

## Editors Note

There is an early morning nip in the air and the leaves are beginning to fall; autumn has arrived, along with our first edition of embraceTALK 2012.

In this edition we recognise that "Service" is the most powerful differentiating factor for businesses today and TALK about aligning our team strategy to meet the demands and challenges in an ever-changing IT and business environment. To this end we have set up a new division, namely the ACS Support Centre, to serve the needs of our valued client base. In the words of Sam Walton, "Our goal as a company is to have customer service that is not just the best but legendary!"

To assist our clients in offering the same level of service and support to their clients, we TALK about the fully integrated Embrace Deal Management, Service and Maintenance Contracts Modules which will help drive costs down and profits up.

It is with great pleasure and pride that we present our case study on how the "ACS-Embrace, competent crew" drives "Total Customer Support" at MAN Bus & Truck South Africa.

Our FAQ section has proven to be very popular and we have users asking about questions in previous issues. These have been published on our website and we invite you to visit us at [www.embrace.co.za/embraceTALK/embraceTALK.htm](http://www.embrace.co.za/embraceTALK/embraceTALK.htm)

In closing, thank you for your continued support and we wish you every success as you drive towards the second quarter of 2012.

*Jeanette*



## In this issue

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Left: Key members of the Customer Support Team

## From the desk of our Support Centre Manager – Debbie De Wit

We believe that Service is the most powerful differentiating factor for businesses today and are aligning our team strategy to meet the demands and challenges in an ever-changing IT environment.

The Support Centre is a new division, focusing on serving our clients and our Value Added Resellers. This new division was born out of the need to provide a single point of contact for both our users and our staff, where assistance is required on technical issues, Embrace functionality, fault log reporting and general knowledge base queries. By providing strong services in these areas, we will free up other resources, enabling them to focus on their own portfolios and give more efficient and timely resolution to client issues.

In holding fast to the ACS vision, our friendly, professional, service oriented team strives for mutual respect and the creating of strong relationships with our Embrace clients as well as across all ACS Departments.

Our company mission is to ensure that Embrace retains its reputation as a leading 'World Class' software package in the Enterprise Resource Planning marketplace and to provide superior long-term support to our valued clients and partners. To this end, we abide by the principles and methodology of the IT Infrastructure Library (ITIL) with our approach to service management.

As such, one of the considerations given to a service, particularly within the context of a Service Level Agreement (SLA), is the IT capabilities that combine to make a business process possible. Efficient business processes are highly dependent on effective IT resources. We have an exceptional combination of resources, which provide highly specialised expertise in support of the Embrace Software package.

Our Service Desk operates from within the Support Centre and is the contact point between ACS and the Embrace community, on a day-to-day basis. Being the central point of contact makes it easier for clients to report issues, log incidents and receive on-going feedback on their progress. Their goal is to manage, co-ordinate and resolve incidents as quickly as possible.

They collaborate with our Account Managers, providing our clients with a consistent high level of support. This involves investigating, reporting and testing of the Embrace Standard Package, based on incident reporting from our client base. In-depth analysis of requests and requirements is done before recommendations for inclusion in Embrace Standard Package are forwarded to our R&D Department.

To assist us in providing our clients with exceptional service we have implemented our Embrace Service Module for call tracking. We are currently developing the Embrace Software Log System, which will enable our client base to log calls and monitor progress directly on our website and maintain direct access to our Service Desk.

Our Support Centre is also the central development point for creating a knowledge base, leveraging from the tools and documents that already exist. The knowledge base is continuously being updated and made available as a resource.

The valuable contributions made by our Quality Control team ensures the best possible solution for business processes based on best practice. Continuous quality control is conducted on all new developments.

The ACS Training Academy also falls within the Support Centre and it is our responsibility to ensure ACS maintains its status as an Accredited Training Provider, registered with the MICT Seta ETQA. This ensures that training is conducted in a manner and environment conducive to a quality learning experience.

We are here to serve the needs of our client base. Since inception, our ACS Support Centre has lived up to its' exceptional expectations. Our clients are invited to make use of our services by emailing incidents, concerns, or other queries to [support@embrace.co.za](mailto:support@embrace.co.za) and we will respond with a follow-up call, a tracking number and commence working on the best solution, fit for your purpose. You can also call us on our direct line 011 275 2100.

— Debbie De Wit

## Did You Know?

Embrace has a fully integrated Deal Management, Service, Maintenance Contracts and Rental Contracts System, which is flexible to meet the requirements of any service organisation, irrespective of what equipment is being maintained.

Features include:

- Comprehensive measures to monitor service costs, revenue income, and financial performance over time.
- Identify potential problem contracts early so they can be addressed.
- Comparison by individual article of actual costs and maintenance revenue.
- Keep a full service history on record.
- Audit trail visibility of the revenue received.
- Support multiple service centres.
- Service articles may be moved between branches, customers and contracts.
- Enhanced cost and revenue tracking by article and site.
- Establish preventative maintenance scheduling that is efficient and easy to maintain.
- Automatically generate contract invoices and work orders.
- Track warranties.
- Give warnings when services are due.
- Use the interactive planning board to monitor the availability of rental articles.
- Saves time and money by making efficient use of assets as well as employee's time.

## Controlling Costs with Embrace Maintenance Contracts

The Embrace Maintenance Contracts Module provides a complete end-to-end solution to companies operating in the repair, service and maintenance environments. It is fully integrated with the Service and Deal Management Modules, giving full visibility of each service article for the lifetime of that "article". These "articles" include vehicles, forklifts, phones, air conditioners, computer equipment, i.e. any piece of equipment that requires maintenance.

Increased efficiency and profitability of the maintenance organisation is ensured through flexible contract management, which allows one to quote, create tailored contracts, define coverage and bill timeously and accurately.

Contracts can be set up to charge a regular monthly amount as well as a usage fee. Costs associated with the maintenance of the service articles are accumulated and the profitability per contract can be monitored and accurately analysed. A cost per usage unit is also calculated, e.g. cost per km for vehicles or cost per copy for photocopiers.

The specific type of maintenance covered is defined per contract, for example, parts only, labour only, parts and labour, specific parts, specific faults, defined services and charges, on an inclusive or exclusive basis. There is also an "add coverage" option. Defining different types of contracts and coverage options with pre-defined templates makes creating contracts fast, easy and accurate. Cloning of contracts is especially useful for fleet contracts. Unlimited service contracts per customer can be tracked.

Embrace customer contacts are used to direct the various documents to the appropriate people. Specific customer pricing can be built into a pricing matrix. The default pricing ensures speed, accuracy and price integrity and is controlled by senior management. Escalation rules can be included in the contract process.

Start and end dates can be specified with contracts set to automatically close when they reach their end date. Alternatively, they can be left open ended. Maximum usage units can also be defined and the contract set to terminate or impose specific job related restrictions if the maximum units are reached before the end date. These parameters can be overridden if authorisation to extend the contract is confirmed. Information on contracts about to expire is generated so that renewal notices can be sent out. These, as well as all quotes, are managed and tracked for forecasting and sales tracking.

Billing is usually linked to a specific service article or serial number, but "TBA" can be used where a blanket contract is required to cover a number of articles whose serial numbers are not known.

Billing can be in arrears or in advance and for various frequencies, such as monthly, quarterly or annually. Advance billing can be amortised according to required revenue recognition and if required, manual journal entries can be processed relating to the amortised provisions.



In addition to the main maintenance charge, other charges can be levied, either as amounts or percentages, on a once off or on a regular basis. Any work order items covered by the contract are recorded and charged against the contract, while items not covered will be invoiced to the customer.

Price escalations can be defined at specified intervals, such as on the anniversary of the contract, annually on a specific date, or on an ad hoc basis. Prices can be raised by an amount or by a percentage and percentage based escalations can be linked to prime rate or to the consumer price index.

If a contract is usage based, readings can be recorded at predefined intervals. Where no readings are received, estimates or minimums are used for billing and the usage reconciled when readings are available. Readings can be from one or two meters and can be billed at more than one rate. A number of usage units can be built into the maintenance price and units in excess of the specified number can be billed, while unused inclusive units can be carried over to the next billing period.

Trial runs and pro forma invoices can be processed for checking and authorising, before the final billing run. Multiple selections are available for selective billing or full batch processing, for example by customer, by specific contract and by frequency. To avoid month-end backlogs, invoices can be processed in the period immediately preceding the current period. There is a facility for processing ad hoc invoices, which can be included in the contract amounts, as well as for processing contract-related debit memos, credit memos and profitability calculations.

Comprehensive securities are maintained and users are restricted to only the functionality given to them. A full audit trail monitors what changes were made within a contract and by whom.

Extensive reports are available at the click of a button, giving full visibility of all revenue, costing and profitability on contracts, enabling the maintenance organisation to deliver excellent service, control costs and grow.



## Embrace Outreach TALK

“We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give.” - Winston Churchill

ACS continues to support the **Ikwezilokusa** Home in De Deur, Meyerton. The team has been busy raising funds, donating clothes, blankets and other items required by the residents. The general repairs and maintenance of the home is on-going and a lot has been achieved, including completion of the roof repairs. Earlier this year, there was an immediate and urgent need for a new borehole pump and we were asked to assist. Funds raised at our annual ACS-Embrace Kite Day were put towards the purchase of an electric pump for the borehole, which has now been successfully installed.

The team arranged a Christmas Party for the Ikwezilokusa residents at the end of last year which was attended by a large ACS staff contingent. There was an air of excitement and anticipation as we were surrounded by happy, smiling faces and bright, shining eyes. Suddenly gasps and squeals



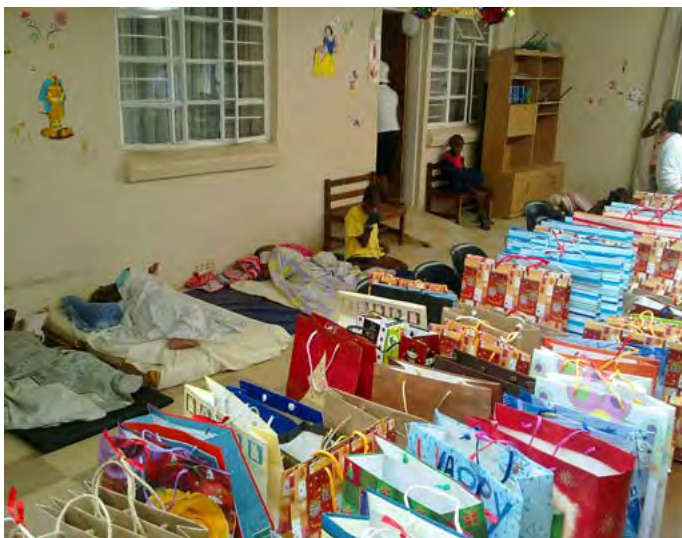
of delight – Father Christmas had arrived! (AKA Emmanuel Mashele, our ACS Technical Assistant). There were bags and bags of gifts and goodies for everybody.

A huge box of clothing was handed over and everybody experienced the joy and magic of Christmas as adults, children and caregivers all received gift bags, filled with toys, toiletries, biscuits, sweets and chips.

Back at ACS House, the walls were bulging with boxes and boxes of Easter Eggs and bags of shoes, presenting us with another opportunity to visit the residents and school children at the home. The ACS car was loaded with all the goodies collected as well as warm winter jerseys in preparation for the cold days ahead.

We thank the Outreach Team for the fantastic job they have done and their selfless commitment to bringing joy and warmth into the lives of those less fortunate than themselves.

*“History will judge us by the difference we make in the everyday lives of others.” - Nelson Mandela*





## A competent Crew drives “Total Customer Support” at MAN Bus and Truck South Africa



EMBRACE has been assisting MAN Bus & Truck South Africa deliver its promise of “Total Customer Support” since 1997, by providing a seamless view of the entire group of companies, seamless stock control and customer support through the very latest in ERP technology.

MAN Truck & Bus (S.A.) (Pty) Ltd, a wholly-owned subsidiary of MAN Truck & Bus AG in Germany, is a leading manufacturer of medium, heavy and extra-heavy trucks, as well as commuter buses and luxury coaches.

The South African operation has its headquarters in Isando, as well as an assembly plant in Pinetown, a bus and coach manufacturing facility in Olfantsfontein, central parts depot in Isando, used commercial vehicle operation in Centurion and a widespread national sales, service and parts dealer network, all driven by ACS-Embrace. The company currently holds second position in the heavy truck market and is the leading supplier of buses for passenger transport in the country.

*“Our requirements are diverse and constantly evolving. Fifteen years ago we implemented Embrace Financials and Manufacturing at our Head Office in Isando. Specialist Automotive Industry systems were implemented at the branches in 2002. We continued along this path for the next 3 years. The problem was that everything had to then be consolidated onto one system, which meant that we were doing everything twice. This was time consuming and caused costly mistakes. We realised that we needed to change paths.”* said Ian Wallis, Group IT Manager at MAN SA.

In 2004, MAN employed the services of an independent consultant and together re-assessed what they had, versus their requirements. The software had to offer a good value proposition; it had to be scalable to cater for anticipated growth; stable and flexible to meet MAN’s evolving requirements; user-friendly, and easy to implement and maintain. Based on this assessment, analysis and subsequent investigation, the decision was taken to standardise on ACS-Embrace throughout MAN SA.

*“Embrace includes all the specialist modules for our industry,”* continues Ian Wallis. *“Added to that, all the modules are fully integrated, on-line and real-time, giving us full visibility and a common view of all 18 of our companies, branches and privately owned dealerships.”*

***When comparing and evaluating possible ERP Business Solutions, the most compelling difference is the company behind the software. ACS has an excellent, competent crew and we have a good relationship with them. They have been supportive of us and are always willing to help when there is a new need or gap. Other companies we have dealt with have not always been as ready to meet our needs. They have made promises but often not delivered. And that is the difference. ACS delivers!”***

When the decision was taken to implement Embrace in all the branches and private dealers, there was a lot of resistance. It is human nature to resist change. However, it did not take long before they realised all the benefits, embraced change and today they say, “We love our Embrace System. We have more financial control, more stock control, more control of the business.” In general, MAN Dealers have found the Embrace System to be robust, methodical and a professional way of working.

MAN has adapted the Embrace system over the past 15 years and together with ACS has worked on a number of different aspects and evolved with them.

The Embrace Workshop/Service Module is used for servicing vehicles. This module includes an interface with the Oil Dispensing System, namely Oilpro. This interface controls the amount of oil dispensed to a job and has helped to eliminate shrinkage.

Embrace also interfaces with the labour clocking system which is used by employees to clock themselves onto service jobs. The clocking system runs in real time, which allows the individual performance of each employee in the workshop to be monitored. MAN is able to track and charge labour

## FAQ (Frequently Asked Question)

**Q** Is there any way that Embrace can assist us in measuring preferential BEE procurement?

**A** Yes, this is standard within Embrace, providing useful reporting tools based on the supplier database that will assist in supplying information required for BEE Procurement.

The BEE Parameters Screen can be found on the Supplier Masterfile in the Creditors Module and all BEE Reports related to Procurement are located within the Purchasing Module.

From a BEE perspective, the following Embrace reports should prove useful:

	Detail All BEE Payments to All Suppliers
	Detail BEE Payments to Valued Added Suppliers
	BEE Supplier Validity Expiry Report
	Summary All BEE Payments to All Suppliers
	Summary BEE Payments to Value Added Suppliers
	Non BEE Payments to Suppliers

Detail All BEE payments to All Suppliers – PO6300

This report differs from the Summary, in that a line by line per Supplier Invoice reporting is provided, as opposed to one total for all suppliers. This report is beneficial to run as it shows the invoice number and date applicable to the “the spend” being reported on.

The information on this report is based on the parameters entered on the *Supplier Masterfile Maintenance BEE Parameters Screen*. The report will identify, in accordance with the selected report criteria entered, a total summary applicable to:

- Supplier
- The Supplier BEE rating



- Total non-BEE spend with a Supplier
- Total BEE spend with a Supplier

Summary All BEE payments to All Suppliers – PO6310

The information on this report is based on the parameters entered on the *Supplier Masterfile Maintenance BEE Parameters Screen*. The report will identify, in accordance with the selected report criteria entered, a total summary applicable to:

- Supplier
- The Supplier BEE rating
- Total non-BEE spend with a Supplier
- Total BEE spend with a Supplier

BEE Supplier Validity Expiry Report – PO6340

This useful report will assist a company with easy follow up on Suppliers regarding the status of their BEE certificate. It identifies the BEE Certificate expiry date and provides the Supplier telephone number.

The information on this report is based on the parameters entered on the *Supplier Masterfile Maintenance BEE Parameters Screen*. The report will identify, in accordance with the selected report criteria entered, a total summary applicable to:

- Embrace Supplier Number
- Supplier Name
- Supplier Telephone Number
- BEE Certificate Expiry Date

## embraceTALK

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against every job. Idle time is also managed.

Loading and Planning is currently being implemented to improve the service level in the workshops.

The parts warehouse, in Isando, has a stockholding of R188-million and supplies 33,000 line items to a Dealer network of 26 in South Africa and a further 11 in neighbouring African countries. The parts operation forms an important part of MAN's 'total customer support' philosophy and an emergency service ensures that parts can be delivered anywhere in South Africa within 24-hours. Embrace gives us full visibility into Group Stock, wherever it may be, including consignment stock. Dealers can source from Head Office or a dealer closer to them.

The Embrace Deal Management Module is used for proposals, quoting, managing and maintaining vehicle sales. MAN has full visibility into all the detail relating to the Deal, including the deal vehicle, customer and finance house. This integrates back into the Service and Maintenance Contracts Modules for after sales service and maintenance of the deal vehicle.

*"Embrace enhances the way we sell and service vehicles. It helps us to ensure our philosophy of "Total Customer Satisfaction". We are currently implementing "Workflow" to streamline our operations even further. This will ensure that we are in line with corporate governance, speed up the approvals process and eliminate the need for signed pieces of paper", adds Ian Wallis.*

MAN implemented the Embrace Maintenance Contracts Module in November 2011, and is already enjoying significant benefits. They are able to manage and measure the profitability of each contract. This Module has streamlined the process and made their lives easier. They do not need to use cumbersome Excel spread sheets anymore and then capture and process the information again. They do things only once and at last have a way of systematically invoicing utilisation accounts.

Embrace keeps the "Full Service History" for the lifetime of each and every vehicle sold. Every authorised MAN workshop has a clear view of this information. Customers can service their vehicle at any MAN dealer, anywhere in Southern Africa.

With Embrace MAN has one system covering all the activities and different types of activities within the entire company. They have 2 different types of assembly Plants:

- 1) Bus Bodies - which move from station to station. There are 1,000's of different parts linked to these stations. MAN receives only the chassis and has to put in floors, lights, seats, carpets, along with everything else that is required. Embrace is used extensively to manage and control this process.



- 2) Trucks – which move to a different station every 20 minutes. The Truck Assembly Plant receives a Kit from Germany, called a "Truck in a Box". This goes through the line. Local parts and other items required are added to this Kit. A BOM (Bill of Material) is used for gross requirements and JIT (Just In Time) ordering.

Embrace Manufacturing (MRP) is used extensively to manage and control this process. Parts are purchased locally and overseas. The Shipping Module is used for importing goods, which gives full costing, with the actual landed cost, taking the exchange rate into account.

Embrace has proven to be cost-effective to license, implement and run. MAN has 405 user licenses but in fact have 900 registered users. This is because the license is based on the number of concurrent users.

*"ACS responds to new challenges, well! The Embrace CRM Module was adapted to meet our industry specific requirements. Embrace has evolved into an all-encompassing solution to meet specialist requirements but all these have been fully integrated into the package, ensuring our competitive advantage.*

*Embrace is suitable for our increasingly complex and diverse environment. Embrace and the ACS crew have been consistently efficient in assisting us in achieving our business objectives of total customer satisfaction, improving our customers' transport efficiency and offering them a comprehensive program for reducing their total cost of ownership", concludes Ian Wallis.*



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