

Industry Insights

What's Your Enterprise Technology IQ?



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I truly believe that technology, when applied correctly, can take good organizations to greatness and even average ones to heights never imagined. Long ago, the computer stopped being the back-office number-crunching workhorse and became an enterprise-enabler, improving operations and accounting, alike, and creating competitive advantage through the use of technology. The big question is how can organizations reach this technology enabled nirvana? The answer is simple—one step at a time.

FEDA members of all sizes are thirsting for ways to do more business with less overhead attributed to each transaction, both internally and on the web. Since this is achieved through a collective strategy and not a single technology purchase, the first step is to assess the 'Enterprise Technology IQ' of your company. This quantifies your ability to leverage technology and achieve the goal (less overhead per transaction in our example). Then, equally important is the computer-savvy of the employees and their ability to learn new programs. The best technology stack available is almost completely ineffective when the user won't embrace new technology. Finally, the resolve of upper management to make the change is imperative to achieving

the desired results. Lack of resolve creates mini-coups stemming from folks refusing to change with the times. For example, some sales reps still use AutoQuotes version 4.0 (even though fine wines from the same era are now vinegar). So, management resolve is critical to the success of any technology project.

All in all, dealers who want to be in a position to take advantage of the economic turnaround need more efficiency and competitiveness through technology. The 'Enterprise Technology IQ' is a three-part number derived by scoring your current infrastructure (servers, computers, accessibility, architecture and software) and combining that with an employee staff resource rating that measures computer savvy and industry knowledge. For many, the employee rating is like a sliding scale—the more industry knowl-

edge, the less computer savvy and vice versa. The third piece is management resolve. In fact, the three components of the 'Enterprise Technology IQ' are like a three-way hanging scale (think scales of justice plus one) with one side being infrastructure and the other weighed down by employee computer savvy and the third by management resolve. So, you can't just raise your 'Enterprise Technology IQ' by buying new hardware or software without balancing out the whole picture.

Where are the benefits in this intriguing equation? Let's start with software and use the industry-leading AutoQuotes as an example. Few people take the time to set up AutoQuotes with

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For more information and a complete white paper on the 'Enterprise Technology IQ', email sales@trxi.com with a subject line: IQ White Paper.

Dealer's Notebook continued

a keen understanding of how the business works. It didn't take an IT guy to get it done (although I leaned on the IT staff along the way).

Our industry has always been technologically challenged. I saw that from the inside. Now that I'm a geek looking in, I can see it even more clearly. Not only do I encourage folks to try AutoQuotes, or any other tool that can invaluablely increase efficiency, I urge you to really learn it. Many AutoQuotes users are just scratching the surface of what it can do. They have grand pianos and are content to bang out chopsticks with two fingers.

Thank you to Stephen, Marc and Michael for sharing my vision and always allowing me space to experiment and grow. All that time spent working with SAP and AutoQuotes only reinforced what I already knew....I was a closet geek. Now I can let my geek flag fly. It seemed futile to let all those hours watching Star Trek go to waste. I was destined to be here at AutoQuotes where my 30 years of industry experience could be put to really good use. It truly seems that all those years were just preparing me for my current gig. □

Industry Insights continued

all of the manufacturer's discounts, special discounts and incentives that the program allows. When done correctly and deployed enterprise-wide, this creates a solid platform for quoting that can reduce mistakes and save tens of thousands of margin dollars for even small dealers in a single year. That's right, "it's not just for cut books anymore." So, if you could stabilize your company quoting and gain valuable margin dollars, why on earth wouldn't everybody do this? The answer is simple—not enough computer savvy. Sure the CFO/IT person will figure it out eventually, but can they get it done before quarterlies?

To further the example, if AutoQuotes is being used to the fullest, then we can explore other technologies to eliminate re-keying the project and save dozens of hours and countless keying mistakes. For example, if your accounting system has an AutoQuotes interface and handles project management, you can save significant overhead dollars through importing *vs.* keying in hundreds or thousands of items on the job. In addition, mistakes on accessories and options (LP, NAT, voltage) virtually disappear because you get EXACTLY what was in the quote. Conservatively, you can save .5 percent to 3 percent of the total cost of the job through hard overhead costs and the cost of mistakes. Moving on, you should be able to keep your accounting inventory up-to-date and synced with AutoQuotes for more accurate purchasing and list-price trends. Simply updating the list prices as they change in a few minutes can equate to thousands of dollars on the showroom floor. Again, why wouldn't everyone do this? Because the technology stack is not being fully used, the staff can't figure it out, or there is no plan to monitor and improve the Enterprise Technology IQ. It makes you wonder, doesn't it? □

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The advertisement features a black digital thermometer with a silver probe. The thermometer's display shows '39.4'. The probe's display shows '159.2'. The brand name 'Cooper-Atkins' is visible on both devices. A circular seal on the thermometer reads 'AQUA TUFF 351'. A small circular logo on the probe says 'A 1 YEAR 100% LIFE WARRANTY'. In the background, a vertical thermometer scale is visible, ranging from -40 to 100 degrees Celsius and -40 to 160 degrees Fahrenheit.

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