



**BARRETT**  
DISTRIBUTION CENTERS

*Customized Solutions – Proven Performance*

# The Barrett Bugle

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## **Barrett: Workforce Training Fund Grant Recipient** **by Ann Foley-Collins, Workplace Learning & Performance Manager**

If you are an avid reader of the Barrett Bugle, you may recall an article written in our April edition about performance management and Barrett Distribution Centers' commitment to professional development of our employees. Since then, we have spent a great deal of time talking to all within the company to identify professional development needs. We now have a training strategy that will impact every Barrett employee; a strategy which encompasses five distinct training initiatives:

- **Team Development Training:** To forge our management team to increase productivity.
- **Supervisor Training:** To elevate the performance of our supervisors and help them with their personnel (and personal) development.
- **Customer Service Training:** To improve our customer satisfaction scores.
- **English as a Second Language:** To develop the English skills of our diverse workforce.
- **Systems Training:** To develop the technical skills of our customer service reps and material handlers, and position the company to implement newer technology.

Based on the strength of our training and development programs, Barrett Distribution Centers was recently awarded a Workforce Training Fund (WTF) Grant from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. This is a tremendous recognition for our company. Our application was selected as one of 15 approved grants from an application pool of 120 submitted. We are very excited about this award and the recognition from the State. However, we are even more excited about the opportunity to deploy significant training resources to develop our employees.

If you have employees in Massachusetts, you may be able to benefit from this program as well. The Workforce Training Fund is administered by The Division of Career Services (DCS), an agency of the Massachusetts Department of Workforce Development. The fund provides resources to Massachusetts businesses and workers to train current and newly hired employees. Its goal is to improve employee skills and maintain the economic strength of the Commonwealth's businesses into the 21st century.

There are two Workforce Training Fund programs: the General Program and the Express Program. There are different applications, grant limits, and approval processes for each program. The Express Program is targeted to small employers with a maximum of 50 employees in Massachusetts. It features an easy-to-complete online application, an online database of training providers, open application period and quick turnaround. The maximum grant amount is \$15,000 annually.

The General Program awards up to a maximum of \$250,000 in funding. Applications for these grants are more detailed and are reviewed by an advisory panel of business and labor leaders. Applications must be filed according to the deadline set for each round. The next round is number 19 and the deadline is March 21, 2005 at 5 pm.

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# Item Activity Profiling

by Bob Willert, General Manager

In May of 2002 I had the opportunity to attend a weeklong class offered by the Logistics Institute at Georgia Tech. The class was designed to teach the principles of establishing “World-Class” warehousing and material handling techniques. Topics included benchmarking, case picking systems, and order picking operations. The technique that has had the most significant impact on Barrett Distribution Centers’ operations is Item Activity Profiling.

Profiling strategies can be used to improve each functional area in a distribution center. (Figure 1). Item Activity Profiling is a subset of this broader category. Item Activity Profiling entails analyzing item and order activity to identify areas of process improvement, and to identify root causes of process flow issues in an objective manner.

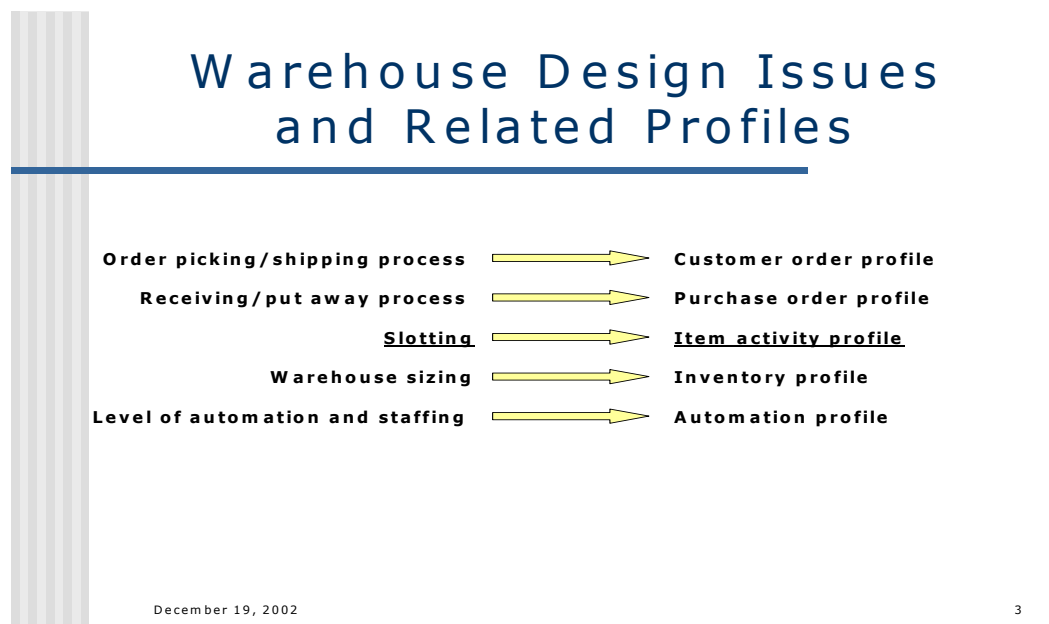


Figure 1

Proper slotting of items for both new and existing accounts in warehouse layout has added significant positive efficiencies to our operation. Item profiling helps decide what storage mode the item should be assigned (e.g., bulk, pallet rack, static pick, flow rack, etc.); how much space the item should be allocated in the storage mode; and where in the storage mode the item should be located.

We utilized this technique to properly slot items for Lagoon Games, a high volume pick and pack account. Lagoon sells novelty merchandise and books directly to national retailers and was profiled in our July issue of the Barrett Bugle.

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## Item Activity Profiling, continued

The first step in our analysis was to determine the popularity distribution for the items. We discovered that Lagoon's items followed a Pareto Distribution where 20% of the items were picked for 80% of the orders (Figure 2). Consequently, those items were assigned to the most accessible locations.

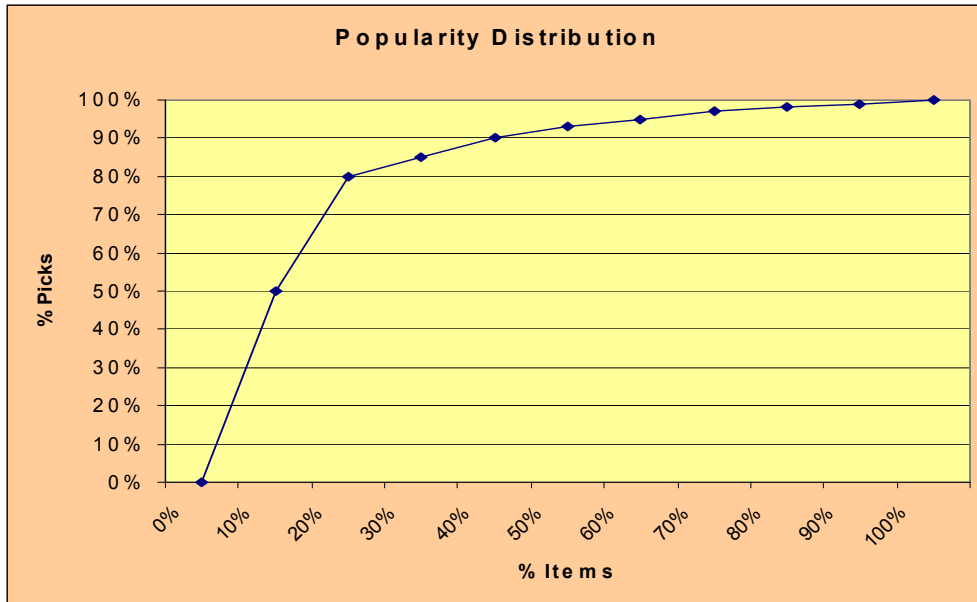


Figure 2

Secondly, we looked at Item Order Completion. Item Order Completion identifies small groups of items that can fill a high percentage of the outbound orders. This technique ranks items from most to least popular.

Thirdly, we analyzed the demand correlation among items. The goal of this analysis is to determine the relationship between different items or groups of items. In our Lagoon example we determined that there were several SKUs of books and games that were consistently ordered together. Therefore, we slotted these items next to each other.

Lastly, we analyzed the demand variability of each item. The objective of this technique is to limit the need to restock in the middle of a picking shift. There were several items in our analysis that we determined needed two slot facings to avoid having to restock in the course of a day. The end result is that we were able to increase order-picking productivity by 9%, obtain better equipment utilization, tighter inventory control, increased employee satisfaction, and better ergonomics.

To learn more on the subject of warehousing techniques, please reference "World-Class Warehousing and Material Handling" by Edward Frazelle.

## ***Kudos to . . .***

**Jordan McLaughlin,  
Customer Care, for his  
attention to detail and  
great efforts-**

“ . . .just wanted to let  
you know how pleased  
we are with Jordan.  
He has been  
exceptional during our  
transitional period!

*Terry J. DePierri  
Inside Sales Manager  
D.N. LUKENS, INC.*

**Jordan McLaughlin  
once again and Chuck  
Collins, Ops Manager,  
for their customer  
service and attention to  
detail-**

“Barrett Distribution  
has done a great job  
on this year's test  
count. Jordan  
McLaughlin and Chuck  
Collins have both done  
a remarkable job in this  
year's weekly cycle  
counting and test  
count. In their pioneer  
year, they have been  
committed to accuracy  
and superior customer  
service. It is a  
pleasure working with  
them and I appreciate  
their dedication to the  
Trane account.

As a result of the test  
count, a complete  
physical inventory will  
not be necessary.

*Eliza Hoerner  
Inventory Control  
Specialist  
The Trane Company*

## ***Customer Spotlight. . . . .***

### **Leap Year Publishing**

***By Diane Alfred, Executive Assistant***

Leap Year Publishing was started 1997 by Enno Tjalsma and Ron Gold. Enno and Ron met in 1994 as consultants for another publishing company in Philadelphia. They recognized an opportunity to capture a market niche for value-priced, image driven products.

Today Leap Year employs 18 people on a full-time basis. They distribute calendars, puzzles, and stationery products to major retailers such as Michaels, Walgreen's, Dollar General, Dollar Tree, Kinney Drug, Wal-Mart, and Toys R Us.

For the first two years, the company focused on wall calendars, with a price range of \$1 to \$2.99. Having solicited discount retailers for 15 years, Enno had the relationships that helped Leap Year penetrate this market.

After this initial period, the company re-deployed its resources to start marketing image driven products such as boxed jigsaw puzzles, gift bags, note cards, journals, and social stationery, all at value prices.

The last two years have been a period of immense growth for Leap Year. Enno attributes this surge in volume to the retailers subscribing to the value priced merchandise for the benefit of the consumer. “Walgreen's and Michaels now have entire sections devoted solely to dollar items for impulse purchases,” said Enno. “We had the foresight to help these retailers, at the store level, to capitalize on the shift in consumer purchasing. That value price point is not going away; this is a trend in retail that is going to continue.”

Wall calendars are still their largest selling category in terms of unit sales. “But our fastest growth category is stationery. We are focusing a lot of our efforts today on a value stationery product line including journals, shopping list pads, monthly planners, and notebooks.”

When asked about his greatest professional achievements, Enno responded, “Our greatest achievement is growth and development of our people. We have a very professional, enthusiastic, and loyal staff that has been together with us from the beginning. These valued employees have helped Leap Year Publishing to double in size in our first two years; and sustain consistent double-digit growth from 2001 to 2004. That's quite an accomplishment.”

Leap Year products are distributed out of our Franklin location. When asked how Barrett has helped Leap Year, Enno replied, “With Barrett handling all of our distribution and logistics, we are able to focus on what we do best. Barrett understands distribution, EDI, freight, traffic, and all the things that we don't focus on as a company, but which are very important to us. By allowing Barrett to focus on the logistics of our business, we can focus on publishing.”

We welcome Leap Year Publishing to the Barrett client base, and wish all the best to Enno, Ron, and their staff.

## **Barrett Distribution Centers**

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**Visit us on the Web!**

**See us at:**

[www.barrettdistribution.com](http://www.barrettdistribution.com)

## **WFT Grant Recipient**, continued from page 1

We applied for and were granted training money through the General Program for all five of our training initiatives. If you are interested in the General Program, you should know that the application process is extensive and detailed. The applicant needs to set clear objectives, define the measurable results, and establish the method for reporting those results. The training plan needs to be part of a strategic plan that supports key company goals.

Our training plan will be executed during the next eighteen months. Each initiative requires a significant match from the company in order to receive the grant. We are investing in the development of our employees so that we can continue on our growth track. In 2005 and 2006 we expect to exceed the operating results that we have achieved in the past two years, as we continue to develop programs that benefit our employees and our customers.

If you would like to learn more you can contact me at 508-553-8800 x18 or go directly to the Massachusetts Business Resource Team for guidance at [www.mass.gov/bizteam](http://www.mass.gov/bizteam) 1-877-BIZTEAM.

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"The difference between 'involvement' and 'commitment' is like an eggs-and-ham breakfast: the chicken is *involved* - the pig is *committed*."

- *unknown*



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# Summer Fun at Barrett

## Family Company Picnic in Plymouth, MA

August 14th, Barrett had its annual company picnic on the water in Plymouth, MA (yes, about 10 miles south of Plymouth Rock!). What a beautiful day!! The weather was perfect for lounging by the pool, walking along the beach and if one dared, swimming in the chilly Atlantic water. Bob Willert manned the grill with cooked-to-perfection burgers, steak, and hotdogs. Tim Barrett personally served his home-made delicious Barrett-famous clam chowder. A great time was had by all relaxing with fellow co-workers and their families.



At left Shannon Shippee demonstrates her cannonball while Chuck Collins and Jose Timas play football with their boys on the beach (above).

## Fourth Quarter Birthdays

Look who's *falling* for another birthday!!

### October

- Jose Alves  
Deandrade
- Antonio Lopes
- Diane Alfred
- Deny Corrales
- Phalla Colman

### November

- Carol Silva
- Jose Soto
- Dennis Almeida
- Jose Medina
- Tomas Burgos

### December

- Mary Rajotte
- Gabriela Flores
- Sharon Pachak
- Edwin Molina
- Hugo Moreno



## Length of Service Award

Awards will go out in October to the following employees:

1 year = Luis Blanco  
Keith Lawton  
Andrew Shoemo  
Hugo Moreno

5 year = Buddy Cannata  
Matt Brown

## Did you know. . . . .

### Harvard Pilgrim Health Care is the #1 Health Plan in America

Our health care provider, Harvard Pilgrim Health Care, is the #1 ranked health plan in America for both member satisfaction and clinical quality, according to The State of Health Care Quality 2004, a comprehensive report issued by the National Committee for Quality Assurance. NCQA is a private non-profit organization dedicated to improving health care quality. This is the first time that a health plan has been recognized for scoring first in both categories. In 2003 HCHP was the first to place in the top 10 in both categories, so receiving this recognition today is particularly gratifying. This is a great distinction and Barrett is proud to be a subscriber.