



MB Foster

Forging the Future

2008 Ecometry Customer Round Table Recap

On June 4-6th, MB Foster, one of four select Escalate Retail sponsors, attended the **2008 Ecometry Customer Round Table**. This event was held in Delray Beach, Florida. It was the first of its kind, but it was well attended by Ecometry customers. Below are some of the highlights we caught during the 2 day event.

Overview

The Round Table was kicked off by Brian Johnson – GM Direct Division, and was attended by 59 companies, for a total attendance of 87 customers. Brian introduced the Ecometry division and team members and event sponsors – MB Foster was one. During the General Session, Brian shared the results of a recent survey and how Escalate is going about resolving installed base concerns.



MB Foster

82 Main Street South
Chesterville, ON Canada

Round Table Sessions



General Session

During the General Session, results of the Escalate Retail survey were announced and discussed at length. [Read more...](#)



Migration Process, the Understanding of

Todd Misemer and Birket Foster of MB Foster headed up the round table for the migration track. Todd commented that migrating to Open Systems is like a new install. [Read more...](#)



Migration Bumps & Bruises

Jim Dunn of Indiana Botanic and Joel Patterson of Pets Unlimited headed up the Round Table on Migration Bumps and Bruises. [Read more...](#)

The information provided, are my opinions and not the opinions of all those that attended. Some of the information, may not be 100% accurate, however, I've done my level best to provide an overview of topics that may fit your upcoming goals and objectives.

Karmin McKay
Migration Partner
1-800-ANSWERS Ext. 305
kmckay@mbfoster.com
www.mbfoster.com/migration

Ecometry Round Table Recap

General Session

Brian Johnson discussed five key areas at length about resolving their installed base concerns. They included:

1) Communications

The survey result were 57.5% positive in regards to recent communication changes, such as newsletters, job reports, all technical bugs now available on the support board and being tracked. Technical issues are being resolved at a faster rate than ever before, and "patch" releases are getting out there sooner.

2) Releases

There was no mention of releases for MPE. Brian did highlight open systems and version 10.0 (major release) and its release schedule. i.e. Minor release dates 10.01 (04/08), 10.02 (07/08), 10.03 (09/08), 10.04 (11/08), all other releases i.e. 10.01.1 would be a patch release. The currently strategy is to support the existing release and two back.

One of the exciting items discussed for version 10 was fraud management with Retail Decisions (RD). Most of the additional features and functions for version 10 can are now available via a datasheet (see attached).

3) MPE (More on MPE migrations below)

Brian announced the official; End of Life (EOL) for MPE is 12/31/09. He also said that 46% of the installed base is still on MPE, the remainder of the installed base is now on Open Systems (54%). At the round table 40% of the attendees were MPE clients, the remainder were on Open Systems. He also pointed out that all MPE sites are being offered the same number of licenses for Open Systems at no additional charge. He went on to say that it's imperative that you have a "plan" and a "budget" to migrate and if you need some help call in the troops and made reference to MB Foster and the Ecometry Professional Services Department headed up by Todd Misemer. Todd said, the company would also need to know how many MPE sites will be migrating so that the company can do some resource planning to ensure that enough staff is available for the transition. He encouraged clients to contact him to let him know.

4) Support

The survey highlighted that 56.9 % of the respondents said the portal is working well for them. Brian added that response times are going down, researching cases are going down. He pointed out that if you're not getting an appropriate response time to pick up the phone and talk with them and please don't get frustrated or stay frustrated – CALL. The total effort in the support department is to focus on resolution time. His last comment was to say that better documentation is coming.

5) Roadmap

The company is now focusing on moving to COBOL .NET and 64 bit-ness. A Proof of Concept (POC) is underway at this time, and the above will eliminate the 4GB limitation. Eventually they will be going to Activex Data Objects (ADO). Brian did not have any timelines or versions that the above would appear in. But, he did mention that the estimated effort will take 1-2 years to complete. In regards to some of the futures capabilities and functionality Brian shared with attendees that they're beginning to partner with a company to supply a Shipping Gateway that can reach all other shipping agents beyond UPS and FedEx. This technology and solution is currently under review, as is a Tax Gateway module. He referenced that two others have been completed; they included Payment Gateway and a Correspondence Manager. On the web-site side he referenced that in a .NET world websites will be decoupled and is the current focus. Other notable items included:

- Portal will soon have a list of enhancements
- Escalate World Conference will be held in San Diego in March 2009

Following the General Session, Martha Menzel one of the IEUG board members, talked about the Google group and how effective it has been for many. However, Escalate has provided a hosting server and BBS software. IEUG will manage the Bulletin Board Service (BBS) – commonly called a BLOG these days. The advantage is that the BBS provides sorting and searching on MPE versus Open Systems. Many that attended wanted to know if the board could integrate all of the Google data into the BBS, at the time it was unknown if this could be done. However, later on in the day it was confirmed that they could. To join the BBS you have to be an IEUG member, its easy to sign up, the URL is <http://forum.escalate.com/>

The overall mood was very positive, customers seemed to be happy, and both clients and the Escalate team were responsive to questions and very happy to re-direct you to the best person to address any concerns.

Ecometry Round Table Recap

Migration Process (Understanding the Process)

Todd Misemer (Escalate Retail) and Birket Foster (MB Foster) headed up the round table for the migration track. Todd commented that migrating to Open Systems is like a new install. For Ecometry, the migration focus is on the back office (IT). He and Birket mentioned the following is needed:

- A Plan
- Remote Support
- Training i.e. Database Course (available directly from Escalate)
- A Test Plan (Escalate helps with defining the test plan and scripts)
- EMMA and or Bridgeware is required to move Ecometry data: 120 day license is available. The recommendation was to split the time i.e. 90 days (for test migrations) and 30 days (for go live).
- If you have 70 GB of data it will take 24 hours. It will take an additional 12 hours to do a full re-index.
- EMMA does not move GTS data
- Business Process Analysis (BPA) and change management is optional but recommended to get the most out of the open systems application.
- Surround Code inventory should be completed with the objective of trying to determine what surround code is obsolete in your organization.
- Ecometry Web – requires no changes. Simply re-point from MPE to Open Systems. However you will have to look at transport mechanisms.
- Upgrade to 6.1p latest MPE version and PCI compliance is recommended.
- Todd offered an additional option, for those not on 6.1p. The effort involves running in a test account on version 7.02, before going live.
- Standard Escalate Migration Service pack for 75 users or less is 300 hours @ \$200.00 USD per hour.
- If customers need to add licenses it's the standard rack rate of 3,600 per seat + 18% for maintenance.
- Average migration takes 6 months (typical migration can take 4 – 18 months)

Migration Process (Bumps & Bruises)

Jim Dunn of Indiana Botanic and Joel Patterson of Pets Unlimited headed up the round table on migration bumps and bruises. A series of questions were asked of them, some of their responses included:

Why did they stay with Ecometry?

- 1) New functionality
- 2) Established partnership

Why did they migrate?

- 1) Didn't want to be the last one on the MPE application
- 2) Business owners/management wanted to grow the company
- 3) Did not want to purchase another HP e3000, money/cash that was being considered for an additional HP e3000 was applied to the migration project instead

Jim Dunn of Indiana Botanic said running MPE was the equivalent of running Windows 3.1.

What has Ecometry Open Systems provided?

- 1) Open Environment
- 2) Limitless application choices and options for new business objectives

Both Jim and Joel said that EMMA makes the task of moving data easy. But...you have to clean and purge data.

It was recommended by both Jim and Joel that you transition your Financial application first. Additionally they said staying with GTS is okay and the migration is easy, but again they stressed it should be done before and/or after the migration not during it.

Jim and Joel identified the biggest roadblock was additional internal resources.

- Recommended that those who will be migrating, to bring in the troops for migration planning and functional testing of the Ecometry application before going live.

The group identified that the biggest future roadblock was:

- Approximately 60 MPE sites will be in the migration line up
- Cost to have Ecometry maintain internal MPE resources will go up
- You don't want to be the last one to migrate.