

Company Information:

Company: Timbre Software, Inc.
Product: Solstice
Contact: Scott Stephenson, sales@timbresoftware.com
Website: www.timbresoftware.com
Hours & Time Zone: Mon-Fri; 8AM to 6PM Mountain Time
Established: 2001 **IDN Membership:** Premier since 2001
QuickBooks Integration: QuickBooks Pro, Premier, and Enterprise, 2002 and later

An Interview With

Scott Stephenson,
Timbre Software

Why was Solstice developed?

Solstice was developed to allow QuickBooks users to easily enter information and transactions while away from the office.

Many small business owners and their employees spend the majority of time out of the office, at a jobsite, or on the road. They stuff receipts here and there and do their best to record information and transactions on paper.

Back in the office the information then has to be entered into QuickBooks, either by the owner, a bookkeeper, or an office manager. In addition to wasting a lot of time, this method commonly results in highly inaccurate or incomplete information.

With **Solstice** transactions can be entered in real-time, significantly improving the accuracy of field data and reducing the amount of time spent entering information once back at the office.

At a Glance:

Record QuickBooks transactions in the field using a Pocket PC

- *Time cards*
- *Invoices*
- *Check & credit card purchases*
- *Bills*
- *New customers & jobs*
- *Inventory adjustments*

Who is your target market and why?

Solstice is primarily targeted at the construction industry. It can certainly be used by anyone who spends a great deal of time in the field or on the road, and we have a number of non-construction customers. However, we have found the greatest need for this product to be within the construction industry and have focused our efforts there. Within the construction industry we have customers within most of the trades (i.e. plumbers, electricians, drywallers, painters, etc.), as well as both residential and commercial general contractors. Most of our non-construction customers are consultants, accountants, or attorneys.

How Does Solstice Work?

Solstice will work on any Pocket PC running Windows Mobile 2003 or higher. There's no limit to the number of handhelds that can be utilized with Solstice, meaning that companies can provide handhelds to each superintendent, crew lead, etc. Additionally, Solstice can work with multiple QuickBooks company files located on the handhelds.

Solstice uses a SQL CE database on the handheld and an Access database on the desktop computer. All data synchronization operations utilize a robust "Two Phase Commit". This means that for every piece of data you

send or receive, there's a verification that it has happened and been successful. There are no partial transfers. If the transfer is interrupted for any reason, all databases are restored to what they were before the transfer started.

Who is your competition and how does Solstice differ?

There are several other handheld applications available for QuickBooks. Examples include Field Ranger, Point of Activity Service Call, mJobTime, and PocketBooks. Most are very different from Solstice. Some are geared more towards managing service calls, some are specifically focused on a single transaction type (e.g. time cards), while others work on different types of devices (Palm vs. Pocket PC).

We have been told by many of our customers who evaluated other products that Solstice is very user friendly compared to other programs they tried. Finally, we believe that we really distinguish ourselves with the support we offer to our customers. While some of our competitors do not publish phone numbers, we are always happy to hear from our customers, whether they need support, have a problem, or want to make a suggestion for the next version of the software.

QuickBooks Integration:

Solstice both reads information from QuickBooks and writes new information to QuickBooks. Because Solstice provides relatively broad capability at the handheld, it touches many areas of QuickBooks. When reading from QuickBooks, Solstice primarily imports the basic QuickBooks lists (e.g. Customer:Job, Items, Accounts, etc.). It does *not* import prior transactions or account balances to ensure the security of the data on the handheld. When writing to QuickBooks, Solstice exports the transactional information that has been entered on the handheld(s). We do our best to limit the potential for error causing transactions at the handheld level. If a transaction is created that matches criteria indicating a potential for an error during export, the user is prompted to make changes right then, *before* they are allowed to save the transaction.

Installation & Setup:

It will usually take less than 30 minutes to get Solstice completely installed to both the desktop and the handheld and to get all the data synchronized out to the handheld.

Solstice has been designed to be very easy to use and has a very short learning curve. A *Getting Started* guide walks the customer step-by-step through everything they need to do in order to get up and running quickly.

Most of our customers tell us that the only thing hard about using Solstice is changing behavior patterns to get in the habit of entering information right away. After a few weeks of use, though, it becomes automatic.

Demonstrations & Trials

Our website offers several Flash based demos of Solstice. These demos are available at:

Time Cards: http://www.timbresoftware.com/products/demos/emp_time_card.html

Invoices: <http://www.timbresoftware.com/products/demos/invoices.html>

Check Register: http://www.timbresoftware.com/products/demos/check_register.html

Additionally, we offer a 30-day, money-back guarantee on the purchase of Solstice. If someone purchases Solstice and decides for any reason that it is not meeting their needs, they simply need to let us know within 30 days and we will provide a full refund.

Pricing, Support, Enhancements & Updates:

Solstice is \$249 per handheld (not including the Pocket PC). An upgrade and support subscription is available (but not required) for \$49 per handheld per year. The subscription provides all product updates, both major and minor, over the course of the year as well as access to phone support. We do not sell Pocket PCs since we prefer to allow our customers to choose the device that will work best for their needs. Many of our customers use Pocket PC phones that they purchase through their wireless carrier.

Without the subscription, support will be provided via e-mail. A 30-day subscription is automatically provided to every new customer to ensure they have access to any support needed to get up and running with Solstice. A comprehensive knowledge base is also available on our website at <http://www.timbresoftware.com/support/kb/>.

Many ideas for improvements and enhancements to Solstice come directly from our customers and potential customers. Continuously improving Solstice is very important to us and we take our customers' input very seriously.

How can Solstice help Advisors with their clients?

By reducing the time required for manual data entry and improving the accuracy of data coming in from the field, Solstice allows Advisors to focus on helping their clients run a healthy, profitable business. Instead of deciphering a stack of receipts or chicken scratch time cards, the Advisor can spend their time helping the business owner learn how to analyze their job data, which is now accurate and complete.

Closing – What is the most important point you would like to make?

The commodities in the shortest supply for most businesses are time and cash. **Solstice** increases the availability of both. Recording information as it happens significantly reduces the time required for data entry once the worker is back in the office.

With accurate and timely data from the field, employees will be paid only for the actual time they worked (not what they guess they did when filling out a time sheet at the end of the week).

Time, expenses, and materials will be assigned to the correct jobs, resulting in accurate and complete invoices that can be sent to customers in a timely manner. A quick and accurate invoice usually generates quick receipt of payment. Finally, all this accurate and complete information from the field allows for job costing analysis that will improve the long-term profitability of the company.

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