing innovation brings increased efficiencies and productivity to the workplace. As smart software becomes more prevalent, it will relieve controllers, CFMs, and PMs from the burden of sorting through libraries of information. Nor will they need to constantly check on the numerous details required to run a profitable construction company.

To find out more about Smart Software, please visit Innovative Software's website at www.i-s-design.com. Click on [this link](#) to sign up for a free web demo of the software.

Endnote:

1. Web Site: http://news.netcraft.com/archives/web_server_survey.html

DENNIS EARNSHAW is the President and Founder of Innovative Software Design (ISD), Tigard, OR. ISD develops products that extend the functionality of Sage Timberline Office accounting and project management software.

Dennis has 21 years' experience with Timberline Software Corporation as product

manager, product director - accounting products, vice president of strategic planning, and vice president of Timberline's project management products.

He earned a BA in Marketing from Lewis & Clark College in Portland, OR.

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Upcoming Webinars and Training Classes

For more information or to register for a training session, please click on a link below or call Kathy Morris at 973-887-8900 x103 or email kmorris@accordantco.com. Accordant training classes are held in Morristown, NJ at the Headquarters Plaza.

Upcoming Webinars

Document Management

allows you to organize all important documents and files for fast, easy storage, retrieval, and routing.

Oct. 18, 26

Nov. 8, 16, 28

Field2Base

is a wireless field service and two way communication tool that allows you to increase the productivity of your mobile workforce.

Oct. 20

Fixed Asset

Fixed Asset Management Solutions provide total command over the entire fixed asset life cycle- from acquisition to disposal.

When your business involves heavy equipment, vehicles and property improvements, it only takes a few depreciation mistakes to overpay taxes and insurance by thousands. In many cases, these wasted dollars are simply due to improper or ineffective asset management.

Nov. 14, 28

MyAssistant

is an easy-to-use software tool that actively monitors your business and notifies you of the details that keep it running smoothly.

Oct. 25

Nov. 15, 29

Office Connector

is an Excel Add-In that allows you to access your Timberline

Office data quickly and easily.

Oct. 17, 24, 31

On-Screen Takeoff

uses cutting edge technology to generate takeoffs directly from your PC screen.

Oct. 22

Prime Bid

Prime Bid is a powerful competitive bid analysis software. If you generate competitive bids, work on projects over \$250K, and want the most accurate final number you can get, Prime Bid is your answer.

Oct. 20, 27

Project Management

simplifies how you manage projects by providing quick access for costs, contracts and document information.

Oct. 25

Nov. 3

**Classroom Training: A Powerful Way to Make
the Most of Your Sage Timberline Software**

Real Estate Accounting

October 23-25

Estimating

Fundamentals: November 1- 2

Assemblies: November 3

Project Management

November 10

Construction Accounting

November 13-15

Service Management

November 20-21

**Construction Software Showcase:
October 18, 2006
Refer a Friend, Receive an Award**

On October 18, 2006, Accordant Company is presenting a "Construction Software Showcase" at the Comfort Suites located at 1275 Route 1 & 9 South in Avenel, NJ. The showcase will run from 8:30am- 12pm and will demonstrate a variety of software packages. Come learn more about Sage Timberline Office for Accounting and Estimating, Field2Base, Master Builder, On-Screen Take-off. This is an event that you won't want to miss!

Accordant is now offering a "Refer a Friend" special. Your experience with Sage Timberline and enthusiasm for its products shouldn't go unnoticed. That's why we'd like to offer an incentive for every time you - or someone you work with - provide us with the name of a soon-to-be client. If you refer another friend to our showcase and they purchase one of our products, you will receive a \$250 gift certificate to any restaurant of your choice. All you have to do is pass this information along!

To register for this event or to inquire for more information, please contact Kathy Morris at 973-887-8900 x103 or email kmorris@accordantco.com.

2006 Sage Summit - Secret Savings

Sage Summit is an annual conference and trade show for all Sage Software customers. This year the conference will be held from November 5-8, 2006 in Nashville, Tennessee at the Gaylord Opryland. Don't forget to sign up for this event! Simply go to www.sagesummit.com and fill in your company and contact information. When asked for partner referral information during the registration, type ACCORDANT and you will instantly save \$100! The conference features networking events, educational sessions, an on-site support center, inspirational speakers, entertainment, and much more. Make sure to register today! **The last day to register is October 27, 2006**, so don't miss out!

Regards,

The Accordant Team



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