

Empire Builder

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Getting Started Tutorial

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Introduction

Welcome to the Empire Builder getting started tutorial. This guide has been prepared to help you in getting to grips with and reaping the benefits of this new and exciting software package. We hope this guide gives you a thorough insight into using Empire Builder.

Empire Builder is Suresoft's first Windows based accounting software product and is aimed at the smaller businesses by providing all the essentials and fundamental facilities to help run your business. The name itself is derived from what we set out to achieve in designing and developing Empire Builder. To help small businesses grow and to help build your business empire.

Empire Builder is the first of many software releases which will be made available over the forthcoming months as we steam on with our ambitious plans for developing a full range of accounting and business management software for all types and sizes of business.

We hope this guide gives you a thorough insight into using Empire Builder. Possibly the most important point we can make here is that we want to hear from you about the system. The bits you do like, the bits you don't like, how things can be enhanced etc. We can only keep on improving this new system if you let us know your thoughts and ideas. So if you have any constructive ideas, regarding any part of the system whether it's a feature or a way to speed operating the system and increase productivity please let us know.

Good luck.

The First Steps

This section is designed to ease you into using Empire Builder.

A fully printed manual is available with the full, boxed product of Empire Builder. Please consult Suresoft for details. Suresoft are also have scheduled training courses for all users of Empire Builder so if this is something you feel that you or members of your staff would be interested in, please let us know.

If you have been using mainstream Windows '95/'98/NT applications such as Microsoft Office for some time many of the facilities in Empire Builder will be familiar to you.

OK now lets load the system and get to grips with using it. Run the Empire Builder software. The first thing the system will do is detect that there are no details set up. Empire Builder will then first of all take you into the company setup wizard. The company setup wizard is used to ask you for your company's name and address and various other details. Follow the on-screen instructions to complete the company set up, clicking on the Next button to progress to the next stage and Back to go back a stage.

The first entry page of the wizard asks you for Master User Details which includes entering a user ID, your full name and your password. This is a compulsory entry as the system needs at least one user to log onto the system. Other users can be added after the system has been fully setup.

Empire Builder is designed to take into account the requirements of each user, whether you have several members of staff who use the system at various times either on the same machine or on different ones.

Every setting in the system to do with setups are unique to the user who is logged in. Each user's system data is stored in the Windows registry and can therefore be wiped clean at any time (using REGEDIT) and the restore system defaults. Each user can set their own colours, their own tool bar options and have available only the parts of the system they want to see. Each user can also be restricted to the parts of the system only they have access to.

You can also password protect each company. When you do this a user must log on with their own individual password and then be asked for a separate password to get access to the selected company. This is similar to the way you can password protect a spreadsheet in Microsoft Excel or a letter in Word. This will be explained later.

Now that we're into the system we can start getting right down to business. This is the main Empire Builder screen which will always be displayed although it can be configured quite extensively by each user.

As you can see you have the menus at the top of the screen, the tool bar underneath it and on the left hand side you have the Microsoft Outlook style "list bar". Each one of these provides a method to get at the features and functions of the system, so you have a choice of three ways of doing the same thing.

You will notice on the list bar there are a list of large icons starting with Customers then Suppliers and so on. The Modules options on the list bar are used to bring up a module

form for each section in the system to provide easy access to the options and facilities within each section. We recommend you make full use of these as they make life much easier as you will see. However as we said earlier as everything can also be selected from both the menus and the tool bar as well then you don't have to use the list bar, in fact you can even switch it off altogether if you so desire!

To get a feel for the Modules select the Customers icon by clicking the picture in the ListBar. You will now see the Customer module window. If there is no data there it won't mean much but you can get the gist that it lists all the customers, giving details of the selected customer at the bottom of the form. The selected record has an arrow at the side of it in the left hand margin of the data grid. The Microsoft Internet Explorer-style buttons (standardised in Windows '98) at the top are there to give you access to the facilities of the Customer's module. The last button on the Options bar is the Close button. Click this to remove the Customers module form.

Now click on the Stock icon in the list bar. You can see it is very similar with the stock items listed and the options on the cool bar at the top. Click on Close to remove the module form. You will notice that what is now the blank screen below the tool bar and to the right of the list bar is the operating space where each option you bring up will use.

You will see that the tool bar underneath the menus has several options on it. These are the system default options. The tool bar is there for your convenience and can be customised to include whatever options you want and it is set up per user, so each user can have their favourite and most commonly used tasks available with a simple mouse click. Customising the tool bar is incredibly simple, see the on-line help for details of how to do this.

The other way to access the various options in the system is through the menus. You can access the menus by clicking the mouse over the headings or by holding down the ALT key and pressing the accelerator key which it underlined. For example to access the Transactions menu you would press ALT + T. The relevant menu will then drop down. As you can see it is very straight forward.

At this stage we're just getting used to the look and feel of the system. You will have also noticed that the system is compliant with the latest Windows style components. We are already working on the next version of Empire Builder which makes use of dockable tool bars which you will have seen in Microsoft Word and other mainstream applications.

Customer & Supplier Modules

Entering and Editing Customer Details

The most obvious starting point is to enter a new customer. Let us look at the ways in which we can access the option to enter new or edit existing customers. First of all we

we will access it from the menu.

Click on the **Records** option on the menu at the top of the main form. The various types of record which can be entered will drop-down. Click on the **Customers** option to bring up the customer edit form.

The second way to select this option is to select it from the toolbar underneath the menus. The add a new customer and edit a customer are the first two buttons on the default toolbar. If you run the mouse pointer over one of these buttons it will pop up and a second later you will see a hint highlighting exactly what the button will do.

Finally you can select **Customers** from the ListBar and when the Customer module form is displayed click on the **New** button on the CoolBar.

This will display the customer record form. The form displayed on the left hand side is always visible. The display on the right hand side is changed dependent on which Tab Page is selected on the top of the form. For example the **Details** page is currently selected which uses the right hand side of the form for the input of additional customer details. If you were to select the **Balance** Tab Page then the right hand side of the form will display a summary of the customer's balances, however the left hand side will always remain static. Select the **Details** Tab Page if it is not already selected.

The first prompt is for a new customer's reference which can be upto 10 characters in length. This field is the main way of referencing each customer throughout the system. Each reference you enter must be unique and we recommend you avoid using symbols in the reference such as &, -, * etc. Enter **PORTLAND** and press **RETURN** (or **TAB**) to move you to the next field which is for you to enter the customer's name.

Enter **Portland Ceramics Ltd.** and press **RETURN**. You can Save your data when you have entered it into the system by pressing [**ALT + S**] or you can click the **Save** button on the options bar at the top of the form. Most of the fields in the form will be familiar to you.

The Email field can be utilised to email information from within the system to your customer. The system will automatically use this field as the email address to send the email to without you having to type it in.

Note The Email facilities provided with Empire Builder are what we refer to as "wrappers" around the underlying email configuration within your Windows operating system. EB simply provides the front-end functionality to call the email features of your system which will vary from machine to machine. For example some PCs may use MS Outlook and some may use MS Mail (not to mention non-Microsoft email packages such as Eudora Pro). If you find that you are having problems sending email from EB then this is caused solely by incorrect configuration of your Windows email and in this event you should contact your PC supplier for technical support in configuring your email.

The Terms field (which represents the payment terms in days) can be used to demonstrate the Spin-Edit control. You can click on the up arrow at the side of the field (or press the up arrow cursor key) to increase the number to what you want to click the down arrow (or press the down arrow cursor key) .

The next field is the Settlement discount days field which is also new to the customer record. Once again you can use the Spin-Edit control to increase the value. The settlement days and settlement discount days fields are used in the Invoice module to default a discount is settlement is made with n days.

The next field is On Stop which demonstrates the Check Box control. If the customer is on-stop then click on the box to tick it or press the SPACE bar on the keyboard. Check Box fields are toggles for either Yes or No.

The next field is Price Code. Used in conjunction with Stock Control and the Invoice Modules you can set which price this customer will generally be given when buying products. Each stock item can have upto 3 prices ie. 1 – Retail, 2 – Trade etc. and the customer can be assigned a price level accordingly.

You will now be asked for an account linked to the Financials Module of the system (also referred to as Nominal Ledger). This can be used to ensure that all sales made to the customer are posted to the selected financial account. This can demonstrate the Search facility which is available throughout the system. You can leave the field blank and press [RETURN] (or TAB) to bring up a list of all your customers or you can type in a short reference to search for the nearest ie. typing in 1 will bring up the first account reference beginning with 1. You can bring up the search window by pressing CTRL + S (hold down the CTRL key and press S). Pressing CTRL+S, pressing [RETURN] or clicking on the search (magnifying glass) button with the mouse have the same effect.

When the search dialog window is displayed there are various options available to you. You can select to search by a different field by clicking on the Combo Box arrow button in the top left of the Windows which brings down a list of available fields to search on. You can then click on the field you want to search by. You will notice when you do this that the selected field will move to the left-most column in the data grid. You can then key your search entry into the Search Characters field. When you have found the record you want you simply click on the grid so the arrow points to it in the left hand margin of the grid and then click on the OK button. You can also select by double-clicking on the record you want. If the record you want has not yet been created you can click on the New button to create it on-the-fly.

The next field is the Discount field which asks you to enter the standard discount percentage you will give the customer when entering invoices in the Invoice module. The Calculator control is available here.

The next Check Box field asks if the above entered financial account is to be used on ALL transactions for the customer. If you check this box then the system will use this account in all transactions for this customer including the Invoice module. If you do not check this box then when entering stock items onto an invoice the system will use the financial account on the stock item record. If a stock item does not have a financial account on it's record or it is a free-text item then the financial account used is the one entered onto the customer record.

You can then key in the VAT registration number of the customer and then you can enter the VAT code which will be commonly used on the customer's transactions. The different rates ie. standard rate, EC sales rate can all be setup within the system. VAT Codes run from 0 to 9.

You will then be asked to key in the EC country code for the customer. This can be used to demonstrate the Combo Box control. By clicking on the down arrow button to the right of the field you can pull down a list of available country codes. To get the list using the keyboard press ALT + DOWN (hold down the ALT key and press the down arrow cursor key) and press RETURN to select.

The next Check Box field asks if the above entered VAT Code is to be used on ALL transactions for the customer. Similar to the corresponding Check Box for the financial account if you check this box then all transactions entered for the customer including in the Invoice module then this will be the overriding VAT Code. This is useful if, for example, you are supplying to another EC state and all transactions will be VAT code 5 as the default EC Sales VAT code regardless of the various VAT rates for the products you are selling from your Stock system ie. standard rated, exempt etc. However for domestic sales you would not generally want to check this box as when you are invoicing different products you want their individual VAT rates to be used.

You can now save the details by clicking on the Save button at the top or by pressing ALT + S. If you want to abandon any changes made simply click on the Abandon button or press ALT + A.

You can then click on the New button or press ALT + N to create another new customer.

If you click on the Balance tab page header (you will see a tab header for Details, Balance and Notepad) you can see the balance details of the customer and some other useful pieces of information. As you can see the core customer details remain static on the left hand side of the form. There are no editable fields in the Balance tab page. Next click on the Notepad tab to see a memo-pad for you to key in unlimited free-text notes for the customer.

You can move between different customers by clicking on the Next and Previous buttons.

When you have finished with the customer form click on the Close button or press ALT + C.

Entering Customer Transactions

There are various transactions to be entered into the system. The first one we'll look at covers basic invoice data posted direct to the ledgers and are referred to in Empire Builder as Manual Entries.

Once again you can select this option in one of several ways. You can select it from the Customer Module form, from the menus or the toolbar (provided you have selected it as an available option). To select it from the menu click on the **Transactions** menu option (or press ALT + T) and click on **Customers** which will give you a further submenu. From the submenu select **Manual Entries**.

To select it from the Customer Module form click on the **Transacs** button on the Module form's option bar. This will give you a menu of available transactions from which you can select **Manual Entries**.

You can split a single transaction across as many financial accounts and VAT rates as required. The system maintains a link between the original sales or purchase transaction to the nominal distribution making transaction-undo a simple task.

The first thing the system asks is for the customer's reference. This will default to the customer which was selected in the underlying Customer module form. You can use the search facilities as explained earlier to select a different customer if required. For this example we'll use **PORTLAND** for the customer we created earlier.

The next entry you are asked for is to select the type of transaction you are entering, either an Invoice or a Credit Note. This takes the form of a radio button control as explained earlier. The default option is Invoice. To change the option click on it with the mouse or use the keyboard pressing the up and down cursor keys. For this example select Invoice.

You can now key in the reference of the transactions and the Details of upto 30 characters to describe the transaction. Enter **10029** for the reference and **Sales Invoice** for the Details field.

Next you will be asked to enter in the transaction date. This will default to the system date you entered when you logged onto the system. You can use the calendar facility to choose a different date by clicking on the Calendar button to the right of the field as explained earlier. For this example confirm today's date.

Next you will be asked if you want to pay the transaction off now. This is useful if you are entering an invoice which has already been paid and prevents you from having to enter a separate payment transaction. For this example click on this field or press SPACE on the keyboard so the tick is displayed in the checkbox.

Now we have selected to pay this transaction off now the system needs to know what bank or cash account you are going to pay the money against. To select which one you want you can click on the down arrow button of the combobox or press ALT + DownArrow from the keyboard. The list of available banks and cash accounts will be displayed. Use the mouse to point to the one you want and click to select. Using the keyboard press the up and down arrow keys and RETURN to select. In this example select **7200 - Bank Account 1**.

Next you will be asked for the payment terms (in days) for the transaction. This will default to the customer's standard payment terms but can be changed. In this case the transaction has already been paid so we can enter **0**.

We are now moved into the data input grid which is used to split the transaction across an unlimited number of nominal ledger accounts and VAT rates. Of course if the transaction was for just one nominal account and one VAT rate we would simply enter one line.

First of all we're asked for the Account. The search facilities are available here with the exception that instead of a magnifying glass on the button we have an ellipse (3 dots). Enter **1000** and press RETURN. The account name will be displayed.

You are now asked to enter Comments for the split line. This won't be recorded on the customer's invoice but it will be recorded on the nominal account's transaction. You can enter upto 30 characters. For this example enter **Standard Rate**.

You are now asked to enter in the net amount of the transaction. If you wanted to enter the value as gross and calculate the VAT inclusive then you would enter the gross value. In this example enter **159.00** and press RETURN.

You are next asked to select the VAT code you want to use on this split line. Enter **1** and RETURN.

The VAT and totals are calculated for you and you will notice they are added to the totals at the footer of the data entry grid. However for this example we want to calculate the VAT inclusive of the 159.00 entered. To do this we can click on the button on the options bar at the top of the form called VAT Rev... or we can press ALT + V from the keyboard (noticing that the letter V on the button is underlined as the shortcut key). This will calculate the VAT inclusive.

The cursor will now move to the VAT field for you to confirm the VAT amount to make any amendments if required. Leave this field as it is and press RETURN. This will now take us to a new line to enter another split to the transaction. Enter the following details

Account	Comments	VC
	Net	
	VAT	

1001**40.00****Exempt Rate****0 0.00**

This illustrates how we can distribute amounts across multiple financial accounts and VAT rates and into one customer transaction. We can move up and down between lines using the up and down arrow keys or pointing with mouse and clicking. If we wanted to remove one of the lines then click on the Remove button on the options bar or press ALT + M from the keyboard.

To save the transaction we have just entered click on the Save button or press ALT + S. To abandon the transaction we would click on the Abandon button or press ALT + A. In this example select to save.

Once saved the system will clear the form ready for another transaction to be entered. Click on the Close button, press ALT + C or click the X button in the top right hand corner of the form to close the form.

We shall now look at what processing has taken place from entering this transaction. Make sure the Customer Module form is displayed after you have closed the Manual Entries form, if not then select it from the ListBar.

With the customer PORTLAND selected on the data grid (the black arrow on the left hand side of the grid is pointing to it) click on the History option.

Viewing Customer Reports

The History form is typical of the enquiry and reporting forms in Empire Builder in that you specify the range of the data you want displayed and then you have the various options available to you in the form of buttons such as printing and emailing the report. The data is then displayed in the grid at the bottom section of the form.

You set the range of customers and dates and the status or type of transactions you want to display. The first customer's reference and the last customer's reference are used as default in the start and finish prompts, indicating you want to includes all customers.

You can use the combo box on the top right of the form to select which types of transactions you want to list ie. Due Invoices, Queried Invoices etc.

The current customer is displayed in the panel below the report options and you can type in a different customer reference to locate a different customer and list their transactions. You can also move between customers by clicking on the previous and next buttons. You can also search for a particular transaction by clicking on the Search button.

To print the transaction history based upon the range specified at the top of the form you can click on the Print button. The system allows you to preview the report before printing if you have a certain parameter set. To set this parameter you would use the

File|System Setup option on the main menu to tell the system if you want to preview the report first or to directly print. This option will then apply to every report in the system. For details see System Setup in the on-line help. The default setting is to preview the report. To see this in action click on the Print button and the system will run the report preview form. You will get used to this form as you work through the system as it is used in all reporting functions.

When the report preview is displayed the data will appear in the main body of the form. If the data is displayed too large you can point anywhere on the page and click on the left mouse button to zoom-out which will make the text smaller and allow you to see more of the report at once. If you point the mouse on the page and click on the right mouse button you will zoom-in to the report. You can also zoom-in and out of the page by using the Zoom combo box on the toolbar.

If you want to print the report you can click on the Print icon positioned on the left of the toolbar. The current page number is also displayed next to some arrow buttons. These buttons enable you to move through the different pages of the report if there are any. The buttons with the double arrow icons are for jumping to the first page and to the last page on the report.

There is a lot of information displayed on the customer report and therefore the default display is in Landscape view. You can use the scrollbar at the bottom of the report form to move to the right of the report. Point the mouse at the bottom scrollbar, click the left mouse button and leave depressed. Move the mouse to the right and the report scrolls to the right with the scrollbar. If you don't need all the information which the report displays on each transaction line but want to list more data on a page you can choose to view the page in Portrait. To do this click the Report Setup button on the toolbar and a dialog form will be displayed highlighting the current setup of the page. You will notice a Page Orientation prompt with a combobox displayed and the default option is Landscape. To change this click on the combobox's dropdown button and change the setting to Portrait. You will notice on this dialog you can setup many different setting displaying and printing the report such as margins etc. Select OK when you have finished.

To close the preview report form click on the X in the top right hand corner of the form. Alternatively you can click on File in the menu in the preview window and select Exit.

Empire Builder includes extensive drill-down or zoom-in facilities that let you track down the details of every transaction. We'll see this in action now. Now that we are back at the main Customer History form you will see the one button we have so far not mentioned, the Zoom button. Click on this button now and you will see a drop-down menu of the available options you can view. The options which are grayed are not applicable to the current transaction. Remember that the zoom-in facilities are for the currently selected transaction indicated by the black arrow on the left hand side of the data grid.

Click the left mouse button outside of the menu to remove the Zoom menu. Point the mouse at the relevant transaction in the data grid and click the right mouse button. You will see a popup menu of options the first of which are to do which zooming in to transaction details. Below is a list of the zoom-in options and what they do.

Transaction Details – This lets you see the full details of the transaction. From this form you will be able to view and zoom-in to all the transaction details. This option can also be selected by double-clicking the mouse on the required transaction.

Double Entry – This option lists all the nominal ledger accounts which were updated when you entered this transaction and the values they were updated by.

Payment Allocations - This option enables you see what payments, credits etc. a transaction was allocated against to maintain a complete detail of what was allocated against what.

Original Document – This option is used if the transaction was entered through the Invoicing section of the system for customers. It lets you look at the transaction and all the items on the it and subsequently enables you to print the document if required.

VAT Breakdown – This option lets you see the details of the allocations of amounts against VAT rates. If you are looking at a customer payment the system will calculate the VAT based on the invoices which the payment is made against.

The drill-down facilities of Empire Builder are more comprehensive than those available in many mid-range packages costing thousands. Just spend a few minutes selecting the options available for different transactions and seeing how the system operates so you can get a feel of what information the system is making available to you.

The Customer History form is much more than just an enquiry screen as it enables you to carry out different processing tasks on the selected transaction such as putting a transaction on query, altering payment terms and indeed undoing (deleting an entry and it's entire effect on the system). Undoing transactions is explained later.

One option which is available when you click the right mouse button whenever you are pointing at a data grid is the facility to change the colour of the data lines to your own preference. You can change this on a per-user basis so the changes you make to the grid colours are only applicable to your own tastes and will not affect other users who may use the system from time to time.

We've now covered the main points of the Customer History enquiry and report form the features of which are applicable to most other enquiry and reporting forms in the system. Close this form by clicking on the Close button of the form or by clicking on the X in the top right of the form.

Entering Opening Balances

There is a very simple way of entering opening balances for your customer and suppliers.

Make sure the Customers module form is displayed. Point the mouse at the customer **PORTLAND** and click on the right mouse button. A popup menu will be displayed with various options available (notice the facility to change grid colours as available in all data grids) including an Opening Balance option. Select this option and the opening balance window will be displayed.

This is a very simple way of entering the opening balance details. You first of all enter the date you want the transaction to be posted on, then key in the reference and the details fields both of which have default values. For this example press RETURN over these two fields to accept the defaults.

You will finally be asked to key in the amount which the customer owes/you owe the supplier. If the customer/supplier has a credit balance then you would enter a negative value ie precede the value with a minus sign. For this example enter 359.26.

When entered click the Save button and the rest is done automatically for you with the system using the Suspense Control Account to post the details.

When you are returned back to the Customer module form you can simply press the up or down arrow key to move to the customer you next want to enter an opening balance for and right click to get the popup menu.

Entering Payments

Entering payments in Empire Builder is a very simple process. As with the rest of the system there are a number of ways of selecting to enter a customer payment ie the toolbar and the main menu. We'll choose the simplest way which is to select from the Customer module.

Click on the **Transacs** button on the form's toolbar and select **Payments** from the drop-down menu.

You are first of all asked to pick the bank or cash account you want to post the payment into. Click on the down arrow button on the combobox or, from the keyboard, press ALT + DOWNARROW to pull down the selections. Select Bank Account One.

You can then select the customer you want to enter a payment for. As we selected the Payments window from the Customer module the system defaults to the customer selected in the module form. However to select a different customer you can use the

Search facilities to help you locate the required customer ie. press CTRL + S from the keyboard or click on the magnifying glass with the mouse. In this example select PORTLAND if not already selected.

We can now enter a date for the payment, in this case accept today's date as defaulted. Now we enter the payment reference for example the cheque number. In this example enter 000348 and press RETURN or TAB.

We can now enter the payment amount. You can leave the payment amount as zero if you wanted to allocate invoices against credit notes or previously unallocated payments. In this example enter 250.00.

The system will now take you into the grid listing the outstanding transactions for the customer. If you are following the examples there should only be one transaction listed which is the opening balance transaction we entered a little earlier. You can enter the payment value against the transaction by typing it into the Payment column as provided. You can also make use of the buttons displayed at the top of the form which are extremely useful in making payments a simple process.

The Automatic button tells the system to make the payment allocations automatically for you by starting from the first outstanding transaction and allocating all the money it can until the Payment Balance (displayed above the Payment Amount field) is zero. This option avoids all non-invoice transactions and those which are on query.

The Undo All button enables you to undo all allocations made on the payment, useful if you want wipe the slate clean and start again.

Please Note If halfway through making your payment allocations you re-enter the original payment amount the system will automatically carry out the Undo All

The Undo button is used to undo the allocation made on the currently selected transaction by reducing the payment column to zero.

The Full button is available to pay the currently selected transaction off in full if there is enough money available to do so.

The Discount button is available to enter a discount value against a transaction ie a settlement discount.

When the cursor is on the Payment column of the opening balance transaction click on the Full button. The system cannot obviously fully pay off the transaction however it uses the balance of the payment to pay off what it can which in this example is 250.00.

Select the Save button to record the payment and the allocations to the system.

Entering Refunds

With the refund option you can process the REFUND transaction against part or the whole of either a part paid or fully paid invoice, against unallocated payments to repay overpayments and even against unallocated credit notes, once again in whole or in part. This feature completes a very comprehensive accounting “engine” which is at the heart of Empire Builder.

From the Customer module form (with customer PORTLAND selected) click on the Transacs button and from the drop-down menu select Refunds.

You will notice the Refunds form is very similar to Payments form. With the PORTLAND customer already been selected you will see the two previously paid invoices which are available for refund. The second Invoice represents the Opening Balance we part paid off a little earlier which the system is allowing us to refund either in whole or in part.

Accept the default date given and enter Ref0938 into the Reference field. In the Refund Amount field enter 50.00 and press RETURN. Select the Save button at the top of the form and you will see that the system complains. The reason is that unlike entering a payment where you can have unallocated payments on your system, the system will not allow you to have unallocated refunds on the system which makes sense as nobody wants refunds hanging around which are not traceable back to anything.

Now it has told us off it will take us back into the screen to complete the refund transaction. Select the first transaction and click on the Full button at the top of the form to allocate the refund against the first paid transaction.

When this has been done click on the Save button to post the refund and then click on the Close button. Take a look at what this has done to the system by clicking on the History button on the Customer module form.

The refund transaction has created a credit note for the 50.00 to reverse the amount on the original invoice and has created a new transaction, REFUND. Point the mouse at the Refund transaction and double-click the left mouse button. When the transaction detail window is displayed select the Distribution button. You will see the double entry distribution of the Refund transaction and that it is the exact opposite of a payment. It has debited the debtors control and credited the selected bank account. Now close the double entry distribution window.

Click on the Payment button in the transaction detail window. This will show you that the Refund has been allocated against the Credit we mentioned earlier. Now click on the Detail button to bring up another transaction detail window, this time for the Credit and

click on Payment. This now shows you the payment allocations for the Credit which contains a link to the refunded invoice using a minus value (of 50.00) and to the Refund (for 50.00). This gives you a look into how everything in the system is traceable and how comprehensive the zoom-in facilities are as well as how useful and flexible the Refund transaction type can be.

Printing Statements

Empire Builder includes a full Document Designer which enables you to design your own document layouts for customer invoices and statements and for supplier orders and remittance advice notes. You can have whatever fonts, colour, page sizes you want with minimal effort and you can even include your company logo and other pictures which you may have scanned in. Designing your documents is explained in the full user manual or see the on-line help .

From the Customer module click on the Statements button.

You specify the range of customers you want to print statements for and the date range of transactions you want to include. For this example you can press RETURN to select the defaults.

The system asks, in the form of radio buttons, if you want to include all transactions or just include outstanding transactions only. For this example select the All Transactions option so it's button is filled.

The system will finally ask you to choose which layout you want to use. There are initially two templates which are included as a standard part of the system. You can use the combobox to pull down a list of the layouts. You can amend these layouts and add your own using the Document Designer. For this example select the first layout.

The system gives you several options of what you want to do with the statements it will produce. You can print them out right away, you can preview them to see exactly what you are getting before printing or you can email ie to your customer.

Please Note Emailing any document or report in the system will generate a report file with the extension .SHZ. It will attach this file to the email as well as an .EXE file which is the Reports Viewer. The Reports Viewer is a freely distributable and very simple to run & use program which must be used to view or print the report.

In this example select to Preview the statements. The Preview will only show you the first statement in the batch for you to see how it is going to look. Click on the X in the top right of the form when you have finished viewing the document.

If you are not on the Customer module form close all the forms and select the Customer module from the ListBar. You will see there is a Reports button on the form's toolbar. Click this and you will see a drop-down menu of the available reports.

The Print Labels option at the bottom of screen is extremely flexible as it has over 50 types of Avery standard label formats so no matter what adhesive labels you have there will be a layout which will suit your format.

We have seen how reports forms look and operate however there is one important type of report we have not yet looked at, graphs.

Graphical Reports

Until you have a reasonable amount of data in your system the graphs will not mean a great deal however we can demonstrate how they operate and their functionality. From the Reports pull down menu select the Aged Debtors report.

You will see two tab pages underneath the report range, one is Report and the other is Graph. The default is Report which is displaying the data. Click on the Graph tab page and you will see the first level graph which is a vertical bar chart highlighting the overall aged debtors totals ie. Current, 30 days, 60 days etc.

On the bar above the graph you will see several controls useful in manipulating the graph. The first button is Save which gives you options of saving the current graph as a bitmap or copying into the Windows clipboard useful in importing into your word processor, spreadsheet and even reports (a rudimentary word processor is incorporated as part of the EB package). You can print the graph and as always email the graph. The Toggle Marks checkbox is used to toggle the display of the figures displayed in the graph giving the exact figure of each element.

The Graph Type Combobox is used for you to choose which type of graph you require for example vertical bars, horizontal bars, lines and in certain reports, pie charts.

The use of each of the mouse buttons is key to operating the graph. Most graphs show general data at first but you can drill-in to a specific element to get a more detailed graph. To drill-down to or to drill-up to a specific element you must click on an active element in the graphs whether it be a bar, a line or a pie but you must NOT click on the white space background of the graph as this performs a completely different function altogether which we'll go through in a moment.

In the first displayed graph in the Aged Debtors Report point your mouse over the Current element and double-click the left mouse button. You will notice that this drills-down into a more detailed graph giving a comparison of the Current months balance by customer. Now move the mouse pointer over the element (whether a bar or pie etc.) for the customer PORTLAND and double-click the left mouse button. This will once again drill-down to give a detailed analysis of this customer's aged debt.

To drill-up again we need to point to an element, it doesn't specifically matter which one, and click the right mouse button. This drills us up a level.

If you had 200 customers how would you view them all on one graph? Well this is where clicking on the white background comes in. You click the left mouse button anywhere on the white space and keep it pressed. You then drag the mouse either left or right depending on which way you wanted to go which then drags the entire graph with your movement to view other parts of the graph.

The above instructions about how to view and work a graph apply to every graph in the system as they all operate to the same standard.

Setting up a Filter

Finally before we move onto other parts of the system we shall look at how to set a filter on the Customer module form. A filter is a version of your data records, in this case customers, which only displays the records which match a set of conditions called a filter.

As you have seen the Customer module form displays (or will display!) all your customer's details in the main data grid. What however if you wanted to view only those who had exceeded their credit limit or who have invoice outstanding for more than 60 days or who have spent more than 1,000 in the last month. The filter is designed to help you take only the records you need and work with only those.

Please Note A filter option is available in 6 or the 7 module forms accessible from the ListBar. They are *only* applicable within the module forms themselves and setting a filter will not affect reports or enquiries. Therefore any report you run when a filter has been set in the relevant module will not be affected

Click on the Filter button in the Customer module form.

As you can see there are various criteria on which you can set your filter from debtors to turnover which you will find useful. The ranges of figures can be used to setup filters such as listing customers who owe more than 1,000 but less than 2,000 or those who owe less than 500 and are on stop. You can mix any given criteria as you like and click on the OK button when you want to set it up. Once you set a filter it will remain in place in the Customer module until you either exit the system or select the Filter option again and click on the Reset button to reset the values back to their default values to include every customer and click on OK.

We've covered the fundamentals of the Customer module which also covers the Suppliers module giving you a good understanding of how to enter transactions and how to produce report all of which are standard throughout the system.

Setting Up System Parameters

Now that you have a good understanding of how the system operates in general terms we'll turn our attention to setting up the system and customising it's use to how you want before proceeding with any other parts of the system.

On the main menu select File. The first two options are the one's we'll concentrate on for this section. The first option is System Setup. Select this and the form will be displayed and as you can see there are several tab pages each one containing parameters for various purposes.

Company

The company tab is used to edit basic company information such as company name, address, VAT registration number etc. It displays the financial year start although this cannot be changed. There is also a field for Company Password. This is used to add an extra level of security to the particular company you are setting up. If you enter a password in here then whenever someone accesses the system they will have to enter their own user ID and password but when they select this company to work on they will be asked for another password. This is useful if you have two or three companies setup on the system and you don't want anybody else getting access to one of the companies but want them to work on the others.

Transactions

The transactions tab is used to set up some parameters regarding the invoicing and purchase orders section of the system. You can enter the default set of notes to be used on each invoice and purchase order although these can then be changed for each individual transaction at the point of entry. These notes are in notepad format and can contain as much text as you require. You can also edit the transaction number counters for each type of transaction for example if your company's invoice number starts at 1000 then enter this in to the Invoice number field. The numbers can only be increased. You can also enter in the default carriage amounts for the invoicing module. For example if you have a standard charge of 5.00 for carriage then this will be defaulted on every transaction you enter as will the VAT code and nominal ledger account. Ofcourse you will be able to change the details for each transaction. It will be useful to enter the default VAT code and nominal account even if the carriage amount is zero so the user already has an entry.

Control Accounts

Control accounts are used to setup the accounts in the financial module which are used to automate the double-entry processing of transactions such as invoices. You can setup a default bank account which will be selected as the bank account for ease of entry although you can have upto 10 different bank accounts.

VAT Control

The VAT control tab page is used to setup the VAT parameters. These include the 10 different VAT rates you can have and you can also setup the VAT rates which represent the various types of processing. 1 is the generally the standard rate, 5 is for EC sales and 9 is for none VAT related transactions.

Miscellaneous

The miscellaneous tab page is used to setup all the various different types of settings and defaults in the system, some of which have been mentioned earlier in the tutorial. You can setup the notes which you want to have printed on your customer statements and supplier remittance advice notes which are unlimited free text notepads. Below is a description of the other settings on this page.

Auto Open Financial Period

If you check this option then the system will open a new financial period automatically for you when you enter the system. This checks to see if the system date is inside an unopened period and if so it will open a new period for you. If you do not check this option then if you enter a date for a transaction in an unopened period then, depending on your user rights, you will be able to open the period there and then without having to go out and select a different part of the system.

Stock Decimals

Enter the number of decimal places you want to have for your stock quantities (max 4) and for your stock prices (max 5).

Minimum Markup

Enter the percentage markup which is the minimum you want to sell an item at in the Invoicing system. This won't stop you from selling but it will warn you.

Free Text Defaults

This is used for the free text items which you can enter onto your invoices. You can setup a VAT code and a nominal account which can be changed at the point of entry.

Unallocated Payments VAT Code

Enter the VAT code you want to be entered automatically onto any unallocated payments. This will be changed when you allocate invoices to them but in the case of VAT cash accounting it is used where no allocations are made.

Preview All Reports

If you check this option then as you print reports in the system the preview of the report will always be displayed before you can print. If you just want to directly print reports then do not check this option.

Start Report Date

When reports require you to set a range of dates then the date you enter here will always be used as the default.

Background Picture

You will have noticed that the background to the main system screen has a picture which has been wallpapered across. If you have a picture you would prefer to use, for example your company logo, in the form of a bitmap file then you can specify the file here so the system can use it.

When you have made any necessary changes to the system you can click on the Save button and then on the Close button to close the form.

Now we have gone through how to setup system parameters we shall now go through how to setup different users in the system.

Please Note Although you can setup different users on the system it is designed for when different users are using the system at different times. It is not for simultaneous access across a network. A network version of Empire Builder catering for this is available separately.

Select the File option from the main menu and select the System Users option from the File menu. From the submenu select Add New Users.

You are first of all asked to key in the new user's ID which is usually the person's initials. You can then key in the user's full name and then password. The bottom section of the form allows you to select exactly which parts of the system this user is allowed access to. The options along the left hand side obviously enable you to select which modules the user is allowed access to. The options on the right hand side go into more detail as to what the user can use and view. These are explained as follows.

Financial Reports

This tells the system if the user has access to view and print reports such as profit & loss, balance sheet, budget variance, the setting up of the financial reports and the elements of the quick analysis which show this information.

System Setup

This is a particularly important access feature as it sets the ability of the user to change system parameters, to setup and edit user details and to create new company details. It is recommended that only one user, a supervisor, has this option checked. As you will see the user passwords are freely displayed and you would not want all users seeing this information.

Amend Transactions

This tells the system if the user has access to amend transactions and to undo transactions.

System Reports

This enables you to select if the user can get at the reporting tools of the system covering the Reports Designer and the Document Designer.

Click on the Save button to save the new user.

As well as preventing users from accessing sensitive parts of the system you can also “switch off” the parts of the system which you consider to be irrelevant to your circumstances.

To do this select the Utilities option from the main menu and from the drop down menu select Toggle Modules near the bottom of the menu. The submenu which is displayed lists all the modules available in the system with a tick by each one indicating that it is

Please Note Although you have switched off a module the parts of the system which rely on the module will still be required. For example if you switch off the Financials module you will still have to specify a financial account if entering an invoicing etc. The module will still be updated in the background even if it is switched off.

currently available. To switch a module off simply select it and it’s icon is removed from the ListBar and the relevant options on the menu and the toolbar will become unavailable.

Financials Module

The financials module is generally referred to as the Nominal Ledger element of the system however we have attempted to largely get away from accounting and bookkeeping terminologies and make it much more easily understood by people who will not necessarily have bookkeeping knowledge.

The core accounting engine of the Financials module stores upto 3 years accounts balances and using a “3rd entry” account P&L balance forward account to enable you enter transactions in any period and ripple it’s effect through to the current period. This means you can enter transactions into any period you like without the need to close off periods first.

Entering and Editing Financial Account Details

First of all we’ll look at the financial account entry and editing form.

Select Financial from the ListBar to view the Financials module form. Unlike the Customer and Supplier module forms the data grid will be filled with the default financials accounts list. Click on the Search button and using the search dialog find the Debtors Control Account (reference 7100). When found click on the Edit button to bring up the Financials Edit Form.

The tab pages on the form once again represent changing the right hand side of the form and indicate displaying the three years balances the system holds for each account and finally a tab page for a free text notepad.

The fields on the left hand side of the form are the standard reference and the account name. The third prompt is for an account type. The system asks you to select which section the account belongs to.

Click the combobox button using the left mouse button or type ALT + Down Arrow key on the keyboard to get a list of the available account types. As you will see the options are Sales, Purchases, Direct Costs and Overheads for P&L accounts and Fixed Assets, Current Assets, Liabilities and Financed By for Balance Sheet accounts. You should select accordingly.

The next prompt, Asset/Liability is new. It is used only for Current Asset and Liability accounts is for you to select if the account can be both an asset and a liability depending on it's balance. This is used solely in producing your financial reports and is in no way used for any processing. Accounts which are typical for the use of this feature are bank accounts which if they have a debit balance (money in the bank) are an asset but if they have a credit balance (overdrawn) are a liability. There is a section later in this guide explaining how to setup the groups for your financial reports.

Please Note When you are setting up the groupings for your financial reports you should include any accounts which have the Asset/Liability feature checked, in both the Current Asset and Liability sections of the report. The system will then check if each account has this feature checked and include it only in the relevant section.

On the left hand side you can setup budget figures for each financial period to produce a budget variance report. The system stores budget figures for each financial year to give you a true budget analysis year by year.

If you click on any of the first three tab pages you will see the budget and balance figures for each of the three years the system holds details for.

Click on the Save button if you have made any changes. To add an account you would simply click on the New button and enter a new account reference. You do not need to use coded account references such as those provided by the system. You could even set up your accounts structure like you do your customers ie. DEBTOR for debtors control, VAT for VAT control, it's entirely upto you.

Click on the Close button to exit from the form.

Entering Journal Entries

When the Financials module form is displayed click on the Journals button and the journal entry form will be displayed.

You will first of all be asked to key in the date for the journal entry transaction and then a brief reference.

When you are taken into the data grid you can enter your journal. If you want to remove a line from the entry you can click on the Remove button (or press ALT + M) or point the mouse pointer to the line you want to remove and press the right button. This will give you a pop up menu of items (notice you can change the colour of the data grid as you can everywhere else in the system) and you can select remove.

As you enter the journal lines ensure that the debit and credit totals displayed at the bottom of the grid are equal before the system will allow you to save the entries.

In this example we will enter a fairly simple journal as follows.

Account	Comments		Vc
	Debit	Credit	
7200			Transfer From Bank
		9	
	150.00		
7230			Transfer To Cash
			9 150.00

When you have entered this click on the Save button or press ALT + S. Now close the form clicking on the Close button or the X button in the top right of the form (or by pressing ALT + C).

The journal entries you entered are collated together and they know what entries they are linked to. This is in order to provide the true tracability and drill-down facilities available. We'll demonstrate this next.

Viewing Financial Reports

On the Financials module form click on the History button. This will display the financial account transaction enquiry form. This is very similar to the customer history form which we explained earlier. The main data grid contains the transactions for the account displayed above the grid. If the account 7230 is not currently displayed then click on the Search button (magnifying glass) at the side of the Account Reference field and find the account 7230 using the search dialog.

When selected you will see the transaction we have just entered. Place the mouse pointer over the transaction and double-click the left mouse button so the transaction details are displayed. This is similar to the transaction details zoom-in form we looked

at earlier in the Customer History form, except it is dealing solely with this nominal transaction. Click on the Distribution button and you will see all entries on the journal entry.

Click on Close to close the double entry distribution form and then click Close on the transaction details to close the details form.

The facilities available on the Customer History enquiry and report form are also available here and indeed on all reports in the system.

Click on Close to return to the Financial module.

Now we'll take a look at some of the other reports in the Financial module. Click on the Reports button and a pull down menu of all the reports available in the Financial module will be listed. Select Trial Balance.

The Trial Balance report form looks similar to the enquiry and report forms we've looked at so far. However the range setting at the top of the form is considerably different. You will notice three period settings each using a combobox with a Search button to the right. Each one has the header "Period" 1 – 3. The Period One combo box has "Current Balances" displayed in it while the other two have "None" displayed in them. Confused? All will be revealed!

The trial balance report form enables you to select upto 3 different accounting periods to view and then, if required, to print. The default view is to have one period displayed using the Current Balances (accumulative balances). Point your mouse at the Period 2 combobox and click the arrow button. This will list some periods which you are likely to want to view ie This Month, Last Month, This Year etc. and is a very quick and easy way of selecting it.

However what if you wanted to see a trial balance for two or three months ago? Or perhaps a complete trial balance for Quarter 4 of last year, or for the 1st Quarter of this year or for the previous six months. This is what the Select Period button (magnifying glass) is used for. Click on the button for Period 2 and you will see the Select Period dialog form.

The Select Period form contains every period for each of the last three years and you can select any period or any combination of periods you want to see a trial balance for. Using the vertical scroll bar drag the list of periods down to the bottom to display the most recent periods. If a period on the list has an asterisk (*) at the side of it then this means that it is a currently unopened period and you cannot select it for reporting.

To select a single period simply point the mouse at the period you want so it is highlighted and click on the Select button. If you want to select multiple periods then you click on the first period or the last period in the range you want. Keeping the left mouse button depressed drag the mouse either down or up to the last period or the first

period and let go of the mouse button. Now with the range of periods you want highlighted click on the Select button.

The trial balance report will now display the selected periods. This can be done for any of the three periods available so you can do comparisons etc. If you want to blank out one of the periods then simply select None on the drop down combobox.

This selection of periods is available for many reports in the system so you can report on just about any period you like!

Click on the Close button to return to the Financials module form.

Next we'll take a look at another important report, the Profit & Loss and Balance Sheet. Click on the Reports button and select Financial Reports from the pull down menu. The financial report is not a report which is displayed as an enquiry but you will be presented with a dialog form for you to select exactly what you want on the report.

You can specify upto 4 different periods to be included on the P&L and balance sheet and you can select the periods you want in exactly the same way as we did with the trial balance. Another feature which gives you a great deal of flexibility in producing the report is the ability to display every individual account in the report or to display it in groups of accounts. Check the Display Individual Accounts checkbox if this is what you want to include.

When you have specified the periods you want to see in the report then you can click on the Print button. The Graph button will display the data for the selected periods in a graphical format which is very useful. Click the Close button to close the report dialog.

Now we have looked at how to produce the financial reports we'll look at the tool you can use to setup the reports and how to group accounts.

Setting Up Financial Reports

From the Financials module form click on the Reports button and select Report Setup from the pull-down menu. You will see the form for setting up the reports which looks pretty bare at first glance.

On the left hand side of the screen you will see just two icons with Profit & Loss and Balance Sheet. On the right hand side is a currently empty data grid and at the bottom are several buttons most of which have been made unavailable.

The left hand control with the two report headers is an unexploded tree view. If you click on the small + to the left of Profit & Loss you will see the categories of the various

sections of the report. Click on the small + next to Balance Sheet (or double-click the label) and you see the category headings for the balance sheet report.

Now click the + next to the Sales label and you will see the headings of the groups which make up the Sales section of the P&L report. Click on the first group label in the Sales section and you will see the grid on the right of the form fill with records.

What we are doing is looking at the structure of your financial report using a tree view. The accounts listed in the grid on the right hand side are contained in the currently selected group, which will be included in the Sales section of the Profit & Loss report.

We'll now fully explode the tree view by double-clicking on Purchases, double-clicking on Direct Costs and Overheads and then double-clicking on all the sections in the Balance Sheet report (use the vertical scrollbar to move up or down the tree view if required).

If you wanted to change the name of any of the group headings you simply double-click on the header label and a dialog will be displayed for you to type in the name you want to change it to.

If you wanted to add a new group to a section click on the relevant section header ie. Sales or on any of it's groups and click on the Add Group button (or press ALT + A) and you will get a dialog for you to key in the name of the new group. If you wanted to delete an existing group then you would click on the Delete Group button (or press ALT + D) and you will be asked to confirm the deletion.

Please Note When you delete a group you are also removing all the accounts in that group from the report layout and they will therefore not be included in the financial reports.

The most important part of structuring the report layout is to add the right accounts into the right groups and sections. Putting an account into the wrong section, including it in more than one group or not including it at all will inevitably cause your figures to be incorrect so it is important you take care.

Please Note When you create a new account in the Financial module it is NOT inserted into the layout automatically and must be added into the relevant section manually before producing your financial reports or it's balances will not be calculated.

To add accounts click on the group heading you want to add it to. If there are already accounts included in the group they will be displayed on the right hand data grid. Click on the Add Account button (or press ALT + O) and you will be given a dialog for you to select the account you want to include. You can use the Search facility to find the account you want. Click on the OK button when you have finished.

If you try to add an account which does not have the account type relevant to the section you are trying to add it to then the system will warn you of this but you will be able to proceed.

If you want to delete an account from a group click on the Delete Account button and you will be given a dialog for you to confirm the deletion.

When you have amended the layout to how you require then you should click on the Check button before finishing with the option. This will make some checks on your layout and report any discrepancies which may cause problems such as any accounts which are not included.

Click on Close to exit this form.

To complete our look at the Financials module we will take a look at the VAT return facility.

VAT Return

From the Financials module form click the Reports button and select VAT Return from the pull-down menu.

As you will see the form looks similar to the VAT return form. The figures are not yet calculated as the system expects us to specify the VAT period by entering the start and finish dates of the period. You can also specify the type of return you want by specifying By Invoice (for standard VAT) or By Payment (for VAT cash accounting) by clicking on the relevant radio button. The Include Reconciled Transactions checkbox will be explained a little later and it is only applicable for the By Invoice option.

When you have specified these initial settings simply click on the Calc button and the return will be calculated automatically for you and the figures displayed in the appropriate boxes.

Several of the VAT boxes have the relevant value displayed on top of a button. By clicking on any of these buttons we can zoom-in to view the breakdown of the selected VAT box.

Click on the button for box 1 (VAT due in the period on sales) and you will be given a breakdown by transaction type and by VAT rate. You will notice that one of the VAT codes will have an asterisk beside it (*) which represents that it is the code for non-VAT applicable transactions as setup in System Setup explained earlier.

You can zoom-in to a particular cell by clicking on it and clicking the Zoom button (or by double-clicking the cell). When you do this you will get a full list of the transactions which make up the figures in the box. If you are using standard VAT then the system will allow you to reconcile or unreconcile each transaction (all transactions will be

reconciled as default) and you can check and uncheck the transactions accordingly. If you are using VAT cash accounting this facility is unavailable.

If you reconcile VAT transactions and you come to produce a VAT return which would normally include the transactions, you can exclude them by unchecking the Include Reconciled Transactions checkbox in the main VAT return form. This enables you to back-date transactions where applicable and still include them in a future return.

Click on Close to remove all forms until the main VAT return form is displayed. Click on the Summary button and you will see a breakdown of VAT codes for net and VAT inputs and outputs. Click on the Close button to close the summary form.

Click on the Print button to print the VAT return.

VAT Cash Accounting

If you are using VAT cash accounting there are many major differences between how this is handled for the standard scheme. The system calculates a true cash VAT return particularly for unallocated payments. As the system builds up a history for each payment of which invoices it was allocated against then each time you run the VAT return it will recalculate this to give a true figure. If you can imagine that a payment could be allocated against as many invoices as you like, with each invoice, in theory, split across 3 or 4 VAT codes then the system will recalculate at the point of producing a cash VAT return and give an absolutely true figure. You can also see the VAT amount on a payment using the drill-down facility so you can still see this transaction-level information at any time. To highlight the flexibility this gives you it is possible to allocate a payment against invoices, then undo this and re-allocate against different invoices and this will be reflected immediately in all essential reports and enquiries.

Bank Module

The Bank module is inextricably linked to the financials module and the bank details are linked directly to the bank account's financial account and all details are posted through directly to the financial module. However a cashbook is in use on daily basis in a business whereas the core financial module may not necessarily be.

Click on the Bank icon in the Listbar and you will see a list of your bank accounts. The New button will take you into creating a new bank details which will create a new account in the Financials module and add it automatically to the control accounts.

With the first bank account selected click on the Edit button. You will see that there are various details you can store about the bank account including the full account name, the account number, branch sort code and the bank's address. Probably the most important

addition to the form is the Limit field which lets you store details of any overdraft limit etc. which is used in the system to project the cash availability status of your business.

When you have made any changes to the bank details you can click on the Save button to save the details and then click on Close to close the form.

Entering Bank Payments & Receipts

Entering bank (or cash) payments and receipts is a very similar process to the Manual Entries transactions we entered in the Customer module. We enter the transaction details and enter the financial accounts splits which are required.

For this example we'll enter a payment although receipts are identical.

Click on the Payments button on the Bank module form's toolbar.

First of all the system asks you to specify the bank you want to post the payment to, the default bank account is entered for you as specified in System Setup. You can click on the combobox button to pull-down the available banks or press ALT + Down Arrow on the keyboard.

You are next asked for the date and then a brief reference for the transaction. Confirm today's date and enter 006782 as a cheque number.

You are then taken into the financial account splits grid to enter the distribution of the transaction across different accounts and VAT rates. Enter the following

Account	Comments	Net	VAT
4500	VC	Printed Stationery	120.00
	1		21.00
4504		Pen & Pads	
	8.51		1
	1.49		

As you can see it is extremely easy to enter cashbook entries into the system. Click on the Save button or press ALT + S and the form will clear for you to enter a new transaction. Click on Close to quit the form.

You can see on the Bank module form's toolbar that we have the facility to transfer money to and from different bank and cash accounts.

We'll take a look at the Recurring Entries option. Click on the Recurring button.

Entering Recurring Entries

When the recurring entries form is displayed click on the New button or press ALT + N. You will first of all be asked to key in a description for the entry which is used purely to reference the recurring entry. Enter **BMW Vehicle Contract Hire**.

The next prompt is for the date that the recurring entry is next due which you can enter manually or can be calculated automatically for you. Leave the date as the default. You are then asked to key in the type of recurring entry. You can enter receipts if you are to receive standing orders or direct debits from customers and you can also assign them to the customers in the Customers module. In the same way payments can be assigned to suppliers in the Suppliers module. You can click on the combobox button or press ALT + Down Arrow on the keyboard to pull down a list of available options. For this example select **Payment**.

You are now asked to enter the frequency that the recurring entry is to be processed. Once again use the combobox to pull-down the available options. There is an option for When Required which is useful for processing regular and repeated transactions but do not have a set frequency. For this example select **Monthly**. You will notice that the Next Post Date field is recalculated.

You can now specify which bank the payment is going to be processed through. The system uses the default bank but you can use the combobox to specify a different bank. We can now specify a supplier if we want it to go through the Supplier module. If you specify a supplier, when processed the system will create an invoice and a payment. If it is a straight forward payment you can leave it blank and the system will process it as a bank payment. For this example we will leave it blank.

Next you can enter a reference which will be used as the reference on the transaction when processed. Enter **BMW092**. You can then enter the details which will be posted onto the transaction when posted. Key in **BMW Contract Hire** for the details.

Now you can enter the financial accounts splits to be posted each time the entry is processed. Enter the following

Account	Comments	VAT	Net	Vc
4401				Car Lease
				300.00
		1		52.50
4905				Credit Charges
		20.00	9	0.00

Now click on Save to save the recurring entry. If you want to process the entry now you can click on the Post button. You are then given the choice of processing the current

entry now regardless of whether it is due or not or processing all the recurring entries which are on file which are now due for processing.

Each time you enter the system it will check your recurring entries to see which ones are due for processing. It will then give you the choice of which ones you wanted to post there and then as you require.

We'll now see how you can reconcile your bank accounts. Click on the Reconcile button in the Bank module.

The default bank is entered for you or you can use the combobox to select a different bank. Once selected press RETURN or TAB and all the relevant transactions will be listed. You can see the X at the side of each transaction. To reconcile a transaction simply click on it which will reverse the selection. The balance figures are adjusted accordingly. You have a reverse button to reverse the selections and you have an Adjustment button to make any entries not included in the system from your bank statement.

Stock Module

The Stock Control module is a comprehensive and simple to operate system which will cater easily for the vast majority of smaller businesses stock control requirements.

Select the Stock module from the listbar. As you can see it is very similar in appearance to the other module forms with the stock records displayed in the main data grid, details of the selected item are displayed at the bottom and the available options for the module are on the listbar.

We'll first of all enter a new stock item on to the system.

Entering & Editing Stock Details

Click on the New button and the stock item details form will be displayed.

You will first of all be asked to enter a stock code for the new item. For this example enter **ABC01** and **Integrated Widget 447A** into the description field. Next we are asked for a product group and we shall go through how to set up groups shortly. For this example leave it blank. You can enter upto 3 selling per stock item. Enter 5.00, 4.00 and 3.00 consecutively into the price fields. Enter 1.00 into the cost price field.

You can now enter three levels of discount percentage onto the stock record. In this example enter 3.00, 5.00 and 7.00 consecutively.

The Show Price Including VAT prompt asks if you want to show the prices as inclusive of VAT. Leave this unchecked. The next prompt asks if the item is a full stock item ie will maintain stock levels. All items, whether full stock items or not, maintain full sales and profit figures for upto 3 years.

The prompt now moves to the right hand side of the page which is changed by clicking a different tab page. As you can see this form has four tab pages. You can specify a default financial account for both selling the item and purchasing the item. Enter **1000** for sales and **2000** for purchase.

You can also enter the VAT code for the rate used for both selling and purchasing the item. Enter **1** for both fields. You can now key in a supplier's reference for the preferred supplier and their stock reference. Leave these fields blank for this example.

You can also key in the location for the stock items and a commodity code which you can use in your own reports to cater for miscellaneous purposes ie. EC intrastat.

If you now click on the Stock tab page you can see that the system displays the current stock levels and you can enter a reorder level and reorder quantity.

The third tab page is for free-text notes on the item. Click on the Picture tab page and you will see a blank white space with button above. This is used to display a picture of the current stock item if you have it in bitmap format for example if you have scanned in a picture of the product. Point the mouse at the button to the right hand side and the hint will tell you it is used to load a picture from the file. If you click this you can then specify the bitmap picture file you want to use. If you click the left button you can paste a picture from the clipboard if one has previously been copied into it. The middle button is used to stretch the selected picture within the space provided.

Click on the Save button or press ALT + S to save the new stock item details and click on the Close button to exit this form.

The Stock module uses the FIFO method of processing and maintains a history of movements. To make direct adjustments to the stock levels of items we need to use the Adjustment form. From the Stock module form click on the Adjust button.

Entering Stock Adjustments

The default stock item used when this form was selected is dependent on the selected stock item on the Stock module form. If you want to change it you can use the search facilities to do so on the stock prompt. However the first prompt is for the type of adjustment you want to make dependent on whether you are adjusting stock in or out. In

this example we will be entering opening stock for the item we will use the default radio button selection for Adjustment In.

You can now enter the quantity to adjust and we will enter **25**. The defaults for the sales and cost price and the date we'll leave as default. For the reference field we will enter **O/STK** and for the description we'll enter **Opening Stock**.

Once the details have been entered click on the Save button to adjust the stock in and click on Close to exit the form.

Setting Up Product Groups

We'll now take a look at setting up product groups for you to assign items to. You are not limited to a set number of groups and you can have more descriptive references to help searching.

From the Stock module form click on the Groups button. The Product Groups window is very simple to use. Click on the New button to add a new product group or select the required group in the list and click on Edit to amend existing groups.

You enter then enter group references and enter a full description of each group.

For this example enter **WIDGETS** into the code field and **Assorted Widgets** into the description field. You can continue to enter product groups into the grid. Click on the Save button to setup the product group and Close to exit the form.

Stock Reports

There are a number of comprehensive stock reports available in the system. The system gives you access to the three years of sales and profit figures it maintains through the Stock Sales and Profit Reports. You can pick any combination of periods you like to report on in the same way we explained earlier with the Financial Reports.

Click on the Sales button in the Stock module form. This shows you the sales and profit figures quickly on screen for each period in the available 3 years. Use the vertical scrollbar on the right hand side of the list to move down. The figures given are for the stock item displayed at the top of the form. The system also displays the product group the stock item belongs to. You will also notice the View Figures For radio button options with Stock Item selected. If you select the Product Group radio button the system will recalculate the figures displayed for the entire product group. You can pick any item or product group you require. Click on the Close button to exit this form.

We'll take a look at another stock report, Stock Valuation. Click the Reports button and select Stock Valuation from the pull-down menu. You will notice that this

enquiry/report form is very similar to the other report form we have looked at. You can specify the range of stock items using the options at the top of the form.

Please Note The By Stock Code/ By Product Group radio button selections which you will find on most of the stock enquiry/report forms do not affect the on-screen enquiry. They only have an effect on the sort order of the printed report.

If you look at the figures which are displayed on the Stock Valuation enquiry data grid you will notice that the system displays stock valuation based at average cost price and at average sales price. If you want to change the sales valuation to be based upon a particular sales price rather than an average of all three prices then you can point the mouse onto the grid and click the right mouse button. This will display a tick by the Average Sales Price option. To change this simply click on one of the sales prices and the figures will immediately be re-calculated to your selection.

Click on the Close button when you have finished with the report.

Invoice Module

Select the Invoice icon from the system listbar and you will see the Invoice module. The upper data grid displays the individual transactions and the bottom section of the screen is split into three tab pages, Header, Items and Footer. If you click on the Items tab you will see another data grid which lists the items on the currently selected transaction.

Empire Builder includes a facility for free-format document printing using our powerful Document Designer for your document layouts.

Looking at the options on the toolbar at the top of the Invoice module form you will see the first three are standard throughout the modules to enter new transactions, edit transactions and to search for transactions. The other options on the toolbar are explained below

Print

Print one or a range of transactions using any document layout you have created.

Post

Updates one or a range of invoices and/or credit notes. You can also unpost transactions if required.

Convert

Convert your quotations and proforma transactions into invoices automatically.

Copy

Copy the details of a selected transaction to create a new transaction which can be for a completely different customer and transaction type.

Delete

Delete a range of transactions which are no longer required.

As with the majority of the Module forms you also have a Report menu with a list of available reports. Click the Reports menu and you will see there are four reports including customer and product histories. Finally you have the Filter option to view a selected range of transactions in the data module.

We'll go through now how to enter a new invoice. Click on the New button.

Entering Invoice Transactions

The invoice entry form is split into three tab pages, the Header where you enter the customer details, Items where you pull products from the Stock module and enter free-text items and the footer where you finalise the transaction with additional charges such as carriage, enter settlement discount etc.

You can first of all enter a customer reference using the search facilities. Just like the DOS software you can enter transactions for non-account customers by leaving the customer reference blank. For this example enter PORTLAND.

Next you will be asked for the invoice date, accept the default given. We are then asked to enter a customer order number. For this example leave it blank.

You can now select what type of transaction you want to enter using the radio buttons. Select Invoice. The system now asks you to enter a delivery address. Press RETURN or TAB through these fields leaving them blank.

The system now automatically takes you through to the Lines tab to enter products and services onto the system

You can now enter a stock code for the item you require. In this example we will use the stock item we created earlier ABC01. The description and the price details are read

from the stock item for your reference and you are then asked for the quantity you have sold. Key in 2 and press RETURN or TAB.

The next prompt is for the price and the system will give you a drop down menu of the three available prices. You can type a different price directly into the field or you can use the mouse or the cursor keys to select one of the three prices (the highlighted price on the list is dependent on the customer's price code).

When selected the system will give you another drop-down menu of the three available discount rates for you to select from. Once again you can enter your own value or select one from the given list.

Next you can specify the financial account you want to use for this transaction and you can use the search facilities if required. Accept the default given. You are then asked to key in the VAT code for the item. If you want to calculate the VAT inclusive of the price entered then click on the VAT Rev button or press ALT + V.

The system will now take you to the next line to enter another item. We'll complete the invoice by looking at the footer. Click on the Footer tab page and you will see the final form of the invoice. The carriage values are defaulted from System Setup as explained earlier. The settlement discount settings are taken from the customer record. We'll accept the defaults given. You can alter the notes which once again uses the default from the system setup.

If you want to post and update the Customer module, the Financial module and the Stock module immediately when you save the invoice then check the Post Now checkbox. For this example check this box.

If the invoice is to be paid immediately then you should check the Pay Now? Check box and you can select the bank or cash account it is to be paid into. For this example leave it unchecked.

We have now finished with this transaction so you can click on the Save button (or press ALT + S) and click the Close button (or press ALT + C).

When the Invoice module form is displayed the invoice's Posted column will be ticked indicating that it has updated the other parts of the system.

We'll now look at printing the invoice.

Printing Transactions

Click on the Print button on the Invoice module form. You will now see the print dialog where you can specify the range of transactions to be printed. We just want to print this one invoice so we can check the Current Transaction Only checkbox which tells the

system to only print the transaction currently selected in the Invoice module. The other range options will immediately be disabled.

You will see a prompt for Document Layout where you can specify the document layout template created in the Document Designer. The system comes with 2 standard layout templates which will be available in the Document Layout combobox. You can have as many layouts as your business needs.

You can then select to print the document, preview it on screen or email it to the customer where they can view it and print it using the report viewer.

Additional Features

There are a number of very useful utility features in Empire Builder which we can look at. If you click on the Utilities menu you will see a list of additional facilities including Reports Designer, Document Designer, Word Processor and a Mail Merge facility.

Quick Analysis

A great feature in Empire Builder is the Quick Analysis facility which lets you look at the current state of your business very easily on screen. To look at this option click on the Utilities menu and select Quick Analysis (or press F5 from anywhere in the system).

You will see that the Quick Analysis form displays the Cash tab page initially which shows you current cash position of your business taking into account all your bank account accounts and any credit limits available to give you the cash availability. At the bottom of the form the system looks at what standing orders are due to paid and to be received, what VAT is owed and what customer payments are due in and what money is now due to be paid to supplier. Taking all the information from within the system it can give a very accurate projected cash position. To the right of each of the projected figures you can set dates for the system to calculate projections on another date, for example the end of a month. If you change a date on say the Standing Order Payments Due then you can ripple the new date to other projection figures by clicking the right mouse and selecting the Change All Dates popup button. This is a very useful feature in keeping you completely up-to-date and telling you where you stand.

The other tab pages are very useful in looking very quickly at the financial information the system holds. If you click on the Profit & Loss tab page you will see that the available periods you want to look at are displayed in a scrollable list on the left hand

side. You can select a period or a collection of periods ie. financial quarters and display a quick profit & loss in the grid on the right hand side. You will notice a check box with the prompt 'Lock Columns'. If you want to do a P&L analysis you can do this by checking this box and when you select a period you can lock it on the grid, then go and pick another period and it will display this period alongside. This gives you the facilities to very quickly view a spreadsheet style analysis of P&L periods. If you don't click this checkbox then each period will be overwritten when you calculate a new period. If you want to lock or unlock a column which is already displayed in the grid then point the mouse over the column you want and click the right mouse button.

To select a period you can use exactly the same method we used when setting up your trial balance or financial reports. When you have selected the period(s) you want then click on the Calculate button. To clear the data grid of all selections click on the Clear button.

The Balance Sheet tab page is exactly the same as the P&L page except that it obviously displays balance sheet.

Reports & Document Designer

All standard reports in the system have been designed using the excellent reporting designer which comes with Empire Builder, therefore the very tool you have for generating your own reports was used by the developers of Empire Builder to create the very comprehensive reports in the system. This should give you some idea of the power this reporting tool gives you. As well as developing your own reports you can change the layout of standard reports in the system!

We have teamed up with Shazamware Inc., WA, USA to bring you the truly graphical, WYSIWYG reporting tool used to generate reports and documents in the system. Shazamware produce the world's finest Windows reporting tools and we have tailored and built upon their flagship product, Shazam Reports Wizard, specifically to work with Empire Builder and utilise every piece of information held in the system. You will struggle to find such reporting power in systems costing thousands and we very much doubt you can find it in an entry level accounts system.

The actual designing and laying out the reports is beyond the scope of this tutorial guide however Shazamware have provided us with an excellent help system to explain how to use the reporting tools, which can be used for both designing reports and documents.

Document Designer

The document designer, as with the reports designer, is a separate .EXE program from the main Empire Builder application but can be run directly from Empire Builder or from outside using the Start button. Select Document Designer from the Utilities menu.

You will be presented with a dialog form for you to use as a control centre for holding the details of your document layouts. At the top the form there is a combobox from

where you can select which document type you want to work with. The default setting is Invoice and there is a options for statements and purchase order layouts. Depending on the document type you select you will see the available layouts in the data grid. If you want to edit any of the available layouts then click on the record in the data grid. You can edit the document name, and the user who owns or setup the documents. If you want to edit the selected document layout click on the Design button to bring up the report designer. To add a new layout click on the new button. Whenever you come to produce the selected document you will get a list of available layouts you can use. You are not limited to the number of document layouts you can have.

For a more detailed explanation of setting up your documents and reports please consult the relevant sections of the on-line help system.