

Third Quarter 2009 — Summer Sizzle!



IAUA 24: PASSPORT TO PROFIT

Alert Management Systems is proud to announce and promote **your** 24th Annual International Alert User's Association (IAUA) Conference in Colorado Springs, November 12-14. The new, faster, more economical itinerary takes off early on Thursday and touches down by mid-day Saturday, so you can enjoy sight-seeing and activities after the conference or head home early.

Advisory Councils by rental type (Party, General, Heavy Equipment) are now FREE on Friday morning, divided into fast-paced, two-part expeditions: Consensus Building and Vision for the Future.

New classes complement revisions of popular treks you might have missed last year. As always, you can vote on new features, explore new Alert technology, and get free consulting.

We also have a great keynote speaker who is an expert in helping you make your web site highly effective. Dennis Masella, a recognized small business web site expert, will provide innovative advice to help you evaluate and

improve your web presence to maximize ROI.



GET YOUR PASSPORT EARLY!

On-Line Registration starts on August 14th at www.alertms.com.

GET ONE FREE ROOM NIGHT at the beautiful Antlers Hilton Hotel!

Offer ends on September 15th.

IAUA Schedule: Nov. 12-14, 2009

Make the journey! Be rewarded.

The Alert Newsletter is a periodic publication of Alert Management Systems, makers of the Alert EasyPro rental management software system. It is a service for members of the International Alert User's Association (IAUA). All rights are reserved. Contact Information: 555 East Pikes Peak Avenue, Suite 205, Colorado Springs, CO, 80903. (800) 530-8050. www.alertms.com

IAUA 24 Highlights

This year's IAUA sessions include:

Revision 11.0: **Opening Safari!**
Introduction to VCQ Report Writer
Advanced VCQ Report Writer
Sub Rental and Missed Rental for Party
Advanced Counter – General & Party
Advanced Dispatch
Advanced Back Office
Multi-Location Management
Web Requests and Customer Portal
G/L Interface In Detail
Commission Management System
State of the Industry and What to Do
How to Make a 20% Profit
System Security in Alert
The Price is Right!
Executive Dashboard
Utilization/ROI Reports
Purchase Order System
Web Site Effectiveness (Speech)
Voting Review/Voting on Rev 12
Separate Advisory Councils for...
Heavy, General & Party Rental
IAUA Business Meeting
IAUA Banquet

...and More!

In This Issue:

IAUA 24: Passport to Profit

-2009 Schedule Highlights (Pg. 1)

Best of... Support Surveys!

-This month's favorite comments from Alert clients (Pg. 2)

The Price is Right!

-A summary of rate concepts to help you win the rate/price wars (Pages 3-4)

Counter Intelligence

-Faster A/R Management (Pg. 5)

Planning for a Successful Outcome

-Server/Ownership Changes (Pg. 6)

Best of... Support Surveys!

Overall, surveys continue to exceed 96% customer satisfaction. Let us know how you feel—respond to the monthly Alert Support Survey via e-mail or fax today! Meantime, here are a few favorites from last month.

"All of your staff went above the call of duty this month in helping us develop some updated reports and utilization of the system for our current and future needs as a company in these trying business times. Thanks for all the help."

"Both issues resolved in just minutes. Jeff, Barbi and Lisa are great! Very patient and knowledgeable about the issues. Thanks!"

"Chris Zanoni was very responsive to my requests regarding formatting issues with the expanded truck report. He listened to my reasons for needing the changes and we ended up with a very concise, usable report."

The Price Is Right!

Win without Losing Your Shirt

We know you are in a battle out there every day for every rental contract. We also know you offer superior products and outstanding service to win and maintain long-term customer loyalty. That's how you've built your business and why you have become a market leader.

Sometimes, though, it's just going to come down to a price. (Or, to the perception of value.) What are some of the built-in rate changing concepts in Alert EasyPro that can help you be nimble enough to compete in 'The Price is Right' game? Here is a brief survey of some of the ways Alert can help you compete profitably.

So, come on down...

Rate Management Program

There is a Utility in your Rental Class drop-down menu with the title Rate Increase. This program is actually a very powerful Rate Manager that allows you to reset rates across an entire Rental Group, or drill down to each class or individual rate. By making rate changes here, you "rate-protect" contracts that are already out on rent, and it gives you a safe worksheet that doesn't effect any business until you press the Commit Rate Increase button. The worksheet shows the precise change vs. the old price for each item, even allowing you to keep any of the rates unchanged.

Although it is titled Rate Increase, it does accept negative percentages. It also allows you to dial in ratios of day to week and week to month, with several 'price-rounding' options.

The rate parameter collection screen creates a rate worksheet for edits prior to commitment.

You can make changes for one store or for all stores at once, managing your rates and parameters for each store competitively. You can even try it out in Demo Mode, write tickets and simulate results before changing.

Rate Parameters Increase Profit

Rental rates are not the whole story. System parameters help determine the profitability of your stated rental rates. If you are a general rental center, for example, how much do you charge per additional period when an item has been rented for a week, a day, and a couple of hours? Your Pro-Ration Table (in Codes and Setup) defines the grace periods you offer for each span.

On the Rate Calculation screen in Codes and Setup, the first parameter is Fixed Rate vs. Pro Rate. If you selected Fixed Rate, your system will charge the day rate for the extra day in the example. Pro Rate will calculate the additional day as a fraction of the week.

(Hint: We recommend Fixed Rate. It can make a profitable difference!)

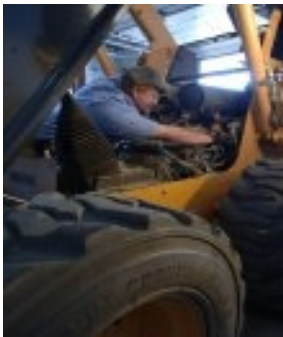
Third Quarter 2009 (Page 4) The Price is Right! Continued...

This is a great time to review dozens of parameters in Codes and Setup to dial-in your policies regarding late returns, weekend rentals and more. You might be surprised (positively or negatively!) by the nuggets of gold you find there. We recommend an after-hours round-table meeting with your manager(s) to review what the system is charging in each instance and why. Using your Exceptions Report, you might even identify recurring exceptions and over-rides, or get consensus on situations that are being handled inconsistently, costing you money and leverage each time.

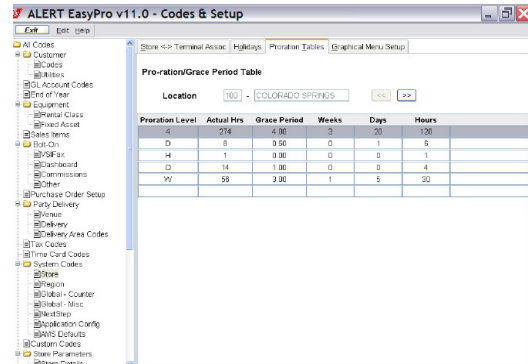
Customer-Specific Pricing

You can tailor your pricing for each customer's rental and/or sales items using this popular feature found in the Customer menu, under Edit, then Customer Rates, and Customer Sales Price. These changes will over-ride regular rates on every contract without worry that special rates/prices won't be observed.

(Revision Note: In 10.0, by popular request, this program has been modified to recognize customer-specific rates and prices even if the customer information is filled out after the items have been selected. This eliminates unintended billing errors. In 11.0, this will become a parameterized option in Codes and Setup.)



New features in Alert allow you more flexibility in modifying meter charges.



Location	Pro-ratio Level	Actual Hrs	Grace Period	Weeks	Days	Hours
100 - COLORADO SPRINGS	D	8	0.50	0	1	5
	H	1	0.00	0	0	1
	Q	14	1.00	0	0	4
	W	58	3.00	1	5	20

Click the Pro Ratio Tables tab in Codes and Setup to sharpen up grace periods and more.

Other Pricing Strategies

The IAUA is a great forum for rental owners to share notes on pricing in a safe and legal environment. We encourage you to attend and share your most successful strategies. Chances are, you may learn more than you contribute. New features are being added to Alert EasyPro all the time based on these discussions. Here are a few examples:

Shift Rates are an excellent way to compete for generator rentals. Along the same lines, do you know that you can over-ride allowable meter usage and the excess usage rate on a per-contract basis now? (10.0 Feature)

The new Adjust Rent feature (10.0) allows you to set a "Bottom Line" for a rental event or job, but pro-rate all the line item rates (and ROI) instantly.

Although discounting rates and price-cutting is sometimes a necessary evil, adjusting rate and parameter settings can off-set lower rates. This is also a good time to review how to maximize revenue from add-on fees, such as: meter/mileage charges, damage waiver, finance charges, fuel surcharge, environmental fees, reservation change and cancel fees, delivery/pickup policies and more.

(Rate/Price Questions? Call Support.)

Counter Intelligence Smart Tips for Smart Rentals

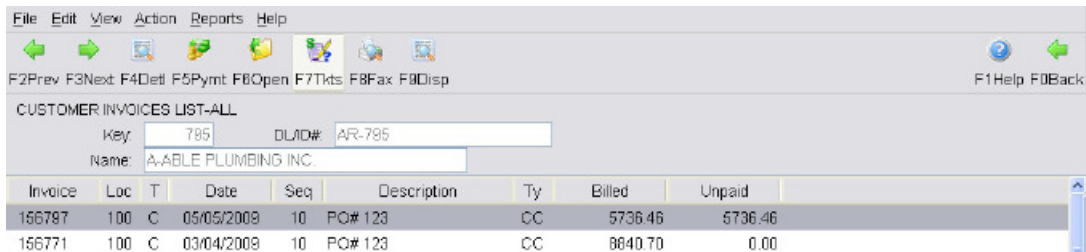
Faster Customer Account Management

We sometimes refer to managing A/R collections in Alert EasyPro as a “One-on-One” sport. You usually get the best collection results for a slow-pay account, for example, by making a follow-up phone call, even though you already sent a statement to everybody 30 days ago. (And this customer has ignored it, naturally!)

That’s why, over the last several Alert revisions, we expanded the pull-down menus available to you in the customer screen. Now, you can perform most routine functions without leaving a customer record. This includes taking a payment, sending a statement, and running a detailed aging or ledger card report. Under Edit, Customer Contacts, a built-in contact management system helps you track collection or sales efforts and allows you to give yourself follow-up reminders (using ‘tickler’ reports). If your system has the Advanced/Alert Option for VSI-Fax, you can even fax or e-mail selected invoice(s) in one step under a single cover sheet. (The Fax an Invoice screen is under the Action pull-down menu. If you haven’t seen it, please contact Client Care for a demonstration and a price quote.)

These “customer-centered” features are very quick and easy-to-find. Most importantly, nothing improves customer service, or cuts through payment-delaying tactics, like the ability to produce back-up documents and call notes instantly.

In Alert EasyPro 10.0, we have just added a new short-cut called F7 Tickets. This button appears when you are in the View Invoices (F8) screen. You can review and modify all open tickets for the customer here, including bids and reservations. You can close tickets or save routine changes without having to go back out to the Counter System, eliminating extra key strokes and ticket retrievals.



If your sales staff has access to the View Invoices screen, above, they might also find the F7 Tickets button to be a big time-saver, especially on accounts with many open tickets.

So, good luck in your customer account management efforts. May you enjoy the benefits of good A/R management, such as a current aging and positive cash flow!

How to Schedule A Server Move Plan Ahead for a Successful Outcome

Just as it took an expert Alert Installer to setup your current Alert system, it takes time and specialized knowledge to move your Alert system to a new server. If you are planning on replacing your Alert server, we recommend following a few simple guidelines to make sure your business is protected from emergency interruption and extra cost.

- 1) Call Client Care in advance.
2-4 weeks advance notice is a good rule of thumb to assure our staff is available. We will do our best to handle emergencies, if covered under your Support Agreement, but a 'Planned Server Replacement' minimizes down-time and avoids rework.
- 2) Alert will analyze and bid the work that needs to be done by Alert vs. your local IT contractor. Every Alert system is different. (So are the skills of local IT companies.) It typically takes a day of Alert technical service time (\$1,000) to help you complete a server transition. We can also provide a 'Do-It-Yourself' (DIY) document for your IT company to evaluate.
- 3) Backup everything in advance!
Make multiple back-ups for peace-of-mind. (Priceless!)
- 4) Please Note: Alert may charge a \$1,000 **RUSH FEE** plus time and materials to support unplanned and/or DIY projects.



Let us know 2-4 weeks in advance if a server move or replacement is scheduled, or if you are selling your business.

Selling Your Business? Plan the Transition

If you are selling your business to a new owner, AMS will help you put together a transition plan.

It will include an official letter that you can use at 'closing' to transfer your Alert Software to the new owner. (Some restrictions apply.) It will also include an Alert Contract for Warranty/Support.

A checklist of tasks is provided to help in the transition, including the ability to keep your 'old' A/R while the 'new' business starts at zero.

It can include a transition plan for your credit card billings (to go to the 'new' bank account) and more.

The cost for this service is a one-time \$1,000 administrative fee plus time and materials for any other services that you request.

For a confidential consultation, please contact Rob Ross, Alert President, at (719) 457-7169.

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