

2003 users' conference

DEXTER + CHANEY

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Learning, Networking, Fun Draw More than 420 to 2003 Users' Conference

The seventh annual Dexter + Chaney Users' Conference offered the usual benefits—learning, networking, loads of fun and great food in a beautiful location—plus some new “twists” that drew more than 420 Forefront users from around the United States.

The spring event—held at the Bell Harbor Conference Center on the beautiful Seattle waterfront—also marked the end of one tradition and the start of another. After a seven-year run in Seattle, the 2004 Users' Conference will go “on the road” to the Hyatt Regency Lake Las Vegas Resort, Spa & Casino. (See related story.)

“Some of our customers told me that our conferences are always very well thought out and very well organized—this one, particularly so,” said John Chaney, Dexter + Chaney co-founder and president. “Those comments came from customers who've attended them several years in a row.

“That demonstrates that our users can learn something new and different when they attend the conference each year. It also tells me that our people are doing a good job to continue to make the conference an educational and fun experience.”

Learning

Forefront users learned—from Dexter + Chaney personnel and each other—how to use Forefront to their maximum advantage in training sessions,

at a computer lab, and in formal and informal networking sessions with other users. Among the new “twists” in 2003: a “Project Team Track” developed for project managers and a session on “Microsoft Office and Forefront” that demonstrated how users can make the programs work together most efficiently.

Also new this year: a Friday-night dinner cruise along the Seattle waterfront on the Royal Argosy cruise ship and a Thursday-night dinner featuring entertainment by a stand-up comic and magician.

Conference-goers also watched a Seattle Mariners game in a group suite at beautiful Safeco field (the Mariners obliged, beating the Detroit Tigers, 6-0). Many others took self-guided tours through Seattle's nighttime hot spots or were accompanied by their Dexter + Chaney hosts.

In short: It has become an annual tradition for Forefront users to fill their heads with knowledge and their free time with great entertainment, in one of America's most beautiful locations.

“Attendees can expect more of the same in Las Vegas in 2004,” said John. “Of course, the weather will be a bit warmer.”



Pack the Sunscreen for 2004 Users' Conference... in Las Vegas

Leave the umbrella at home and pack the sunscreen, shades, and swim suit for the 2004 Dexter + Chaney Users' Conference... in Las Vegas. The 2004 conference will be held May 13-14 at the beautiful Hyatt Regency Lake Las Vegas Resort, Spa & Casino located just 14 miles from McCarran International Airport and 17 miles from the Las Vegas Strip.

The eighth annual Users' Conference will be packed with the same ingredients that have made it a yearly success since 1997: learning about Forefront, great networking, and the opportunity to make enhancement suggestions for future versions of Forefront. But, for the first time, the destination will not be Seattle's waterfront. Instead, we're moving the conference to Las Vegas, where May temperatures average around 80 degrees.

Located on the shores of Lake Las Vegas, the 21-acre Moroccan-style resort offers breathtaking beauty and fun for the entire family—an 18-hole Jack Nicklaus Signature Golf Course, two pools, “Camp please see “Las Vegas” on page 4

Forefront Provides Answers at Your Fingertips — Even in ‘Whodunit?’ Video



“Every time I come to the Users’ Conference, I learn at least a dozen new things that I would never learn just by staying at the office.”

*Debbie Petersen,
contract administrator
Gordon N. Ball Inc., Alamo CA*

Every Forefront user knows that all the job and company-management information they need is right at their fingertips. Brigid O’Shaughnessy, one of the main characters of “The Maltese Forefront” video that kicked off the first morning of the conference, learned that the hard way.

The black-and-white, 1940s-style video demonstrated Forefront’s capabilities, including a new one: solving a murder. Brigid, daughter of the owner of O’Shaughnessy Construction, was hoping to get some dirt on a key competitor, Maltese Construction, whose success was threatening to put O’Shaughnessy out of business. She put private investigator Sam Spade on the case, with false tales of substandard work, pay-offs to inspectors, kickbacks to customers, and other allegations against Maltese.

Unfortunately for Brigid (a.k.a. Dexter + Chaney’s Diane Conway), Maltese used Forefront. Thus, when Sam (Brad Mathews, whose day job is Dexter + Chaney’s VP/sales and marketing) snooped into Forefront at Maltese’s

office, he found that Maltese was guilty of nothing more than running efficiently and profitably.

“This is so easy, everything is here, and everything is documented,” said Sam, while cruising through Forefront (...a line for which Brad needed no rehearsing). “One thing is for sure, these guys at Maltese are good. Labor costs are great, they use only top quality materials from the best suppliers, their overhead is incredibly low. No surprise that they’re profitable.”

Sam found all that information with just a few clicks of a mouse. Plus, photos taken by a job site camera—stored permanently in Forefront Project Management—demonstrated who shot and killed Sam’s partner, Miles Archer (Dexter + Chaney’s Erik Osborn), at a Maltese job site.

Perhaps when Brigid gets out of prison in 20-plus years for that crime, Brad and Co. will have run out of ideas for opening-morning videos that Conference-goers have come to eagerly anticipate. “The Maltese Forefront” followed spoofs in previous years on Star Trek, Mission Impossible—even a “mockumentary” on that chart-topping rock and roll band, The Forefronts.

Perhaps It Should Be Called a ‘Networking Conference’

Arguably the most important aspect of the Users’ Conference each year is networking. Both formally and informally, the conference is designed to make it as easy as possible for users to share information with each other and with Dexter + Chaney.

Networking helps users operate Forefront more efficiently when they’re back at the office and assists Dexter + Chaney in its development of future versions of Forefront.

Formal networking opportunities included two forums for advanced Forefront users and five industry-specific roundtables. Informally, users shared their ideas and comments over lunch, cocktails, between sessions—really, any time during their two-day visit to Seattle.



“Because our customers use Forefront to run their businesses all day, every day, they speak the same language as their peers and can share similar experiences with Forefront. That’s priceless,” said John Chaney. “Plus, we rely on their comments to ensure that Forefront keeps pace with their needs. Document Imaging and Human Resources are just two of the countless Forefront capabilities that are a direct result of customer suggestions over the years.”

'Project Team Track' a Hit With Attendees

The "Project Team Track," offered for the first time at the 2003 conference, was a hit with project managers and those who work closely with them (such as owners, estimators and controllers).

The three-session series offered in-depth instruction on project planning, job progress tracking, managing revenue issues, and other topics related to successful project management.

Through the use of case studies, attendees learned how to design their Forefront system for maximum efficiency and how to enhance Job Cost reporting. They also received suggestions to better utilize data collection tools (employee



and equipment time card forms, change request forms, etc.), and learned about methods for projecting job revenue.

"We designed the 'Project Team Track' to help project managers use Forefront to its maximum advantage," said John Chaney, Dexter + Chaney president. "Attendees told us it was extremely helpful."

Computer Lab, Special Projects Provide Answers to Attendees' Questions

Once again, the computer lab and Special Projects booth at the Users' Conference hummed with activity. Attendees took the opportunity to meet—in person, one-on-one—with Dexter + Chaney personnel to address their individual needs.

Case in point: "One of our clients had a question about how to handle pay-per-diem," said Dexter + Chaney's Geoff Falk about a visitor to the computer lab, where eight computer terminals were constantly in use. "They didn't quite know how to handle it, and they thought it might be rather complicated. It turns out it was a very simple procedure that they could have been following all along in their version of Forefront.

"That's a typical example," Geoff continued. "Likewise, we were able to provide a very simple solution to someone with a question about Document Imaging. Forefront has so many capabilities and, understandably, people don't have the time to learn everything there is to know about Forefront when they're working day-to-day in the office. This is the opportunity to come and ask questions."

Added Dexter + Chaney's Tina Bowe: "It's also a chance to meet people we've only talked

with on the phone. Answering their questions in person is very helpful."

Dexter + Chaney's Special Projects Group likewise met with a steady stream of attendees who wanted to learn more about add-on products (such as custom programming, Crystal Reports services, electronic payroll and tax reporting, etc.) for their individual businesses. Representatives from the Special Projects Group listened to individual users' needs as the first step in tailoring services and programs for them.

"Many users had very specific needs in mind and asked how we could help with them," said Dexter + Chaney's Chuck Trifunovic. Among the most-mentioned topics: MICR and personal-signature checks, the data copy program, and payroll reporting.



"We installed Forefront in January 2002, and we have a certain comfort level with it. We decided to attend the Users' Conference because it will help us go beyond the 'infancy stage.' In particular: we know there are things in Job Cost that we just aren't using. After the conference, we can go back to the office and share information about Job Cost and other aspects of Forefront with the people who use it on a day-to-day basis."

*Bruce Huff,
executive vice president
Harper Contractors, Hebron KY*

**America's Sweethearts:
Filmed on Location at
the Hyatt Regency
Lake Las Vegas Resort,
Spa & Casino**

If you've seen the 2001 movie *America's Sweethearts* (with Julia Roberts, Billy Crystal, John Cusack, and Catherine Zeta-Jones), you've seen the Hyatt Regency Lake Las Vegas Resort. The Hyatt was both stage and home to the cast and crew during three weeks of filming.

"I understand that Julia Roberts and Billy Crystal loved the resort," said Patty Harder, Dexter + Chaney's marketing manager and Users' Conference executive planner, who spent a week-end scouting trip at the resort. "And I'm confident our clients will love it, too."

"We've been to the Users' Conference every year to learn as much as we can about the system from Dexter + Chaney and from other users. We've done lots of fun things in Seattle over the years, but now we're looking forward to going to Las Vegas in 2004 for a new adventure."

*Paula Hansen, controller
Pieper Houston Electric,
Houston TX*

Las Vegas

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Hyatt" for kids, lake-based water sports, and gambling at Casino Baraka.

The resort is a perfect venue for learning and networking while surrounded by sun-drenched terraces and palm-lined courtyards. Great conference facilities, beautiful accommodations, and excellent guest services, combined with an incredible array of leisure activities, promise to deliver everything Dexter + Chaney and our clients need—all in one spectacular location.

"We wanted to do something different at a facility large enough to allow all of our users to attend the conference at the same time," said John Chaney, Dexter + Chaney president. "In the past few years, we've had the Users' Conference in two separate sessions. A single event will bring all of our users together, making it easier to network and renew the acquaintances and friendships made at previous conferences."



Wondering how the nightlife at the Las Vegas event will stack up against the Seattle conferences? Rest assured, planning is underway for after-hours entertainment, including evening escapes to the strip for Vegas-style—and Dexter + Chaney-style—fun!

Dexter + Chaney has reserved rooms at the Hyatt for our attendees and their guests at a discounted rate, and reservations are now being accepted by the Hyatt. To book a room(s), call 800-55-HYATT or visit www.lakelasvegas.hyatt.com; remember to mention Dexter + Chaney to receive your room(s) at our negotiated rate.

You'll hear from Dexter + Chaney in late 2003 about registration. Be an early bird: if you register for the conference by the end of 2003, you'll automatically be entered in a drawing for a free suite upgrade!

First Five Minutes of First Training Session Pays Off

Dexter + Chaney has long believed that training sessions about Forefront's capabilities are very valuable to the software's users. One customer—Dan Mistichelli, CFO of H.B. Frazer Company, King of Prussia, PA—confirmed that belief.

"The first five minutes of the first session—'Microsoft Office and Forefront'—on the first morning of the conference made the entire trip worthwhile because I learned so much," said Dan. "I learned how to export information directly from Forefront into Microsoft Word®, eliminating three or four steps. My controller and I discussed this, and we agreed that—just from this session alone—the information we learned will save about 10 hours per month between the two of us."

We can't promise that everyone had an identical experience (at least not in the first five minutes!), but we're confident they learned something new. The sessions focused on new

and popular capabilities (like Human Resources, Document Imaging, Project Management), longstanding features (Payroll, Job Cost, Crystal Reports, Info-Link), and job-specific classes for controllers, systems administrators, and the project management team. (See related story about the "Project Team Track.")

In the session entitled, "Project Management: Tracking Job Details With Forefront," for example, attendees learned how to track project details through its Daily Log. They also discovered how the new "Inbox" feature enables project team members to collaborate without faxing or e-mailing all of the project documents.

In "Human Resources: Automating Employee Management," they got an overview of the Human Resources module that automates the employee-management process in all areas of a construction business, from recruitment through retirement.

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