

# VIP BIM TIPS & Tricks Booklet



*Business  
Intelligence Manager*



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## Creating and linking a report

Did you know you can customise the look and layout of the VIP BIM reports?

Why would you want to do this? VIP BIM standard reports are designed to cater for the masses, you might want to change the look (colours, font style ...) to suit your company image, and you might want to change the layout (move columns, add or remove columns ...) to suit your company processes and save these changes for the next time you run the report.

### Before we start

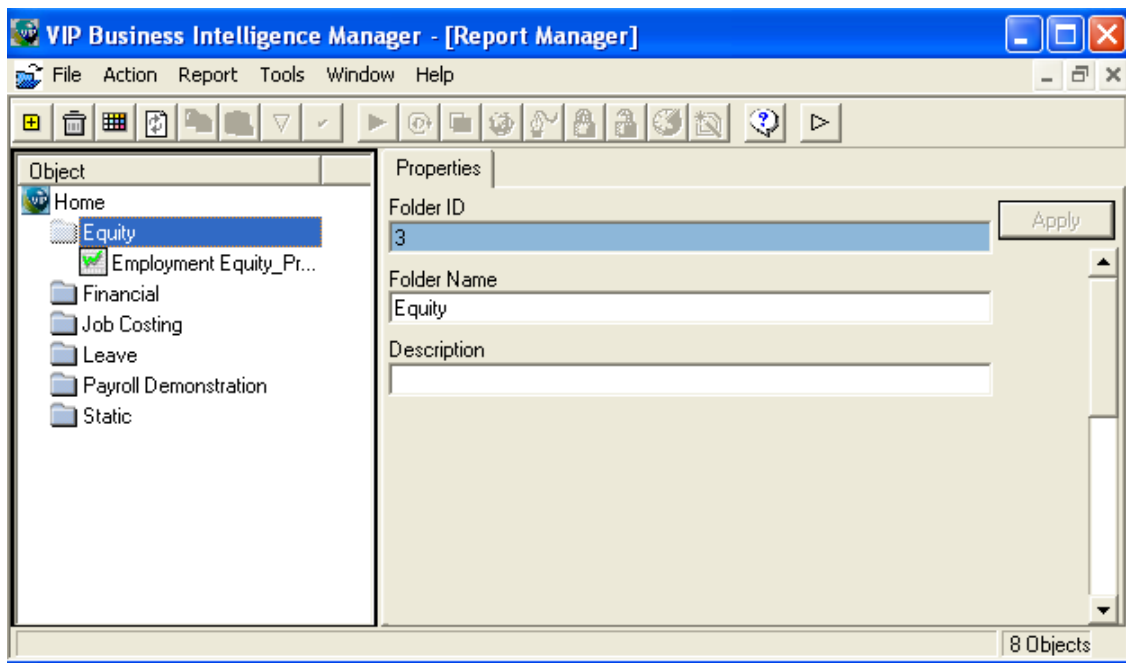
If you are unsure of making changes to any of the standard reports, it would be a good idea to make a copy of the report before you make any changes to the report.

### How to Copy a report

Open report manager and right click the report you want to Copy, select the copy option. Right click on the report folder you want to paste the copy to and select the Paste option. The copy of the report will be renamed as "Copy of" and the original report name.

### How to Create and Link the report

1. Open your VIP BIM Report Manager
2. Select and run out the report you want to customise



3. Make the changes to the report; ensure that Sheet1 (where VIP BIM puts the Raw Data) and Sheet2 (where VIP BIM puts the report parameters) are unchanged.

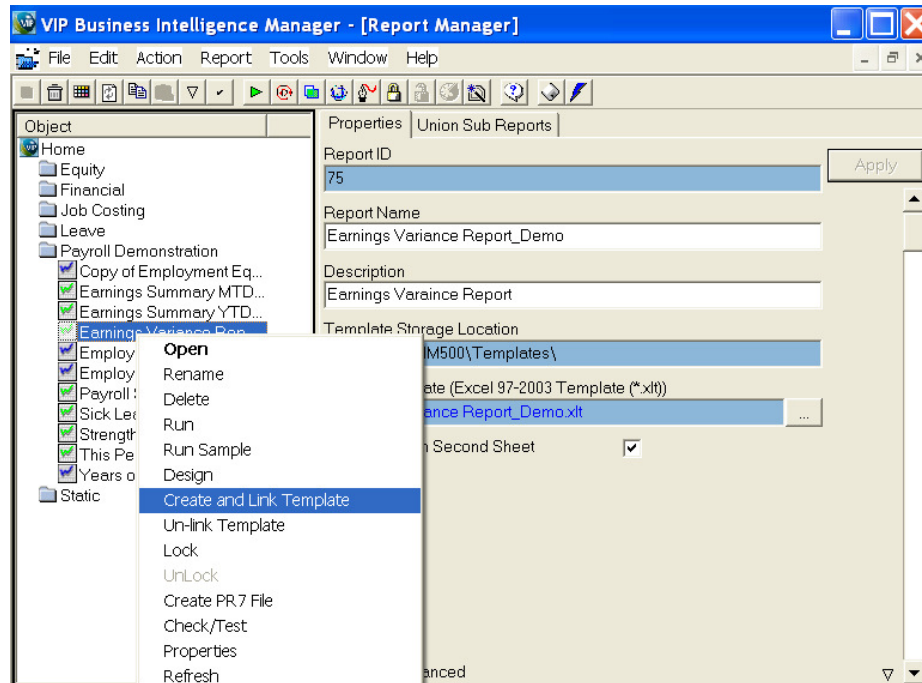
**EARNING VARIANCE REPORT PER DEPARTMENT**

003 - VIP Demo

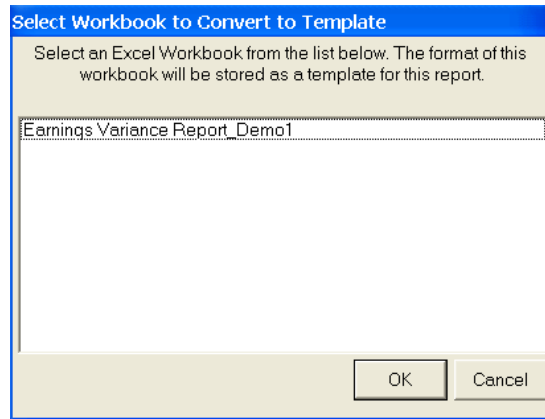
Period Ending: 2006/06/17

Employee Code	Employee Name	Earning	Amount	PP Amount	Variance Amt	Variance %
601865	Williams F	Normal Pay	1618.74	3808.81	-2190.07	-135.29
		Overtime	-	349.46	-349.46 *	
		Paid Pub Hol	666.54	-	666.54	100.00
		Leave Pay	1523.52	-	1523.52	100.00
602512	Sweni SD	Overtime	889.00	762.00	127.00	14.29
		Paid Pub Hol	222.25	-	222.25	100.00

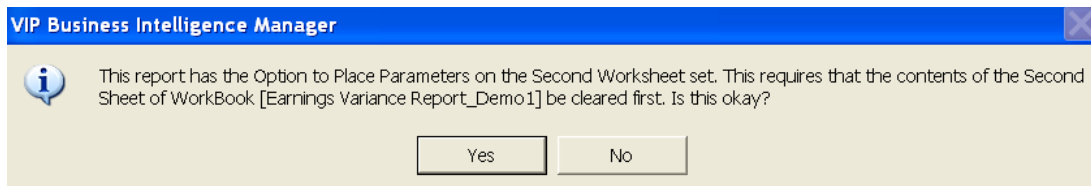
4. Once the changes have been made, leave the workbook open, and go back to Report Manager. Right click on the report the changes where made for and select the Create and Link Template option



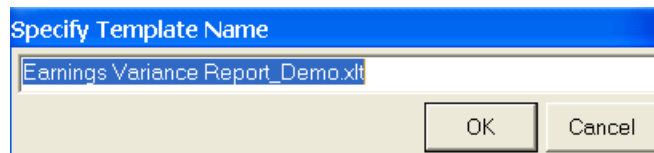
5. The popup window will show a list of all open Excel workbooks, select the workbook you have made the changes to and click OK



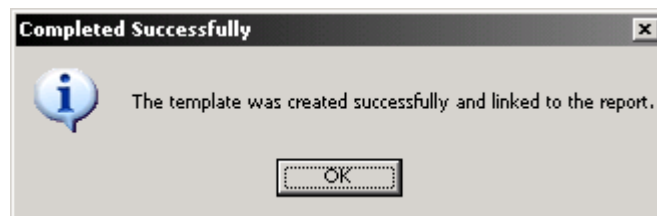
6. You will be prompted with the below message, as mentioned in point 3 you should not make changes to Sheet2. Click Yes to link the workbook, if you select No the workbook will not be linked



7. You will also be prompted to specify the template name, it is a good idea to change the name of the template to insure that the original template is not overwritten with the customised one, click OK



8. A message will be displayed once the template has been successfully linked



9. Quite easily done!

## Copy and Pasting BIM Reports

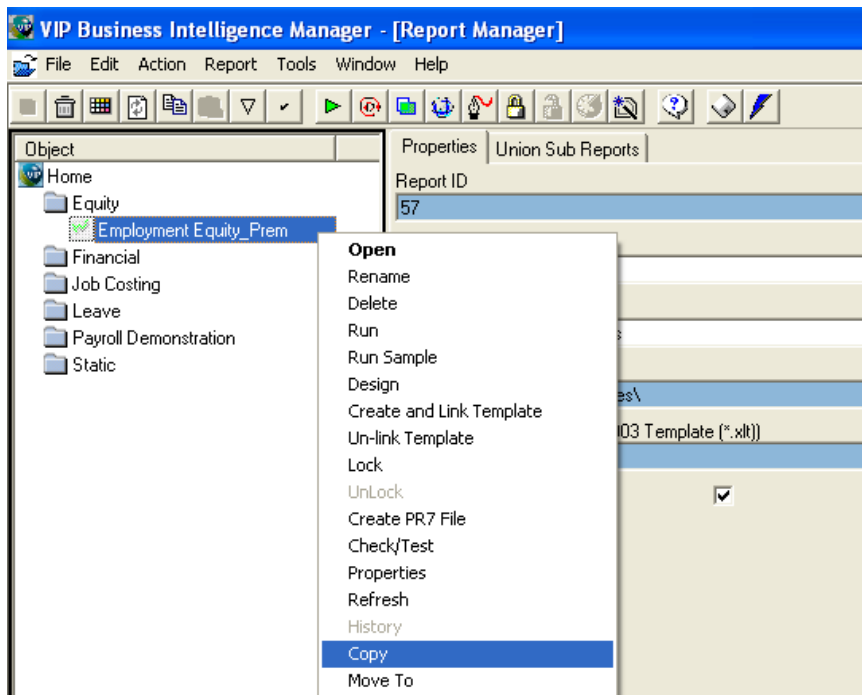
Did you know you can copy and paste a report, at any stage, in the report manager?

### Where would this be useful?

This can be very useful if you do not want to corrupt the master report, or you would like to create hybrids of an existing report.

So you might have an Equity report that shows a analysis on enire company, and you want to create another report that shows equity data analysed by branch instead. The wise thing to do is create a copy of the original report, and then rename the copy to Equity by Branch, and then customise the new “Equity by branch” report. You have the benefit of re-using all the IP in the original report without having to create it from scratch. This is how you do it...

1. Open your Report Manager



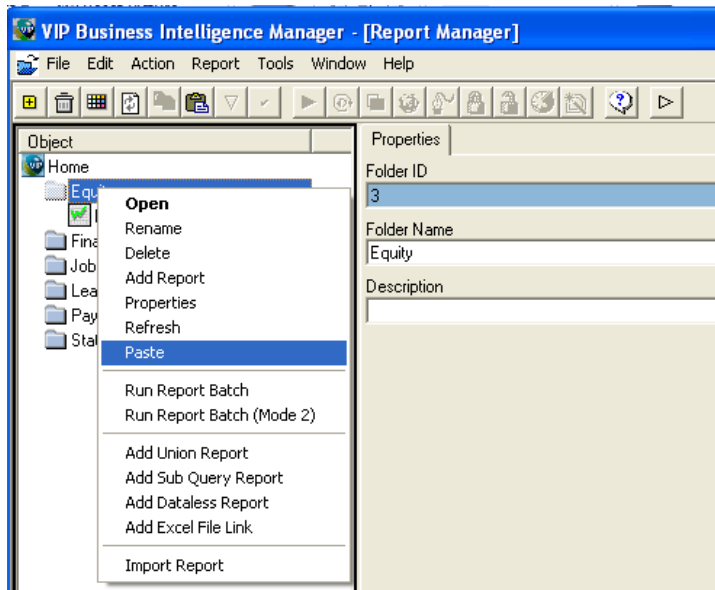
2. Right click on the report you want to make a copy of

Select copy from the popup list

This has pasted the report to the clipboard – now you need to paste the report onto a folder...

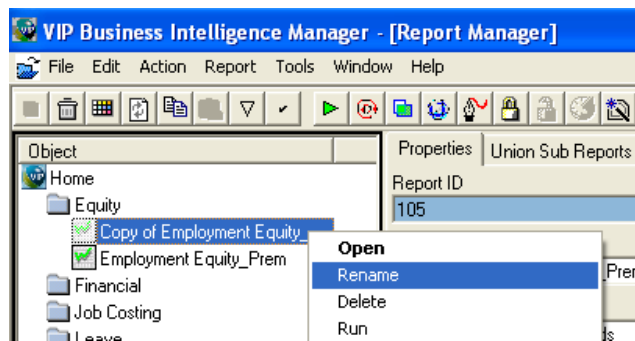
3. Select the required folder – this might be the same folder that the original report was in, or a different folder.

Right click on the folder and choose paste from the popup menu



Note – you can also use the short-cut keys of Ctrl-C to copy the report, and Ctrl-V to paste it instead of using the menus.

4. You can now rename the newly copied report – by default the new name will be “Copy of <old name>” so it can be distinguished from the original report.



5. Right click on the report and select the “rename” option to rename the report.

So what you have now is an exact duplicate of the original report that will get its data from the same place, and deliver it in the same format – until you make any changes to this new report.

## Importing and exporting BIM reports

### Why would we want to do this?

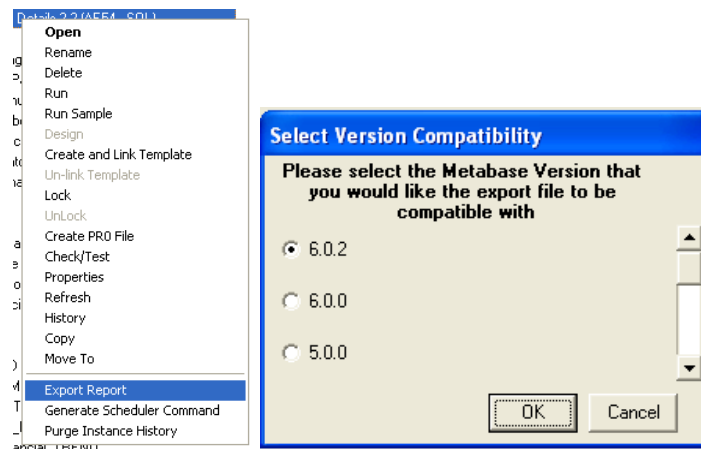
One of the great features in VIP Business Intelligence Manager is the ability to create reports and be able to share them with other VIP Business Intelligence Manager users. Another significant use is to be able to export problematic reports and send them to be fixed, and then import them once they are ready – in this day and age with significant traffic congestion, this can be a huge time and money saving for you. It is essentially a transport mechanism for reports that removes the risks of cutting and pasting various elements of a report manually.

### Exporting a Report:-

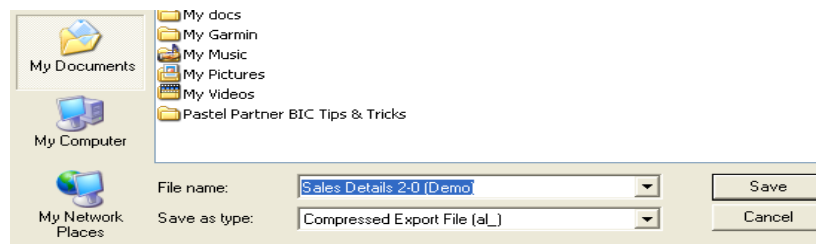
Reports can be exported from one VIP Business Intelligence Manager System and imported into another. The export function can create either a flat file (.alx extension) or a file in a compressed file format (.al\_ extension). Either of these file type may then be distributed for import into other VIP Business Intelligence Manager systems.

To export a report, simply select the report in the Report Manager Interface or from the Tools menu you can run “Export Report”.

You will be prompted for a Metabase Version. Select the highest version, unless the installation you intend importing the report to is running on an older version of VIP Business Intelligence Manager.

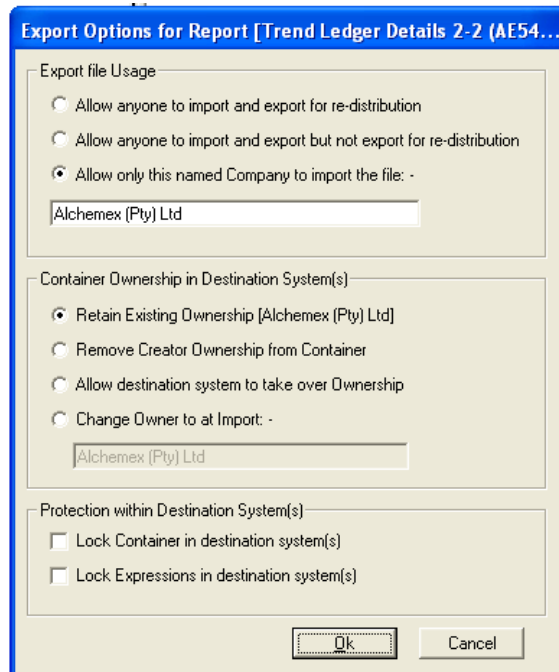


You will be prompted to select a location to save the export file.

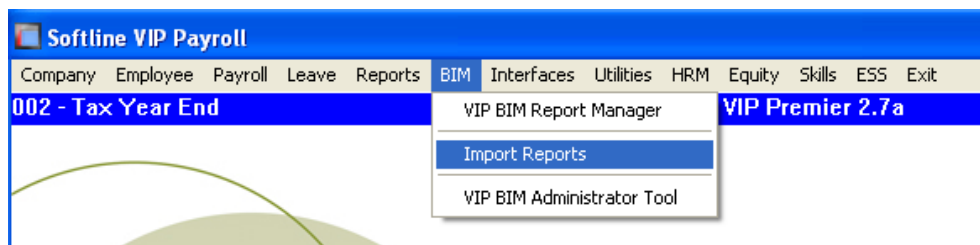


**Note:** Use a compressed file format (AL\_ files) for space efficiency. This is useful when you need to distribute reports.

Note that if you are running a Third Party Developer License of VIP Business Intelligence Manager then it is possible for you to protect your export files. Below is a screenshot of the additional functionality provided.



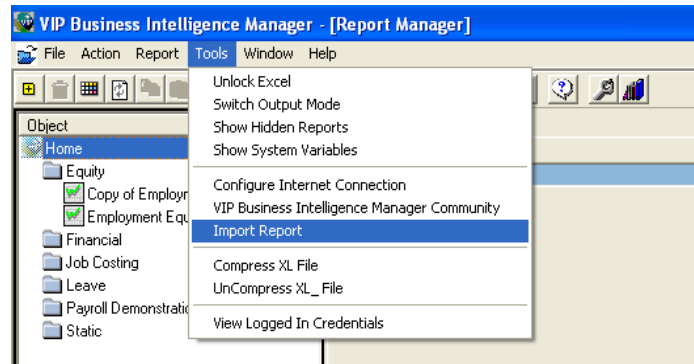
Export files can be imported into your VIP Business Intelligence Manager system from VIP Payroll Interface from the BIM Menu or in the BIM Report Manager



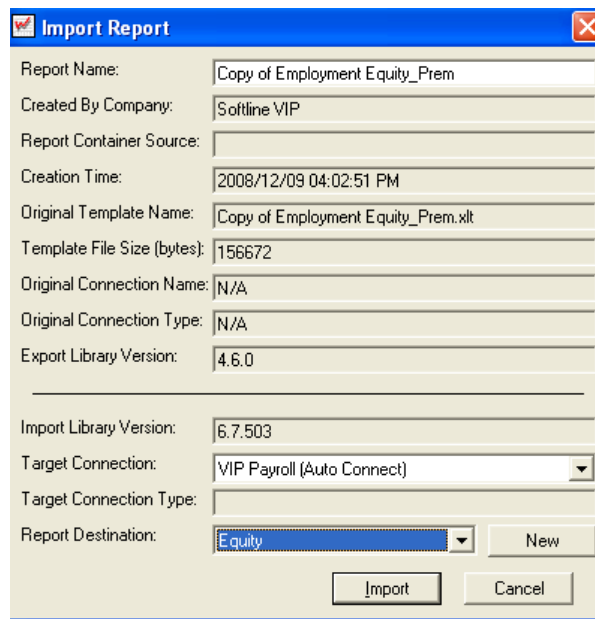
**To Import a report using the Report Manager, perform the following steps: -**

- Open the Report Manager.
- Click on "Home" in the Object window
- Select the Tools menu.
- Select the "Import Report" function

- You will be asked to locate the VIP Business Intelligence Manager export file (\*.ALX or \*.AL\_)
- Browse to the file and press Open.



VIP Business Intelligence Manager will show the following dialog screen which contains information for the import and requires you to select a Target Connection and a Report Destination.



- Select a Target Connection from the drop down field provided
- Select a Report Destination folder from the drop down field provided.
- In the event that you would like to create a new folder in which to place this report then click the "New" button
- Type in a name for the folder and click OK
- Press Import.

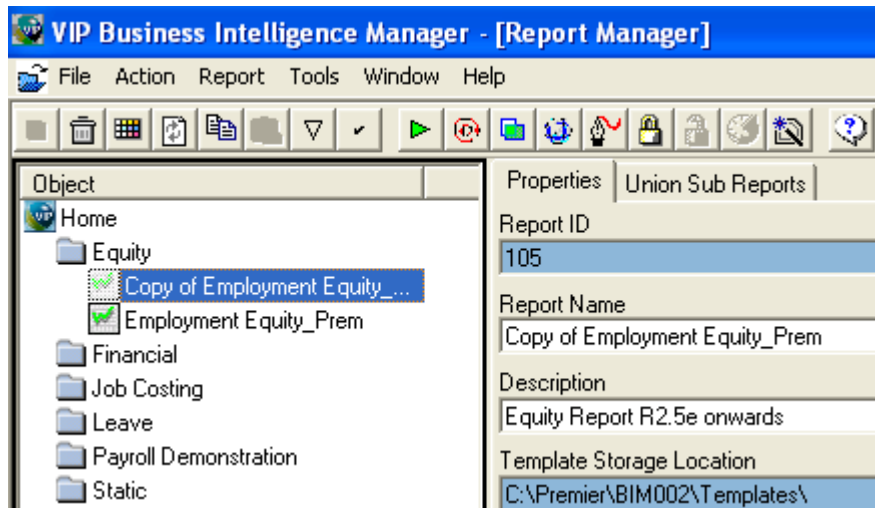
VIP Business Intelligence Manager will try and locate a Source Container in the selected connection that matches the one used by the original report. You will be given the option of using this one if a match is found or creating a new one. Where possible it is recommended that you use existing Source Containers. Your report should now be available for use in the Report Manager.

## Automatically distribute BIM Reports on the Web or an Intranet

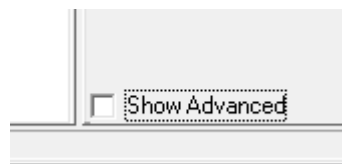
Did you know that you can automatically distribute any VIP BIM report on the web or on an intranet. Why would you want to do this? It often happens that information rich reports, that could help your organisation, are sitting on some ones desk – if only they could be easily distributed to the right people – effortlessly.

Here's how it is done!

1. Open your report manager.
2. Select the report that you want to publish to an intranet/ internet.



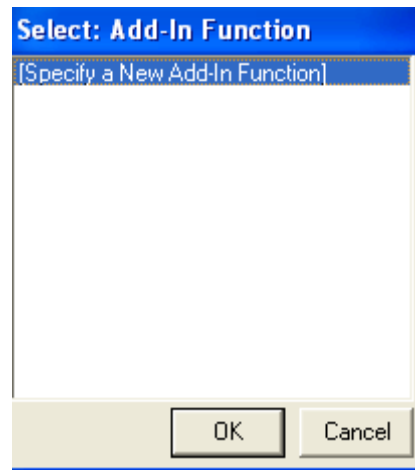
3. Select the check box to **Show Advanced** Properties of a report – it is at the bottom of the **properties tab** window.



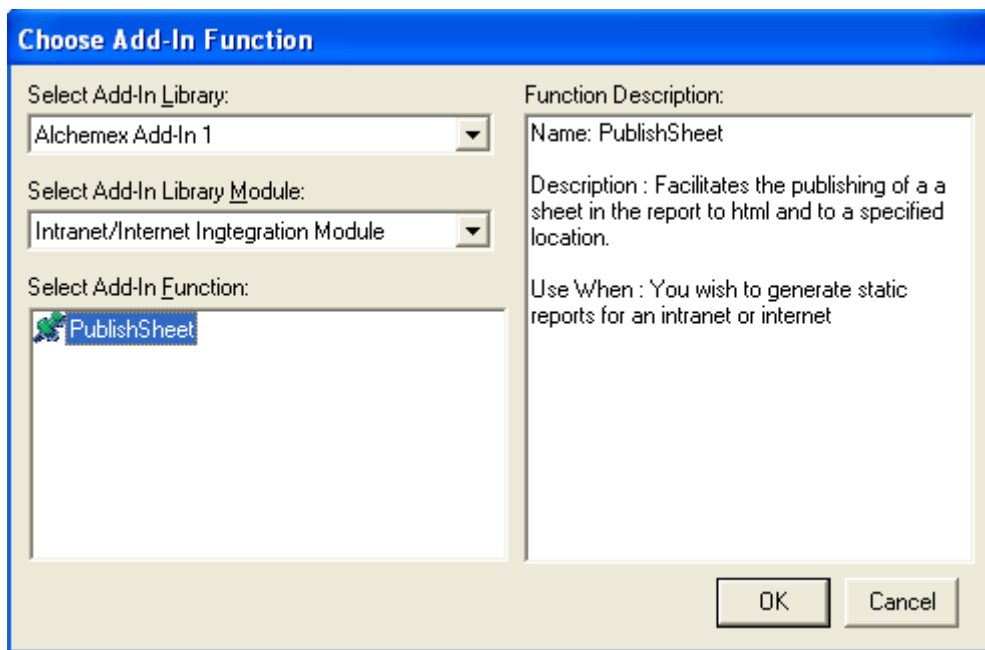
4. Select the button to **'Run Add-ins'** - this will be listed in the **properties** window of the report.



5. Select the option to 'Specify a New Add-in Function' and select **OK**.

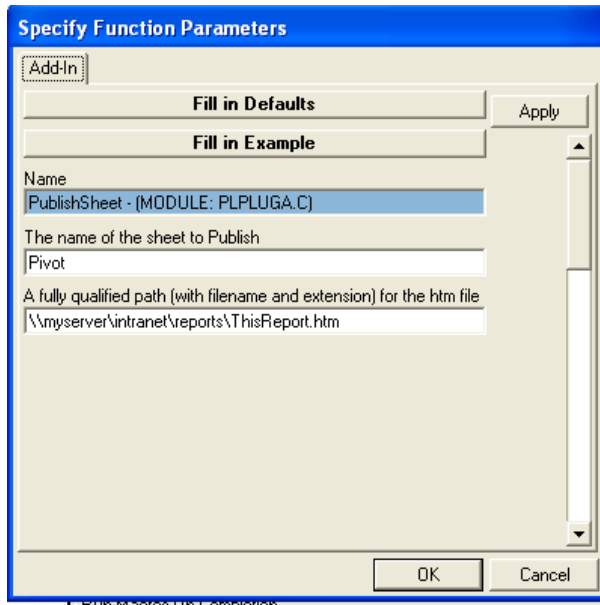


6. A box will appear as follows



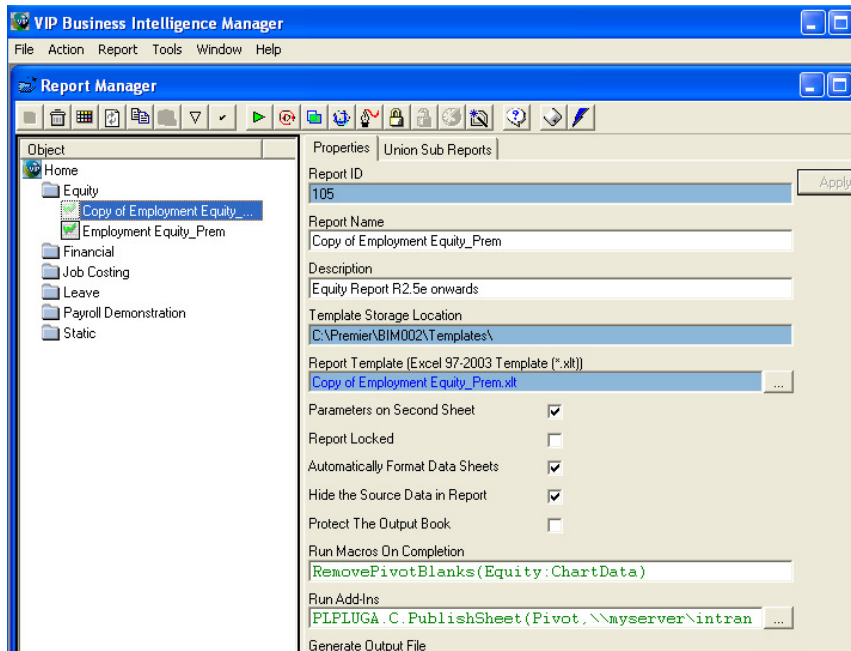
Select the **Add-In Library**, and **Add-in Library Module** as shown above. Select the **Add in Function** followed by the **OK** button.

7. A box will pop up asking you to enter all the relevant details for distribution – see below



This will include details about the name of the sheet to be published and a fully qualified path for the HTML file. (with filename and extension)

8. When you have entered your details, select **OK** and you will see that a string has been added into the “**Add-Ins**” box in the properties window of your report.



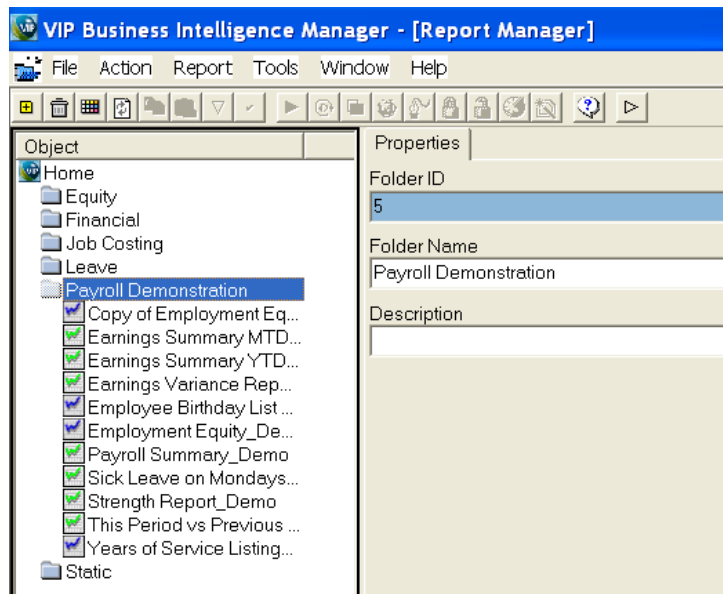
9. QED (Quite Easily Done!)

## Auto e-mailing VIP BIM reports

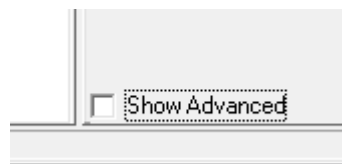
Did you know that you can automatically distribute any VIP BIM report once it has been run, to a distribution list of your choice? Why would you want to do this? It often happens that information rich reports, that could help your organisation, are sitting on some ones desk – if only they could be easily distributed to the right people – effortlessly.

Here's how it is done!

1. Open your report manager.
2. Select the report that you want to setup for e-mailing automatically once it has been run.



3. Select the check box to **Show Advanced** Properties of a report – it is at the bottom of the **properties tab** window.

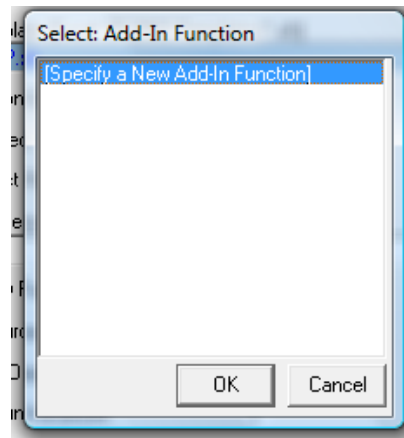


4. Select the button to **'Run Add-ins'** - this will be listed in the **properties** window of the report.

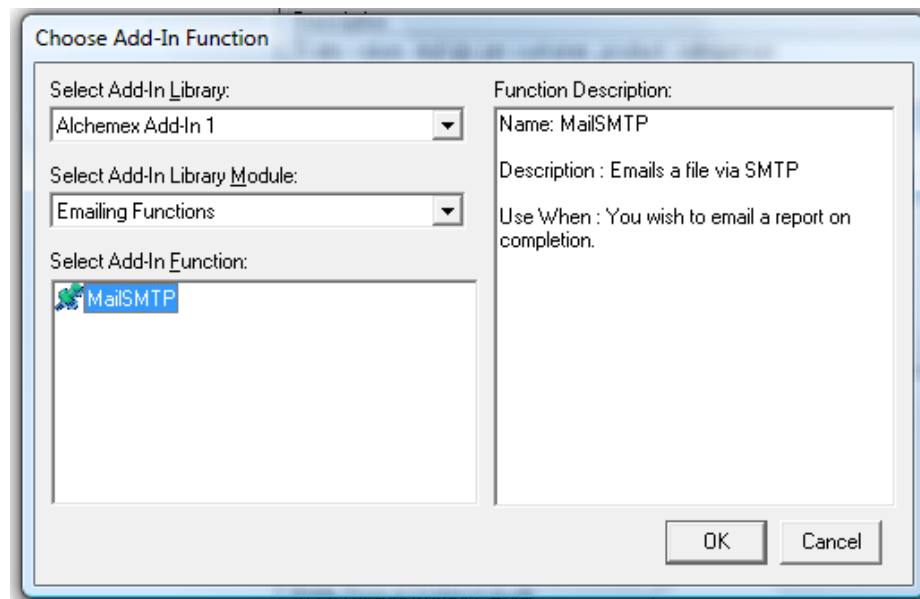


The screenshot shows a dialog box titled "Run Macros On Completion". It contains four input fields: "Run Macros On Completion", "Run Add-Ins", "Generate Output File", and "Close Book on Completion". The "Run Add-Ins" and "Generate Output File" fields have ellipsis buttons to their right. The "Close Book on Completion" field has a checkbox next to it.

5. Select the option to **'Specify a New Add-in Function'** and select **OK**.

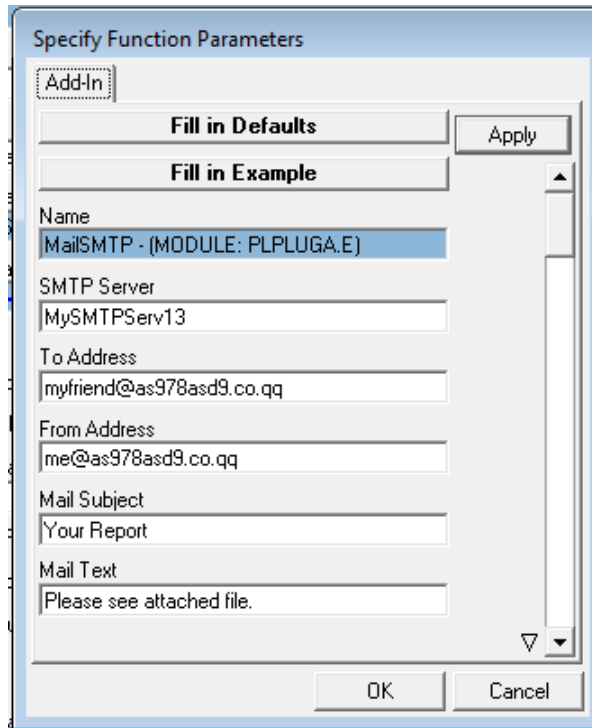


6. A box will appear as follows



Select the **Add-In Library**, and **Add-in Library Module** as shown above. Select the **Add in Function** followed by the **OK** button.

7. A box will pop up asking you to enter all the relevant details for emailing – see below



The image shows a dialog box titled "Specify Function Parameters". At the top, there is an "Add-In" dropdown menu. Below it are two buttons: "Fill in Defaults" and "Fill in Example". To the right of these buttons is an "Apply" button. The main area of the dialog contains several text input fields: "Name" (with "MailSMTP - (MODULE: PLPLUGA.E)" selected), "SMTP Server" (with "MySMTPServ13"), "To Address" (with "myfriend@as978asd9.co.qq"), "From Address" (with "me@as978asd9.co.qq"), "Mail Subject" (with "Your Report"), and "Mail Text" (with "Please see attached file."). At the bottom right, there are "OK" and "Cancel" buttons.

This will include details about your mail SMTP server which you must get from your Mail administrator, as well as the 'from' and 'to' addresses. To send to multiple e-mail addresses, use a colon in between addresses. Ensure that when you give the report a name that you include the ".xls" extension as well. Scroll down on this window to see more available options.

8. When you have entered your details, select **OK** and you will see that a string has been added into the "**Add-Ins**" box in the properties window of your report.
9. Execute the report, and it will automatically be e-mailed to the selected recipients.

```
Run Add-Ins  
PLPLUGA.E.MailSMTP(MySMTPServ13,myfriend@as978asd9.co.  
Generate Output File
```

10. QED (Quite Easily Done!)

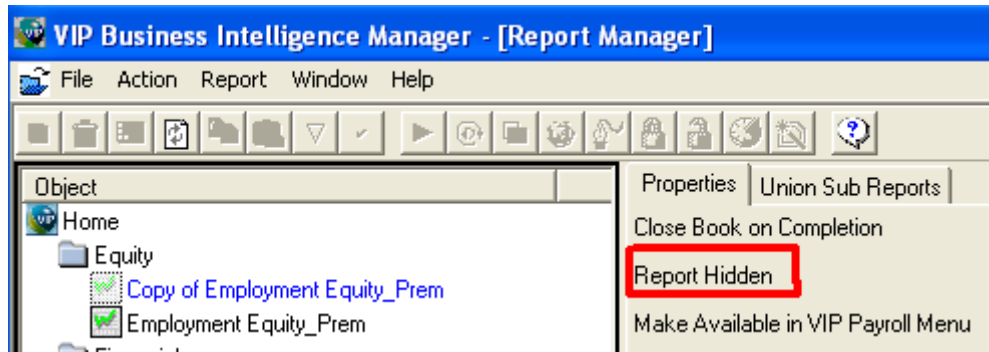
## Hiding and Showing BIM Reports

Why would you like to show or hide reports?

It is handy to be able to hide reports that do not need to be run separately, but only as union reports. This will give your object window a neater look.

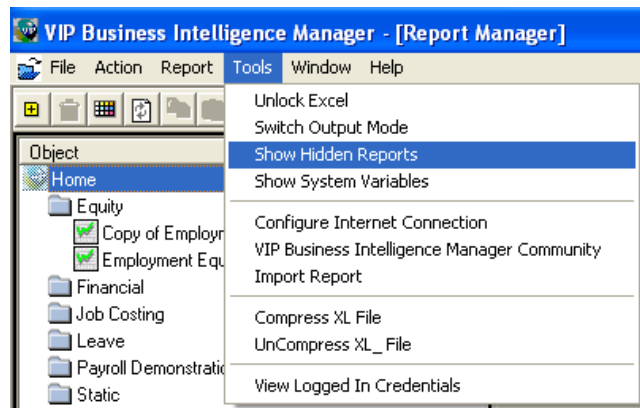
### To hide a report:

1. Select the report in the Object window of the Report Manager, under Properties select
2. Show Advanced
3. Under the properties tab, select the option Report Hidden
4. Refresh your object window view by double clicking on Home at the top of the screen
5. Now the report will not show in your list of available reports



### To show a hidden report

1. Select the Home object in Report Manager
2. Select Show Hidden Reports



Refresh your object window by double clicking on Home at the top of the screen

You will now be able to view your hidden reports

Please take note that access to make changes to a report, will not be available on the reports making up a union report. These reports have a black arrow next to them in the object window. Access is available to the reports with blue lines next to them.


## Scheduling VIP BIM Reports

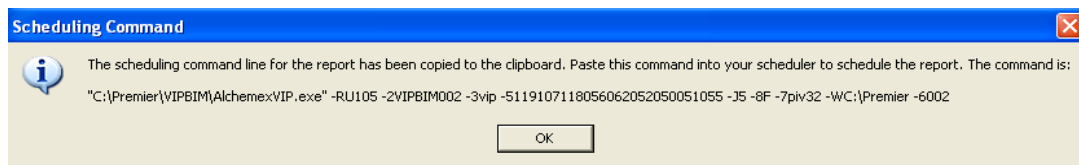
VIP BIM reports can be run unattended, from Operating System batch files or under the control of external scheduling software (such as the Microsoft Windows Scheduler or the Microsoft SQL Server Agent). This can be useful when you have certain reports that you need to run on a regular basis.

**When reports are run unattended they are automatically closed on completion.** Scheduled reports must use the Generate Output Advanced report or the Retain Run Instances option to be useful. See Advance Report Properties for more information.

Typically reports that are scheduled will have the **Generate Output File property set so that the unattended reports are saved to a specific location.** Set this property under the Advanced options on the Report Properties tab.

To generate the command to schedule a report run:

1. Open the Report Manager
2. Select the report you wish to generate a schedule command for
3. Click on the Schedule Icon .
4. If the report expects parameters then you will be prompted to enter these. Enter any necessary parameters and click OK.
5. A message box will then appear that will display the syntax for the running the report. Additionally this text will be placed on the windows clipboard so that it can be pasted into the application or batch file that will be controlling it. An example is shown below.




When reports are run unattended the information that is usually sent to the Process Monitor window is redirected to a log file. You should review this log file to make sure that your reports are running as expected. The log file is named Alchemex VIP BIM Unattended.log and can be found in the Logs folder which is a sub folder of the VIP BIM Installation folder.

You can view this log file in a text editor application such as Notepad.

The file can also be opened directly from the Administrator Tool. To do this Open the Administrator Tool and choose the Menu item Tools > Open Log File.

The application returns a process exit code for the scheduled report to indicate Success (0) or Failure (1) allowing the calling process to check the result of a shelled report.

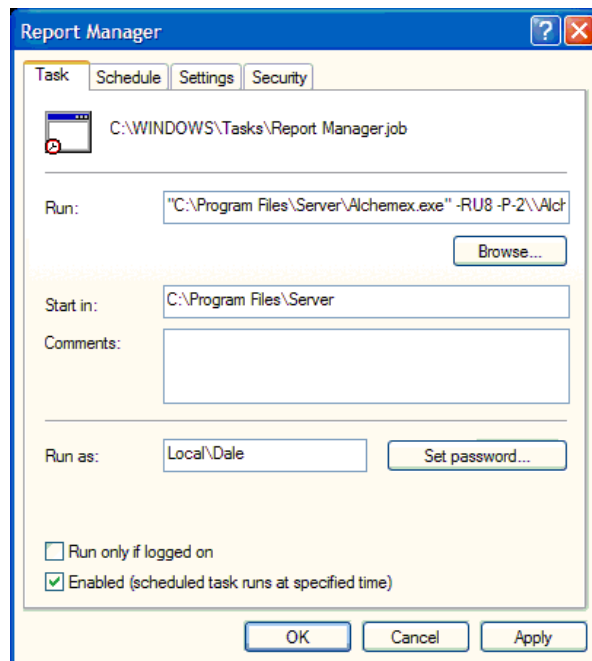
## Scheduling a Report using the Windows Scheduler

1. Select the report that you wish to schedule in the Report Manager.
2. Click on the Schedule Icon  on the toolbar or right click on the report and choose Generate Scheduler Command.
3. If the report expects parameters then you will be prompted to enter these.
4. A message box will then appear that will display the syntax for running the report.
5. Additionally this text will be placed on the windows clipboard so that it can be pasted into the scheduled task command field.

Reports that are Scheduled are closed on completion and therefore must use the Generate Output Advanced report or the Retain Run Instances option to be useful. See Advance Report Properties for more information.

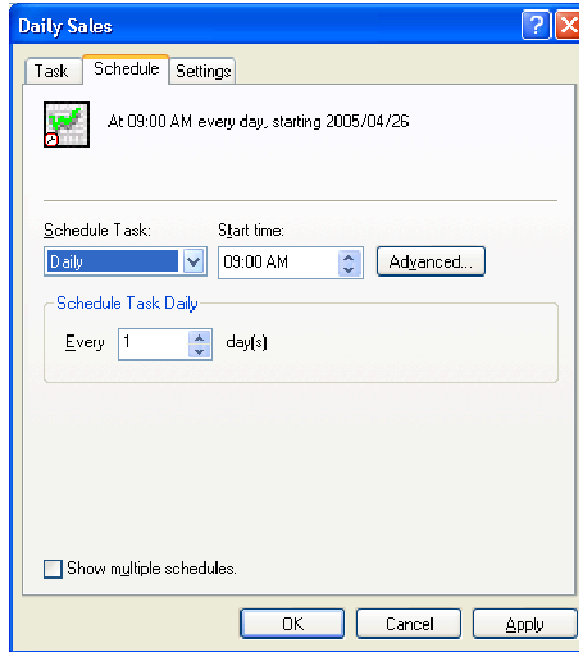
Open the Windows Control panel and then open the Scheduled Tasks item.

1. From the menu choose File > New > Scheduled Task.
2. A new Scheduled Task will appear in the explorer window.
3. Rename the task with a meaningful name.
4. Select the new task
5. From the menu, choose File > Properties.
6. Place the cursor in the Run text box, right click and choose Paste.
7. The run command for the report will be copied from the clipboard into the Run box.
8. You can optionally enter a comment describing the scheduled report.
9. Leave the Start In box blank.

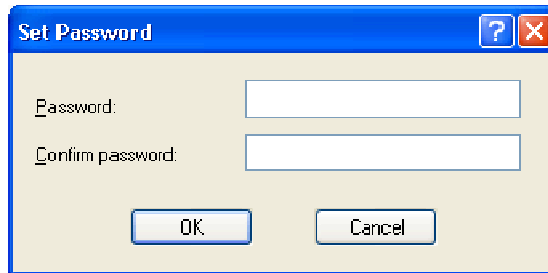


In the Run As box enter the user name that should be used to run the report under (for domain user accounts use the format domain\_name\user\_name) . The user name must be a valid account on the domain or local machine with sufficient privileges to run VIP BIM.

To set the Schedule for the Task click on the Schedule Tab and choose the schedule options for the report. The Schedule Tab is shown below.



When you have set the schedule options press the OK button. A password box will appear asking for the password of the user that has been specified to run the Task. Enter the password in the Password box and the Confirm Password box and press OK.



It is important to understand that the **user account** that is used for the scheduled report **must have sufficient permissions to access all the necessary resources to run the VIP BIM report**. It is best to log on to the machine that will be running the scheduled report as that user and test that the report can be run interactively under the user account before using the account for scheduled reports

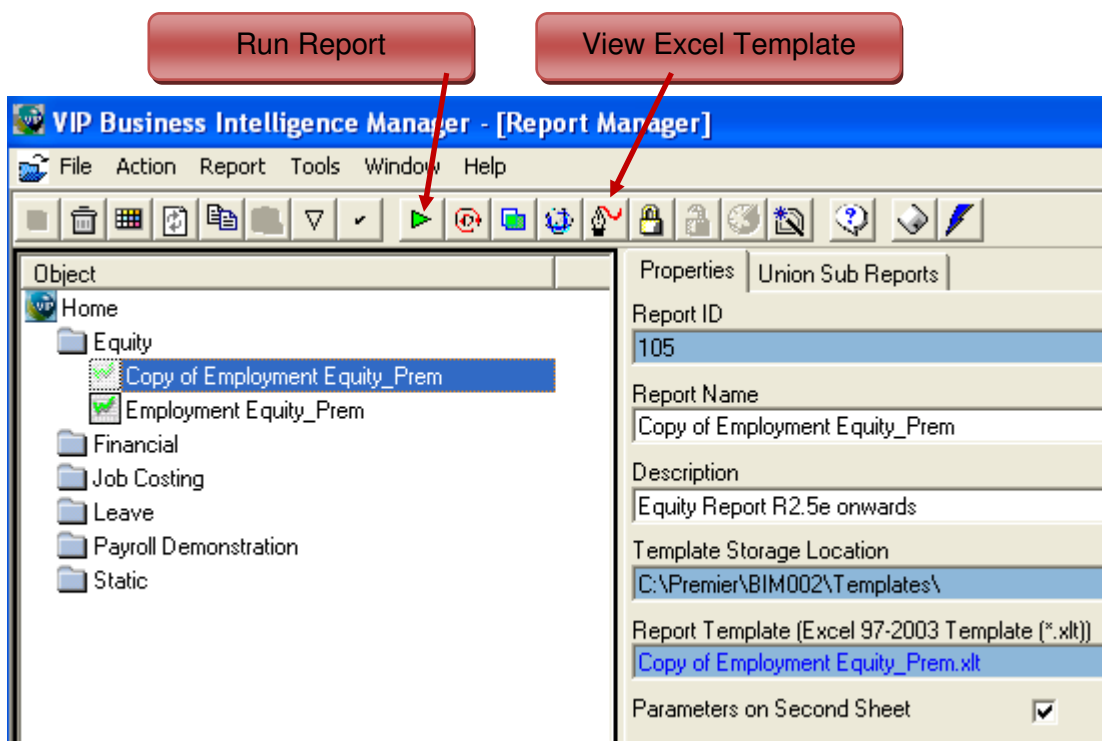
## Automatically Running Macros

Did you know that you can automatically run macros you have created when you run your report in VIP BIM?

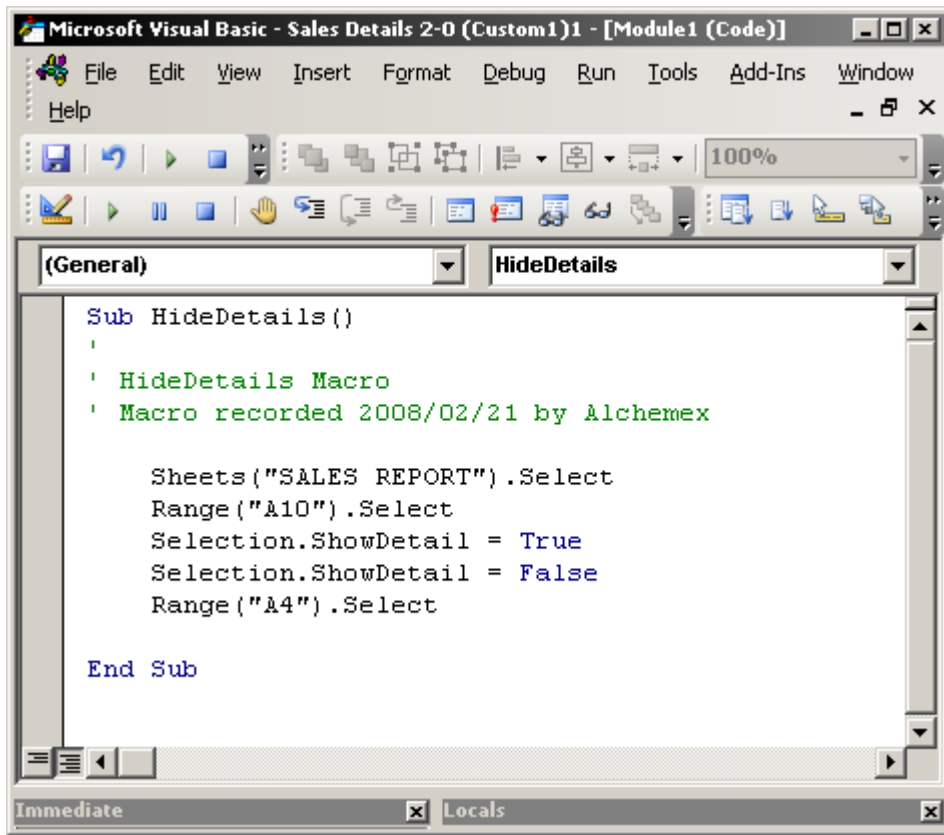
Why would you want to do this? Macros can be very powerful for doing many different things in Excel (e.g. formatting, filtering and securing . . .). This makes the report one step closer to being ready to go as soon as it's run out.

Here's how it is done!

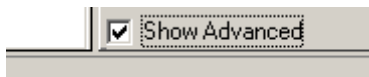
10. Open your report manager.
11. Select the report that you want the macro to run in, run the report or open the Excel template.



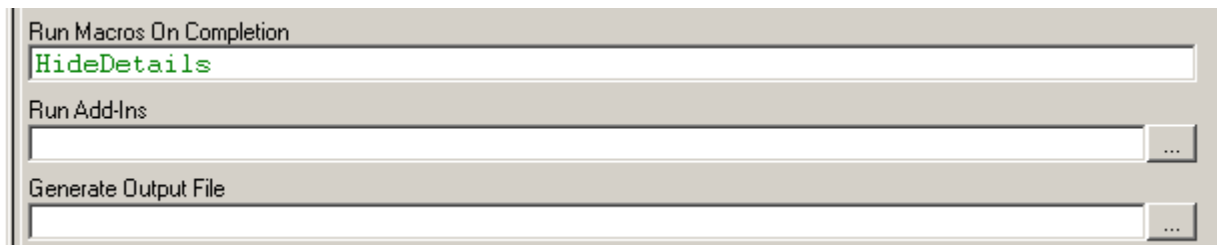
12. Create the macro you want to run automatically, ensuring that in your macro you specify which sheet you need the macro to work in. (This will help by forcing the macro to select the correct sheet even after you *Create and Link* the workbook with a different active sheet)



13. Once you have created and tested your macro, save the template back or create and link the workbook back to the report.
14. Highlight the report in which you have created the macro, under the *Properties* tab, tick the *Show Advanced* option at the bottom of the screen.



15. In the advanced options list that is now available, locate the *Run Macros on Completion* option



In the text box type the name of the macro you created.

## Additional Notes

- If there is more than one macro that needs to be run, then separate their names with semi-colons.
- If a Macro takes parameters then place these in brackets after the macro name in a comma separated list.

```
Run Macros On Completion  
Zeroing; Consolidate(1992,Jan)
```

- Macros will always run after any Add-Ins should you have any Add-Ins placed in the "Run Add-Ins" property.
- Combine macro names and Add-Ins in the same property to ensure the correct order thereof when running the report. Example: To have a macro run before an Add-In, place the macro name in the "Run Add-Ins" property before the Add-In.

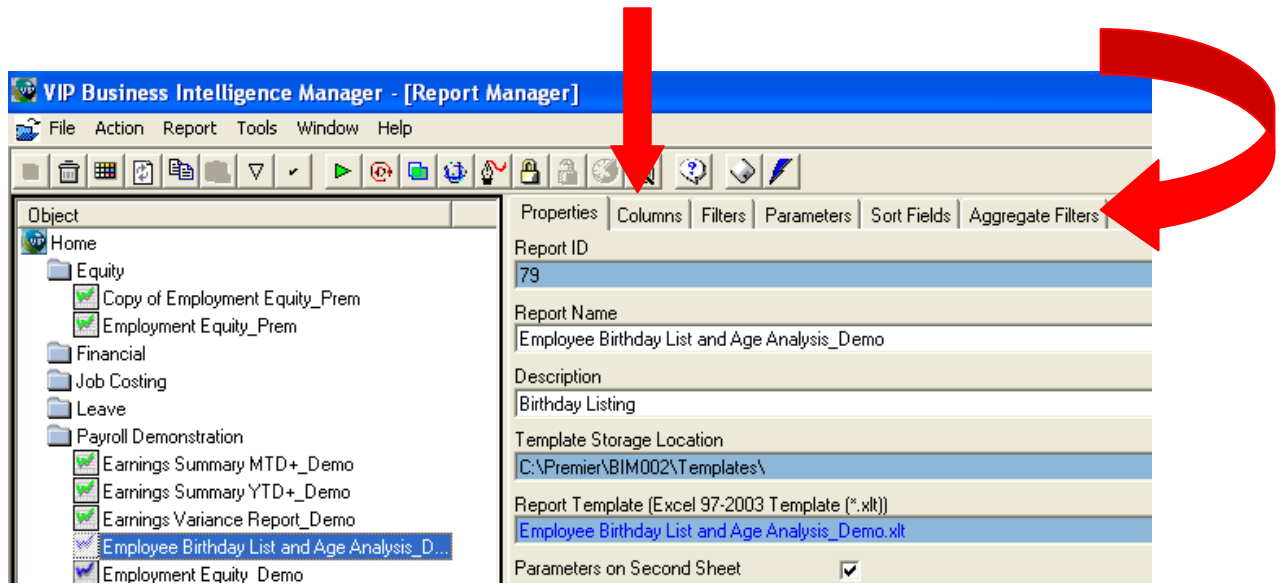
16. Once you have entered the name of the macro, make sure you Apply the changes to the report

17. Run the report out and your macro will automatically run.

18. QED (Quite Easily Done!)

## Use of aggregate filters Function in the BIM Report Manager

Have you written a report that ended up rendering huge data volumes and results in lengthy run times and therefore causes performance issues?



There are many scenarios that could cause this but by far the most common one is the absence of aggregate function use in reports.

Simply put, an Aggregate is to bring together or to collect into a mass or sum. Examples of aggregates are SUM, MAX, MIN & COUNT.

Solution:

- Launch BIM Report Manager.
- Navigate to the “Columns” Tab and take a close look at the fields you have included in your report. Now identify all the fields that your report will ever need to show and then delete the superfluous ones.
- Now identify all your VALUE fields and apply an Aggregate to each of them. The most common aggregate being SUM.

What you have done by aggregating is as follows –

- You now have a report that groups your results by the remaining fields i.e. Customer Name and then sums your VALUE fields (i.e. Sales amount excl VAT) accordingly.

Thus instead of having a report that renders each and every transaction line item from your source Transaction Table into “Sheet1”, you now have a report that only renders the exact required data. You have effectively tuned your report for speed. This simple practice will dramatically reduce runtime and result in, for example, a 5 minute report now running out in a matter of seconds.

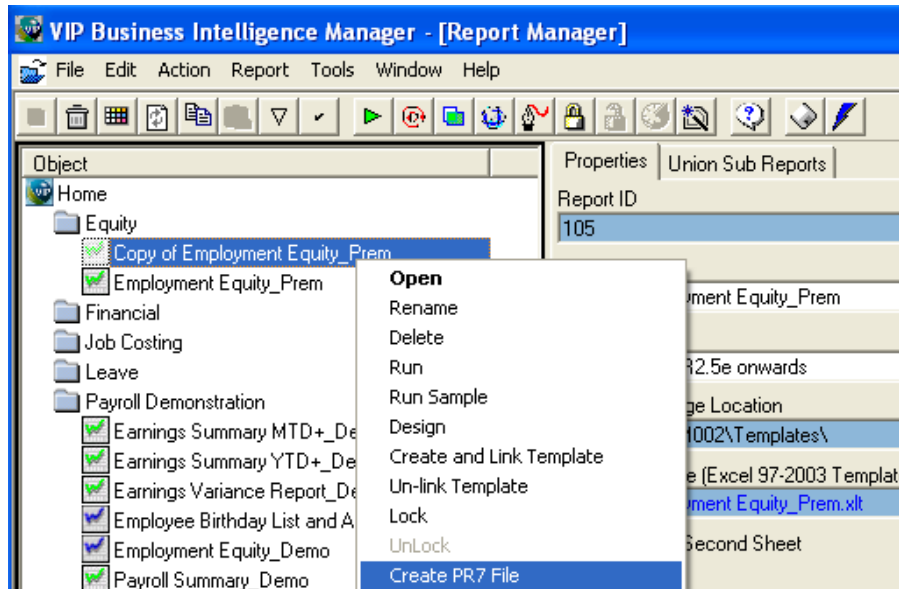
## Create a run time version of a BIM report and run it from your desktop

Why would you want to do this?

So that you can run reports by double-clicking on an icon without having to login to the report manager interface. This also has the advantage of restricting unauthorised access to report development/authoring.

Pre-requisite – you must have the client libraries for BIM installed on any machine that you wish to execute the reports from.

Open the report manager and right click on a report and choose the create PR\* option



Browse to a location to store the file and give it a name.

To run the report, browse to the location where you stored it, and double click on the icon to run it.

If there were any report parameters that need to be entered, the box will pop-up asking you to enter them.

As the report runs you will see the progress monitor being displayed and the report will be delivered into Excel on the desktop where the report was run. As easy as that!

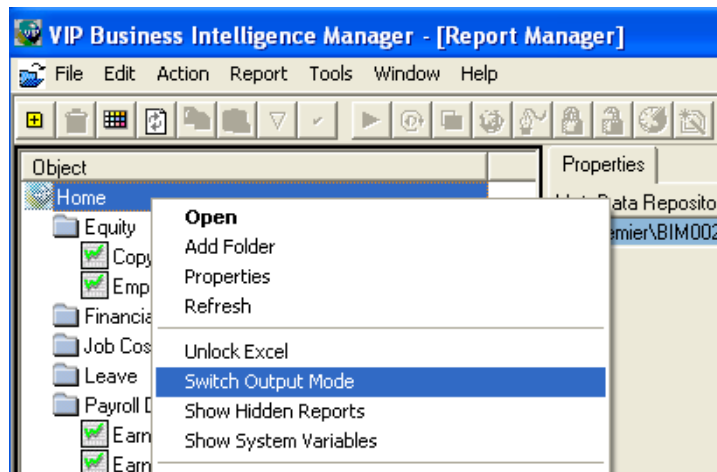
## Viewing the SQL code passed by BIM to the ODBC Driver for a Report

Did you know you can view the SQL code passed by BIM to the ODBC driver? This can be very useful if you are developing a report but keep getting a “Report Execution Error”, you will be able to see exactly what is passed to the ODBC driver, including Table joins, Sort Criteria, Field Expressions, Filters . . .

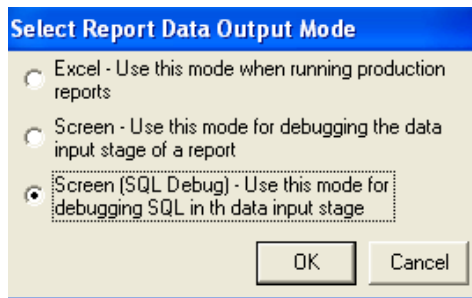
### How to Switch the Output Mode to SQL View

10. Open your Report Manager

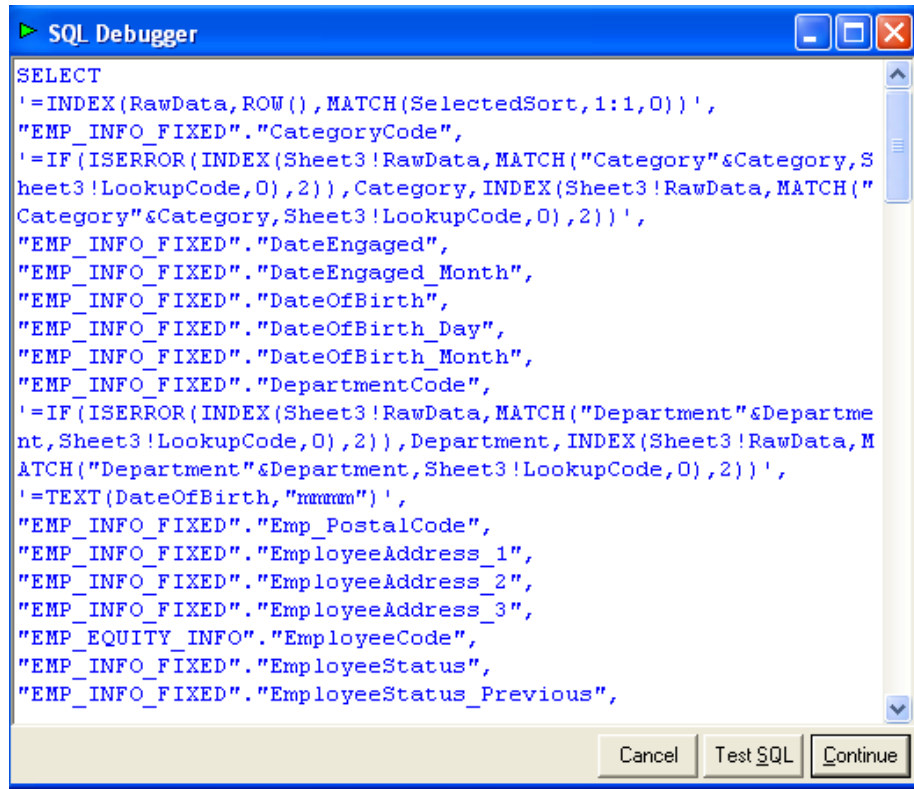
11. Right click on Home and select “Switch Output Mode”



12. Select the “Screen (SQL Debug)” and click OK



13. The SQL Debug window will popup with the SQL code that gets passed to the ODBC driver



```
SELECT
'=INDEX(RawData,ROW(),MATCH(SelectedSort,1:1,0))',
"EMP_INFO_FIXED"."CategoryCode",
'=IF(ISERROR(INDEX(Sheet3!RawData,MATCH("Category"&Category,Sheet3!LookupCode,0),2)),Category,INDEX(Sheet3!RawData,MATCH("Category"&Category,Sheet3!LookupCode,0),2))',
"EMP_INFO_FIXED"."DateEngaged",
"EMP_INFO_FIXED"."DateEngaged_Month",
"EMP_INFO_FIXED"."DateOfBirth",
"EMP_INFO_FIXED"."DateOfBirth_Day",
"EMP_INFO_FIXED"."DateOfBirth_Month",
"EMP_INFO_FIXED"."DepartmentCode",
'=IF(ISERROR(INDEX(Sheet3!RawData,MATCH("Department"&Department,Sheet3!LookupCode,0),2)),Department,INDEX(Sheet3!RawData,MATCH("Department"&Department,Sheet3!LookupCode,0),2))',
'=TEXT(DateOfBirth,"mmmm")',
"EMP_INFO_FIXED"."Emp_PostalCode",
"EMP_INFO_FIXED"."EmployeeAddress_1",
"EMP_INFO_FIXED"."EmployeeAddress_2",
"EMP_INFO_FIXED"."EmployeeAddress_3",
"EMP_EQUITY_INFO"."EmployeeCode",
"EMP_INFO_FIXED"."EmployeeStatus",
"EMP_INFO_FIXED"."EmployeeStatus_Previous",
```

14. You can go through the SQL code to try find the problem, then make the relevant changes to the container (Administrator) of the report (Table joins, Field expressions . . .) or to the Report (Report Manager) itself (Filters, Aggregate Functions . . .)

**NOTE:** You will not be able to edit the SQL code in the Debug mode, you have to correct / make changes to the Container or Report directly.

15. From the SQL Debug window you can  
Test SQL – Test the SQL code to see if it runs out successfully or not  
Continue – To see what the raw data will look like in a Data output window

### Things to Keep in Mind

- When you open the Report Manager it defaults the Output mode to Excel every time, regardless of the state you closed the Report Manager in

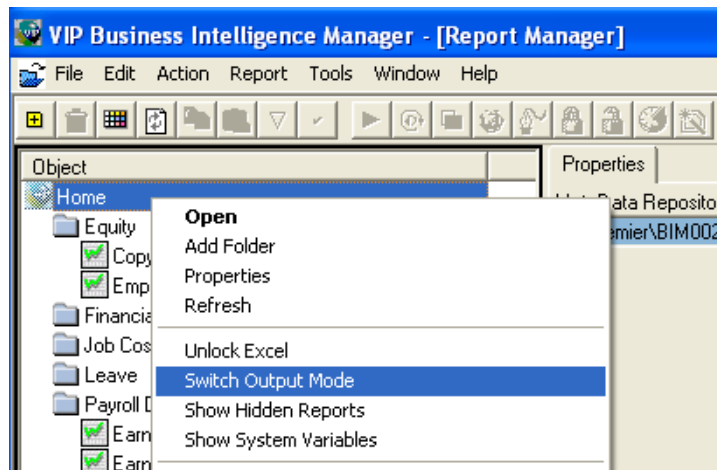
- In a networked environment of BIM, the Output mode you select will only be effective on the PC it was set on

## Viewing the raw data before it's passed through to Excel

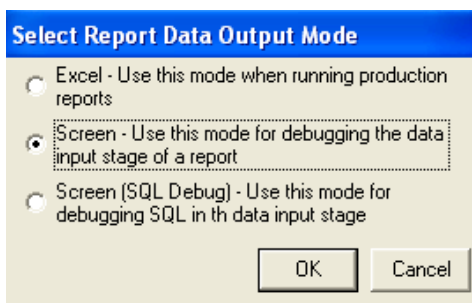
Did you know you can view the raw data of a report before it's passed through to Excel? This can be very useful if you need to quickly check to see if you are getting the right data from your container or that your filters and/or parameters are working correctly without waiting for the data to render into Excel.

### How to Switch the Output Mode to Screen (data view)

16. Open your Report Manager
17. Right click on Home and select "Switch Output Mode"



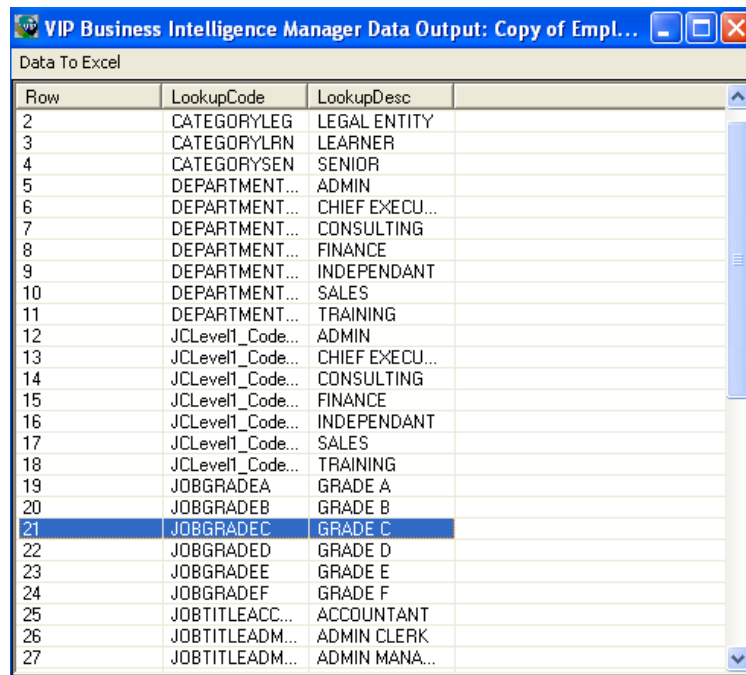
18. Select the "Screen" mode and click OK



19. Now highlight the Report you are working on and run as normal

20. Enter any Parameters the report might have and click OK

21. The Data Output window will popup with the raw data



Row	LookupCode	LookupDesc
2	CATEGORYLEG	LEGAL ENTITY
3	CATEGORYLRN	LEARNER
4	CATEGORYSEN	SENIOR
5	DEPARTMENT...	ADMIN
6	DEPARTMENT...	CHIEF EXECU...
7	DEPARTMENT...	CONSULTING
8	DEPARTMENT...	FINANCE
9	DEPARTMENT...	INDEPENDANT
10	DEPARTMENT...	SALES
11	DEPARTMENT...	TRAINING
12	JCLevel1_Code...	ADMIN
13	JCLevel1_Code...	CHIEF EXECU...
14	JCLevel1_Code...	CONSULTING
15	JCLevel1_Code...	FINANCE
16	JCLevel1_Code...	INDEPENDANT
17	JCLevel1_Code...	SALES
18	JCLevel1_Code...	TRAINING
19	JOBGRADEA	GRADE A
20	JOBGRADEB	GRADE B
21	JOBGRADEC	GRADE C
22	JOBGRADED	GRADE D
23	JOBGRADEE	GRADE E
24	JOBGRADEF	GRADE F
25	JOBTITLEACC...	ACCOUNTANT
26	JOBTITLEADM...	ADMIN CLERK
27	JOBTITLEADM...	ADMIN MANA...

22. You can now easily go through the raw data, sorting fields by clicking on the field headings.

### Things to Keep in Mind

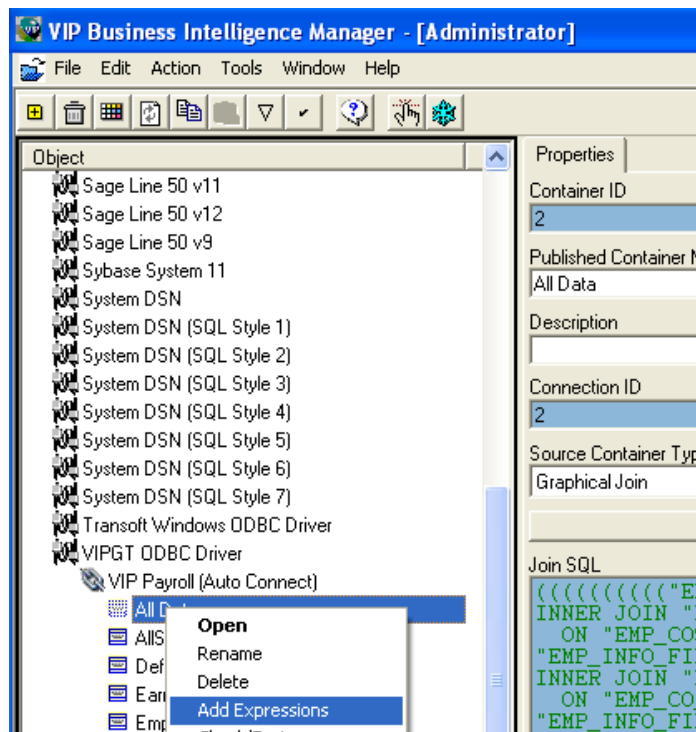
- When you open the Report Manager it defaults the Output mode to Excel every time, regardless of the state you closed the Report Manager in
- In a networked environment of BIM, the Output mode you select will only be affective on the PC it was set on

## Creating Excel Formulae in your Report

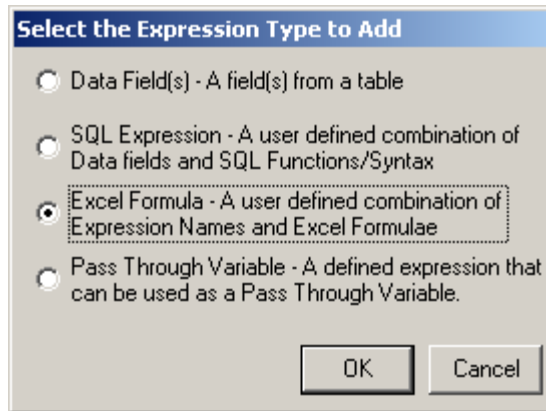
Did you know you can create Excel formulae as data expressions in the Administrator module? This can be very useful if you have a Formula you need to be extended as far down the sheet as the rest of the data.

### How to create an Excel Formula in your Report

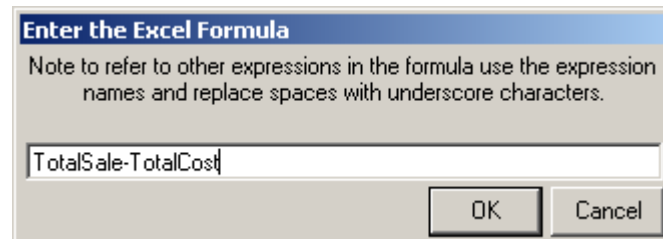
23. Open your Administrator Module and Browse to the container in which you want to add the Excel Formula
24. Right Click on the Container and select *Add Expression*



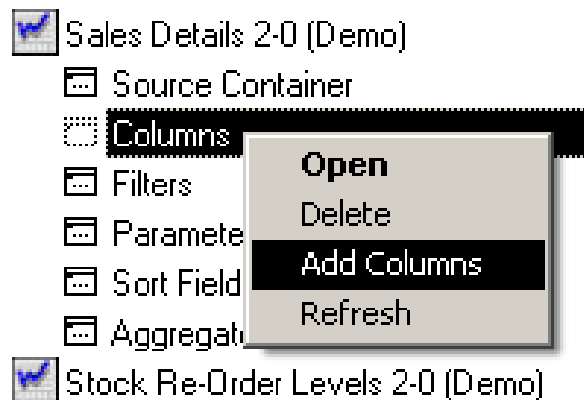
25. Select Excel Formula option.



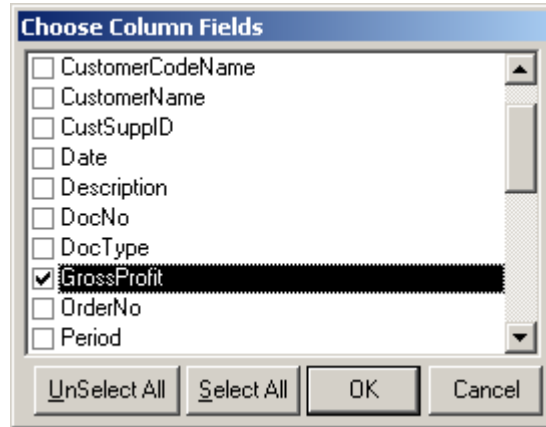
26. Give the Excel Formula a name e.g. “*GrossProfit*” then type in the Excel Formula (**Do Not** put an = sign in front of the formula, BIM automatically puts it in when you run the report), click *OK*



27. Open your Report Manager and Browse to the Report associated to the above container and Double click on it.
28. Right Click on Columns and select *Add Columns*



29. Select the Excel Formula you created and click *OK*



30. Run the report out, you will see your Excel Formula in the Data sheet (e.g. Sheet1)

### **Notes**

- If you create an Excel Formula with a specific cell reference (e.g. Sheet1!A2) it will not be changes as the Formula moves down the rows, (e.g. All the rows Formula will refer to Sheet1!A2). Alternatively you can use the Column reference Sheet1!A:A
- It is advisable to use Named ranges in your Excel Formula
- Alchemex automatically creates a Named Range for each Column in the Data Sheet of a Report based o the name of the Column

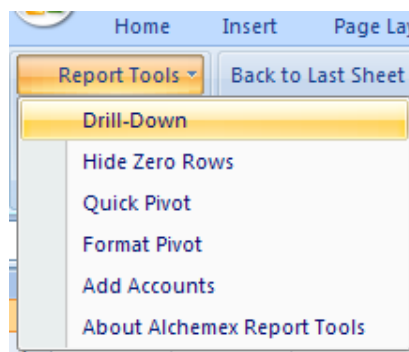
### **Tip**

It is easier to create the Excel Formula on the Data Sheet of a run out report and then copy the Formula back to the Administrator Module.

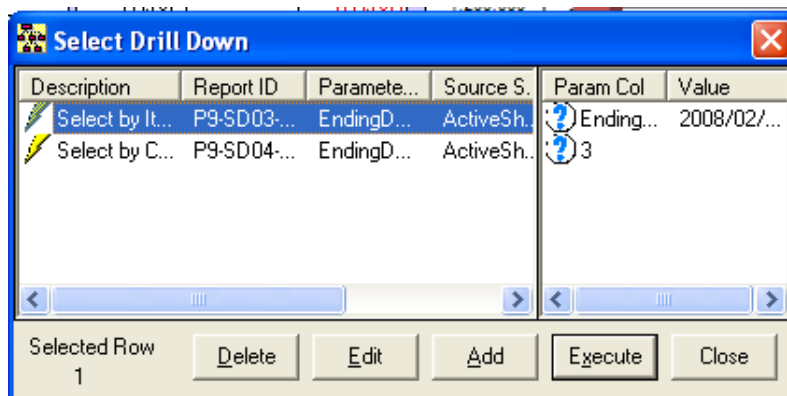
## Configuring Dynamic Drill-Downs

The Drill-Down tool allows you to interrogate data directly from within your Excel Reports. A common scenario might be where one high level BIM Report needs to drill-down to line level transactional Data in other reports. As a fast interrogation method the Drill-Down tool allows individual BIM Reports to be executed with parameters based on Excel Cell values. These reports render their data directly to a fast grid style window or you can opt to drill-down data to your Excel Report Workbook. The fast grid option will however allow you to dump the data into Excel via the data screen menu. In this form a BIM Report definition is being used as the source for an Ad-Hoc data enquiry.

To use the Drill-Down tool locate the "Report Tools" menu on your Excel Menu Bar.



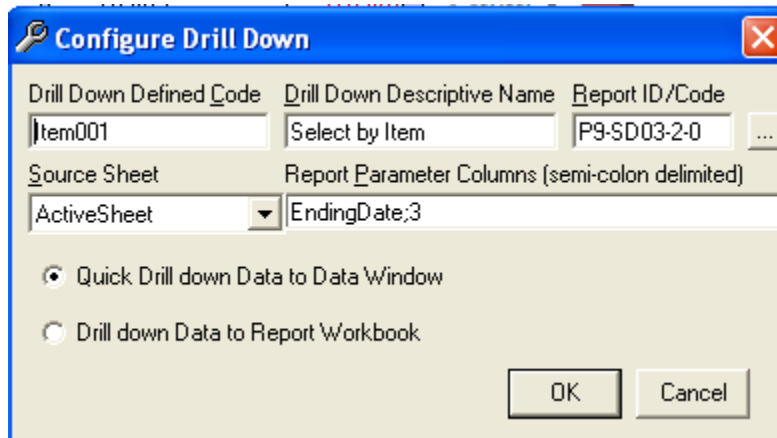
The Drill-Down tool will appear. To execute a pre-configured Drill-Down simply double click on it or select it then select the Execute Button.



To configure a Drill-Down - Select the Drill-Down and select Edit.  
The Configure Drill-Down window will appear. This window is shown below.

To Add a Drill-Down select the Add button and follow the same process outlined below.

**NOTE:** A Drill-Down definition set is contained within an Excel Book or Template. If you change or add a Drill-Down definition in a Report you should link it back to your Report in the Report Manager to keep the changes.



**The Properties of a Drill-Down Definition are listed below: -**

- **Drill-Down Defined Code:** A unique code for the Drill-Down within the Excel Book Drill- Down.
- **Descriptive Name:** A meaningful name used to identify the Drill-Down
- **Report ID/Code:** The BIM Report ID to use for interrogation. The Report ID of a report is listed on the property window of a report in the Report Manager. In Version 6 you are also now able to use the Report Code to specify the report to use for interrogation.
- **Source Sheet:** The Source Sheet used to interrogate from. This is the sheet that has the parameters for the report. This must be the Excel Worksheet name OR the word "ActiveSheet" for the Drill-Down to work from any sheet in the Workbook.
- **Report Parameter Columns:** A semi-colon delimited list of the column numbers or names used to define where to obtain the report parameters from.
- **Quick Drill-Down / Drill-Down to Workbook:** Gives you the choice of having the output displayed in "fast grid" (in a window) or "direct to workbook" style

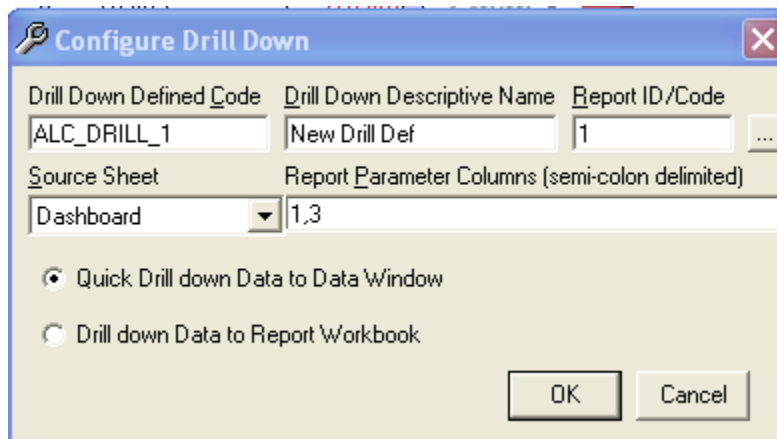
In the example above whenever the Transactions Drill-Down is executed the values from the EndingDate named range and Column 3 will be taken for the active/selected row and passed to the report of ID P9-SD03-2-0. The report will run and render the data to screen. The Data Output screen is shown below (that was the specific option selected)

Row	CategoryID	CategoryName
4	1	Beverages
72	8	Seafood
14	2	Condiments
33	3	Confections
12	1	Beverages
52	5	Grains/Cereals
9	1	Beverages
74	8	Seafood
64	7	Produce
69	8	Seafood
18	2	Condiments
71	8	Seafood

Once viewed, the window can be closed. However if you wish to analyse the data in Excel then use the Data to Excel menu provided to transfer the Data into Excel. A number of options are provided for this.

**To Add a Drill-Down press the Add button and follow the same process outlined below.**

NOTE: A Drill-Down definition set is contained within an Excel Book or Template. If you change or add a Drill-Down definition in a Report you should link it back to your Report in the Report Manager to keep the changes.



The 'Configure Drill Down' dialog box contains the following fields and options:

- Drill Down Defined Code:** ALC\_DRILL\_1
- Drill Down Descriptive Name:** New Drill Def
- Report ID/Code:** 1
- Source Sheet:** Dashboard
- Report Parameter Columns (semi-colon delimited):** 1,3
- Options:**
  - Quick Drill down Data to Data Window
  - Drill down Data to Report Workbook
- Buttons:** OK, Cancel

The Properties of a Drill-Down Definition are listed below: -

- **Drill-Down Defined Code:** A unique code for the Drill-Down within the Excel Book Drill-Down.
- **Descriptive Name:** A meaningful name used to identify the Drill-Down
- **Report ID/Code:** The BIMReport ID to use for interrogation. The Report ID of a report is listed on the property window of a report in the Report Manager. In Version 6 you are also now able to use the Report Code to specify the report to use for interrogation.

- **Source Sheet:** The Source Sheet used to interrogate from. This is the sheet that has the parameters for the report. This must be the Excel Worksheet name OR the word "ActiveSheet" for the Drill-Down to work from any sheet in the Workbook.
- **Report Parameter Columns:** A semi-colon delimited list of the column numbers or names used to define where to obtain the report parameters from.
- **Quick Drill-Down / Drill-Down to Workbook:** Gives you the choice of having the output displayed in "fast grid" (in a window) or "direct to workbook" style

In the example above whenever the Transactions Drill-Down is executed the values from the Columns 1 and 3 will be taken for the active/selected row and passed to the report of ID 1. The report will run and render the data to screen.

## Hide zero rows

Did you know that you can compress a layout to only show the rows that contain values?

Why would you want to do this?

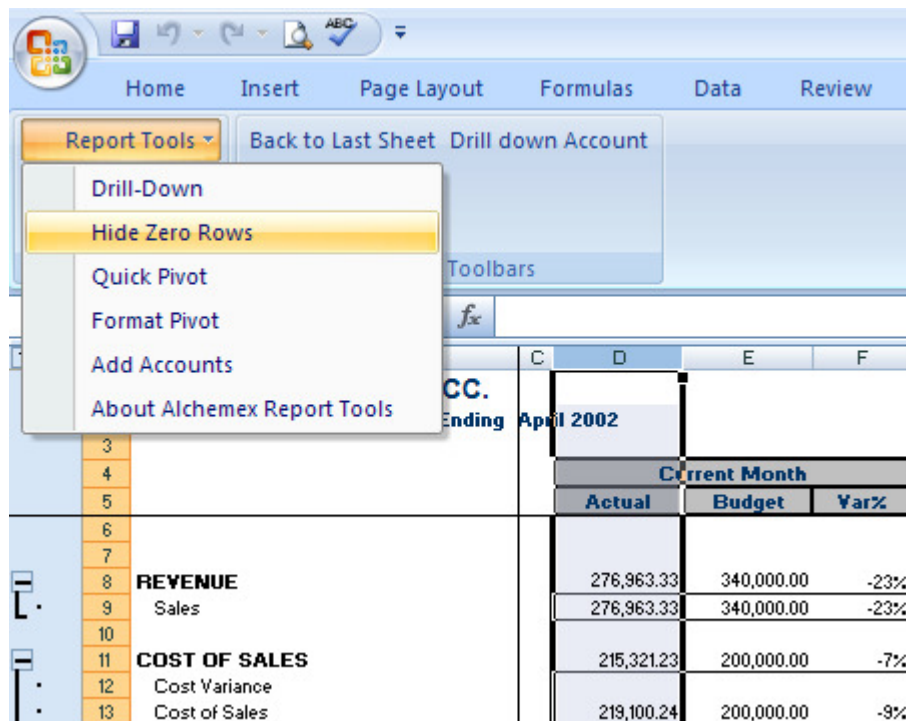
If you have a large general ledger with lots of GL codes and many of them have no balances posted against them, you don't want them to clutter up reports that you may have.

How do I do this?

1. Run out your report from the BIM report manager  
Select the column that you want to hide the zeroes from

		Current Month			YTD		
		Actual	Budget	Var%	Actual	Budget	Var%
April 2002		276 963.33	340 000.00	-23%	1 327 437.53	1 490 500.00	-12%
		276 963.33	340 000.00	-23%	1 327 437.53	1 490 500.00	-12%
		215 321.23	200 000.00	-7%	859 157.94	760 000.00	-12%
		219 100.24	200 000.00	-9%	839 630.29	760 000.00	-9%
		-3 779.01		-100%	19 527.65		-100%
		61 642.10	140 000.00	-127%	468 279.59	730 500.00	-56%
		47 281.64	78 760.00	67%	283 181.46	356 670.00	26%
						3 500.00	
					930.15		-100%
					637.01		-100%
		606.69		-100%	4 218.62	1 800.00	-57%
		501.19	60.00	-88%	984.05	240.00	-76%
		384.89	1 500.00	290%	14 981.25	25 000.00	67%
			500.00		4 134.00	6 500.00	57%
		289.38	500.00	73%	545.69	1 300.00	138%
					5 749.36	10 200.00	77%
		95.51	500.00	424%	4 552.20	7 000.00	54%
		567.10	200.00	-65%	1 611.18	1 700.00	6%
					378.40	300.00	-21%
					1 026.61		-100%
					1 721.99	2 600.00	100%

2. Select the hide zero rows option from the add-ins->report tools menu



3. Confirm or change the column details when prompted and see how the rows are compressed to display a schedule that is compact and shows only relevant data.
4. Note that the rows are hidden, and not deleted so if subsequent journals are posted to accounts that did not have values before, these will not be lost.

As easy as that!

## **BIM Report Writing Best Practices**

The purpose of this document is to provide the best possible guidelines on effective report writing.

**Guidelines are categorized as follows:**

### **Getting Started**

#### **Administration Tool:**

Containers

Joins

Expressions

Lookups

#### **Report Manager:**

Parameters

Union Sub Reports

Advanced Report Properties

#### **Excel Template File:**

Use of VB Code

Use of PivotTables

Page Setup

Page Formats

### **GETTING STARTED:**

Always bare in mind the following key words before, during and on completion of the development of a report:

Automation

Flexibility

Performance

Ease of use for future support/maintenance

## ADMINISTRATOR

### CONTAINERS:

1. Keep the number of reports per container to a minimum. (Eliminates room for error when editing an expression, if numerous reports are using the same container and the same expression, changing the expression for the purpose of one report could result in a negative impact on the other reports)
2. Name containers as per the report name or similar to. (Ease of use in recognizing the contents of the container).
3. Provide meaningful descriptions on containers.
4. Include expressions in the container that may be useful to the client for future use even if they are not required on the report in question.

### JOINS:

1. Use graphical joins unless you require specific clauses with the join
2. Views and stored procedures should only be used if designing a report from a database where such views or stored procedures are standard within the database and not client specific. An exception would be if the need arises for an extremely complex report where the end result cannot be achieved in any other way.

### EXPRESSIONS:

1. Use data fields, sql expressions, and pass through variables as much as possible.
2. Excel Formulas should be a last resort if the end result cannot be achieved through the above-mentioned expression types. (Excel formulas have a negative effect on file size and performance)
3. Provide meaningful names for expressions

### LOOKUPS:

1. Ensure that lookups are working properly on any field used as a parameter on the report and any other fields that may be used as parameters if customizing the report.
2. Where the functionality of the database allows for the use of "Distinct" ensure that lookups display a distinct list of values.
3. Where necessary, set the lookup type to a Customised Sql Statement and customize the statement in order to achieve the preferred end result. The lookup of the expression does not always have to come from the table listed in the Expression source; it can be set to obtain the value from a different table.

## REPORT MANAGER

### PARAMETERS

1. Rename parameter fields (on the parameters properties screen) where necessary to provide more meaningful options to the user at runtime.
2. Set "Parameters on Second Sheet" on. Having the parameter values within the workbook can be extremely useful in report headings.

### UNION REPORTS

1. Where possible place all parameters on the first union sub report which runs. This will eliminate pop ups later in the run process.

Note that Union sub reports run in Reverse Order (LIFO) within a union report.

### UNION SUB REPORTS

1. Hide union sub reports from view – less confusion for clients when running reports.

## EXCEL TEMPLATE FILE

### USE OF VB CODE

1. Keep macros as simple as possible
2. Avoid complex VB code, as this becomes a support issue for future maintenance and is not supported by Alchemex.
3. Make sure of the Add-Ins available in the BIM Report Manager as some may eliminate the need for complex macros.

### PIVOTTABLES

When using a PivotTable in the template file take the following into account:

1. PivotTable Limitations – ensure that you do not display too many row fields that could cause the pivot table limitation to be reached. Use page fields where necessary to further summarise data.
2. When pivoting data from a source data sheet where the data was rendered by BIM, always use the range *Sheetname!RawDataCols*. This will ensure that the full range of data extracted is always available for use within the pivot table. When adding new columns to a report, these new columns of data will then automatically be included in the pivot table range.
3. Turn off the feature "Save data with table layout". This is a pivot table, "table option" which affects file size when turned on resulting in large template files.
4. Use the feature "Clean Template Pivot Fields" in the Report Manager to clear out pivot table items before exporting the report for delivery. This will ensure that the user of the report does not view items within the pivot table that were used in development of the report.

## PAGE SETTINGS

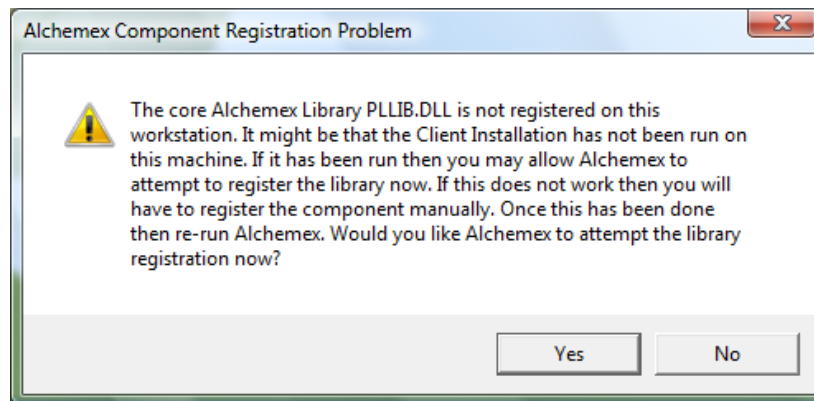
1. Set the following footers on each page:
  - At the bottom left, set the date and time
  - At the bottom right, set page numbering
2. Set print titles to have row headings repeated at the top of each page
3. Set print titles to have columns repeated at the left of each page where necessary
4. Preview the report and adjust the scaling where necessary
5. Reset margins where necessary

## OTHER PAGE FORMATTING

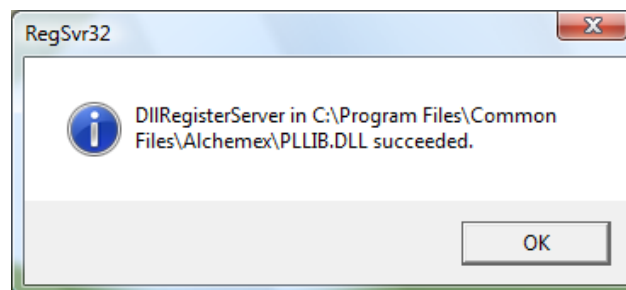
1. Set report headings at the top of each worksheet that is used as a final end result
  - Include parameter values within the report headings where necessary
2. Set "Freeze Panes" to enable easy scrolling around the worksheet without losing view of report headings, etc.
3. Hide the display of zero values on the worksheets
4. Hide the display of gridlines on the worksheets
5. Adjust the zoom display if necessary but to a minimum of 75%.

## Installing VIP BIM on Windows Vista

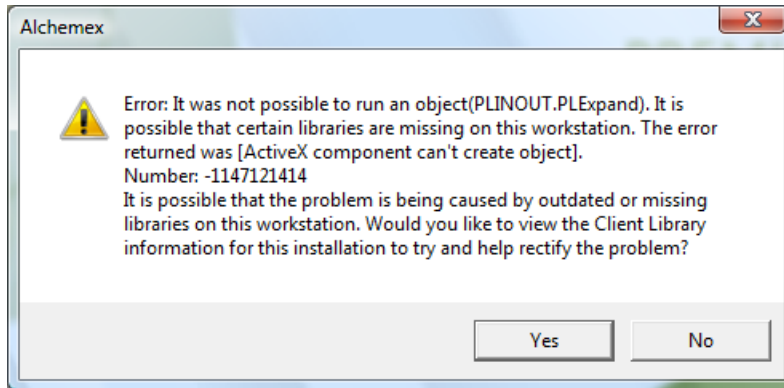
After doing a standard VIP install, including options for BIM, when launching BIM, you get the following error.



Choose "Yes"

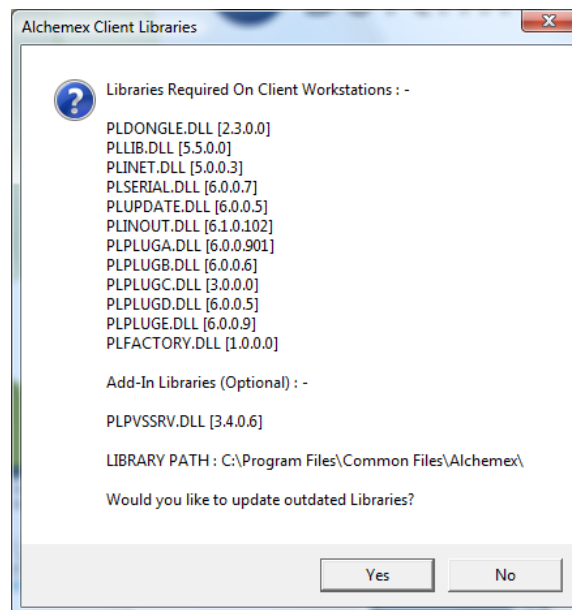


After successful registration of above DLL, launch BIM again, you get the following error.

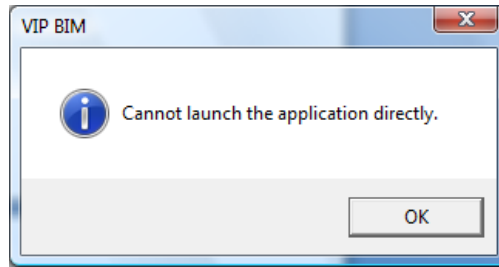


Choose "Yes"

You then get the following message.



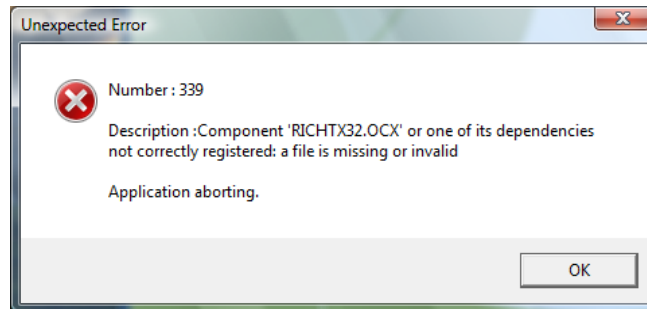
If you choose "Yes" and get the following message,



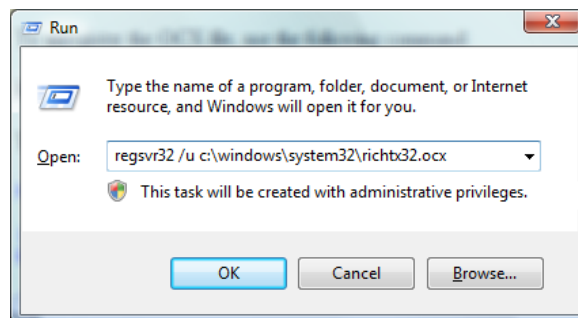
Then run BIMUTils.exe from the Premier\VIPBIM folder.

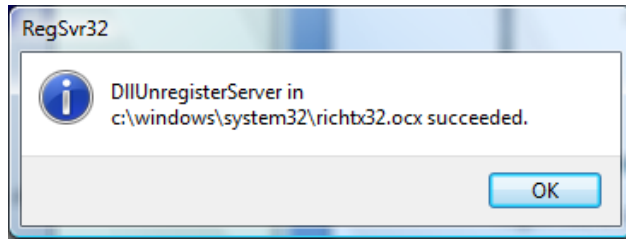
Choose the “Register VIP BIM DLL’s” option

After registering all DLL’s you might get the following Active X error.

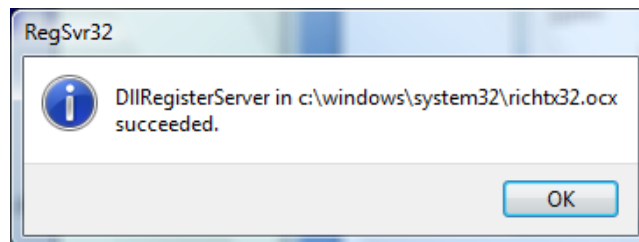
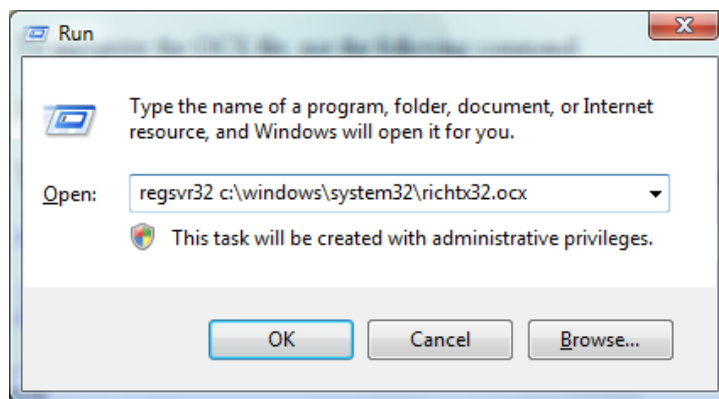


First unregister the control using: `regsvr32 /u c:\windows\system32\richx32.ocx`

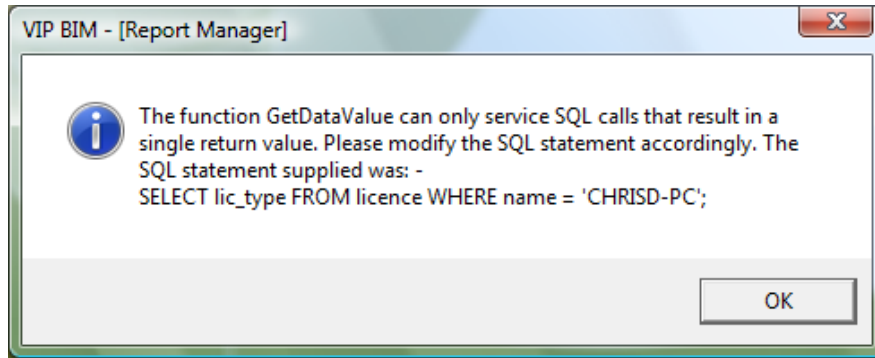




The register the contol again using: `regsvr32 c:\windows\system32\richtx32.ocx`



If you get the following error, ODBC drivers haven't been installed.



Install ODBC drivers again.

BIM should now work on Windows Vista

If you get an error regarding ODBC drivers not being installed, this might be due to BIM not picking up the ODBC driver. There is a new EXE for this, which can be obtained from Special Solutions.

## Useful Contacts

Special Solutions	021 – 420 7234
Website	<a href="http://www.vippayroll.co.za">www.vippayroll.co.za</a>
Email	<a href="mailto:odbc@vippayroll.co.za">odbc@vippayroll.co.za</a>
BIM Forum	<a href="http://www.alchemex-forum.com">www.alchemex-forum.com</a>