

# the TUGpulse

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## Reap a Harvest of Needed Data By Using Custom Fields in PJ

by: Tom Moore

The Custom Fields feature in Sage Timberline Office gives you the opportunity to add additional fields to your data entry screens to capture necessary data. (See the accompanying *A Sampling of Custom Fields Possibilities for what you can do on page 11*). To unlock the true power of that tool, you need to update your Crystal Reports form templates and reports to display the information entered in your custom fields.

When creating custom reports and forms, you should always use Save As and give the file a new name. Then use Reports Manager and/or Project Management (PJ) Settings to tell PJ the new name of the report. This way, you always have the default version of the form to go back to if you run into problems or make any mistakes. Many users use the rule of an exclamation point plus their company name; the exclamation point causes the custom reports to sort alphabetically to the top of the list, and the company name clearly identifies the report. For example, I would open the PJ Submittal Log (CR).rpt and save my custom version as !Gray PJ Submittal Log (CR).rpt to show that this report is a Gray-ICE Builders report.

A key point is that when you add the Custom Fields data table to your report

structure, you must use a “left outer” link. If you don’t do this, your forms will be blank unless there’s data entered in your custom field. Usually you want the form to print no matter what and to display the custom field data if it’s there, not to cause the form to be blank if it’s not there! Another “gotcha” is to make sure to open your PJ data entry screen and enter some data in your new custom field before trying to preview it in your updated Crystal report—if there’s no data entered there, nothing will display.



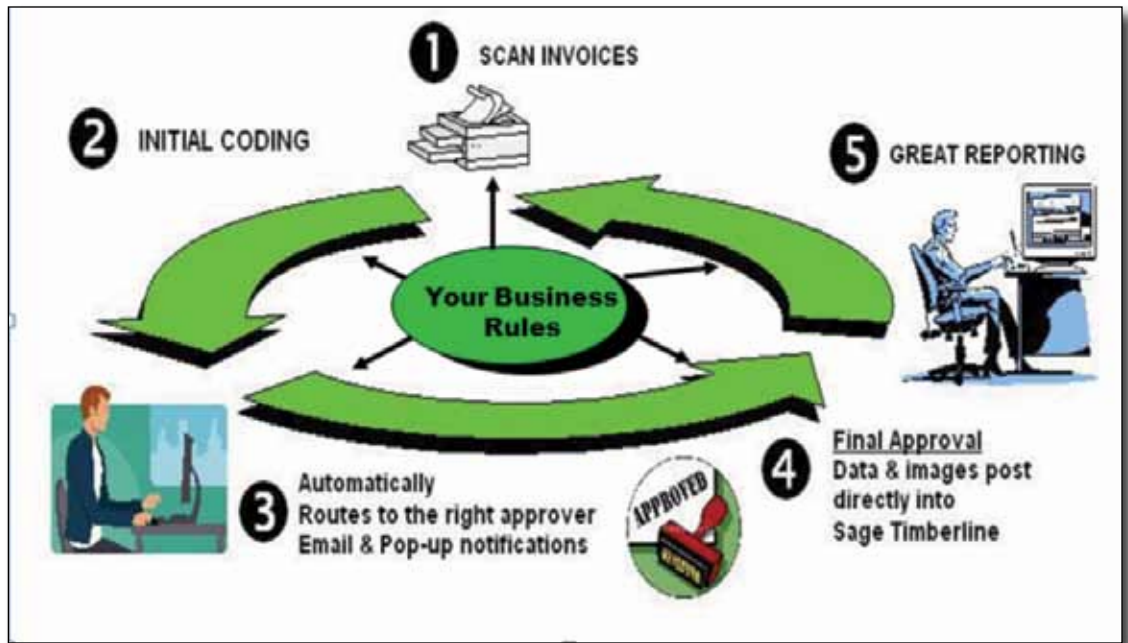
When you’re updating form templates, don’t forget to update both the “(T)” and the “regular” version of each form. (The “T” version runs when you press Print or Send from within Timberline; the “regular” version runs when you select the document form from the Report menu.)

# There's an Easy Way Out of The Accounts Payable Gridlock

by: Bernard Ross, Vice Operating Manager  
Core Associates LLC, Sage Timberline Office Development Partner

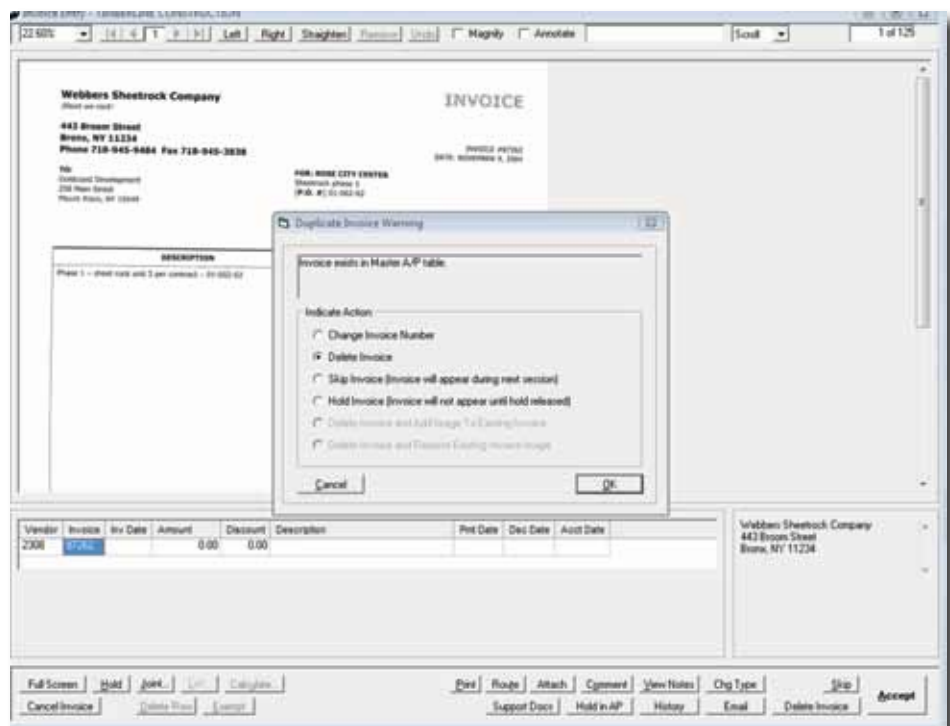
Many Sage Timberline Office clients find that approving accounts payable invoices is arduous and time consuming, particularly those companies that still use manual approval systems. Typically these companies stamp each invoice when it arrives, add supporting documents to the invoice, and then manually distribute the invoice to the right person for approval. This process can become extremely labor intensive, especially when the approvers are out of the office.

Figure 1 – TimberScan Batch-Oriented Workflow



To make matters worse, some companies have dozens of approvers and require more than one approval for some invoices. Or, companies have separate rules for different types of invoices. Losing track of invoices, unfortunately, happens far too often. Invoices inevitably get misplaced, and sometimes multiple copies of invoices float through the organization. The approval process can seem like a never-ending logistical nightmare. Keeping a tight rein on the flow of paper and information is critical, but it takes a great deal of time and effort, especially when you're using a manual system. It's no wonder that automating the approval process has become such a high priority for so many Sage Timberline Office users.

Figure 2 – TimberScan Data Entry – Duplicate Invoice Warning



□ Continues ...

## The Paperless Approval System

Fortunately, many Sage Timberline Office clients have found a way out of the invoice approval gridlock by using TimberScan: The Paperless Approval System. TimberScan automates every aspect of the invoice approval process. With TimberScan approval times are generally reduced by 50%, making the program a very efficient and cost-effective solution for most companies.

TimberScan is designed exclusively for Sage Timberline Office to automate its A/P approval process. TimberScan uses built-in imaging technology to provide paperless invoice processing. Although going paperless is a major leap forward, the innovation that's key to TimberScan's success is its ability to define each company's unique business rules for routing invoices. The result is that even the most complex routing requirements are automated.

Most paperless systems are document-centric. Each scanned document requires a person to scan, categorize, code, route, and name it before moving to the next document. This is not the case with TimberScan. TimberScan is batch-oriented. All invoices are scanned as a batch and the coding is a separate batch process. Naming documents and routing are also automatically completed by the system. This batch processing allows for division of labor and increases efficiency. Figure 1 illustrates the TimberScan workflow.

*(NOTE: We also offer an alternative workflow in which AP invoices are entered into Timberline, and TimberScan is only used to approve invoices and post images into the Timberline database.)*

that simplifies incorporation of the check as part of the invoice record. In addition, TimberScan works with recurring invoices and POs generated by the various Sage Timberline Office purchase order modules: Purchasing and Inventory (POIV), Residential Management (RM), and Service Management (SM).

Virtually all scanners support the TIFF format that TimberScan uses. The ideal scanner should have a good sheet feeder and the ability to scan 25–50 pages per minute. Photocopy machines with these features can be used instead of a dedicated scanner.

## Coding

TimberScan acts as a separate pending invoice system. Invoices flow through TimberScan, and, once approved, they get posted directly into Timberline's AP New File. There is

no need for importing, exporting, back-filling or scraping, and there's never any duplicate data entry.

AP data entry in TimberScan works exactly as it does in Sage Timberline Office, including the warnings, error messages, and reminders, etc. (Figure 2). Even the List button performs the same functions as in Sage Timberline Office, listing vendors, commitments, jobs, cost codes, properties, GL account codes, and so on. Knowing how to do AP data entry in Timberline means you are 90% trained on TimberScan.

Besides all the data entry options that are available in Timberline,

Figure 3 – Comments Added During Date Entry

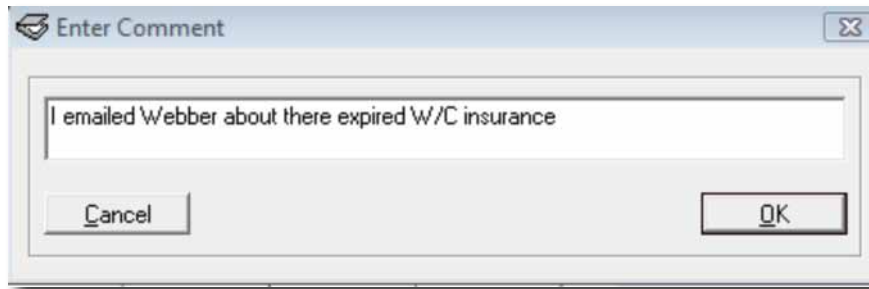
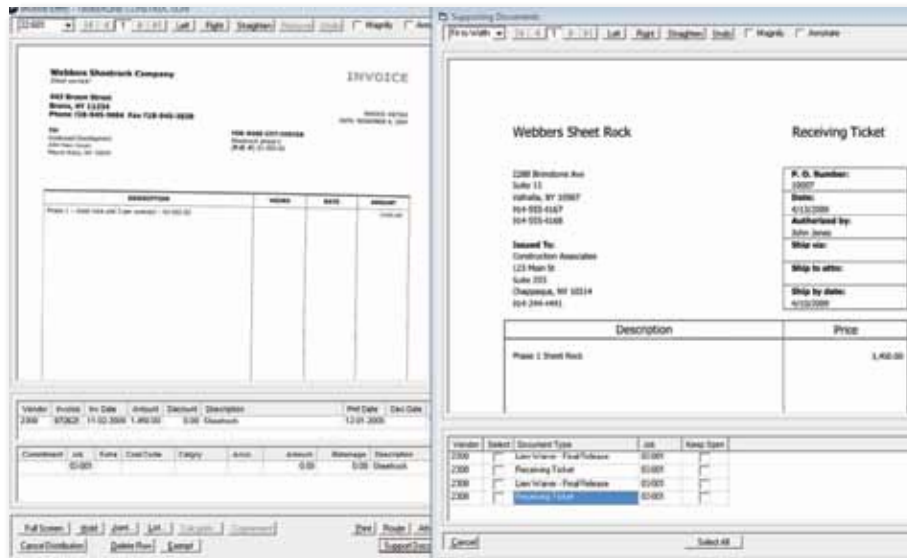


Figure 4– TimberScan Date Entry – When Supporting Document Button is Selected



## Scanning

TimberScan automates the scanning of invoices and supporting documents. The system makes it easy to handle multi-page documents. Invoices automatically flow to the accounting department for coding. All supporting documents are scanned together. After scanning, invoices are categorized with a user-defined category and are associated with a job or a company/property code. Scanning is very easy and is usually handled by the person who opens the mail.

TimberScan also comes with an automated check scanning routine

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## There's An Easy Way Out of the Accounts Payable Gridlock

□ Continued from page 7

TimberScan also adds the ability to view vendor history, send e-mails, put invoices on hold, and make comments (Figure 3).

Essentially, the approval process starts well before an invoice is received. Companies usually receive purchase orders, packing slips or tickets prior to an invoice's arrival. TimberScan captures these preliminary documents, codes them, and allows the operator to select the relevant supporting documents (Figure 4) during invoice entry.

Clicking on the Supporting Documents button will list all documents relating to the vendor/job or vendor/property. With TimberScan, the approver receives all the necessary documents to guarantee that invoices are correct and the goods and services are delivered.

### Approving

The approval screen is the same as the data entry screen. However, TimberScan's security features control the ability to code or to change coding.

The approver receives notification when new invoices are available.

The Notes feature will automatically pop up when the approver views an invoice (Figure 5).

The Hold in AP feature allows for approving invoices for cost, but not for payment. This is ideal for vendors who haven't submitted their insurance certificates or lien waivers. TimberScan posts the invoice, but payment cannot be made until the invoice is approved in Timberline.

### No Duplication of Effort

With TimberScan there's never any duplicate data entry. During the posting process, invoice images flow into Sage Timberline Office as attachments and can be viewed by running an inquiry.

The actual AP invoices and all supporting documents can be viewed in Timberline from the AP, GL, JC, or PJ modules.

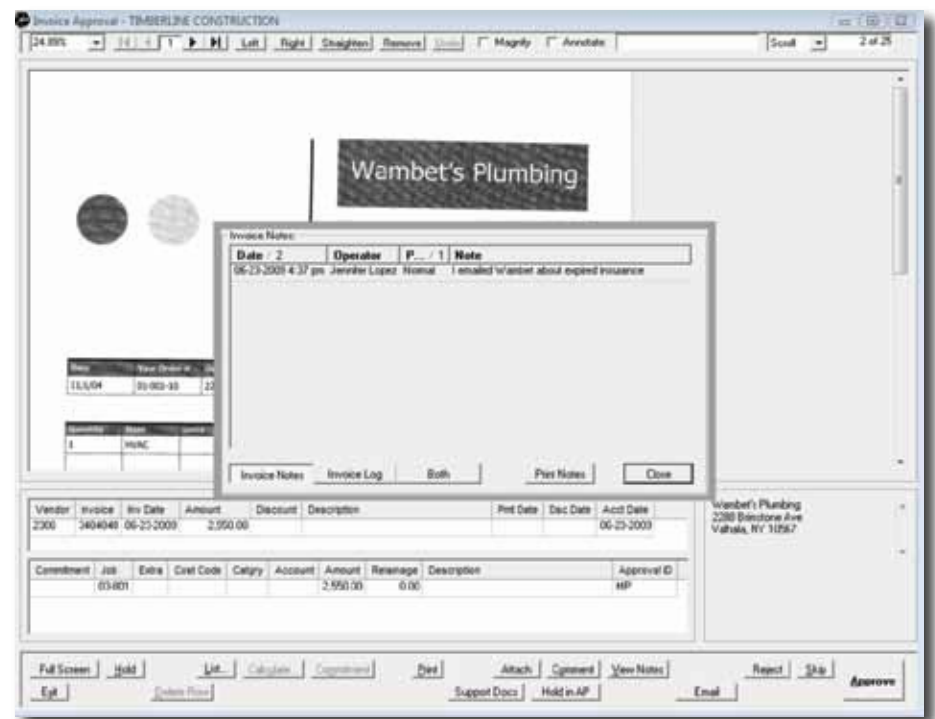
### Reporting

Users have given TimberScan's reporting capabilities high praise because data can be pulled from both the Timberline and TimberScan databases. This provides for timely reporting, regardless of where the invoice is in the approval

powerful and responsive system. It supports Microsoft® Terminal Server and Citrix® for remote users. Soon, TimberScan will have mobile capabilities so that invoices can be approved on cellular phones.

Implementing TimberScan is quick and easy. Check the TUGweb.com Bulletin Board to view user comments. Our clients say that TimberScan is the easiest implementation they have ever experienced. Many were fully opera-

Figure 5 – TimberScan Approval – Comments and Notes Automatically Pop Up



process. These reports can be printed, viewed, saved as .pdf, or burned onto a CD. All the report menus have extensive filtering capabilities, and the program supplies pertinent information quickly and easily.

Reports can also contain copies of invoices and supporting documents that can be used to supplement customer billing, CAM billing, or loan draws. In addition to standard reports, TimberScan also includes a report that displays invoices by approver.

### Powerful and Responsive

TimberScan runs on the Microsoft® SQL database, making it a very

tional in a day.

With more than 275 clients, encompassing more than 5,000 end users, TimberScan is the perfect paperless solution for automatic invoice approval routing, great reporting, and total control of the approval process.

To see a demonstration of TimberScan, please contact your Sage Timberline Office Business Partner. If your Business Partner is not an authorized TimberScan representative, please contact Core Associates directly at 888-666-2673 ext. 101. To schedule a web-based demonstration, logon to: [www.core-assoc.com/html/seminars.html](http://www.core-assoc.com/html/seminars.html). 