Inventory Solution
Overview

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Context:

Introduction

The objective of Inventory Management system is to provide up-to-date information about a warehouse. The main idea of the system is to divide the information about products, goods, equipments and so on into unambiguously identifiable items so that it can be effectively checked, monitored and reported on. The degree of detail should be determined optimally.

Inventory Management system should make it possible for a department management to be in control of so called Configuration Items (CI) such as hardware, software, documentation, licenses, product properties, goods features. These items might be shown in the interconnection with employees in company's departments.

System Perspective

Well functioning Inventory Management system provides the company with:

- precise and up-to-date information on all components which are required to perform business processes;
- direct control over company assets;
- determine the objective and extend of the configuration management;
- take into account existing instructions, standards and process concerning the support organizations;
- develop nomenclature for the configuration items, if they do not already exist.

Requirements

Inventory stuff consists of:

- handheld computer, public or industrial, with or without the bar-code reader;
- cables;

Central office stuff consists of:

- one or more Personal Computers, connected by the local network;
- printer;
- handheld computers base (for one or several computers);
- handheld computer charger, one for every computer or industrial;
- cables.

System Modules

In order to cover all aspects of the inventory management, the system has to have several modules (see Appendix 1). Each module belongs to the warehouse employee, to the central operator and to a central database.

	Module	Functions	Comments
1.	Configuration Management Database (CMDB)	▪ contains all the data required for the production of goods and services, including a description of the individual configuration items and their interconnection	mandatory
2.	Administrative Tool	▪ synchronize CI with roles and users within the company; ▪ register new CI and their versions; ▪ document changes to CI (status update, changes to CI attributes, changes in responsibilities, approval of changes, changes alerts, license control, relationship to other CI, etc); ▪ protect integrity of configuration data; ▪ import/export configuration data; ▪ print reports, charts; ▪ work directly with CMDB; ▪ integration with third-party management tools (e.g. Microsoft SMS).	mandatory
3.	Windows version of Inventory Application	▪ enter, edit, update, delete CI and their versions; ▪ track changes to CI; ▪ training the staff to work with handheld based version of the application.	optional
4.	PocketPC version of Inventory Application	▪ enter, edit, update, delete CI and their versions; track changes to CI.	mandatory
5.	Synchronization utility	▪ synchronize the local CMDB from PocketPC Inventory Management version with the central database (upload/download changes, download master-data).	optional

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Systems Functionalities

Administration

Administrator can set up rights and access privileges to every sales agent and distributors, so that only authorized users are able to perform some particular tasks.

Centralized control

All actions, taken by the sales agents and distributors staff, are kept in the database. Manager can create a report at any time using this data, so that it allows to impartially estimate the each person's work during the day, the week and the month.

Centralized management

Operator in the distributor's office is responsible for the data synchronization (uploading and downloading them to/from handheld computer). He or she only needs to initiate this process pressing a single button, everything else will be proceed automatically. The system is keeping the history about synchronization process and it is possible to print them at any time. Operator can create individual or group reports, control the products features, create requests to load tracks.

Implementation Steps

Both the system architecture and the proven software environment really exist in order to successfully implement the system that fits to client's needs. It is possible to use either PalmOS or PocketPC or both for the handheld module.

However, sales processes of each company are really unique and a system tuning is highly required. According with this fact we are offer an way of the system implementation based on several steps.

Inception

On this step, Client's Representative and System Analyst are describing existing sales processes. Some processes might be redundant; the other might be required in terms of PC-based sales process. The dataflow also has been investigated.

Elaboration

Based on the sales process description, gained on the previous step, System Analyst and Client's Representative select the scope of system modules required and describe the functionality of each of them in details.

Implementation

On this step the real system implementation is performed. Each module is created according the steps described in chapter "Module Implementation Steps". So that it is possible to add a new functionality during the implementation step, if required.

Transition

Here the step, when the system is installed on client's computers. Modules will be installed and the staff will be trained. At this step achieved results are compared with the initially planned.

Module Implementation Stages

It order to achieve the best result, each module of the system have to be implemented through the several stages. Each stage is characterized by the amount of functions implemented. These stages are: prototyping, final version and technical support.

Prototyping

At this stage only the main functionality of the module has been implemented. This allows to the client to see what will he get, to decide how this fits to their requirements, make some changes. In this stage also some additional details might be investigated that were not obvious during Inception and Elaboration steps.

The result of this stage is semi-functional module that will be used by a client's target group for a while.

Final version

As a result of the prototype version usage System Analyst will create the list of additional functionalities that should be included into the final version of the module. There are two types of additional functionalities: enhancements and requirements. Enhancements are definitely will be included into the final version. Requirements are additionally discussed and estimated.

The result of this stage is completely functional module that will be used by a client's target group for a predetermination period of time. During this time the module might be tuned and fixed.

Technical Support

The sales processes are not stable. So that it is possible that the client will request to make some changes to better fit the module to the sales process. All this changes are topics to discuss.

Appendix 1. Inventory Management Structure