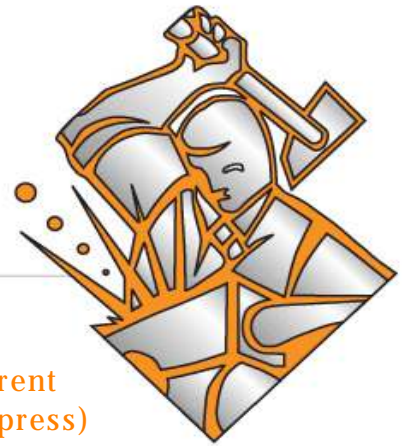


EMCEE BROADCAST PRODUCTS



I use a lot of different software, and I generate reports a lot of different ways. Of all the ways I do it, MBF-UDALink (formerly DataExpress) is the easiest to use. The thing I like the best is its simplicity," Schrieber said. "It's really quick."

How much can one dedicated MIS manager do? Ron Schrieber knows how to let tools power up his co-workers. That's how the Manager of Information Services at EMCEE Broadcast Products deployed MB Foster's MBF-UDALink (formerly DataExpress) to let users perform their own information access at the maker of intermediate television broadcast equipment.

The company manufactures and distributes low-power and instructional broadcast gear for sale around the world, delivering signals between studio and transmitter. With more than 35 years of service to the television broadcast industry, Emcee transmitter systems are in operation in over 95 countries. Emcee does its business with a full-time MIS staff of only Schrieber. He supports the operations of the firm with hundreds of reports that pull data from the core manufacturing information system. More than half the reports have been written outside of the MIS group at Emcee, and Schrieber himself is working in his first full-time MIS position.

Making data available throughout the company with that level of experience demands a flexible, straightforward reporting utility. Schrieber said MBF-UDALink (formerly DataExpress) provides that strong, simple backbone.

There's not a steep learning curve with MBF-UDALink," Schrieber said. "It lets you get a good-looking report out in very little time, as long as you know your databases." The MIS manager estimates there's 350 reports moving information about Emcee's operations, all written with MBF-UDALink. The reports cover things like sales commissions, sales order numbers by domestic and foreign markets, cash disbursement reports, open items to be returned to vendors and shortage reports for purchasing.

The company manufactures, installs and services television broadcast equipment for commercial, educational and private television systems. Its principal products are UHF, VHF and Multichannel Multipoint Distribution Service (MMDS) transmitters. Emcee's business is custom-building television transmission equipment to order, so the company is often in the position of needing to order parts for projects. Schrieber said that MBF-UDALink (formerly DataExpress) reports are easy enough to write and maintain that the company now has more up-to-date information on inventory. That more specific information has led to a savings in shipping.

"We have a shortage report for purchasing, and MANMAN has nothing like it that we can use," Schrieber said of the company's core manufacturing software. The MBF-UDALink report based on the core application data looks at each day's kitted projects and checks the inventory levels, then tells purchasing what items to order to cover the projects. "They can then determine what are the best lot quantities to order," Schrieber said, "and the purchasing department picks up the report in the morning."

It's the nature of the Emcee business that repair parts need to be moved quickly, especially when a transmitter is off the air. "That report in particular has saved us a lot of running around screaming, 'We have to have it shipped Red,'" Schrieber said. "We can move the shipments down to Blue, or sometimes even to Ground," he added, referring to the levels of UPS shipping service. "We do a lot of fast shipping in both directions."

Emcee benefits from 200 reports written by a staff member whose strength was business practices rather than MIS skills. Schrieber said the cost accountant had never seen an HP 3000 before he started writing reports, much less MBF-UDALink.

The value of a high number of reports comes from how specific each look at the company's data can be. "A lot of the stuff helps us keep our databases clean," Schrieber said. "When work orders are open longer than they should be, we can see why they're open. We can check stock to see what isn't moving. While our products are fairly standardized, they're custom-built. We build to order, and if you want something special, like a modulator, these things all have to be taken into account when we're doing pricing and costing. It helps to have lists you can look up quickly."

Schrieber said the core manufacturing package at Emcee "has a lot of nice reports, but they report on everything in a category. With MBF-UDALink (formerly DataExpress) we can narrow down, and look at the one little item that we want to look at. They're very specific."

About half of the reports deliver data to PC tools for end-user manipulation, using clients like Quattro and Paradox, as well as Microsoft Office. Some reports create subfiles which other MBF-UDALink (formerly DataExpress) reports can use, and many reports require no replies to prompts - they are just run and updated results are delivered.

