

# Technology Audit

## Business Intelligence

### QAS

## QuickAddress Batch with Suppression

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### Abstract

*QuickAddress Batch with Suppression is a data-quality application that compares name and address records against a multitude of industry standard reference files. It subsequently cleans them, appends additional profiling information, and flags suppressed records according to the user's requirements. In this way the software removes out-of-date records helping organisations to maintain accurate and quality name and address information, thus reducing costs of marketing, sales, and service delivery. The standard reference files used by QuickAddress Batch with Suppression include Royal Mail's Postal Address File (PAF), Experian's National Canvase (for Names data), and a number of suppression files covering changes of address, 'gone-aways', deceased, and 'do not contact' information. Updates to these datasets are available via a CD or for automatic download, and install via an Internet connection. The product is a stand-alone solution without Application Programming Interfaces, but it does provide Open DataBase Connectivity (ODBC) drivers that connect into the user's database for automation, so that users do not have to manually export and re-import data.*

*Butler Group believes that without suppression, companies risk unnecessary sales and marketing costs, resource wastage and failure to comply with data protection, mailing, fax and, telephone preferences services. As such, companies should evaluate the cost of suppression against that of wasted direct marketing and failure to comply with regulations. Other financial benefits to be gained include better targeting of potential customers and, removing the hidden cost of brand damage that can so easily come about as a result of inappropriate direct mail. Furthermore, a major contributor to Return On Investment (ROI) on the QAS' solution is the elimination of overhead costs that customers would incur otherwise, when liaising direct with reference data suppliers.*

### KEY FINDINGS

Key: ✓ Product Strength ✗ Product Weakness ⓘ Point of Information

✓	The product provides easy access to a comprehensive set of reference data, taking away the need for customers to liaise directly with reference data suppliers.	✓	ODBC drivers connect into the user's chosen database.
✓	The reference data can be updated from CDs or on-line without any system disruptions.	✗	Integration with other software is not possible due to data provider restrictions.
✓	The user interface is simple and clear.	✓	ODBC drivers connect into the user's chosen database.

### LOOK AHEAD

QuickAddress Batch with Suppression is a new product that was only released in Q2 of 2006. However, QAS is not resting on its laurels and intends to further extend the range of suppression data sets that it offers. These will potentially include Business-to-Business (B2B) and international data sets. Furthermore, QAS is in talks with the REaD Group to potentially include their data sets in the product. Other plans include functionality for de-duplication of data, and service delivery using the Application Service Provider (ASP) model.

## ► MARKET ANALYSIS

Good data quality and integrity are essential parts of every successful business, and no more so than in the area of customer information. Small mistakes in communications with existing or potential customers can instantly harm brand reputation, and jeopardise the results of many years of good customer service. Despite the importance of data quality and integrity, Butler Group believes that most businesses have failed and will continue to do so, because they neglect to take seriously the management and control of these issues. The use of suppression technology is being introduced as a further element in the constant battle to improve data quality. To define it more clearly, suppression involves gaining control over changes that take place in corporate data and, that are not immediately apparent internally. Examples include: changes of address that are not notified to the organisation; and the death of a valued client. The process of suppression enforces efficiency by ensuring that only appropriate information is sent to an organisation's clients', for example, avoiding mail-shots being sent to the wrong address, perhaps chasing deceased clients for small outstanding debts or offering to sell them new products. However, the real value to business is in cost savings that can occur as a result of maintaining up-to-date customer information. For example, running a set of suppression procedures against the corporate customer database prior to the launch of a new brochure can result in suppression of thousands of out-of-date records, saving resources and costs for those records, providing an instant business saving. The need for suppression is highlighted by figures from Royal Mail that show that 18,000 people move house everyday in the UK.

Another aspect to address data cleansing and suppression is the need for companies to comply with mail, fax, and telephone preferences regulations, which require companies to exclude people registered with these services from direct mail campaigns. According to the Direct Marketing Association, everyday an average of 1,800 people register with the Mailing Preferences Service (MPS) and 18,000 people register with the Telephone Preferences Service (TPS).

There is also a crime element that is linked to information sent to the wrong address which can be used by fraudsters for identity theft purposes, posing as individuals who have moved or passed away. This does not just affect the individuals concerned but can lead to unpaid debts and financial losses incurred by the companies that are subjected to such fraudulent transactions.

To answer these business needs, QAS, an Experian® company, enhanced its range of data accuracy software when it launched QuickAddress Batch with Suppression in May 2006. The software provides users with access to a host of leading suppression and data cleansing files direct from their desktop PC. Data within QuickAddress Batch with Suppression is screened against leading suppression reference files, which include: Experian's Absolute Movers, Royal Mail's National Change of Address file, the Mortasceen database, and the Telephone, Fax, and Mailing Preference services. QAS also offers desktop access to the Royal Mail's National Change of Address file, which is otherwise only available via bureau. The solution removes the need for users to negotiate with each data supplier individually. Files are updated electronically over the Internet direct to the user's desktop providing accurate and up-to-date suppression data whilst avoiding downtime.

## ► FUNCTIONALITY

QuickAddress Batch with Suppression manages the quality and accuracy of name and address records by comparing the data against industry-standard reference files. The records are subsequently cleaned, flagged, suppressed, enhanced, and categorised depending on the user's requirements. Updates to the reference data are available via CD or for automatic download and install via an internet connection.

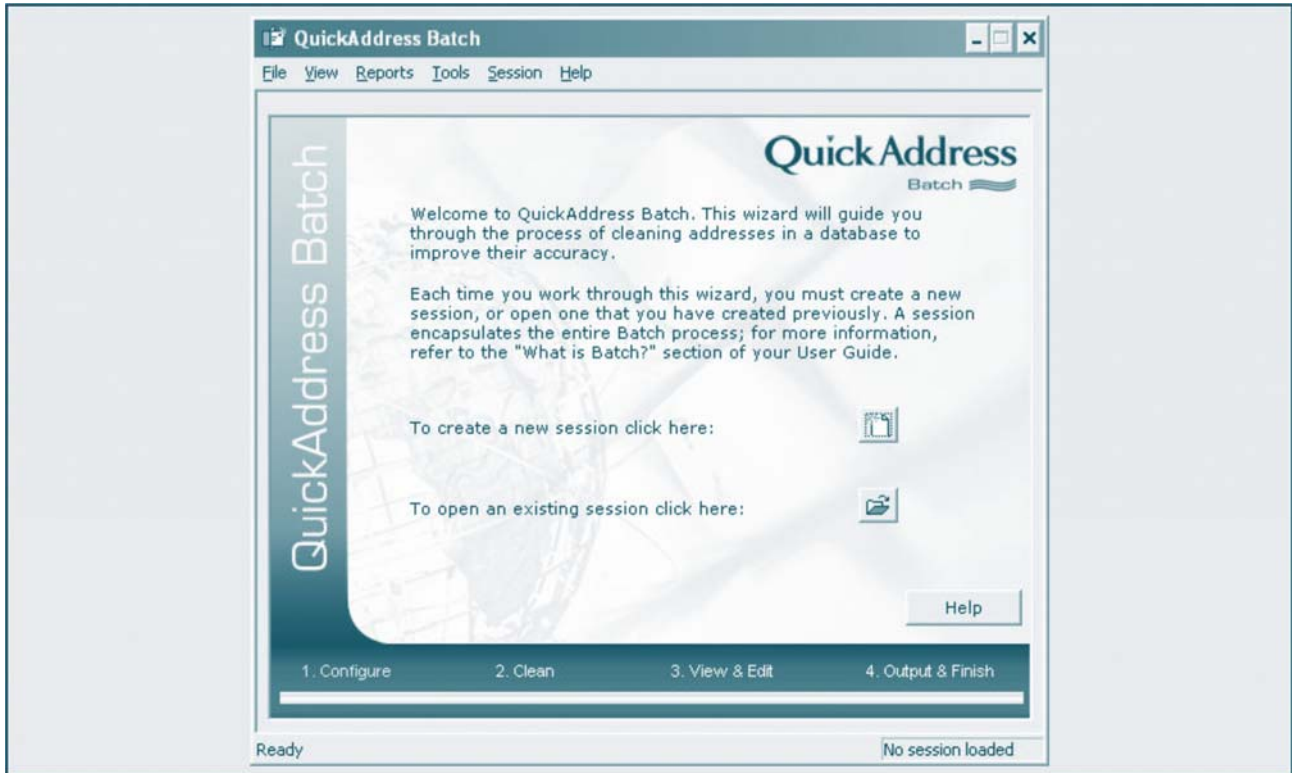


Figure 1: The Product's Main Screen

The process for suppression gives users control by allowing them to view the number of suppressed records, and to make changes to the configuration in order to optimise the process for best results. In this way the users can see the number of changes that would be made to their data, before committing the results back to the database. The user can choose to either suppress records in their database on a one-off (temporary) or permanent basis, depending on the purpose of the suppression.

Using ODBC, the application can read/commit records directly to or from a database without the need to export and re-import that data.

Butler Group believes that a strong feature of this solution is the functionality that allows other data such as grid references, geo-demographic profiles, and local government information to be added to the user's records.

Match Result	Field1	Field2	Field3	Field4	Field5	Field6	Field7
Partial Match P5132000028:GBR	Mrs J Bolton	Mole End Clifton-on-Teme	Clifton-on-Teme	WORCESTER	WR6 6EH Worcester		WR6 6EH
Tentative Match R51302002020:GBR	Mrs J Bussman	135C 135 Saltram Crescent	Saltram Crescent	London	W9 3JT London		W9 3JT
Partial Match P9130000024:GBR	Mrs J Chambers	Braemar Homestead Road	Homestead Road Thringstone	Thringstone Coal...	LEICESTER Coalville	LE67 8LL Leicestershire	LE67 8LL
Partial Match P51311000024:GBR	Mrs J Green	Whiteley Bank Main Road	1 Main Road Whiteley Bank	Ventnor	Isle Of Wight Ventnor	PO38 3AH Isle of Wight	PO38 3AH
Partial Match P9130000024:GBR	Mrs J Guest	Hopes Cottage Simpsons Lane	BROSELEY Broseley Wood	Shrosphire	TF12 5RF Broseley	Shropshire	TF12 5RF
Tentative Match R51310002020:GBR	Mrs J Hallett	Fulham High Street Flat 49 Parkview Court	49 Parkview Court 38 Fulham High Street	London	SW6 3LL London		SW6 3LL
Good Premise Partial P91300001022:GBR	Mrs J Laidler	2 Lombard Street 2 Lombard Street	STOURPORT ON SEVE	Worcs	DY13 8DT Stourport-on-Severn	Worcester...	DY13 8DT
Tentative Match R5131000020:GBR	Mrs J Mathewson	Bridge Of Don 7 Forvie Lane	7 Forvie Lane Bridge of Don	Aberdeen	Aberdeenshire Aberdeen	AB22 8TF	AB22 8TF
Tentative Match R5131000020:GBR	Mrs J Mcmillan	Port Seton 14 Johnston Terrace	Port Seton	Prestonpans	East Lothian Prestonpans	EH32 0BB East Lothian	EH32 0BB
Partial Match P9130000024:GBR	Mrs J Monk	Fairview Howard Road Howard Road	Broadwell Broadwell	COLEFORD	Glocs Coleford	GL16 7BT Gloucester...	GL16 7BT

Figure 2: The Batch Viewer

The viewer allows the user to see the changes that Batch with Suppression has made to their data, before committing this back to the database. It also allows interactive manipulation of individual results.

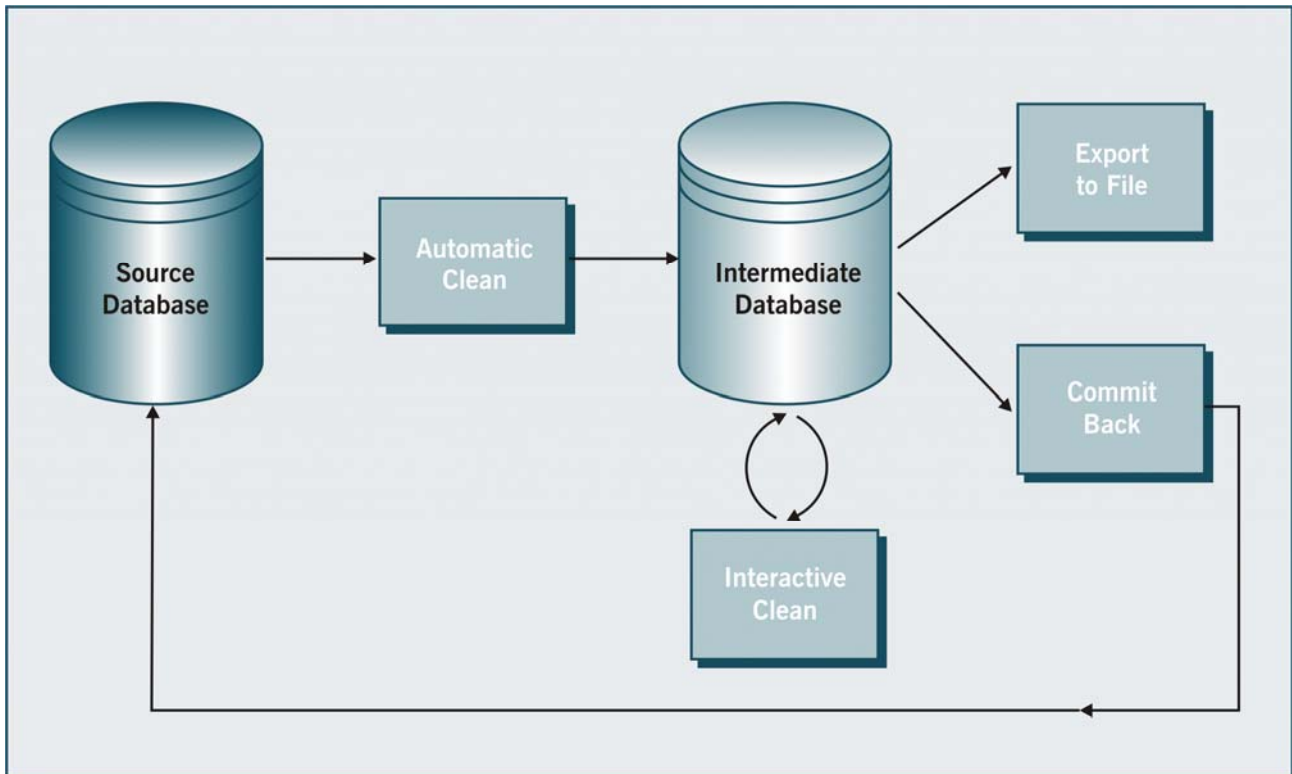


Figure 3: Overview of the Product's Architecture

The product's architecture comprises the following:

**Automatic Clean** refers to the automated processing of a source database, with a match code assigned to each record processed to indicate the level of address cleaning carried out, and Batch's confidence in the matches found.

**The Intermediate Database** is where copies of the original input fields, reference fields, and cleaned/enhanced (output) fields are temporarily stored. It is updated during Automatic and Interactive cleaning operations. This has a storage capacity of 100Gb, and can provide a theoretical limit of at least 100 million records per source database. Writing data back to a user's database is a one-way process; it cannot be undone or rolled back. As Batch frequently deals with customer and contact databases of immense value to the user, integrity and security are very important. The intermediate Database plays an important part in securing the data. Its utilisation, as opposed to updating records on-the-fly, provides a means of fault tolerance to protect the data.

**Interactive Clean** offers the user functionality to manually seek a match using the name and address elements of records when the Automatic Clean process was unable to find any matches of sufficient quality. The user can mark processed records as accepted or rejected, or assign them a particular custom Match Type for processing later. The Interactive Clean module supports up to ten concurrent users, who can manually clean a given database at the same time. It manages usage to ensure that no two users can edit the same record at the same time, nor edit records that other users are working on or have cleaned.

**Export** refers to the process of exporting all or some of the cleaned data to a new file such as a one-off mailing list.

**Commit** refers to the process of permanently committing cleaned/enhanced data back to the original database.

The product enters a suspended state if there is a system crash. An automatic cleaning run can subsequently be resumed at the last record read, which is dependent on whether the source database has a unique record identifier.

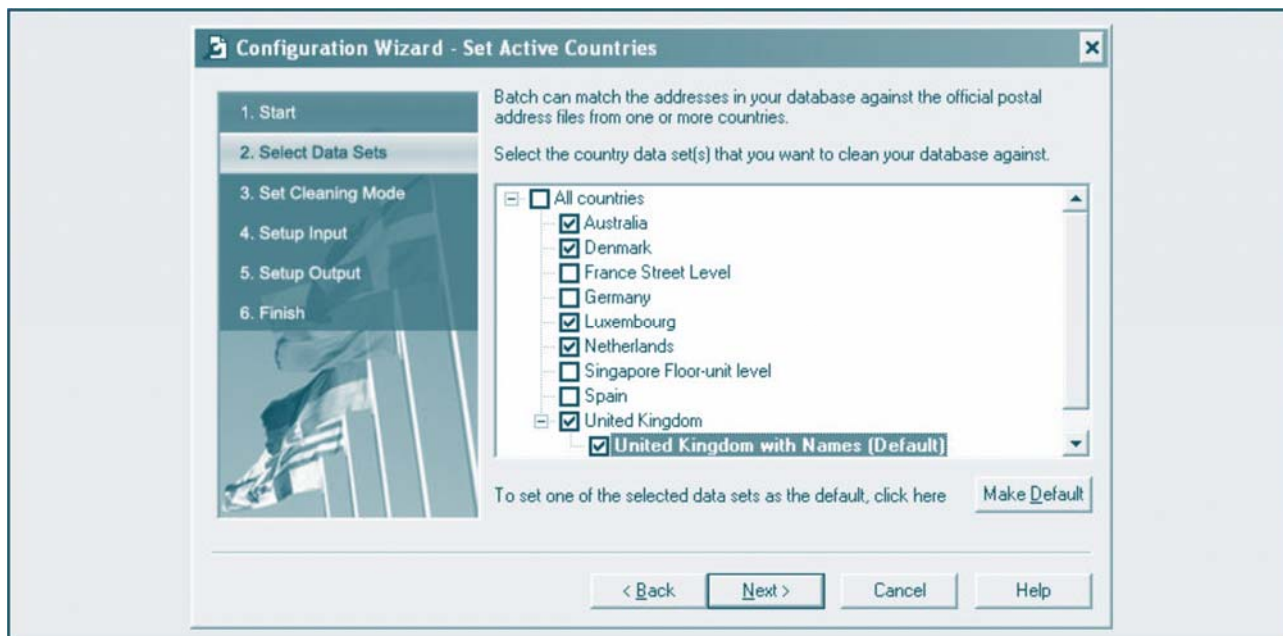


Figure 4: A Screenshot of the Configuration Wizard

## ► DEPLOYMENT

QuickAddress Batch with Suppression is easy to install and comes with comprehensive documentation. In addition, QAS offers technical support, training, and professional services to assist with user implementations.

The product is a standalone solution that can be fully installed and configured within one hour. The minimum configuration requires Windows 2000/Windows Server 2003/Windows XP, Intel Pentium 4 processor or equivalent, and at least 512Mb RAM. Butler Group believes that the ease-of-installation is a positive feature of this product, given that it provides the user with a comprehensive set of reference data, some of which would only otherwise be available through bureau services.

In terms of disk space, the application itself requires 55Mb and up to 1.8 Gb for the data, as well as space to process the data. This is estimated to be the same size as the database that is being cleaned. Butler Group believes that the size of disk space required for the data and processing can therefore be substantial and users should take this into account when planning and preparing for deployment. An Internet connection would allow updates and transactions to take place on-line.

Using ODBC, the application can read or commit records directly to or from a database without the need to export and re-import that data. QuickAddress Batch with Suppression also offers automatic data updates, which allow updates to the suppression data sets to be automatically downloaded via the Internet, without any intervention from the customer. Those organisations not taking advantage of this automatic download utility would require an end-user resource to install CD-based reference dataset updates, on either a monthly or quarterly basis, as determined by the user's requirements.

QAS' configuration wizard is designed to minimise training requirements. The manuals that are shipped with the product and, QAS' technical support are other resources that are available to the user. In addition, QAS runs one-day training sessions either as part of a public or a company specific course. In Butler Group's opinion, the clear user interface and the wizard-based configuration make this product very easy to set up and use.

Technical Support is available during office hours either via telephone, e-mail, or online at [www.qas.com/support](http://www.qas.com/support). Professional Services are also available to provide advice and perform services at the client's location.

One weakness in the product is that it cannot be integrated with other software owing to restrictions from data suppliers. This means that there are no Application Programming Interfaces (APIs) except the connectivity that is offered via ODBC drivers, which are provided with the software to communicate directly with the user's databases.

The upgrade path for current users is a simple one, with no need to change business procedures in order to use or support this product. As for those who use bureau services, their business processes become simpler with the elimination of such steps as having to send data outside of their organisations and to export/re-import data into their databases.

An annual licence fee is applicable to use the product. This is then reduced for the second and subsequent years. There is also a transaction based fee for each suppressed record. This follows the model used by QAS' data suppliers. Estimates of overall costs are dependent on the data sets, subsequent transactions, the size of and the data quality of the customer's database, and the frequency with which they carry out the suppression.

Standard parts of QuickAddress Batch are the software application and the postal address reference data that it uses to clean addresses. Optional parts include additional country address datasets, additional data to clean against (e.g. consumer or business names data), the suppression datasets, and additional data that can be appended to the database as part of the cleaning process (e.g. grid references, geo-demographic segmentation classes etc.). The price includes one user of Batch Interactive which allows the user to carry out manual cleaning of data that could not be automatically cleaned.

The cost of annual maintenance varies depending on the datasets involved but the renewal cost of product licences is generally 40% of the first year licence costs, in the second and subsequent years. Transactional costs are the same. The prices include regular data updates and all technical support.

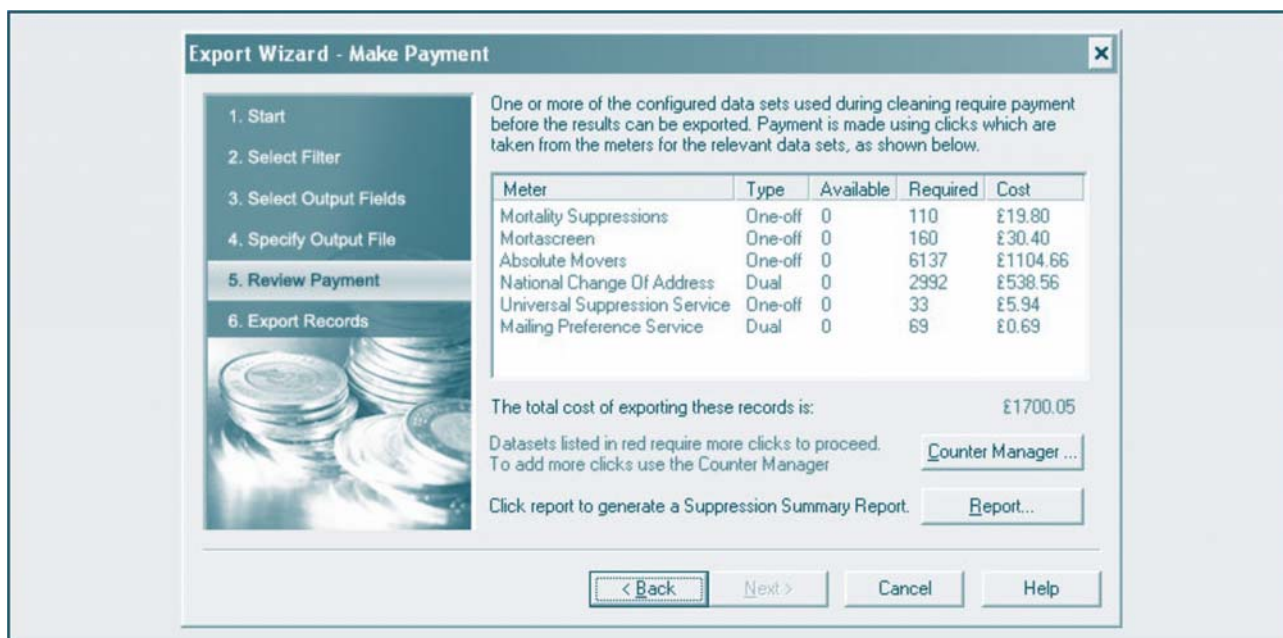


Figure 5: A Screenshot of the Export Wizard

## ▶ PRODUCT STRATEGY

QAS developed QuickAddress Batch with Suppression based on the belief that other desktop solutions on offer were limited in terms of functionality, data, brand awareness, and numbers. Other options, such as online services, including Intact from QAS, still require upload of data. When developing its new product, QAS focused its efforts into an alternative to provide the first real option for companies that want to have complete control of their data suppression needs, in-house.

The target customer base is medium-to-large companies that maintain hefty consumer databases. Given the purchasing and on-going costs of this product, Butler Group believes that QAS is targeting the right group of companies.

Product development is focused at increasing the number of suppression sets supported so that the product becomes a comprehensive one-stop shop for data cleansing needs.

The key business partnerships that support this product are the relationships that QAS has created with the suppression data suppliers; Experian, Royal Mail, Direct Marketing Association, Millennium Direct, and potentially in the future, The REaD Group. QAS has worked hard over the last three years to develop these relationships so that their customers do not have to liaise directly with those data suppliers in order to benefit from data suppression.

## ► COMPANY PROFILE

QAS is one of the UK's leading suppliers of address management and data accuracy solutions, achieving the Best Address Management Software accolade at the 2005 SMART awards. QAS began trading in 1990 and has experienced rapid growth since it was established. The company is a wholly-owned subsidiary of Experian®, a global information solutions company. QAS has headquarters in Clapham, London, and regional offices in Manchester and Edinburgh. Outside the UK, QAS has offices in Europe, North America, and Asia-Pacific. The company has a workforce of 429, with 289 in the UK, 22 in France, 46 in Australia and Singapore, three in The Netherlands, and 69 in the US.

QAS has more than 9,700 customers worldwide across all industry sectors. In the UK, customers include O2, Nissan, Chelsea Football Club, Harcourt Education, the National Blood Service, Bradford and Bingley, and Surrey Police. In addition, a wide range of QAS Business Partners sell QuickAddress software within their own applications. QuickAddress products have been developed and certified for use within leading applications from Microsoft®, Oracle® including Siebel, PeopleSoft®, and SAP AG.

## ► SUMMARY

Data quality and integrity problems are not new and have dogged organisations of all shapes and sizes for decades. Butler Group believes that a properly implemented data quality strategy will not only help the organisations to exploit their software investments, control internal costs, and help meet regulatory requirements, but that it can deliver many additional benefits and ultimately a positive, long-term ROI. Suppression should be viewed as an essential part of data quality assurance and companies should evaluate the cost of suppression against that of wasted resources and costs, such as those incurred in wasted direct marketing. It is also important for companies to take into account the hidden cost of brand damage that can arise out of inappropriate direct mail.

QAS' QuickAddress Batch with Suppression offers organisations an easy and flexible way to manage these issues and save time and money in the process. The product which stems from QAS' many years of experience in the name and address management arena, offers a strong solution that brings a number of reference data sources within the easy reach of the user on the desktop. As such, this solution is definitely well worthy of consideration.

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