A great deal of the set up for establishing a company in ALERE is done in the Manager Module, along with functionality that is shared by the other modules.

One Company – One Entry

One of the primary features is how ALERE handles customers, suppliers and other companies. Instead of treating them as separate they are simply all seen as companies with attributes. The attributes define what relationship the company and their locations have with your company. For example, do you ship to them? Do you send them invoices? Do they also sell to you and send you invoices?

The list of companies is both entered and displayed using what we call "Treevision". Treevision works like Windows Explorer. Just click to open and close different levels. You can enter companies right on the screen.
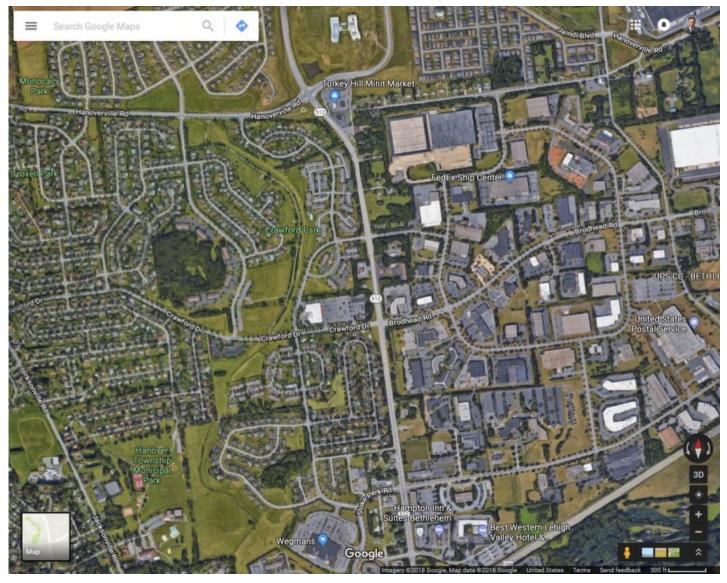
This approach to handling companies closes a hole that is present in most accounting packages. The information for a company only needs to be entered once instead of multiple times depending on your relationship: customer, supplier, banking, etc.

This "enter once" capability allows credit memos to be directly turned into payables, invoices to be offset by payables within the same company, and common practices like sending a refund check to become easier, and it will cost your company much less time and money.

Google Maps

Companies are tied to Google Maps so that driving directions are available along with satellite views of company locations! This is an excellent way to verify that a company has a storefront location.

You can use the locations function to find a list of all companies in an area. Another use is to rank geographic areas by the revenue they generate.

One Central Location for Codes

The Manager module contains one central file for the creation and maintenance of system-wide codes. Whether you need a code for a unit of measure, customer payment term, price group, product class, etc., there is only one place you have to go.

Bank Transactions & Reconciliation

ALERE takes what are usually difficult bank transactions and not only makes them easier but delivers that extra step. For example, when handling a returned customer check, you can automatically recreate the customer invoice just as if the payment had never been made. Have to void a check? The payable can be reopened as if the payment had never been sent. Everyday activities like deposits, withdrawals, posting interest, and recording bank fees are a breeze.

Bank and credit card account reconciliations are accomplished using helpful screens to guide you through the process.

Order Approvals

Order Approval Rules are designed to provide a structured approach to the approval process. User-defined rules can be tailored for each type of Sales and Purchases Order to meet the level of control you wish to achieve.

Threshold levels can be assigned which trigger the approval process. Each rule will accommodate up to four individual groups, each consisting of one-to-four people, any one of whom is authorized to "sign-off" on an order. The "approval groups" can be required to have a sequenced approach to approval or any one member from each group can approve concurrently.

Orders can be created and held in a "Pending" status. When an order is accepted it is tested to see if it exceeds a threshold. If it does, then its status is changed to "Submitted" and the approval process is triggered. An automatic notification system is employed to push the approvals through to completion.

Approvals are given by "accepting" the order. Orders awaiting approval can be individually or mass accepted from a list.
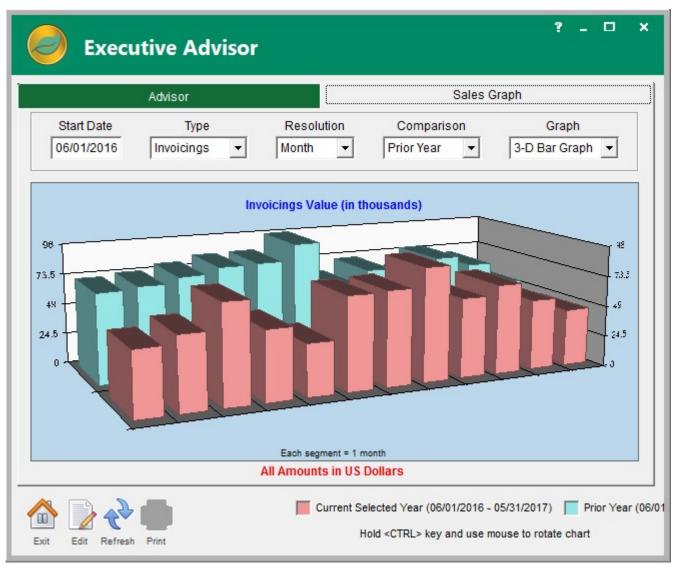

Email, Notifications & Alerts

Email can be internally created and sent by ALERE. At key points in the sales and purchasing processes emails can be auto-generated and a PDF of the accompanying document attached and sent. To control what is sent and to whom, groups of rules are user-defined and assigned. For example, one group could be designed to send notifications when a sales order is accepted, or shipped, or invoiced. Designated people could be alerted when a purchase order is received, revised or voided.

Besides sending the associated document, its type can be identified along with its ID and revision number (if applicable) and date, in both the subject and body of the email.

In many cases email may be optionally reviewed and edited before being released. This allows additional recipients to be added and additional documents to be attached.

Executive Advisor

The Manager Module provides an executive overview of the performance of your company. Because of the real-time nature of ALERE, key financial indicators, such as your accounts receivable balance, accounts payable balance, incoming orders, shipments, invoices, and even expenses, profits and cash balances, are readily available and displayed on one screen. In each case you can drill down to the supporting reports.

Sales and invoices are graphically displayed in a variety of ways, including comparisons to the previous year.

The ability to see up to the minute invoices, expenses and profit has proven to be very popular with management over the years.

Payment Terms & Sales Taxes

It is amazing in today's world how convoluted even payment terms and sales taxes can become.

You can define rules that handle even the most complex payment terms, such as "prox" terms, where orders placed by a certain date are due on a specific day of the next month, or Christmas dating terms with percentages due for a certain number of months, or even terms for paying rent.

Individual sales tax rates for state, county, city, and local are defined and then combined into rule sets for different locations. GL account numbers can be assigned to each tax rate. Temporary taxes using active and inactive dates are supported. The value added tax (VAT), or goods and services tax (GST) is a consumption tax levied on value added. Those taxes are also accounted for in ALERE.

Multiple Companies & Login Security

ALERE can handle 99 companies. The data for each company is stored in a single folder. This makes it simple to move a company to a different location or copy it. Why would you copy it? Copying makes it simple to back up data. Training people is much easier when you are working with real-life data from a copied company. Another reason is that each company can have separate folders where modifications are kept which apply to select companies. This approach allows you to copy a company and test new modifications before applying them to your live company.

For a mission critical application like ALERE, security has to be an important consideration. Extensive password security protection is available at the user level, the company level, and, in very sensitive areas, at the function level. You have control over the password size, length of time it is valid before the user must change it, whether or not the same password can be used again and, if so, when. For each function in ALERE that is password protected you can set the user to have unlimited access, password access, read only access, or no access at all.

Security templates can be constructed and assigned to users where the settings can be further modified.

Document Management

Document management is a system to digitally store, manage, and track documents. It is built into the backbone of ALERE through Hyperlinks.

Document management is done by placing file hyperlinks in the memo fields of ALERE documents and connecting them with the supporting paperwork that has been scanned or digitally stored. The hyperlink is simply added by right-clicking in the memo or note field to display a menu and selecting the "Insert File Hyperlink" menu option. Once the hyperlink is in place, the paperwork is made easily available by searching for the particular document. There is no requirement for entering key words or indexes.

The uses are endless. Finding an invoice from a supplier, saving a purchase order from a customer, adding pictures to an inventory item, supplying MSDS sheets for shipping, associating a photo with person, including a drawing with an order, providing documentation for a general ledger journal entry, storing a complimentary letter from a client, keeping pictures documenting damage to a shipment … the list goes on and on.

Company Templates

The process of creating a new company involves entering a fair amount of default values. These "values" take the form of details such as payment terms, credit limits, tax districts, company status, etc. To help reduce these tedious entries, templates can be created and then applied during the creation of new companies, new locations, and when converting a prospective company into an active company.

Modifiable Software & New Releases

Another key aspect of ALERE is its ability to be modified. Light modifications can be done right in the program to reports, screens and labels. More extensive modifications can be done by adding the Developers Source Kit (DSK).

A Data Dictionary is built into the Manager Module to provide information on tables, fields and indexes. The architecture of ALERE has been developed in a manner that, when the recommended modification strategy is followed, allows changes to be made very quickly. Furthermore, those changes can be brought forward into new releases with little or no effort.

Extensive reporting and sophisticated browsers with drill down are included throughout the ALERE software.

Labeling

Everyone likes to print labels and the Label Generation function makes it easy. Choose from prospect, customer, supplier, or item labels and check which specific ones to print. The labels default to a 2" x 4" size. That makes them compatible with Avery 5163/8163, Staples 479877, or any of the many other equivalent label makers. Label printers may also be used, such as those from DYMO, Seiko or Zebra.

The labels can be modified to your exact requirements since there is such a wide variation of how companies would like to format them.