Introduction

Many small and medium-sized businesses are looking for smarter ways to operate in order to survive in this changing economy. After gaining control of your finances (generally with QuickBooks), the next areas for efficiency improvement include order management, inventory control, warehouse management and manufacturing. In the past, this meant leaving QuickBooks and buying software systems costing upwards of $100,000 with reoccurring costs of $20,000 a year. Most small and medium-sized companies can't afford such high prices. Additionally, these systems can be complicated and cumbersome to use. Finding employees that are knowledgeable in the new system adds to both these costs and your frustration.

Fortunately, Fishbowl Inventory is an affordable solution that solves many of the problems that only expensive solutions solved in the past. Fishbowl integrates with Intuit's QuickBooks and is the leading inventory control solution for manufacturers and wholesale distributors. It allows companies to continue to use the QuickBooks software they already know. In short, Fishbowl provides solutions to many problems faced by small and medium-sized businesses that are struggling in today's highly competitive business world.

Common Inventory Control Issues Faced by Small Businesses

The cost of purchasing and/or manufacturing product to sell is often a company's largest expense. With the stakes so high, it is essential for you to know how much of a product is available to sell and where it is located.

Keeping too much inventory on hand may tie up cash that could be put to better use in other areas, such as marketing, new stores, employees, etc. You also risk having your products expire or go out of style before they are sold. Cash-flow problems are a major cause of business failures. Keeping too little inventory on hand risks frustrating customers with out-of-stock items, which results in losing sales and repeat customers.

> *"Know how much inventory is on hand. Inventory is money. Old and obsolete inventory can paralyze your business"*
>
> Source: *"Handbook for Small Business" from the U.S. Small Business Administration*

Manufacturers worry about production line constraints. Inventory sitting on the production line between processes needlessly ties up cash and storage space. It also points to areas where improvements can be made to increase the speed and throughput of your manufacturing process.

Shrinkage is a concern for anyone with raw goods and products to sell. Whether from theft, damage, material losses, obsolescence, or changing demand trends, inventory has a way of decreasing in value over time. Companies need to be aware of these issues and improve processes to minimize them.

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Determining ideal inventory levels is a constant balancing act and is key to a healthy, growing business. It is highly beneficial to use a software solution that can help you accurately determine the most important variables to track in your business.

Order Management

Tying your order entry system into your inventory control system is critical when it comes to controlling inventory and satisfying customers. Quickly entering customer orders and tracking them throughout your company is crucial to providing a good customer experience. Having an integrated system that tracks purchasing, receiving, stocking, picking, packing, shipping and accounting brings cohesiveness to your organization as you increase your bottom line and move up to the next level.

> *"Experience indicates that the computer applications most beneficial to a small business are accounts payable, order entry, accounts receivable, inventory control and general ledger."*
>
> Source: "Handbook for Small Business" from the U.S. Small Business Administration

The following is a list of software features that growing businesses often need:

- *Ability to track and report on inventory in multiple locations/warehouses/storefronts*
- *Single data entry point for multiple systems*
- *Insightful reports enabling better decision making*
- *Ability to track parts using serial number, lot number, revision and/or expiration date*
- *Pricing rules for various customers or sales events*
- *A Product Configurator that allows customers or production managers to customize a product, thereby increasing customer satisfaction and reducing quoting errors (e.g., assemble-to-order and build-to-order)*
- *Tools for purchasing, receiving, selling, picking, packing and shipping*
- *Ability to land costs*
- *Optional accounting costing methods. (e.g., LIFO, FIFO, Standard or Average Costing)*
- *Manufacturing with multiple bills of materials per part*
- *Work orders to track progress and assign tasks*
- *Barcodes to increase the speed and accuracy of working with inventory*
- *Ability to accept credit cards and other forms of payment*

Fishbowl Inventory

Fishbowl Inventory, as the name implies, allows you to view and analyze your business processes from whatever angle you want. Known for its ease of use and clean user interface, Fishbowl helps companies gain control over many areas of a growing business, and it does so at a fraction of the cost of what most companies expect. Fishbowl Inventory is the #1-requested application for QuickBooks users looking for fully integrated inventory control and light manufacturing.

The fact that Fishbowl integrates with QuickBooks is a plus for business owners and accountants as you can continue with the

accounting program you are accustomed to using. It allows back-office workers to make inventory, warehouse, and manufacturing entries into Fishbowl rather than requiring them to have access to the accounting details in QuickBooks. Fishbowl also provides user rights so that employees only see the areas of the system to which they need access—access to cost values. By restricting access, you keep your data safer and reduce the potential for errors.

Fishbowl Inventory allows you to know your on-hand inventory at a given location—as well as where to find it. Since Fishbowl integrates with QuickBooks, there is no need to reenter the same information in QuickBooks and your shipping application. When exported from Fishbowl, invoices and bills are automatically created in QuickBooks. This saves you a step and ensures your data matches up across applications.

Being able to analyze the data stored in an inventory control system is absolutely mandatory. Fishbowl has, as one customer put it, a "myriad of useful reports" to gain insight into your business. Custom reports can also be created through Fishbowl and its partners. Fishbowl can run on Linux systems, providing another low-cost option for businesses. The desktop portion of Fishbowl can also run on Macs. Some Fishbowl features are available on tablets and smartphones through an app call Surfboard.

Fishbowl is flexible to use in a host of different situations due to its growing Software Development Kit (SDK) as well as Fishbowl's ability to import and export Comma Separated Value (CSV) files. The SDK allows developers to integrate Fishbowl into web stores, Customer Relationship Management (CRM) systems or other legacy systems and processes. Fishbowl Inventory provides many features designed to help businesses move up, without moving away from their core accounting system–QuickBooks.

Fishbowl Partner Marketplace

Developers building on the Fishbowl platform are creating an ecosystem of valuable solutions for customers. You can find these solutions that integrate directly with Fishbowl Inventory in the Fishbowl Partner Marketplace. Our partners offer dozens of hardware and software tools in the marketplace, including CRMs, point of sale, merchant services, custom reports, barcode scanners, data migration, tablet apps, server hosting, and more.

> *"Developers building on the Fishbowl platform are creating an ecosystem of valuable solutions for customers."*
>
> *Fishbowl Partner Marketplace*

Ease of Use

Introducing a new system into any business can be time-consuming and complicated. Fishbowl, however, is known for its ease of use and has both online documentation available via the Fishbowl Wiki and more than 60 online training videos to help you better understand how to implement Fishbowl.

UPS Ready

Fishbowl Inventory is the first inventory management software in its class to be certified as UPS Ready. This means that Fishbowl has UPS shipping features pre-installed in its software with no setup required. Without having to open a Web browser or leave Fishbowl, you can send shipment notices to UPS, compare cost estimates for various shipping methods, print UPS labels, and email packing lists and tracking numbers to customers. Shipping is a lot more convenient with Fishbowl's UPS Ready features.

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Warehouse Management

Fishbowl Mobile is a robust Warehouse Management System that provides inventory control through the process of receiving inventory, putting it into stock locations, and moving it to production stations, as well as facilitating selling, picking, packing and shipping. Fishbowl Mobile does all this and helps you rotate through inventory before it becomes old, obsolete or out of style/season.

Fishbowl Mobile can identify and label inventory with industry standard ABC codes to help in laying out your warehouse in a more efficient manner for quickly picking orders. It can also help calculate the ideal reorder levels for your products and automatically generate purchase orders based on those key metrics.

Multiple Locations

As companies grow, they discover the need for tracking inventory at multiple locations, whether it is multiple warehouses or inventory kept in bins, trucks, etc. Fishbowl Inventory allows you to track inventory across unlimited locations and provides transfer orders to move inventory between sites. You may pick, pack and ship your inventory from one warehouse and receive it in another across town or across the country

> *"Fishbowl Inventory allows you to track inventory across unlimited locations."*

Traceability

Some companies require the ability to track inventory all the way from the purchase of raw materials to the manufacturing of the product, to the final customer delivery. Serial numbers, lot numbers, revision numbers and expiration dates are common attributes that facilitate this. Fishbowl Inventory provides the ability to handle these tracking methods and any others your business uses, such as color, size, etc.

Fishbowl also provides an unlimited number of custom fields for orders, customers, vendors, parts and products. These custom fields are different from the tracking fields mentioned above because they don't enforce inventory divisions. They provide the ability to attach other attributes to objects.

Product Configurator

Product customization has become increasingly expected, as customers want things their own way. Being able to quickly and accurately give quotes to customers and have those quotes flow into the production process reduces lead times, increases customer satisfaction, and saves time for engineers and sales reps who normally calculate these things by hand. If your product can be sold in multiple colors, sizes or with other custom options, Fishbowl provides a way to define and use them.

Manufacturing

The features in Fishbowl's Manufacturing Option were designed with the Production Manager in mind and these features have three primary functions. First, the manufacturing features are designed to simplify the arduous task of organizing work, materials and processes. Second, Fishbowl's Manufacture Orders, Work Orders and Bills of Materials give users the ability to

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streamline manufacturing processes and optimize custom jobs. Third is customization—Fishbowl's diverse manufacturing option can be customized to meet most assembly, job shop and manufacturing needs.

Fishbowl's Manufacturing Option comes equipped with two modules: Manufacture Orders and Bill of Materials. The Manufacture Orders module is a powerful tool for Fishbowl that allows a user to create and track assembly, disassembly or repair work orders. It keeps track of your customers' information, including sales order data, scheduling data and costs. Advanced manufacturers can use Fishbowl to automatically create work orders for handling multilevel assemblies; tracking stages; tracking locations for work orders; and providing detailed instructions and travelers for your shop floor.

Because Fishbowl's Manufacturing Option has features that are robust yet customizable, they can handle the need of a wide variety of industry needs, including wholesale and distribution, kitting and assembly line manufacturing. Fishbowl makes any manufacturing or assembly process flow smoothly and efficiently.

Custom Pricing

It is often advantageous to be able to offer different prices to different types of customers. It is important that during the order creation process, the prices established for a particular customer are the prices actually used for that customer. In other industries it is important to be able to statically or dynamically update prices as the price of raw materials may change from month to month and/or day to day. A robust system like Fishbowl Inventory will allow businesses to create these price books (or pricing catalogs) based upon the customer, customer group, a specific product, or a product group. Fishbowl is also flexible enough to handle a holiday sale and round prices to the nearest dollar.

Costing Methods

The Average Costing method used in QuickBooks is not always the best costing method to use for a business. Manufacturers often prefer Last In First Out (LIFO), First In First Out (FIFO) or Standard Costing accounting methods to better understand the dynamics of their operations. Fishbowl brings the ability to use LIFO, FIFO or Standard Costing methods. Fishbowl keeps track of the costs and pushes the correct values to the corresponding accounts in QuickBooks. Cost of Goods Sold is appropriately updated depending on the chosen costing method.

Reconciling

Fishbowl facilitates the reconciliation of purchase orders. After an item has been received into your inventory and your vendor's bill is sent to you, you have the option to reconcile your costs to match the vendor's bill.

Landed Costs

Fishbowl can land costs as you receive inventory. If you deal with tariffs or shipping costs and want to see these costs reflected in the cost of your parts, Fishbowl provides a way to accomplish this during reconciliation.

Reports

Fishbowl Inventory has more than 150 reports in its system for your convenience. Some of the most popular reports include: Inventory Valuation Summary, Part Reorder, Part Activity, Sales Order and Purchase Order Summary, Cost of Goods Sold,

and Gross Margins. Fishbowl's reports help companies maintain accuracy by keeping a history of all transactions, noting the users and dates. Each Fishbowl report is also equipped with a Customize Report option that can be used to modify a report and save those changes for future use, based on your company's needs.

Barcodes and Fishbowl Mobile

Fishbowl Mobile is your wireless inventory solution for significantly increasing inventory accuracy and worker productivity in your warehouse. Reduce your frustration by eliminating errors and always knowing your on-hand inventory. Fishbowl Mobile prevents inventory loss by keeping accurate counts of inventory, correctly assigning inventory locations, and making inventory audits feasible—improving your bottom line along the way. Fishbowl Mobile requires a wireless internet connection and runs on Microsoft Mobile 5 and Microsoft Windows Mobile 2003.

Summary

As a company continues to grow, so must its systems and processes. Fishbowl Inventory provides many of the features that are otherwise only found in much higher-priced systems. Fishbowl also enables companies to keep using QuickBooks for their accounting needs. Fishbowl and QuickBooks provide the ability for small to medium-sized companies to move to the next level.

About Fishbowl

Fishbowl and its cornerstone product, Fishbowl Inventory, make it possible for every business to have the level of flexible and mobile inventory management solutions large organizations enjoy. It is especially popular among manufacturers and wholesale distributors. Fishbowl offers advanced features, including multiple location tracking, seamless Quick-Books integration, order management, and pick/pack/ship functionality.

*Sign up for a personalized product overview by calling 1.800.774.7085 ext. 2
or visit our website at www.fishbowlinventory.com*

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