

In Harmony

Future Business Systems Newsletter

Issue 3, Autumn 2000

From the Publisher

Here we are, already at the 3rd edition of In Harmony. I must confess initially I wondered if we would have enough to say in a quarterly newsletter – but in fact, finding copy has never been a problem! There are always new developments within Harmony, and technology generally.

In this issue we're also going to cover GST, which is a very significant event for Australian business. GST will be nothing like Y2K – it will have huge ramifications, and there is a lot of hard work ahead for all of us.

At FBS we have had 3 staff members dedicated to GST development and preparation since October last year, and their involvement will continue until July at least. Are you doing your bit? While we can prepare the software, your business needs to be ready to receive it. I urge you to discuss your GST plans with your Account Manager as a matter of urgency, to ensure a smooth transition.

As always, I would be delighted to hear your comments on the newsletter, or any other feedback about FBS. Please call me at the office, or send e-mail to msilver@fbsaust.com.au.

Mark Silver
Managing Director

Welcome new Harmony users:

Valiant Enterprises, Vic. Import and distributor of baby accessories and clothing. Brands include Emmaljunga, Tiny Love, and Baby Limited.

Corfu Jeans, SA, Vic and Fiji. In addition to their famous jeans, Corfu manufactures and distributes women's casual clothing.

New Balance New Zealand. Importers and distributors of sporting footwear and apparel. New Balance is one of the biggest names in running shoes. The New Zealand company is linked to New Balance Australia, which also uses Harmony.

We're growing!

FBS has recently expanded – we have taken over the remaining space on our floor, giving us 50% more area. Not only have we relieved the pressure on current staff, we have made room for the new staff we expect to recruit to provide our customers with even better services.

However, from a customer point of view, the real benefit is that we now have a dedicated training room, fully equipped and filled with natural light. We also have another meeting room. Inquiries about training should be directed to Karen Bouhadana, or your Account Manager.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 1 Welcome new Harmony users/We're Growing
- 2 Harmony and GST
- 2 Technical tip/New Staff at FBS
- 3 Harmony Point of Sale
- 3 Harmony Desktop 1.3
- 4 Camec – Company Overview
- 4 Electronic lodgement/Problem Report Sheets

Harmony and the GST

The new tax is fast approaching, and we have been hard at work for many months, getting ready. However, preparing for the GST is a partnership, and you must do your part also.

In December we sent you a questionnaire, asking for details of your GST plan, sample forms to be revised, and the name of your GST Project Leader. To date a worrying number of clients have still not responded.

As many forms must be redesigned for each client, the workload will be heavy, and we will be working strictly on a "first come first served" basis. Contact us even if you do not have your ABN.

If you have mislaid your questionnaire, please call our GST Coordinator, Karen Bouhadana, who will send you a new one. Please note that we cannot guarantee to have your forms revised in time if we don't hear from you before 31 March 2000.

However, the GST affects much more than your forms. The tax has implications for many areas of your business, some of which you may not have considered – cost of goods, inward invoices, credit notes and much more. It is important that we meet with you to discuss the changes for your particular situation. If you have not already done so, make sure you call your Account Manager as soon as possible to set up a time.

In terms of implementation, we have already upgraded almost all client databases to include the new fields needed. The programs themselves will be tested during April and released from May.

Upgrades will be shipped with complete instructions on how to apply the upgrade. We are also preparing comprehensive instructions for the "business" end – setting your system up for the GST, changing your prices etc. Different versions have been created for different types of business – please call Karen for the appropriate version for you. There is plenty you can do to prepare, so don't delay and make life harder for yourself in June!

Technical tip

We often get support calls related to Harmony performance problems. In most cases, these result from insufficient system "housekeeping".

Every time you produce a form or a report, you have the option of saving it. Many people save everything, and never go back to clean up their files. These files become larger and larger, eventually slowing down system performance. This is because every time you save to that file, the system has to go through the whole directory to find the next available space. We have seen directories with as many as 100,000 documents, when the maximum recommended size is 10,000.

(It should be noted that, on a Windows operating system, you would suffer from crashes. Because Unix is so much more robust it keeps working, although it can slow down dramatically.)

The solution is to go through your files every month, and delete or archive anything you don't need to access regularly – for example, invoices and quotes more than 3 months old. You can still access your archived files, however they no longer affect performance.

Instructions for archiving files are in the on-line help, or you can ask your Account Manager to guide you through the process.

New Staff at FBS

We welcome Eddy Bradley, our new Account Manager based in Melbourne. Eddy has a background in retail, having managed his own shops for many years. He also has experience at implementing accounting systems, giving him the perfect mix of skills for his new role. After the current training phase, Eddy will support existing clients as well as undertaking new business development.

Eddy's appointment brings the number of Account Managers up to four – this is an indication of how well-received our account management concept has been. Having 4 Account Managers ensures even better service and support for our customers.

Harmony Point of Sale

We have recently revamped and upgraded our Point of Sale system, and it is better than ever. Unlike most other POS systems, Harmony is an on-line system – all shops are on-line all the time. There's no overnight polling or "end of day" procedures, pricing and stock lookup are always accurate, and management reports are completely up to date.

Remote stores use the Internet for low cost, reliable connection – cable connections are particularly robust and very inexpensive.

Here are some of the features:

- Improved user interface. We have cut down the number of keystrokes required, made it easier to process tenders, streamlined screen layouts, and created an instant style/size/shop lookup for available stock. We've also improved the bank reconciliation to line up with multiple bankings from multiple stores.
- Rewritten layby function. The new layby allows the invoice to be raised at the time of the initial deposit being taken. There is also a new, easy to use layby payment entry option, which prints a receipt for the customer. The old layby method has been renamed "order entry" and can be used to take deposits and progress payments.
- New suite of reports. Harmony reports track sales by period, by store, by style or category, by region and by salesperson, as well as which lines are selling best, and who earns the highest GP.
- Time clock interface to track staff labour and movement. You can also track labour by staff log in, and the system will calculate pay for shifts worked, even across multiple stores and cost centres.
- Improved restocking – we've made it easier to see what each store has, and what they've sold, to make intelligent decisions about stock movements.
- Better customer loyalty options, including the ability to track purchases to individuals and create personalised offers.

To learn more about Harmony Point of Sale, call your Account Manager, or read our new brochure: Harmony POS and Electronic Commerce.

Harmony Desktop 1.3

Over the past few months, we have been busy improving Harmony Desktop even further. Here are the latest new features:

- You can now copy and paste between any application and Harmony, using Harmony Desktop 1.3.
- Harmony screens now scale themselves horizontally AND vertically. The system would always scale horizontally – that is, automatically adjust the image so that the whole width of the page could be viewed on your screen at one time. Now this feature applies for lengthy vertical screens such as scheduling – Harmony will automatically size the image to fit, so you don't have to scroll through it.
- New dial-in protocol. We have always supported RLogin, we now support Telnet also. There are two reasons for this: 1) Some Internet routers don't support RLogin, and Telnet broadens the range of available routers, particularly at the economy end. 2) Secure Shell is coming. This allows encryption of transactions through software, without the need for a separate encryption "box". However, Secure Shell is only available with Telnet.
- We have made dramatic improvements to the Harmony Document Viewer. It now stores images locally, rather than downloading them each time they are needed. Harmony stores all images automatically, then decides whether to use a stored or downloaded image, depending on what is best and fastest. This feature allows for much faster printing for remote users, especially over the Internet.
- Speaking of remote printing, we have improved this too – Harmony can now print to any remote printer, without needing to have each printer's driver installed. This means you can print literally anywhere.
- More customisation options for screens and toolbars within the desktop. There are too many to mention here – you'll need to try it yourself and see! In addition, programming one of the 10 customisable buttons now automatically programs the equivalent Function key to do the same thing. There's no need to use the mouse, you just hit the F key that corresponds with your custom key to get the same result.
- If you wish to have your existing Harmony Desktop upgraded or wish to purchase Harmony Desktop for the first time, please contact your Account Manager to make the necessary arrangements.

CAMEC - Company Overview:

Almost every caravan in Australia has components made or supplied by CAMEC, the biggest name in caravan and marine accessories. This family owned business manufactures, imports, distributes and even exports its products, which run to about 6,000 items. More than 50% of CAMEC's business is in manufacturing for the caravan industry, on the rise after a lengthy period of decline.

Harmony has supported CAMEC's information needs for many years.

"We started out with the core accounting modules, then gradually added others as we needed them," says Georgina Walton, Office Administrator at CAMEC. "We are always having modifications done to tailor the modules to the way we do business."

CAMEC now uses Harmony for manufacturing, bill of materials, distribution, importing, payroll, fixed assets, diary, quotations, automatic faxing and more.

The manufacturing modules in particular were extensively modified. Georgina appreciates the experience FBS brings to the process. "When we are looking at making changes to a module, FBS can show us what others in a similar situation have done, which is very useful," she comments.

Harmony has produced many tangible benefits for CAMEC, including improved efficiency and greater customer service.

"Having on-line stock information is not just good for us, it's good for our customers," says Georgina. "We can see at a glance if a particular item is in stock and place the order with a few keystrokes. The order confirmation can be faxed directly to the customer from the system, without printing any paper or trotting off to the fax machine." This time-saving feature extends to other communications, such as supplier purchase orders.

"We have better stock control now, because the system automatically prompts us to reorder when we need to," Georgina comments. "It generates the orders and sends them automatically. Harmony saves us at least half an hour a day in the purchasing department alone," she adds.

CAMEC has sales reps on the road with laptop and modem - the reps dial in to the main Harmony system from the client site to get up to date information and pricing. In future it's likely the Internet will be used, rather than a dial-in connection.

Georgina has nothing but praise for the support received from FBS over the years. "They really know their stuff and their people are easy to deal with," she concludes.

Electronic lodgement

We have revised Harmony so that you will be able to produce Group Certificates on plain paper, and electronically lodge Group Certificates with the tax department. We are currently awaiting ATO approval of the software, and hope to add this feature to the May release of Harmony.

Problem Report Sheets

When reporting problems, queries, request for new features etc. please DO NOT place the name of a person at FBS unless they have been previously been dealing with THIS problem. It can only DELAY the resolution of your problem (ie it will not go to HELP DESK for processing). If you have not dealt before with anyone on THIS problem, then either address it to HELP DESK or leave it blank.

Also when reporting a problem please give us as much detail as possible to help us to resolve it as soon as possible. Examples of problem report with not enough information-

- My G/L does not balance
- Costs are incorrect on invoice
- Printer "abc" does not work
- I cannot do my end of month

You need to explain WHY you believe there is a Problem and give us ALL the relevant information to support your case. Eg screen dumps showing an example to support your case.

The bottom line is that we want to resolve your problem as quickly as possible and we need your cooperation to do so.