



Excelling in  
Practical  
Inventory and  
Cataloguing  
Applications

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## 1. The Requirement

The key to effective supply management depends largely on the quality of the data available including item information data. Specifically the latter must be able to support operational requirements, integrate with the functionality of the materials management system it resides on and enable users to readily identify, select and obtain the required items.

An organisation may aim to protect its future with the latest technologies in both hardware and software, but poor quality data will seriously impede the expected productivity gains.

**75% of businesses experience significant problems due to faulty or poor data. (PWC)**

The principals of Epica Solutions (Epica) have extensive experience in configuring data to all major cataloguing or content standards in common use today. In many instances they have found that organisations are often:

- \* Restricted by the rigidity of the standards selected and applied;
- \* Forced into a high cost of implementation
- \* Restricted by a lack of scope in the standard not initially obvious;
- \* Provided with data standards that hamper the functionality of the host system; and
- \* Imposed with excessive ongoing support changes by the managing body.

## 2. The Solution

Recognising these issues, Epica is focused on the needs of industry and seeks to provide the most cost efficient supply cataloguing data methodology available whilst providing maximum flexibility for organisations regardless of size, planning to move to an e-commerce environment in the medium to the longer term. The other overriding principle is that it should provide all the benefits of a disciplined catalogue method including savings up to 10% of the annual inventory costs through the elimination of duplications and obsolete items and the possible identification of equally reliable but cheaper components and equipment.

Consequently Epica Solutions has developed its own catalogue and data standards, drawing on the strengths of the standards in common use today, whilst removing much of their complexity. The underlying philosophy being that Epica's Standards shall be sufficiently broad to enable them to interface with all key standards without loss of integrity or the introduction of ambiguity or vagueness, whilst facilitating an organisation's ongoing operations.

## 3. The Standards

Epica has examined in depth the various published standards as well as the myriad of classification systems used for commodity grouping, spend aggregation, etc. In line with its philosophy of a "back to basics approach" Epica's Standards exhibit simplicity, future scope, cost effectiveness and low cost maintenance. In fact one client dubbed it a "Revolution in Cataloguing". Any catalogue standard, regardless of its complexity or simplicity, still requires the instilling of disciplines to enable the data to be readily rendered to organisational requirements. Epica Standards incorporate the following:

### 3.1 Standard Names

These are recognised as the Epica Name Class (eNC), a simple two tier naming structure as demonstrated below.

Level 1: Noun (or Noun Phrase)

A noun or noun phrase is used as the first word or word group in an Epica Name Class (eNC).

Level 2: Qualifier

The qualifier constitutes the primary attribute used to differentiate Nouns or Noun Phrases when more than one item concept applies:

Examples:	Name Class	Qualifier
	BEARING	
	BEARING	BALL
	BEARING	ROLLER

## 3.2 Epica Item Attributes & Attribute Groups

Epica has developed many attribute sets defined by the individual item attributes of form, function or fit relevant to a Name Class. The collection of item attributes or characteristics specific to an Epica Name eClass is referred to as an Epica Attribute Set or EAS. A unique item of supply is then defined by the assignment of properties against the eAS.

An eAS will only comprise the essential physical and performance attributes inherent in an eNC; no more, no less.

The role of the eAS is fourfold. It is to:

- Ensure that like items are addressed in a uniform manner;
- Identify omissions of key descriptive information;
- Enable automation of the description build and audit processes; and
- Enable generation of output to a clients specification by reordering the sequence in which the attributes are displayed.

To enable the inclusion of additional qualifier or high level item classification, Epica has adopted the approach that the primary attribute in every eAS is designated as the Design Type. The Design Type defines the principle item groups that exist with an eNC as displayed below with end result being fewer attribute set to maintain.

Name Class	Design Type
BEARING,BALL	DEEP GROOVE ANGULAR CONTACT MINIATURE MAXIMUM CAPACITY THRUST
BEARING,ROLLER	CYLINDRICAL TAPERED NEEDLE THRUST

## 4. Advantages in using Epica Standards

The advantages may be summarised as follows:

- Less costly to apply than most other standards;
- Provide flexibility in their application;
- Readily configurable to suit any ERP/EAM system;
- Lower ongoing maintenance costs, fewer attribute sets;
- Less reliance on highly trained catalogue maintenance personnel;
- Can be readily integrated with all major classification systems in use, e.g. UNSPSC, eCI@ss, NATO; and
- Designed for the needs of Australian industry.