embrace*TALK*

Editors Note

Welcome to another edition of embraceTALK - 2011. The year is almost over and most of us are planning a well-deserved holiday. In this edition, we set sail on our Sales and Marketing Division, under the captaincy of Ian Foster and TALK about embracing change and plans in place to integrate sales and marketing to deliver "product and service beyond excellence".

"It is not the strongest of the species that survives, nor the most intelligent, but the one most responsive to change."
Charles Darwin

We TALK about a new software technology, called *Web services,* that has caught "techdom's" attention at ACS-Embrace. There is no question that these represent the next big technology change in computing. Read all about it in our Special Feature and see how Web services can change the way you use all your computing resources.

We welcome new staff members to our ACS-Embrace family and if you missed our inaugural annual ACS Kite Day in September, we have included some action pictures from our breezy, fun, family day.

It is with great pride that we present our case study on *"Making Business Flow through Embrace"* at CEVA Logistics. The Embrace Warehouse Management System *sinks* the notion of exorbitant implementation and running costs, allowing improved productivity and profits to *surface*.

In closing, thank you for your continued support and we wish you every success as you set sail towards a productive and prosperous 2012!

Jeanette

From the desk of our Sales and Marketing Director - Ian Foster

"In a progressive country change is constant; change is inevitable." Benjamin Disraeli

As many have experienced, more so in recent times, change is constant and how true that is at ACS as well. Internal restructuring opened a new opportunity for me to move out of the research and development environment and into sales and marketing, a change that has been exciting, challenging and a real eye-opener.

We have an experienced and dynamic team, which has grown over the past year, who go out into the marketplace, do research, secure new business and maintain close relationships with our existing, valued client base.

Sales, marketing and customer care is a living, breathing culture that threads through our entire team and to this end we are dedicated to working closely with you, our users and your technical account manager to ensure that we continue to deliver service and solutions beyond excellence. Our customers are our greatest sales collateral and for that, we thank you.

We recognise that marketing is strategic, while selling is tactical and that there is a need for both. Our focus is therefore to bring them both into perfect alignment, with a buyer-focused perspective. Today's buyers are looking for a different experience, not more product information and want partners who can help them take the lead in their respective industries.

In this fast paced, digital, always available world we live in, ACS is striving to get a clear message out to an audience of both existing and potential Embrace users, without the message being lost in all the clutter that is spam, instant messaging and voice mail.

As we strive to embrace the six "P"s of marketing – People, Product, Price, Place, Promotion and Process, we firmly believe that our biggest investment at ACS is in our people, who are the most important ingredient in our success.

To date, we have published our newsletter, embraceTALK, which has been well received in the Embrace community. Our "User Forums" have been well supported and have created an environment where we

are able to interact with our users in a mutually beneficial way so as to open the channels of communication. We launched our inaugural annual Kite Day which was a flying success amongst our staff, clients and general community. ACS-Embrace was also "flighted" on Talk Radio 702 in the lead up to the event. Congratulations to Matthew Futcher from Ceva Logistics on winning the much coveted hamper!

As Lauren Bacall said, "Imagination is the highest kite one can fly" and whilst imagination has no limit, our marketing budget does, but we are excited about new marketing initiatives and you will see more of ACS-Embrace on the digital landscape. Our aim is to raise awareness of what we have been told is a *"best kept secret".*

For those of you who are still feeling depressed about our early exit from the Rugby World Cup, here is some good news about South Africa. As a "Proudly South African" company, we believe it is important to look at some of the positives regarding our local economy.

The World Economic Forum data ranks South African banks as the "second most sound in the world", shaded only by Canada. "Unless your banks are sound, your economy can't grow" and talking of economic growth, for each of the last eleven years, South Africa's economy has grown faster than the two nations we look to for leadership, namely, the USA and the UK. Apart from its superior growth rate, South Africa's national balance sheet is one of the strongest in the world, with a national debt ratio half that of the best member of the EU.

Many of our clients have already taken advantage of and are embracing the new modules and enhancements in Release 13, looking for ways where Embrace can assist in creating a competitive edge in tough trading conditions.

ACS-Embrace remains an attractive and affordable solution, meeting local and international ERP requirements – a fully integrated, on-line, real-time solution, without unnecessary complexities or middleware required to bring it all together. We have been told that Embrace has always been ahead of its time, meeting your evolving requirements today and tomorrow, delivering "beyond solutions". —Ian Foster

- The differentiating modules within ACS-Embrace, along with the level of integration into the core financial and inventory modules, position ACS-Embrace to serve a number of vertical markets, in the Service, Rental, Warehouse Management and Logistics industries.

- The Embrace Warehouse Management System (WMS) can be implemented as part of an integrated, end-to-end Embrace solution or as a stand-alone 3PL solution and interfaced to 3rd Party Software.

- We cater for "local" & international WMS requirements, have a proven track record and are locally based.

- Embrace WMS supports:

  – Full order and inventory visibility across the web

  – Flexible configuration options

  – Multiple warehouses and zones

  – Paperless warehouse with RF scanners

  – Integrated shipping and multi-currencies

  – Wall-to-wall, location and cycle counts

  – FIFO and FEFO Picking

  – Fixed, bulk and mobile Bins

  – Order picking, wave picking and zone picking

  – Directed put-away and automatic replenishment

  – Pick, pack and load

  – On-line, real-time tracking and reporting

  – "KPI" tracking of picking performance and turnaround times

Special Feature - What to do with my Mobile Device?

As technologies mature and connectivity stabilises, the limitless possibilities and benefits of online Embrace interaction become reality.

Tablets, iPads and smartphones are becoming more and more commonplace in the work environment and whilst many view these tools as being designed for information consumption, the reality is that a mobile interface enables organisations and their people to move closer to the customer, creating a customer centric environment and promoting interaction and customer service at a very different level.

In many cases information is extracted from Embrace and uploaded onto a web server, forming the basis of an online interface. Typically customer product information is uploaded from Embrace, to serve as a product catalogue, while debtor and pricing information is uploaded to facilitate the processing of online orders. This information, however, is only a snapshot and becomes outdated almost immediately, as transactions are processed, either on the back-end ERP system or when online transactions are processed on the web site. Stock level inaccuracies, pricing discrepancies, etc. mean that the extension of transaction processing to the web can be fraught with challenges.

Embrace Web services

allows real-time access to enterprise information, thereby ensuring that timely, accurate information is available and mobile users are able to access the most current information.

Web services are essentially individual interfaces to specific sections of business logic or information from Embrace and when put together they create a robust framework for leveraging existing functionality from Embrace, onto the internet. Companies often use a number of external software systems, in addition to the Embrace ERP system, and Web services enables these external systems to become an integrated part of an overall efficient enterprise solution.

For example, online shopping websites would incorporate numerous web services into an existing online shopping site, to fulfil a multitude of tasks. These include credit limit checking on the customers account, real time stock availability, accurate pricing based on break points and discount matrices and the placing of a sales order directly into the Embrace environment. Taking advantage of the same logic used within both standard and customised Embrace applications, business rules and logic are leveraged into an online, mobile environment.

Another major advantage in Web services is that because Web services conform to open standards, a Web service written on one platform, e.g. Microsoft, can call another Web service written on another platform, e.g. Linux.

The innate flexibility of Web services make the notion of software as a service a real possibility and because Web services provide integration between two systems, software as a service refers to the possibility of not having to install software on iPads, smartphones, workstations or servers, but rather, being able to use it from across the Internet.

From a technical perspective, Embrace Web services are developed using a standard Web Services Developer Toolkit, making use of industry standard technologies in both the development and runtime environments. SOAP (Simple Object Access Protocol), XML (eXtensible Markup Language) and Web Services Definition Language (WSDL) are used as enabling technologies and all traffic can be secured using 128-bit SSL encryption.

From a less technical perspective, XML is the "Esperanto" of Web services. SOAP is like a virtual envelope for computer code that acts as an introductory letter, saying what is inside and where it should go, while WSDL is the nifty little code that allows different types of software to talk directly to each other. That's the real "Promised Land" for Web services - software interacting without humans getting in the way.

From small enterprises to large corporations, Web services can be set up quickly, cost-effectively and with minimal effort, giving access to the wealth of information available within the organisation, whilst maintaining security and utilising advanced features to ensure sensitive information is safeguarded.

Tablets, iPads and smartphones are out there, more and more people have them and use them, let's embrace them.
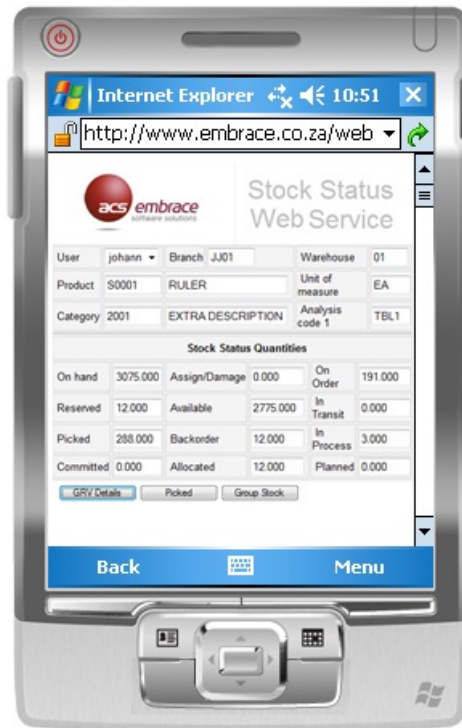
Making Business Flow
- with Embrace

At CEVA Logistics, we are passionate about contributing to the success of our customers by providing outstanding supply chain services. Every day we aspire to be brilliant supply chain experts, mastering all elements of business logistics and focusing on operations excellence.

In South Africa we design, implement and operate complex, end-to-end contract logistics and freight management solutions for a wide range of customers across all sectors. Our freight management services cover all air and ocean requirements supported by customs brokerage and value added services and we provide a wide range of tailored warehousing and distribution services across the country, including road distribution.

"Winning contract logistics business in today's competitive marketplace requires adaptability and agility from our Warehouse Management System (WMS). While we are part of a global company, which our clients benefit from, they are also able to benefit from our local Embrace WMS, which meets our unique local, technical and costing requirements. The system has been designed and implemented in such a way that our local labour force can use it effectively and efficiently, with minimal training and effort. To date, ACS-Embrace has been able to meet all our requirements, either within standard package or with specific tailoring.

We initially chose Embrace while we were negotiating with a prospective client, a leading US based company, in the dietary and health supplement industry, who were looking for a contract logistics partner who could provide them with a complete end-to-end solution. They had specific system requirements, which included a warehouse pick & pack operation with RFID scanners; lot and batch control; an interface to receive sales orders from their Head Office system and update stock and sales information back to their system. Unless we could meet these requirements, we would not have been able to secure their business. The customer gave us a very short time frame to implement and together with the ACS-Embrace team we were able meet their deadline and their expectations and were up and running on Go Live date. The company representative that was present at the time was impressed to the point that we have been used as a reference for other countries.

From that initial installation we have used Embrace for multiple customers in multiple branches and their

team has always been able to accommodate our needs!" **Richard van Rooyen-IT Manager, CEVA Logistics**

"It has been a pleasure using Embrace. It is very easy to grasp and use. We are becoming more and more self-sufficient, which means the on-going running costs are minimal. We successfully implemented Embrace, ourselves, in our Durban and Cape Town branches.

Embrace enables us to measure and reward picker performance. Pickers are expected to pick a certain number per hour. Since running Embrace with RFID Scanning, this number has increased by 30%. We often employ temporary staff and they are able to use the system in no time at all and exceed the pick performance requirements. We can look at pick rates per picker, enabling us to reward those who are fast and to assist those who are not. Pickers can see their own pick rate and percentage of incentive target, which provides them with an incentive to be more productive," **Matthew Futcher – IS&S WMS Support.**

"Embrace gives us:

- 🔴 *Accuracy throughout the business through complete warehouse tracking*
- 🔴 *Central visibility and control of inventory throughout multiple warehouses and branches*
- 🔴 *Control over products that expire*
- 🔴 *Control over serial numbers and locations*
- 🔴 *Improved accuracy and ease when picking*
- 🔴 *Low cost rollout over "like" environments*
- 🔴 *Billing reporting based on multiple criteria*
- 🔴 *Higher accuracy with products and containers scanned from receipt to pick, pack and load.*

With ACS-Embrace we have a business partner who shares our passion for providing outstanding service and contributing to the success of their customers." **Richard van Rooyen-IT Manager, CEVA Logistics.**

that the Embrace Desktop is due for a "facelift" and in considering our options for this, we will be looking at all the latest possibilities, including the latest mobile options available on smartphones, tablet computers and various other operating systems besides Microsoft Windows. In the meantime, you could consider using a Terminal Services type product, such as the Citrix iPad Client, which will allow you to run Windows programs such as the Embrace Desktop on an iPad within a terminal window. This is the method some other ERP vendors are using to get their software to run on an iPad.

Q   As you take a photograph of a train hurtling from Jo'burg to Pretoria at 200kmh, some bits of the train are actually moving in the opposite direction, back to Jo'burg. Which bits?

A   The wheels

Last Word

"Blessed is the season which engages the whole world in a conspiracy of love."

Happy Holidays

embraceTALK

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Team Embrace *TALK*

In the last 4 months, we have had seen some "moving and shaking" within the team. We start by welcoming and introducing you to our new team members and wish them every success.

Delene Klopper joins our Projects team as a senior financial business analyst. Delene brings with her a wealth of knowledge and experience in implementing and supporting financial, inventory and warehouse management software solutions. Delene also has extensive knowledge in SQL and Crystal Reports. We have no doubt that colleagues and clients will embrace and benefit from her expertise and experience.

Ivy Rhulani Kubayi has joined the Support Centre, to assist at the Help Desk. Ivy joins with experience in web development and technical support. She looks forward to assisting you, our users, with her friendly and helpful manner.

We say farewell to **Viv Lofthouse** who, after 18.5 years of service, retired from ACS in October. Viv was a member of the Projects and Customer Support Team, where she specialised in our Embrace Manufacturing modules, as a business analyst and trainer. We will miss her graphic explanations and expertise and wish her a long and happy retirement.

ACS Annual Kite Day

"Throw your dreams into space like a kite, and you do not know what it will bring back, a new life, a new friend, a new love, a new country."   Anais Nin

A splash of bold, bright colour appeared on the horizon, while bodies of all ages, shapes and sizes took to the field. The wind came and went but the entertainment did not stop. There were three-legged races, sack races, egg tosses and kite flying competitions throughout the day, with plenty of prizes to be won!

The "Kite Workshop" was a huge hit with children, moms and dads, with colourful creative kites being

manufactured. These kites successfully took to the skies and held their own flying next to other professional and stunt kites.

Professional kite flyer, Phil Hewett, added to the entertainment, with his stunt kite exhibitions and "sweet drops". The "Make a Memory" Hamper was won by Matthew Futcher, from Ceva Logistics after a "Kite Drop" competition. Proceeds from the Kite Drop went to the Ikwelilokusa Home for the profoundly disabled. This was a family fun day to be remembered and diarised for next year!

acs embrace
software solutions