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So You Have a Great Integrated Application....Now What?

There are over 3 million QuickBooks installations in North America.

Many of those users are small mom and pop shops that were used to pen and paper, or maybe an Excel spreadsheet to track the sales they made of their product or service. They are very proud of their offering, can tell you about it inside and out and how it will solve whatever type of problem you might be having. They know their neighbors, the Chamber of Commerce, their customers, and the small business community around them.

One day while talking to someone about being overwhelmed with keeping track of the finances of the business another small business owner says you really should go to store and pick up QuickBooks.

The small business owner goes to his local computer superstore and becomes the 3,000,001st user of QuickBooks.

Meanwhile, software developers are creating wonderful QuickBooks integrated solutions and know that not all of those 3 million users will need those products. However, they might very well need our solutions:

- When the big companies knock on their door and say; we like the widget you are creating and if you will exchange orders and invoices with us electronically, then we will do business with you.
- When the website they had created is getting so many orders that they can't waste time double keying that information into QuickBooks.
- When they hire sales people and they are entering orders into a sales system and someone else has to enter those orders into QuickBooks so that they can be invoiced.
- When their inventory list is getting so big that QuickBooks can't handle the data.
- When they are ready to throw QuickBooks out the window because it isn't fulfilling their needs.

Basically we are looking for the overwhelmed QuickBooks users!

So how do we find them? We can't go the local computer superstore and expect to find them; our solution is one that needs human intervention. We need to ensure that overwhelmed QuickBooks user really needs us, and not one of our competitors or a QuickBooks Pro Advisor.

This was the challenge I was introduced to in October 2005. My company, eBridge Software, has specialized in integrating EDI documents since 1993. That same technology allows us to integrate web stores, SCM, CRM, and the possibilities are endless for what can be integrated for QuickBooks in the future. eBridge does this type of integration for 35 other accounting applications and my coworkers are well versed in working with the Sales teams that represent those packages. It is a referral business and they work hard at building relationships and the results are there. We have over 1000 installs of our adapter and are experts in the technology. No one in the company has focused on QuickBooks as a market for our product offerings before.

The roads traveled by my coworkers would not work for QuickBooks; there are not sales representatives that are building relationships with customers convincing them that QuickBooks is the correct accounting

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solution for them. There are marketing efforts, and there is name recognition. Intuit is clearly the market leader in the small business accounting world.

So who is my target QuickBooks user? I am looking for companies that have 1 – 10 employees, who have reached a wall of some sort that makes them require outside help to maintain and grow their business.

Where do they turn? They turn to who they know, the computer guru they know, the internet, but where will they start? Their accountant, bookkeeper. In a word Chaos!

As QuickBooks Developers there is not just a single place for us to market our offerings, our goal is to educate as many of these contact points as possible.

Over the next few months I will take you along on my journey to getting the word out to QuickBooks users and share with you each step and each result.

I will give you an idea or more that will help you in your own marketing efforts, I think that with 3 million QuickBooks users we have room to share some ideas!

Next Month...how to use the QuickBooks Solutions Marketplace effectively.

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