

MACOLA 10

FINANCIAL & DISTRIBUTION SOFTWARE REVIEW
BY SHELDON NEEDLE



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Executive Summary

New ownership

In 2017 the Dutch software company Exact Group B.V. (Exact) sold its Exact Specialized Solutions division, which includes Macola, JobBOSS and MAX to ECi Software Solutions Inc. of Fort Worth, TX, under the leadership of ECi management.

Macola 10 includes applications that manage accounting, distribution and manufacturing activities as well as workflow, document management, human resources management, customer relationship management and project management. Macola has its roots as a straightforward integrated financial, manufacturing and distribution solution.

Macola 10 (Enterprise Suite) is a 32-bit product. Macola 10 was developed using industry standard programming application development tools. With the use of innovative technologies the product has been engineered to make it very user friendly. The panels menu presents the most frequently used applications in clear sight. The menus are arranged based on the functional areas of their use, e.g. Financial, Distribution, Manufacturing Planning, Manufacturing. This upper level menu can be further exploded showing Macola 10 objects (View, General Ledger, Accounts Receivable, Accounts Payable, Reports). Users may switch between companies without exiting Macola 10. Server.

Macola 10 core ERP functionality includes:

- General Ledger
- Accounts Receivable
- Accounts Payable
- Cash Management
- Financial Reporting
- Core capabilities for manufacturing:
- Materials Requirements Planning
- Shop Floor Control
- Standard Costing
- Production Order Processing
- Core capabilities for distribution:
- Order Entry
- Inventory Management
- Purchase Order Management

The SQL system manager bundles the Designer module, which allows the user to customize data entry screens. In Macola 10, the latest interface now uses Integrated Crystal Reports for a number of the released modules.

The use of Microsoft SQL Server2010 delivers significantly more power than ever before, through 32-bit processing, advanced security, scalability and reliability. The support for the Microsoft SQL engine provides significant increases in performance through true client/server support. Microsoft SQL Server is the complete database and analysis offering for rapidly delivering scalable e-business solutions. It does not support multi tenant cloud.

For the user, this means that the number of software applications or number of users can 'grow' with the company without affecting system performance. Furthermore, database management tasks, like making backups, are easy to perform with the MS SQL Server 2010. Because of the open structure of the database, the integration with other systems is excellent.

Flexibility Suite

The Flexibility Suite, a product that is offered by Software North America uses the industry-standard Visual Basic for Applications as the SQL scripting language. This product allows an Software North America reseller or a sophisticated End-User to add events based activities to the fields on Macola 10 screens. This adds the ability to add visual basic programming code to events on field (i.e. Got Focus, On Change, On Exit, etc.).

Crystal Report Writer can also be used to customize the Integrated Crystal Reports. Using Crystal, you may create grouped reports, sub reports, cross tab reports, conditional reports, Top 'N' and Bottom 'N' reports, as well as drill down reports. Crystal includes mail merge functionality, and distribution in multiple formats including HTML, RPT, executables (.exe) and MAPI to name a few.

Macola 10 offers a number of service-oriented features, such as service billing in accounts receivable and built-in charts of accounts for service-based businesses.

XML

XML (Extensible Markup Language), the standard in data exchange, is completely supported by Macola 10. You can import and export data into and from Macola 10.

Integrated Security

Through integrated Windows security, the validated network user is automatically recognized upon opening the system. There's no need to log in again. A network user is also a Macola 10 user.

Once your network environment is ready, the installation of Macola 10 is very easy. Among the many alternatives available, you can actually do an installation off the Internet, by downloading the complete software from the Software North America Macola Customer and Reseller portals.

What typically requires a number of installations for all the packages is now one simple process.

Pros

- Consistent look and feel
- Purchase Order and Receiving has strong vendor performance analysis reporting
- Quotes and estimates can easily be converted into sales orders, or manufacturing orders
- Allows the user to tie multiple shop orders to a single job
- Allows the user to evaluate the cost of alternate production routes
- Can be used effectively by mixed-mode job shops \$10M+

Cons

- Does not provide a work in process valuation report
- Difficult to read multi-level BOMP inquiry screens
- Does not allow for variations in materials requirements in different routers
- Quoting and Estimating (Q/E) does not integrate with RFQ
- Labor time entry is segmented into two different transaction entry screens
- Implementing MRP is a major challenge and frequently users are not able to succeed
- Not suitable for custom job shops with large BOMs

- Not suitable for multi-plant when each location has a different Bill of Materials for the same item, or there are many inventory transfers between plants

New Features in Version 10

New functionality in Macola 10 enables automated processes that can commonly replace manual data entry – saving both time and money, while increasing accuracy.

This new functionality enables you to easily complete transactions with quotes, orders, inventory, master data maintenance and more without re-entering data in multiple screens. For example, a distributor may want to automatically perform an inventory check before an internet order is confirmed. With Macola 10, you can complete that step automatically. Then, once that order is confirmed to the buyer, an order is automatically entered into Macola 10.

Configurable Workspaces

One of the key features of Macola 10 is its customizable workspaces. It's about productivity and enablement from any location.

Macola 10's highly configurable workspaces aim to provide the same user experience across client/server, browser-based and mobile platforms. Furthermore, this new interface generates smart, contextual menus – offering you options and data that are contextually significant. In other words, it shows the right menus at the right times and enables you to take action directly from that screen.

Built-In Business Activity Monitoring

In Macola 10, unlimited business activity monitoring is included, allowing users to create automated actions which are triggered by

predefined business conditions. These “business events” support thousands of potential conditions and responses.

For example, when an order is received, your company automatically generates an invoice and sends it to the customer. Let's say this customer has been inactive for a certain number of months – through business activity monitoring, an alert is automatically sent to the associated sales representative so they can follow up. Similarly, if a standard monthly order has not been received from a supplier, the inventory manager could be automatically alerted.

Business Process Management

As companies grow, one of the most challenging growth pains is the management of both information and business processes. Document management capabilities allow users to share documents and knowledge securely – in real time – from any location.

Workflow tools enable you to align all parties involved in a process, and automatically route tasks to the next person in the chain, eliminating redundant work and reducing overhead.

Integrated CRM allows you to store customer information centrally for easy access from anywhere and streamline customer interactions

User Interface

Pros

- Consistent look and feel
- Windows Hypertext-based help files
- Excellent keyboard functionality
- Outlook like role bar for personal groups
- Browser looking panels menu that takes a process flow approach to menu organization

Macola's documentation has always been excellent. It is complete and well written with readable examples of all maintenance and inquiry screens. It also has lots of sample data. It has been organized into functional areas corresponding to the new menus. Menus are pull down, light bar with pop-up windows giving Macola 10 a consistent look and feel throughout all modules. The consistent screen and keyboard usage would make you think that one person had written the entire system.

Electronic Data Interchange

The EDI solution is an all-in-one solution that provides greater compatibility with emerging EDI standards and trends than ever before. New functionality includes an available Supply Chain EDI solution that enables users to transact EDI with suppliers as well as customers.

EDI includes an EDI translator, modular trading partner kits and one-click integration with the company's Macola Progression and Macola 10 mid-market ERP solutions. New trading partners can be set up in minutes simply by downloading a trading partner kit from the Web.

With Supply Chain EDI solution, manual input of daily business transactions conducted with trading partners such as invoices, receivers and accounts payable invoices is virtually eliminated.

Additionally, several new EDI sub-modules have also been added as available options, including the Business Network, Public Warehouse EDI, an 852 Product Activity Reporting System, and a 753/754 Routing Request System.

Recent upgrades

Version 340 adds new features and enhancements based on input from customers and partners, allowing them to extend the value they can leverage from core product offerings. The products are tightly coupled, offering a number of new

capabilities including support for compliance management and integration with warehouse management and business analytics offerings.

Organizations looking to address newly tightened compliance requirements can leverage the Version 340 upgrades to Macola to track and report internal processes required as part of FDA Part 11, ISO or Sarbanes-Oxley compliance filings. Utilizing the benefits provided by Version 340, Macola customers can now tie-in the functionality of the Warehouse Management System, a full-featured WMS offering RF data collection, picking, label printing, packing and pallet management; and Business Analytics, a set of pre-built business intelligence tools that unlock value from internal information storehouses.

Other upgrades include:

- WebShop, a collaborative product catalogue and storefront for Macola users
- A credit card processing module with support for Go Software PC Charge Payment Server
- A new set of inquiry tools called PowerViews to speed access to information
- A fast, efficient way to manage purchasing activities
- Improved cash-flow management features and a new opening balances feature to aid in faster startups of new installations

e-Synergy

e-Synergy is a web-based front office e-business solution from Exact Software North America that integrates with Macola 10. e-synergy integrates several applications like Human Resources, CRM, Product Catalog, Document Management, Project Management, Electronic Work flow and Critical Financial Data. This system also allows you to create and maintain portals. The integration of e-synergy with Macola 10 enables critical financial

information stored in Macola 10 to be accessed from the front office.

e-Synergy's CRM solution offers one of the tightest integrations in the industry linking the front office to the back office Macola 10. It links your Sales and Marketing departments with the rest of the organization. This tight integration between your front office and mission-critical back office is becoming more important in today's highly competitive marketplace to attract and keep customers.

e-Synergy allows prospects to be converted into customers, and allows the user to access real-time Account, Inventory and Order Status information anytime, anywhere using the Internet.

e-Synergy is an add-on application which is priced according the number of users. There is a significant implementation and learning curve in order to use it effectively.

Bar Code

Macola also has a bar code package for producing bar coded labels or to run a full-scale bar code inventory system. It is designed to be used with Macola 10's distribution and manufacturing modules; inventory management, purchase order and receiving, order entry, Production Order Processing, Labor Performance and Shop Floor Control. You can also use the bar code fonts that are shipped with the system to bar code the Integrated Crystal Reports that are shipped with Macola 10. For example, your Picking Slips and Shop travelers are available with bar codes for your data-collection systems.

Purchase Order and Receiving

Pros

- Can define up to 99 PO printing formats
- matches receipts against PO
- Receiving inspection/material review board (MRB) support
- Manufacturer's part number support
- Create liability entry for goods received not yet invoiced
- Computes purchase price variance based upon difference between actual cost and standard cost
- Supports landed costs
- Strong vendor performance analysis reporting

Macola 10 also offers Request for Quote (RFQ) and Purchase Requisition module. This is a separate module from the purchasing module, but directly supports it. It allows multiple requisitions to be placed for the same item, consolidated, and authorized into purchase orders. Consolidated requisitions can also be sent out to multiple vendors to get quotes on and then authorized into purchase orders.

Macola 10 purchase order and receiving module provides a link between inventory and accounts payable. Unreleased PO's can be entered, changed to a released PO, printed, and then received against. These can also be automatically created from inventory based on reorder points or based on MRP order demand and order points. Only Macola 10 inventory and accounts payable modules are absolutely required to run this package.

Master Files

The purchase order file holds default data used in purchase order entry as well as acceptable limit figures concerning shipment variances, or when a shipment doesn't conform to its order date, price, or quantity (described further in the receiving section).

The vendor items file stores information on which items are supplied by which vendors, with one record in the file for each vendor/item combination. Included are the corresponding vendor item number (the vendor's item number for each piece of merchandise may be different from your item number), minimum order quantity (for memo purposes only - this won't stop you from ordering a smaller quantity than the minimum), and the last activity date that the particular item was supplied by the vendor.

Also contained in the item vendor file are normal, no purchases (don't buy further merchandise from the vendor), and hold status. Statistics maintained on vendors include average lead-time, days late on receiving merchandise, rejection percentages, and the cost variance (invoice price minus order price). Additionally this file contains support for purchasing from distributors by designating manufacturers that are required, preferred, or not allowed.

Purchase Order Entry

Orders are of five types: normal, drop ship, blanket, master and blanket releases. Drop ships are similar to normal orders except merchandise is shipped directly to the customer. A blanket order is an agreement for a vendor purchase at some future time. The blanket order is given a status of firm (set quantity), estimate, minimum quantity, or maximum quantity.

Orders can hold an extensive amount of data. For example, the weights of items are calculated for the order as a whole and by line item. Certain data held in the vendor's file is supplied by default, such as ship-to address; ship-via carrier; freight charge responsibility; terms of payment; need for acknowledgment; and need for confirmation of shipping from the vendor. Three standard comment lines may be printed from the vendor file, or comments may be typed in.

A unique feature is that comment lines may be entered for each line item. If the item entered isn't in the vendor item file, you may optionally add it to the order causing its automatic addition to the file. Unit cost defaults can be set to last, average or standard. Data displayed includes available quantity of your merchandise already located at the ship-to location, reorder level, and quantities received, rejected, released, and invoiced.

Modifying or canceling orders is easy up to the time the orders are printed. After printing, the process involves cancellation or modification of certain fields such as shipment request date or quantity ordered. After changes are made the system will automatically produce change orders or cancellation orders to be sent to the vendor.

Receiving

The audit trail file holds all receipts entered plus any modifications or deletions to these receipts. Entry of receipts may be sped up with a feature that automatically displays the order's next line item not yet fully received. When entering receipts, a warning will be displayed if the receipt date is earlier than a specified scheduled receipt date, if the quantity shipped is greater than quantity ordered by a specified margin, or if the unit price charged by the vendor is greater than the order price by a specified margin.

Receipts from drop ships are processed when the vendor sends notification of shipment to the customers. This allows the invoice to be paid. Besides allowing for deletion of orders, which have

been canceled or fully received and invoiced, you may also delete items which were entered but never approved for release and printing.

Items can be defined as requiring inspection in the Inventory Management module before being accepted into inventory. When receiving an item that requires inspection, the system notifies you that it must be inspected, the requirements of the inspection, and then puts the quantity into the receiving inspection location, not into stock. A predefined sample size then needs to be inspected before it is passed on into stock. Receiving Inspection Aging Reports help manage the effectiveness of your Inspection process as well.

Reports

Macola 10 purchase order and receiving module offers extensive reporting capabilities. Scheduled receipts can be printed by the vendor from which they were ordered, by the item number, or by the job. Parameters for these reports include specifying the number of days late (lists only items overdue by a certain period of time), buyer codes, and notification identification (who should be notified of problems with a purchase). Overdue items are flagged in any of the report variations.

Cash requirements are calculated for purchases. For each vendor, the due date of orders received is listed by order, along with cash needs by user-defined aging categories. Vendor performance reports show last activity date, year-to-date number of orders, year-to date purchases, purchases from last year, number of late receipts, percentage of late receipts by line item, rejected shipments, and averages for lead time and number of days late. The vendors selected for this report may be qualified by activity date, late percentage of shipments, cost variance, or rejection percentage.

Advanced Distribution

The Advanced Distribution module contains six features for the heavy distribution company: Landed Cost, RMA processing, Hard Allocation, Multi Bin support, Confirm Pick and Confirm Ship.

Landed Cost enables you to capitalize costs such as freight, import duties, customs charges, and in-house handling. This system supports companies, which deal with international vendors and others who require more comprehensive inventory costing capabilities.

Return Material Authorization (RMA) is an addition to this module's functionality. It allows material returns to be authorized, received, and then credited or reshipped via a new order.

Hard Allocation allows you to commit a specific serial, lot and/or bin number during the order entry process.

Multi Bin supports a tightly controlled stockroom environment, which contains multiple bins within a location, and minimizes the labor cost of locating and stocking inventory. *Confirm ship* will allow for the decrement of inventory upon confirming that an order has been shipped.

Serial Lot

Within Macola 10 Inventory Module, an item may be designated as either serial or lot controlled. Macola 10 supports both a combination of static and numeric serial/lot assignment. Upon receipt of a serial/lot controlled item into inventory, Macola 10 will assist in the assignment of the numbers into inventory. Once in inventory, whether the item is shipped out, or used in producing another item, Macola 10 will require assignment of the serial/lot number to be relieved from inventory.

Macola 10 assists with quality tracking by allowing the user to trace or drill down to other items, which have used a defective batch of items. It also

supports rules-based issue and receipt logic such as earliest expiration, FIFO and Priority.

Additionally, FDA compliance can also be achieved using Macola 10. Functions, which support this include the ability to trace items upward and downward, the ability to view the manufacturer's serial/lot number, unlimited notes at the serial/lot level, expiration dating, and the ability to put a serial or lot number on hold.

Integrated Crystal Reports

Pros

- drag and drop capabilities
- 150 Macola 10 standard reports come defined as script which may be modified and saved under a new name
- Easily access the customization Capability from within Macola 10 if access to the Crystal designer is available.
- Provides bar coded reports

offers many third-party Report Writer options. Their open-ended approach to report writers allows the user the ability to select from a wide range of report writers based on simplicity versus flexibility. Some of the report writers supported include Crystal, and others.

Excel Add In

The Excel Add-in module provides a dynamic link between Macola 10 and Microsoft Excel. This link allows you to generate your own views in Microsoft Excel using Macola 10 data. You can make your own calculations using the data in the Macola 10 database without having to type or export it. After adding transactions in Macola 10 you just refresh your Excel worksheet, giving you immediate, up-to-date, dynamic reporting capabilities.

Advantages of Excel Add-in include:

- Dynamic links with the Macola 10 database
- Easy to read data in Excel with help of the functions
- Easy to set up standard reports using a wizard
- Easy to set up reports because of the integrated database
- Data input in MS Excel and online modification in Macola 10, of, for example, budgets

Excel Add-in lets you build your own reports using a wizard or standard formulas. These formulas let you determine which information you want to retrieve, such as debtors' outstanding items.

Excel Add-in gives you several extra menu options in Excel so that you can work with the information directly from the Macola 10 administration. These let you exchange information with the Macola 10 administration to retrieve your own or standard reports. With these menu options, working in Excel with information from Macola 10 is user friendly and fast.

Administrative Information

Using the information button lets you retrieve information like standard financial year, lowest and highest financial year from all the administrations. This lets you easily select the right administration for retrieving standard reports or for setting up your own report.

Search Function

With the 'search' function you can retrieve information from a master database such as general ledger number, item name, department name, and profit center name. If you have chosen a category, you get a total overview from Macola 10 in Excel with available values. From these you can choose an item from the master data and use it

in the Excel worksheet along with same titles used in the administration.

Function Wizard

With the function wizard you can quickly and easily retrieve information from the administration and use it in your Excel report. For example, you can decide for an overview of outstanding items, revenue by debtor, and revenue by item. This function is particularly useful for creating your own reports.

Reports

In Excel you can retrieve several standard reports from an administration. You can choose from:

- Balance
- Aging analysis
- Revenue statistics
- Analytical accounting
- Table information
- Budget

You can adapt this report to your needs and save it. If you want the overview updated, all you have to do is select the 'refresh' function and your report will contain the most up-to-date information from Macola 10.

Datamarts and OLAP cubes

The average amount of information that your enterprise system now collects and stores has grown dramatically. Not only is the quantity of data overwhelming, its makeup is typically quite complex. Not all users who require this information understand the complex relationships of the transactional data.

Through its SQL Server product, Macola 10, provides you access to data warehousing and OLAP cubes. This simplifies the process of extracting and analyzing the volumes of data that you may have.

'Sales Mart,' is included with the Macola 10 SQL Server system. It allows you to analyze your key sales indicators-spanning multiple years. Using Microsoft® SQL Server's™ Data Transformation Services (DTS), which is a graphical methodology for building data warehouses, it extracts data from the Macola 10 system, and transforms it into a more logical, manageable subset.

Business Intelligence

Business Analytics™ is a comprehensive business analytics solution that provides users with the enterprise-wide intelligence necessary to improve the decision-making process. Business Analytics is the result of a strategic relationship between Software and Vanguard Solutions.

In an effort to share information across the enterprise and identify emerging trends more quickly and accurately, mid-market business leaders are increasingly seeking business intelligence solutions that will give their organizations a competitive edge in the marketplace. Featuring pre-defined analytics fully integrated with Macola 10, Business Analytics enables users to conduct online and offline analysis and consolidate reporting on a wide range of business processes including inventory, sales, manufacturing, distribution and finance.

Integrating and displaying data from applications and other ODBC-compliant sources such as existing legacy systems and spread sheets, Business Analytics' robust executive dashboard capabilities provide business users with drill-to-detail access to data. With user-defined Information Views, which combine data from single or multiple sources, users view this information in real-time without relying on a data warehouse or repository.

About Sheldon Needle



A former CFO, consultant and software designer, Sheldon Needle has authored or co-authored more than 20 books on software selection and has contributed articles to major publications, including the Journal of Accountancy and Nation's Business. CTSGuides.com has the distinction of being the very first company to do hands-on, independent evaluations of software for the middle market.

Sheldon speaks with business owners and managers every day about software selection and makes personalized recommendations based on their needs and budget. He is widely known and respected throughout the business software community for his independence, integrity and expertise. As part of registering for our free software selection kit, you receive a 15-minute consult with Sheldon. Sheldon understands financial and business issues and speaks your language.

He knows the leading software companies—how they compare, their strengths and weaknesses, where they fit into the market and which ones would be suitable for your business.