Expert Prototyping™

How an expert would configure software functionality for your enterprise

Too many options

The same BPCS / ERP LX code is delivered to a wide range of customers. Therefore, the code arrives with a very robust set of configuration options. There's probably a million permutations on how subsets of those options could be combined. It's a mind-boggling chore to learn enough about software functionality options so as to arrive at the optimal way to configure BPCS / ERP LX for a specific enterprise.

We don't believe in "one-size-fits-all" education at Unbeaten Path. It's very inefficient to present the material that way because the majority of the options thrown up on the wall aren't going to be pertinent for a given environment. Students attending multiple-company (public) education courses don't know what parts of the presentation to pay attention to.

Ink pen training

Part of the reason we selected the name "Unbeaten Path" for our consulting company is because our founder (Milt Habeck) just about got fired for subjecting a group of users to SSA's "ink pen" training back in 1988. It happened at S.C. Johnson, Inc. (Johnson Wax) in Wisconsin.

> Milt invited several people from each Johnson Wax company in Latin America to attend two weeks of BPCS training up in Wisconsin. We got a generous dose of simplistic ink pen examples … and that generated three problems:
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> **First:** we ended up with pages of postponed questions. For example, the trainer couldn't illustrate manufacturing answers with an ink pen BOM. The Johnson Wax products were much more complicated than ink pens and our manufacturing was a mixture of process + discrete.
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> **Second:** as the days progressed, students found it increasingly difficult to remember the details. The SSA trainers were "hooking" those details to an ink pen illustration (or to a chart of accounts or to a "Vendor "X" or to a "Customer Y") which had nothing to do with Johnson Wax.
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> **Third**: after afternoon training sessions concluded, the students couldn't do any homework on the teaching database using examples pertinent to Johnson Wax. To do that, they'd have to go all the way back and start over with a fresh Bank Master setup.
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> By about Tuesday of the second week, the students were in full revolt and Milt got hauled on to the carpet for making not quite two dozen people from Latin America feel like they weren't learning anything. So, when Milt founded a company to provide BPCS services, the "**Unbeaten Path**" name meant that we weren't going to do training the ink pen way.

The Unbeaten Path way

When we're invited to train BPCS/ERP LX users, we strongly recommend that the trainer prepare an Expert Prototype to use for illustration purposes in the classroom. That's done in advance of the training dates. The Expert Prototype development process is different depending on the module(s) scheduled for training; here's how it's done for a manufacturing planning course:

- We ask for two, three, maximum four products that fairly represent the scope of the important manufacturing activity at the company.
- We get remote VPN access to a recently refreshed test environment to study how those products are currently configured.
- We schedule a few phone conferences with engineer(s) and cost accountant(s) and manufacturing planner(s) to learn details about how the products are made, the manufacturing planning process, the principle "exceptions to the rule," shop floor management/reporting, and the current frustrations with using the manufacturing planning software.
- In the iSeries test environment, we then assemble an Expert Prototype for those two, three, or four product codes.

  The application consultant that will perform the training has the depth of experience and seasoning to assemble a theoretically sound configuration. It's how he would do it if he were running your company. Obviously, it won't handle every exception nor everything in the product line ... but ... it is a tremendously productive and comprehensive head start that can be the basis to build a final approach.

- Finally, we develop classroom exercises based on that prototype so that students can practice the course content in the classroom using familiar codes, ingredients, vendor names, and work center names.

Between 1.5 and 4.0 days are typically needed to develop the Expert Prototype (depending on the modules involved and the complexity of your enterprise). The *immediate* results are much happier students and much better retention. The *longer term* result is even more valuable.

The longer term ROI from Expert Prototyping

We recommend that the IT department make a secure copy of the Expert Prototype configuration. It is a consistent point of departure for future employee training episodes.

The classroom training exercises originally developed by Unbeaten Path can be used over and over again as new employees arrive or as a refresher experience for existing employees. Exercise results can be compared with the "correct answers" documented by Unbeaten Path's expert. If you want to sustain corporate policy and lock down the way BPCS / ERP LX functionality is applied at your enterprise, then we recommend you embrace this idea.

A device to address other software application issues

Expert Prototyping is a good idea even if you don't employ the result in a classroom setting. Pick a thorny problem with the way BPCS is used at your enterprise and ask one of our application consultants to deliver a recommendation embodied within an Expert Prototype. It's a thorough and efficient way to force all the issues out for discussion and then to document/lock-down configuration decisions within an illustration which is pertinent to your enterprise.

Unbeaten Path regularly employs the Expert Prototyping device to deliver these **up a notch**™ professional services with exceptional quality and precision:

- ☑ **Development of operating policies and procedures** (confirmation that world-class results demanded in corporate policy can be delivered in BPCS/ERP LX).
- ☑ BPCS/ERP LX **version migrations** and from-scratch **system implementations** (business process prototypes become the starting point for basis for cross-functional conference room pilot scripting).
- ☑ **elbow-to-elbow**™ **coaching** (desk-by-desk delivery of enhanced BPCS/ERP LX productivity and user confidence).

Navigate to information about these three **up a notch** professional service categories by clicking on the purple ink text.

Money-back guarantee of quality service

Unbeaten Path has been in business for almost two decades and we've never received a complaint about the quality of our Expert Prototypes. Nevertheless, if your users report they are not pleased with the quality of our application consulting, our professional services agreement promises that we'll rectify the deficit at no charge (or refund all the consulting fees if we can't solve the problem in a commercially reasonable way).

Questions ?

It would be a privilege to answer any questions about **Expert Prototyping**, classroom education, or application consulting. Click **here** to see information about classroom education and training materials for BPCS v4.x through ERP LX versions.

Here's Unbeaten Path International's contact information:

Toll free North America: (888) 874-8008
International: +(262) 681-3151
Send us an e-mail (click **here**)

Unbeaten Path®