

POMS Pointers



Keeping you informed about the new purchase order management system

Welcome

Welcome to the second issue of POMS Pointers, the newsletter that gives you the low down on the new purchase ordering system. In this issue, you can find out how the first sites to go live are finding things, and who to go to for further help at your own site. We also hear what Drummond Hall thinks of the project, and get an eye witness report from the training course.

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Front Line Training

The POMS 'key users' will be the first port of call for site help and queries when POMS goes live. Given their 'front line' position, it was crucial that they received comprehensive training about the new system. We talked to 'key user' Chris Stolworthy from Totnes about the tuition he received and what others can expect from the training when it comes to a site near them.



The first users get to grips with the new system

Chris and the other key users spent a day and a half at Claygate with the trainers, learning about the system and then trying to break it!

"The first part of the training was a presentation about why we've got a new purchase order system," Chris explained. "That was important to set the scene, then we got down to the real business of trying it out."

"To be honest, we had a lot of error messages when we first tried to input purchase order requests, but we expected that. It's only by putting some real-life examples through the system that we can iron out all the bugs before we go live at the sites."

Chris and his colleagues got to grips with the basics of the system very quickly, but the training highlighted areas where procedures were missing. Chris explained: "Standard purchasing was fine, but on trickier areas, we realised that set procedures were needed and head office is working on those as we speak."

Chris is now organising training for others at the Totnes site with fellow 'key user', Cliff Salter. They have a training room with five PCs and a projector and are offering a three-hour starter session to give people a good introduction to the system.

"We've been asking people to come to the training armed with as many examples as they can of what they want to buy from whom. That way the sessions will be as practical and useful as possible," said Chris.

Chris and Cliff have even enlisted further help for when they're not available. "Cliff and I can't be there on the first few days, so we've enlisted the help of Alan Ewing, an Oracle expert, to make sure that everything goes smoothly." Readers of the first issue of POMS Pointers will remember that Oracle is providing the software for the system and have undertaken more than 200 similar installations.

Chris and Cliff are taking up their front line positions. Here's the full list of POMS key users:

DC London
Fiona McHugh
Sue Hunt

Hanworth/Newport
Jatinder Maan
Robert Davies
Charlie Tiley (Newport)

Totnes
Cliff Salter
Chris Stolworthy

Sevenside
John Parker
Steve Windsor
Clare Mardon
Melanie Stevens

Davidstow
Jackie Knight

Aspatria
Justin Storey
Richard Chapelhow

Maelor
Brian Redfern
Nick Rowlands

Hartington
Chris Browne

Maelor SDI
Tracey Cannell

Haverfordwest
Jack Eade
Tim Whittal Williams

Crudgington
Richard Dale
Paul Waters

Kirkby
Alison Mannion
David Linden

Chard
Craig Daley

Nuneaton
Gavin Rawson
Nicky Wolverson

Crudgington TDC
Alison Skeats

Crudgington NPD
Sarah Darrall



The Storeman's Story

David Price and John Billett have been sharing their experiences of the first few days of POMS 'live', but we also wanted to find out how it's been so far for the end user. We spoke to Ted Haddock, storeman in Fenstanton.

Ted explained how the new system compares to the old: "Before the new POMS, if I wanted to raise an order, I had to print out a request and then take it across the site and leave it for sign off. It could take two weeks to get something approved. Now it takes literally 10 minutes!"

A problem with boots on Ted's site recently highlighted the practical benefits of the new system. He explained: "A couple of guys at our site needed some new boots. The old ones were so bad that they couldn't work in them. With the old system it would probably have taken a week to order the new boots. This week it took just 10 minutes."

Ted admits that he had reservations about the new system when he first heard about it. "I'm not a big computer whiz, but I've got used to this really quickly," he said. "The training was very good and the whole thing is pretty self-explanatory. All in all, it's going to make my life a whole lot easier!"

View from the Top

We caught up with Drummond Hall to find out what he thinks about the new purchase order system. He was enthusiastic about the benefits it will bring to the business: "I can see two immediate advantages, firstly the speed of the system means we can reduce lead times for ordering, and secondly it will help to streamline our relationships with suppliers so we can all improve our businesses to mutual benefits."



"Sometimes it can be quite daunting learning a new way of doing things, but I know that when people see for themselves how easy POMS is to use and how valuable it's going to be, they'll be as convinced as I am that it's a great development."

Gone Live!

"Day one: seven purchase requests approved in seven minutes." That could very easily be an entry in David Price's diary for the first day POMS went live in Fenstanton.

Following on from our quizzing of David and his colleague in Frome, John Billett, in the previous issue, we returned to find out how the actual launch of POMS has gone down.

Q So, has it really been as easy as David's fake diary entry above would have us believe?

A Well, we went in with our eyes open – we weren't expecting everything to be perfect on day one, but things have worked very well. Having said that, it's still early days. We'll let you know for sure when the first few weeks are over.

Q One of the benefits we highlighted before was the speed of the system, has that lived up to expectations?

A There's no doubt it's a very efficient system. We get a request through via email, which is so much quicker than a hard copy. Not only that, but we can immediately see the chain of approval, so we don't always have to call round checking that the right people have okayed the request.

Q There was a rumour that your managers can now sign off some purchases. True?

A Absolutely! We reckon we see around 20-30% fewer requests because they're within our managers' own limits and they can sort it out themselves. That saves us time and gives our managers the authority they deserve.

Q You guys are painting a very rosy picture. It can't all have been plain sailing.

A Well, so far it has gone pretty well. That's not to say we haven't had problems, for example we can't access the detailed reports that the system will produce just yet and the system has been on and off a few times in the first few days.

Q So, others reading this will be looking forward to their own sites going live. Any advice?

A Firstly, get your key financial controls in place. In the move to the new system it's really important that no regular orders are missed, or that you end up putting double orders in. There are corporate procedures for this, but it's something we were very mindful of. Secondly, don't expect things to be perfect from day one!



The purchase request paper is binned

