

Computers Unlimited Users Group recap

By Gayle Smith, Computers Unlimited



Building better users

Computers Unlimited, developers of TIMS Software, hosted its annual Users Group Conference in September, creating an opportunity for up-and-coming gas distributor talent to experience TIMS Software and to network with both new and veteran users along with industry related vendors.

At the forefront – mobile applications

With the migration to cloud-based software systems and mobile on-the-go applications, a major focus of this year's Users Group discussed the expanding mobile capabilities for increased ease of use, accuracy, staff productivity, and bottom line savings in many areas for gas and welding distributors.

Smartphones and tablets provide the freedom to access and deliver real-time information needed by sales, service, dock, in-store, delivery, and plant workforce at a moment's notice.

For the user, real time data, account analytics, order and delivery capabilities,

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ships/returns and exchanges of cylinders and rental equipment, inventory/customer/quote inquiry, and much more are provided by a few simple clicks.

Technology to get the job done

Tom Klemz, of Bakers Gas & Welding, attended the conference and spoke to other users during the TIMS Delivery session about his company's move to mobile.

Tom said, “In today's world you

must be efficient. The means to achieve efficiency is simple with the mobile delivery product TIMS developed. For us, all paper, other than the driver's manifest, is completely eliminated. Drivers now scroll through their phones every morning to see what deliveries they have for the day. It's simple.”

When asked about how technology is changing for distributors, he said, “The train has left the station. This is where tech is going. If you don't become efficient, you lose, and you may even lose workers because your processes are outdated.”

Attendees also learned how the TIMS Delivery app provides four different delivery options for users. Robert Bertrand, Computers Unlimited Smartphone Solution Specialist, demonstrated how using TIMS Scheduler or Roadnet®, based on your fleet size, makes it possible for your drivers to see their routes by date, truck, and driver number, get real-time updates, and have the ability to add new orders on the fly.

Your staff can see driver locations in real time along with real time status of orders as they are delivered, rescheduled, or marked as undeliverable.

He explained how TIMS Delivery could also be used in direct mode for on-call/hotshot drivers creating both new deliveries and future orders on the go. Lastly, Robert showed session attendees how Delivery can be used for all walk-in customers at the front counter, or on the dock with simple account look-up for cylinder exchanges or adding hardgoods to an order.

Simplify Customer Contract Management

CU's (Computers Unlimited) development teams presented class instruction followed by panel discussions involving users of some of TIMS latest products. One such discussion included three customers who have begun using TIMS Contract Campaign Manager.

Ben Bisconer, CEO of Complete Welders Supply, explained, "Previously, in order to renew contracts, we exported them to Excel®, broke the Excel sheets up to all the sales managers and sales people, recompiled them all back together and sent it off to do a mass update. This module takes the tedious work out of contract renewals and streamlines it. More importantly, it gives users accurate results."

Linda Fette, VP of Helget Gas Products, was also part of the panel discussion, and said, "It's not only a major time-saver for our team members in processing increases, we now know the true effect on our bottom line dollars. If you want an impactful module, this is the one that will affect your financials tremendously from labor dollars to true forecasting and budget purposes."

As nexAir's Manager of Financial Analysis, one of BJ Barr's responsibilities includes customer pricing. nexAir

has hundreds of thousands of pricing contracts that must be managed individually.

BJ stated, "When we were only using Excel, it would take several weeks to compile, condense, and distribute all of the information needed for a pricing review. Contract Campaign Manager now does all of that in about 30 minutes, and our salespeople love the new functionality provided by the software. Deploying Contract Campaign Manager this year has been a great success."

Building better users

A reoccurring theme at CU's Annual Users Group Conference is to continue to build better users. TIMS products, both the core system and its mobile applications, are constantly further developed and as a new influx of employees join a distributor or a current employee changes positions, there is always a need for supplementary educational training. In addition to class instruction, TIMS support staff, developers, and product implementers are on hand throughout the conference if any users need more in-depth guidance.

At its Users Group, CU offers up both

the traditional aspects of its software for this group along with sessions for its long-time users that focus on new and emerging products. Other new features discussed were Accounts Receivable Worklists, Bulk Gas Manager, and Cylinder Plant Production & Replenishment.

Keeping your data close

Adam Goldammer, Business Intelligence Product Owner at Computers Unlimited, presented a full post-conference day showing data capabilities to attendees by sharing his skills to give users the ability to create powerful data visualizations, easily distribute reports within their organizations, and access the reports on their mobile devices.

The 2020 Computers Unlimited Users Group is scheduled for September 14-16 at the Doubletree by Hilton, in Billings, Montana. [gw](#)

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Page 76

