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BOLTWISE & COMPUTER INSIGHTS: TRANSFORMING FASTENER DISTRIBUTION THROUGH INNOVATION by Dennis Cowhey

How cutting-edge AI technology and The Business Edge combine to help distributors do more, in less time, with fewer people

In an industry where speed and accuracy are crucial to success, the partnership between BoltWise and Computer Insights, Inc., is revolutionizing the way fastener distributors operate. By seamlessly integrating BoltWise's AI-powered quoting platform with The Business Edge™ ERP system, distributors are experiencing unprecedented efficiency gains that directly impact their bottom line.

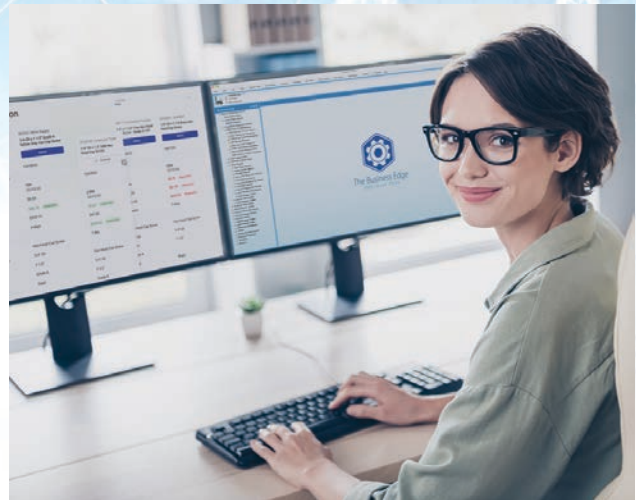
The Challenge: Speed Matters

Every fastener distributor faces the same bottleneck: manually entering large quotes and customer purchase orders slows response times and ties up valuable sales representatives. Without centralized cross-references, teams waste time on repeat searches and risk costly errors. Perhaps most frustratingly, distributors often miss business opportunities simply because they don't know where to source unfamiliar parts quickly enough.

The traditional workflow creates friction at every turn. Sales teams receive customer requests, spend hours researching and manually typing part numbers, cross-referencing specifications, and building quotes line by line. By the time they're ready to respond, competitors have already submitted their bids.

A Modern Solution Built on Solid Foundations

BoltWise addresses these pain points by sitting seamlessly alongside The Business Edge™ ERP system, never replacing it but rather amplifying its capabilities.



The integration leverages The Business Edge's™ modern RESTful APIs to create a frictionless workflow. To onboard a new distributor, BoltWise uses the entire item master from The Business Edge™—typically via an Excel file to avoid unnecessarily taxing the API. Then, every Sunday night, the system automatically pulls any new items added during the week, ensuring the catalog stays current without manual intervention. Customer lists sync in real-time, so new accounts are immediately available for quoting.

Intelligence That Learns and Adapts

What sets BoltWise apart is its sophisticated machine learning model. The platform extracts each item description from The Business Edge™ and automatically attributes it with searchable characteristics—such as material, grade, thread size, length, finish, and dozens of other specifications. This attribution happens invisibly in the background, transforming simple text descriptions into richly searchable data.

When a customer request arrives—whether via email, PDF, or Excel file—BoltWise reads it, structures the information, and immediately begins searching against the attributed catalog. The AI model matches customer part descriptions to the distributor's actual inventory, surfacing the most likely matches in seconds. Sales representatives simply verify the matches rather than hunting through catalogs or typing from scratch.

The system remembers every match. When a customer's part number gets matched to a specific item, BoltWise saves that cross-reference. The next time that a customer orders the same part, the match happens instantly.

If the system suggests an incorrect match, users can easily correct it by typing the right part number or searching the catalog. Crucially, BoltWise learns from these corrections, training the model to avoid similar mistakes in the future. This continuous learning means the platform becomes more accurate and more valuable over time.

Real-World Results: From Hours to Minutes

The impact is immediate and measurable. Distributors that previously spent hours processing 100-line quotes now complete them in minutes. Sales representatives who once spent their days typing part numbers now focus on pricing strategy and customer relationships.

Consider a typical scenario: A customer emails a purchase order with their internal part numbers and vague descriptions. Previously, a sales representative would manually research each line item, cross-reference specifications, search through The Business Edge™, and manually enter all the information. With BoltWise they forward the email or upload the PDF, verify the matched parts, and click "Send to The Business Edge™." The system creates the sales order via API, complete with customer part numbers saved directly to the product file—a best practice that distributors know they should follow but rarely have time to implement.



Nothing moves to The Business Edge™ until the user explicitly approves it. After verifying matches in BoltWise, they click "Send to The Business Edge™" which creates a sales order under their user ID. The order appears immediately in The Business Edge™, ready for pricing, inventory allocation, and processing. The reference ID is tracked in both systems, making it easy to find and manage orders.

Beyond Quoting: Discovering New Opportunities

BoltWise doesn't just match parts faster—it helps distributors find parts they've never sold before. The platform's "Find Supplier Items" feature searches across master distributor catalogs to locate parts that match customer requests. If a customer requests a product the distributor has never stocked, BoltWise can search supplier catalogs that the distributor already works with. Customers can bring their own catalogs from companies like Star Stainless and Stelfast, and BoltWise will use those catalogs to identify the correct part.

This capability addresses a critical gap: distributors frequently turn down business because they don't know which supplier carries a particular item or don't have time to research it. With BoltWise, that research happens automatically, enabling distributors to quote confidently on items they've never handled before. The discovered part numbers can then be used with The Business Edge's™ Fastener Supply Chain Network to obtain real-time pricing and availability.

Distributors can upload any supplier catalog in Excel format, making the system as comprehensive as their supplier relationships. BoltWise requests permission before sharing supplier data across customers, maintaining confidentiality while maximizing the value of collected catalog information.

The Technology Behind the Magic

The technical implementation exemplifies how modern tools should work: powerful yet unobtrusive. BoltWise uses The Business Edge™ APIs to create sales orders only after user approval, pulling customer lists in real-time while batching item updates weekly to optimize performance. The system saves customer part numbers directly to the product file in The Business Edge™ automatically building the cross-reference database that drives future efficiency.

Most BoltWise users work with two monitors—one running their email and BoltWise, the other displaying The Business Edge™. This simple setup eliminates the need for tab-switching and screen-hopping, keeping the workflow fluid. An upcoming Outlook extension will streamline this even further, allowing users to select an email and send it directly to The Business Edge™ through a sidebar, matching parts and creating orders without ever leaving their inbox.

Testimonials: Success in Action

“Working with Computer Insights’ RESTful APIs made it easy to build features, and it’s always nice working with modern tools. Mike Van Name was a joy to work with, and the continued collaboration will bring new features that help our mutual customers succeed.”

Cole Weiler, CEO at BoltWise

“Technology will continue to change, and we welcome the challenges and excitement those changes bring. AI is all around us, and we are leveraging it whenever it makes sense. Working with Cole and his team at BoltWise has been a pleasure. We are looking forward to helping our mutual clients do more, in less time, with fewer people.”

Dennis Cowhey, President at Computer Insights, Inc.

Key Capabilities: BoltWise at a Glance

- **Quoting Fasteners, Faster Than Ever** - Transform 100-line quotes from multi-hour projects into tasks completed in minutes, freeing sales teams to



The Business Edge

Simple · Focused · Effective

focus on pricing and customer relationships.

- **AI-Powered Attribution and Search** - Advanced machine learning automatically identifies fasteners from descriptions, drawings, or part numbers, instantly matching them to the correct products in your catalog.

- **Automated Quoting** - The system generates complete, structured quotes automatically, reading emails, PDFs, and Excel files to extract customer requirements and match them against your inventory.

- **Quote Management** - All quotes are organized, tracked, and easily accessible within the platform. Sales teams can instantly see quote history, cross-references, and The Business Edge reference IDs for seamless workflow management.

- **Supplier Library** - Search across master distributor catalogs to discover parts you’ve never stocked before, enabling you to quote confidently on unfamiliar items and capture business that would otherwise slip away.

A Partnership Built on Shared Values

The collaboration between BoltWise and Computer Insights represents more than technical integration—it reflects a shared commitment to advancing the fastener distribution industry through practical innovation. BoltWise has cutting-edge AI technology and a relentless focus on user experience. Computer Insights brings decades of expertise in the fastener industry and a robust, proven ERP platform that has served the industry for twenty-five years.

Both companies understand that technology succeeds only when it solves real problems for real people. The integration between BoltWise and The Business Edge™ embodies this philosophy: powerful capabilities delivered through an intuitive interface that sales teams can master in minutes, not months.

The technical foundation matters too. The Business Edge's™ RESTful APIs offer a modern, well-documented interface that facilitates straightforward integration. When implementation questions arise, responsive support ensures quick resolution. This combination of solid architecture and attentive service creates an environment where innovative third-party solutions can thrive, expanding the capabilities of The Business Edge without forcing changes to core workflows.

Looking Forward: Innovation That Scales

The relationship between BoltWise and Computer Insights continues to evolve. Potential enhancements under discussion include direct hyperlinks that would open new orders inside The Business Edge™ with a single click, eliminating even the minimal friction of copying a reference ID. The upcoming Outlook extension will further streamline workflows by bringing quoting capabilities directly into the email environment where sales teams already spend their time.

These innovations share a common thread: they reduce the steps between customer inquiry and completed quote, compressing timelines and improving accuracy at every stage. In an industry where being first to respond often means winning the business, these incremental improvements compound into significant competitive advantages.


The partnership also demonstrates how distributors can effectively leverage modern technology without compromising the systems that run their businesses. The Business Edge™ remains the operational foundation, handling inventory, accounting, shipping, and all the complex processes that keep a distribution business running. BoltWise plugs into this foundation, adding AI-powered capabilities.

The Bottom Line: Growth Through Efficiency

Distributors partner with BoltWise and Computer Insights for a simple reason: they want to grow their businesses without incurring proportionate increases in overhead. Companies targeting aggressive revenue growth—say, from \$10 million to \$20 million—need step-change improvements in efficiency. They can't simply hire twice as many people and expect linear results.

Technology provides that step change. By automating the time-consuming, repetitive tasks that consume sales representatives' days, distributors free their teams to focus on activities that directly drive revenue, such as developing pricing strategies, cultivating customer relationships, and pursuing new opportunities.

The integration between BoltWise and The Business Edge™ delivers these benefits without requiring distributors to replace their core systems or retrain their entire workforce. Sales representatives who understand fasteners and know their customers can immediately leverage AI-powered matching without needing to become data scientists. Operations teams maintain their familiar Business Edge™ workflows while receiving higher-quality data entered faster and more accurately.

This combination of continuity and innovation represents the future of fastener distribution: businesses that honor the industry's traditional commitment to expertise and service while embracing the tools that make that expertise and service more valuable than ever. 

More Information



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