

## From the Desk of Our President

By Ram White

This September has brought us many new challenges, as Americans, as human beings, as family members, and as business professionals. I would like to extend my thoughts and prayers to everyone that has been affected by the awful tragedy on Tuesday, September 11<sup>th</sup>. The ACDM, as an organization of professionals whose careers are dedicated to managing change, have significant understanding of change. However, most of us have had little experience or background in handling the enormity of the kind of changes resulting from that Tuesday's events, or those that will surface from the events that are unfolding during the weeks, months, and years ahead. As CM and DM professionals, we understand how important doing the right things for the right reasons depends on the right people having the right information at the right time. This basic principle becomes so very important in this time of tragedy, recovery, and response. We must continue to do what we do best.

In the spirit of making efforts to return to a normal work pattern, the ACDM Executive Board proceeded with its scheduled board meeting in Denver on 21-22 September. Even with the travel restrictions and complications, we had six of the eleven members able to make the meeting. We thank Steve Konieczka and SCM Labs for hosting the meeting. Under very somber conditions, the board was able to conduct and accomplish our usual business.

One of the major accomplishments of this meeting was the formal transfer of the membership management processing and recording from the old File Maker Pro database application to a new AIM system. This transition had been initiated over a year ago in order to facilitate the management of our membership information. The older File Maker Pro system had become a significant handicap to maintaining accurate and current membership information, which was reflected in poor membership response and services. As of this meeting we have closed out the old and begin using only the new system. Board members are making concerted efforts to clean up old member records that have obsolete contact information. For the immediate future, Steve Konieczka, VP of Services, will be maintaining the AIM membership database and its back ups. The File Maker Pro application and databases will be archived.

In addition to the new AIM membership database, our members will be noticing some changes to the ACDM website. We have consolidated the home page site and the conference site under a single management process. This consolidation was accomplished as part of the transition to a new Internet Service Provider (ISP) which will better meet our current needs and intended growth requirements. Besides the web site's new "look and feel," we will be including additional sources of configuration management references and standards information and additional CM related links.

Finally, I invite everyone to visit our site, [www.ACDM.org](http://www.ACDM.org), to see first hand all the information available and particularly the link to the ACDM conference. Please mark your calendars for this event. The conference will be at the Omni Rosen Hotel in Orlando Florida, the 11<sup>th</sup> through the 13<sup>th</sup> of March 2002 and I encourage you to sign up now.

Thx,  
Ram

P.O. Box 58888

Salt Lake City, Utah 84158-0888

800-738-8500

<http://www.acdm.org>

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Training Manager, Integrated Support Systems, Inc  
934 Old Clemson Hwy,  
Seneca, SC 29672  
(864) 654-1284 ext. 156 (W) / (864) 654-1286 (fax)  
email: [ramw@isscorp.com](mailto:ramw@isscorp.com)

### VP of Services – Steve Konieczka

President & COO, SCM Labs, Inc.  
1515 Arapahoe, Tower 1, Suite 420  
Denver, CO 80202  
(303)-623-9225 (W) / (303)-623-9202 (fax)  
email: [steve@scmlabs.com](mailto:steve@scmlabs.com)

### VP of Education – Dick Carlson

(714) 638-3731 (W)  
email: [iascar@earthlink.net](mailto:iascar@earthlink.net)

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National Aeronautics and Space Administration  
Marshall Space Flight Center  
MSFC, AL 35812  
(256) 544-0691 (W) / (256) 544-4275 (fax)  
email: [Sue.Fair@msfc.nasa.gov](mailto:Sue.Fair@msfc.nasa.gov)

### Treasurer – Curt Jagger

7365 Main St #120  
Stratford CT 06614-1300  
Phone (work only, for the time being)  
(203) 386-3981 (W) / (203) 386-3045 (F)  
email: [cjagger@sikorsky.com](mailto:cjagger@sikorsky.com)

### CM Chair – John Corcoran

P.O. Box 470126  
Fort Worth, TX 76147-0126  
(817) 341-4948 (W) / (817) -341-2728 (fax)  
email: [jecork@earthlink.net](mailto:jecork@earthlink.net)

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President, CEO  
Millennium Data Management, Incorporated  
Post Office Box 5435  
Huntsville, AL 35814  
256-536-1096 (W) / 256-536-6096 (fax)  
email: [HauerCC@aol.com](mailto:HauerCC@aol.com)

### Board of Governors

#### Hugh L. Ayres, Jr.

COLSA Corp.  
Advanced Research Center  
6724 Odyssey Drive  
Office Number 1101  
Huntsville, AL 35806  
(256) 922-1680, ext. 1243 (W) / (256) 922-9090 (F)  
email: [hayres@colsa.com](mailto:hayres@colsa.com)

#### Paul Olszewski

3015 Del Rey Ave  
Carlsbad, CA 92009  
(760) 944-0733 (W)  
email: [PAULOSKI@aol.com](mailto:PAULOSKI@aol.com)

#### Samuel H. Packer

Lockheed Martin  
Mail Stop B2400  
P.O. Box 179  
Denver Colorado 80201-0179  
(303) 971-5036 (W) / (303) 977-3220 (fax)  
email: [samuel.h.packer@lmco.com](mailto:samuel.h.packer@lmco.com)

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Mary Shack  
4410 Bellvue Ave  
Austin, TX 78756  
512-451-0841  
email: [MLBS@juno.com](mailto:MLBS@juno.com)

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# Service Parts and the BOM

By Frank Watts

Service parts and methods of handling them in the Bill of Material are often a nagging problem for product manufacturers. Sometimes they are structured in the product BOM, creating problems for manufacturing. Sometimes they are treated totally outside the BOM. Sometimes all parts of the product are “spared” by inference. There is a method of referencing a spares BOM in the product BOM that would be optimum for many manufacturing enterprises.

Of course, “make to print” companies generally don’t have a service part issue. Some companies make a conscious decision to replace the end item and not to have any subordinate service parts. If your product is molded or otherwise inseparable, you don’t have spare parts. However, most product manufacturing companies have a service parts process whether or not they think of it as such.

Many enterprises merely explode all product parts and assemblies in their service literature. This is actually an unconscious decision to spare everything. Wouldn’t it be better to make a conscious decision as to what to spare? Does exclusion of any item from the spares listing mean that it won’t be sold to a customer? Of course not – you will probably sell any item in the product. It merely means that if the customer wishes to order a non-spared item, the cost and delivery will have to be analyzed and quoted.

A recent business email indicated that “spare” sounds like something that isn’t needed and should be eliminated - so “service parts” might be a better term. Part, components and assemblies that are subject to wear, failure or damage should be identified as spared items. In fact, wear, failure and damage should be “eliminated.” Although tremendous strides have been taken in this writer’s lifetime, we engineers still haven’t figured out how to achieve that design utopia. The decision is somewhat subjective in the area of wear and damage. How much wear or damage need be probable before listing an item? Are Mean Time Between Failure (MTBF) calculations required? Determining what to spare and not spare can be a difficult set of decisions but they should be made.

Why go through all the “pain” to determine what should be spared? First of all, failure to make a separation of items in your product leads to the natural conclusion that all the items are “spared.” Thus your customers will conclude that all items are available on a fast turn-around and published price basis. They believe that you will carry a few items in an inventory that they are available on demand! Do you really want that impression or inventory? Or worse yet, service parts orders are filled from the production inventory and a schedule missed for another customer. Wouldn’t it make more sense to have the engineer and field service representative make a conscious decision as to which parts should be spared? Perhaps only 20% of your total items would thus be spared. Then the spared items can be carried in a service parts inventory, separately managed and minimized according to actual failure, wear and damage data. We can then only document the spared items in the publications – saving a significant amount of time and money in the companies publications. Aren’t these also the items that we need to be most concerned about if a design change occurs making the spare obsolete or superceded by another part?

Some companies find an available data field in the BOM where each item can be coded as spared or not spared. This technique is probably a good idea, but most MRP systems won’t do any thing with that code / identification. It certainly helps the marketing and publications people to know which items need to be priced, exploded, etc. But the items in the product BOM aren’t quite what the service parts people want anyway. They want some of the items specially packaged, perhaps specially tested and possibly with a field installation / test instruction. Most folks that face this issue agree that a special “assembly should be given a part number and structured. This allows the proper assembly and test labor (and thus the proper standard cost) to be associated with each special assembly. Some let this special assembly “hang out in mid-air.” Some put it in the product BOM and code the box and instruction as phantom items. This contaminates the production BOM and doesn’t allow the MRP to drive the box and instruction for spares requirements.

A better solution might be to build all spared items and special assemblies into a separate BOM - one for each product or family of products. The service parts people can then use this BOM to do their publications and to do their spare parts inventory management. Certain customers might use the spares BOM to order (provision) spares for their own inventory. This writer would go a step further and list this separate BOM as a reference document on the product family end item’s BOM. Title it with the product model numbers. Thus when a “where used” check is made any service item will show up not only used in product A and B but also on the spares BOMs for product A and B. This list can then be properly addressed as part of each engineering change. If a non-interchangeable / part number change is made to a spared item the appropriate spares BOMs would change. If the change is “downward compatible” then the old item would be removed and the new item listed. All orders for the old part number would be filled with the new. If the change is not “downward compatible” then the serial number(s) must be known that contain / don’t contain that change - a practice that is advisable for all part number changes anyway.

A well thought out method of handling service parts can be a significant cost avoidance / savings and also result in happier customers. Of the methods this writer has observed, results would seem to favor a special assembly / referenced spares BOM approach.

By Frank Watts, a certified Configuration Manager (CCM), engineer / document control consultant who teaches Engineering Documentation Control / Configuration Management courses with the University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee. He can be reached at (970) 887 9460, email at [ec3corp@rkymtnhi.com](mailto:ec3corp@rkymtnhi.com) or at [www.ecm5tools.com](http://www.ecm5tools.com)

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1515 Arapahoe Street, Tower 1 Suite 420, Denver, Colorado 80202