



## Macro Scheduler User Podcast Interview: Bob Hansen from Sensible Solutions

### Interview by Tracy Fitzpatrick

**FITZPATRICK:** Hi. My name is Tracy Fitzpatrick, and I'm interviewing Macro Scheduling users about their experience with the software. With me now is Macro Scheduler user Bob Hansen from Sensible Solutions Inc. Hi Bob, thank you for joining me.

**HANSEN:** Oh, I'm having a good time Tracy. Thanks for calling.

**FITZPATRICK:** Great. So, Bob, you have essentially created an entire business - a successful business, on business automation and making products work together that weren't designed to share information with one another. And I think you have so much to share with the Macro Scheduler community because you've been doing this for more than twenty years! I know not necessarily using Macro Scheduler for that long, but you've been around for quite awhile, and your business goes across so many different verticals. And so I think you have quite a bit to share. So with that in mind, I know you've developed countless solutions with the Macro Scheduler, including one many companies are faced with, which is making sure data is backed up. Can you tell our listeners about that, Bob?

**HANSEN:** Sure Tracy. One of the things I saw with many of my clients is that they are very good about backing up the server, but local machines don't get backed up. In addition to that they are usually changing DVDs or changing tapes, and they rely on someone to do that, and when that person is out, the system falls down. So coming up with a solution, I've put on many of my client's sites a dedicated system for doing back ups. So it has five hard drives in it labeled Monday through Friday and we use Macro Scheduler to go through all the work stations on the network and back up to this dedicated back up server. Each of the users can update a text file on their computer every day to identify which folders or files they want backed up. And at night, Macro Scheduler, based on its own scheduling routine, will start the routine. It will go through each of the computers on the network one at a time. It looks for a particular file on that computer, determines the names of the folders that are going to get backed up. It then determines what day of the week it is, and it copies the files from that local work station onto the drive for Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, whatever day of the week it may happen to be. And this happens at night, off hours. It runs seven days of the week. It does not



require any human intervention to get involved in the middle of it. And we also have part of the Macro Scheduler routine will send off an email. So if we run into any errors during the back up process - if one of the machines was not online, or something of that nature, then an email will be sent to the office administrator to let them know that there was a problem with the back up last night. So it works very good. Customers have been very happy with it. And Macro Scheduler just simplifies the whole routine, eliminating any extra steps. You don't have to worry about people forgetting to do something.

**FITZPATRICK:** Well, you know, the one thing, obviously, that's beneficial here, is important data. And a lot of people have those important working copies on their desktop and so they think, once this is final, I'll upload it to the appropriate server so that it won't be lost, but you know, it's still really valuable, when it's, you know, in work. And another thing that you had mentioned that I hadn't really thought about so much... you mentioned before when we had spoken, was that people sometimes don't realize how important those bookmarks and things like that, that they have been saving are, until they are gone. And this is one way to eliminate that, correct?

**HANSEN:** That's right. There are a lot of things that are kept on the local machine that people don't think about. The "my documents" folder, have a lot of information in it, that people don't realize it's there until the data is gone.

**FITZPATRICK:** Right. Well you also told me about another situation I found really impressive, where you were able to help a major medical university save a tremendous amount of time. Could you tell our listeners about that one?

**HANSEN:** Sure. This is a situation where the admissions office receives applications from a central clearing house and this is a process that was taking a full week with three girls in the office to make a modem connection and download some files. And then they would have to print out the files, highlight certain fields, copy the information onto another form, and then the screen would do some data entry into a program on their computer. Then they would have to go through and re-manipulate that data and go through and they were reading reports on-line and trying to set up schedules. It was a very time consuming process and a lot of errors were introduced into it. So they contacted me. Rather than getting new software, which was their initial solution, they decided they could stay with the software that they had and not have any additional expense. But we would use Macro Scheduler to automate the operations that they were doing. So the end result was that Macro



Scheduler would start up on Sunday night, it would make a modem connection with an ftp connection, it would download files onto a workstation. Macro Scheduler would then close the ftp connection, it would open up a text editor program, it would manipulate the data so that it would now be in a format that could be imported into their database program directly so they did not have to do any data entry. The text editor would be closed. The database program would be opened by Macro Scheduler, the modified information would be imported into the database program, the routines in the database would then go through and run calculations, and we would end up with some records that could be identified for candidates that were accepted, candidates that were rejected or records that were incomplete or missing some information. So at the end of that routine, the Macro Scheduler would create these reports, send them off to some printers, so one printer would be set up with letters and envelopes, and another printer would be set up with reports. So Monday morning when the staff came in, their letters were all set to be mailed out, they just needed to be stuffed into the envelopes. Reports were generated so they could set up the schedules with the different professors on the campus. And it freed the girls up to do more productive work during the course of the week.

**FITZPATRICK:** So you said this was taking three people for almost an entire week and now this is something that can be set up to run, you know, on a Sunday night? Or the night before?

**HANSEN:** It's about three hours to run. It runs every week. And the girls are much more happy in the office. They now have, one of the reports is an exception report with incomplete records. And on that report, it's not just the name of the candidate, but the contact information is also there, so, the phone number is there. They can call or send an email to follow up on the missing information and key it directly into their database.

**FITZPATRICK:** Wow. So they are able to probably process things a lot quicker. And contact those people like you said, that maybe filled out something wrong or didn't fill something out... so they can move things...

**HANSEN:** With the other process they were getting papers out of order, they'd fall behind the desk and get misplaced, and it was real critical for people trying to get into a University and have their records were lost.

**FITZPATRICK:** Yeah, that's not good. It's not good. It's human, I understand, but that's not good. I also know, Bob that you work with the ever-popular



Quickbooks product and you've probably developed countless solutions for the many problems people face with Quickbooks. It's a great tool, but I know that it could always do more, right? So maybe you could tell us one of your biggest success stories there.

**HANSEN:** Well, one thing that comes to mind. It wasn't very complex. But there's a limitation with Quickbooks that many people don't know about - that it's limited to 15,000 customers. And I had an account call me and say they ran out of customers and they were going to have to get a new product, and the new version of Quickbooks that they needed was going to cost them \$3,500... was there something we could do? And we found that they had not been reducing their file size each year. They had many years of records within their Quickbooks file. So if we could eliminate prior years of records, and we could have the file much smaller, they wouldn't have to buy the \$3,500 package and they could stay with the one they have. But in order to do that there were thousands of transactions that had to be cleared before we could delete the records. They started doing it manually, and said, "There's not going to be any end to this. We can't finish this." So we looked at it, and said, "Oh, the perfect answer to this is Macro Scheduler." And it probably took 20 minutes to put together a short routine. Then we opened up Quickbooks and we start the Macro Scheduler routine and it tabs over the five fields, it presses the space bar, puts a checkmark in the record. It then does the same thing, enter control/enter to save the record. And then it starts over on the next line. It tabs over six fields, it presses the space bar, and hits control/enter, tabs over six spaces, and so on and so on. And we were able to run this over the weekend. It took about 15 hours to run, and they were pretty sure that if they could have taught someone to do it, it probably would have taken two or three weeks to get the job done.

**FITZPATRICK:** Right.

**HANSEN:** So it was just a real simple, tedious thing, but since Quickbooks does not have any type of macro routine in it at all, it sure enabled us to simplify a process that would have taken a long time for them.

**FITZPATRICK:** I'll say. I would not have wanted to have been the person who had to spend those two to three man-weeks trying to reduce the size of those. Well, Bob, thank you so much for your time and like I said earlier, you've been doing this for a long time, and you've developed so many solutions that people will probably find extremely helpful to them and people can visit you at



[www.sensiblesolutions.org](http://www.sensiblesolutions.org). And I know you are also very active on the Macro Scheduler forum site. So thank you for your help with that.

**HANSEN:** I'm sure I mentioned to you, I just couldn't work without Macro Scheduler. For me it's the glue that allows me to automate all the other office applications together. I couldn't support my clients without it. I'm just so happy I found it when I did.

**FITZPATRICK:** Well, that's wonderful.

**HANSEN:** I've been using it for about ten years, I guess.

**FITZPATRICK:** Wow, wow. That's a long time, and I'm glad to hear it. Thank you so much. Now for our audience, if you found this Macro Scheduler user story useful, you may like to listen to our other user podcasts by visiting our website at [www.mjtnet.com](http://www.mjtnet.com). Or if you have a story of your own to share, we'd love to hear from you. Send us an email to [sharemystory@mjtnet.com](mailto:sharemystory@mjtnet.com).