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Sage MAS 90 Tip

Here's how to use Business Alerts to email a group of invoices to a customer. Start the Customer Notification of New Invoices sample process. Then,

- ① Double-click to open the **Process Properties** window.
 - ② Click on the **Steps** tab and select **Monitor an OLE DB Data Source**.
 - ③ Click **Edit**, then the **Step** tab.
 - ④ Click **Edit** and for the **Group By** field select "AR4_Open-Invoice" Customer Number.
 - ⑤ Click **OK**.
- You're finished.

Software Maintenance Subscriptions

See page 4 for more info!

The Bill Of Materials Module Not Just For Manufacturing

Generally regarded as a manufacturing tool, the Sage MAS 90 ERP Bill of Materials module is very useful for companies that perform simple assembly such as grouping together several items in a package. Think of industries that sell gift baskets, tool kits, storage containers with lids, craft supplies, and hardware sold with fittings—all consist of bills—a collection of items sold as a single item. Let's take a look at what the Bill of Materials module has to offer.

Consider ABC Company that sells gift baskets. ABC buys raw materials for these gift baskets in bulk, and then assembles the finished products to sell. Few of us would think of this company as a manufacturer, yet the Bill of Materials module is a great fit for this type of distributor.

Why Use Bill Of Materials?

ABC Company sells a gift basket that includes: the basket, flowers, a stuffed toy, a card, and the cellophane and ribbons to wrap it. This Gift Basket is set up as a bill of materials, with the components being the items that make up the basket. It wouldn't be efficient for an order entry clerk to enter every component into the sales order, nor would the customer need to see those components; they're just buying a Gift Basket.

Pick And Choose Options

What happens when one of ABC's customers wants a green basket instead of blue, or a stuffed dog instead of a bear? That's where the Bill of Materials module's **Options** come in. By setting up various options for its bills, ABC can accommodate variations in the basic bill without setting up multiple bills to represent minor changes. During Sales Order Entry, ABC's staff can enter a bill and then configure that bill by selecting the options established for the bill. The result is a clean, intuitive interface for ABC's staff, and an efficient, effective inventory and order entry system for the company.



Companies that assemble several items into a package for resale also can benefit from the Bill of Materials module.

A bill can have up to nine **Option Categories** (color, size, etc.) and each option category can include any number of specific

options selected when the bill is processed. If you wish, you can designate an option category as required—this will force the user to select from the available options for that category. An option may increase or decrease the bill's unit price, and the Bill of Materials module allows you to account for both possibilities.

The multiple available options for a bill can present some special situations. For example, the choice of a particular option may require you to add or subtract another component from the bill.

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Bill Of Materials CONTINUED

The Bill of Materials module provides for this through Option Interaction Maintenance. Here you list component items, comment lines, or a miscellaneous charge to be added or subtracted from the base bill when a particular combination of options is selected.

Accounting For Costs

There's labor involved in assembling the gift basket—someone gathers the items, arranges them in the basket, wraps the basket in cellophane, and ties the ribbon around it. The Bill of Materials module lets ABC account for that labor by adding a Miscellaneous Charge code to its bills. ABC Company could incorporate an overhead cost or a setup charge into its bills in the same fashion. The cost of the gift basket then is the sum of its components, plus the sum of the miscellaneous charges ABC has assigned to it. The Bill of Materials module makes it easy for ABC to accurately state the cost of every item it sells.

Yield And Scrap

With most manufacturing processes, and in many of the quick assembly type processes there is waste. For ABC Company it may be that the ribbon they buy comes in lengths of 30 inches, but each basket only needs 24 inches. The Bill of Materials module **Scrap** accommodation allows ABC company to account for that scrap in the bill's components.

The Bill of Materials module also has built-in accommodation for **Yield** calculation, allowing for the accurate projection of material requirements. Both the Yield and Scrap accommodations can be used within a single bill.

Using Kit Bills In Sales Order

Many assembly-type companies, such as our ABC Company have simple, single-level bills that they use to define a group of items that are commonly sold as a single unit. Kit Bills or Sales Kits are an efficient way to configure these types of bills in the Bill of Materials module. Kit bills can be either assembled during the order picking process, or they can be assembled during the manufacturing process.

For companies that do not preassemble and stock completed goods, Kit bills are ideal,

since they are entered on a Sales Order. You can “explode” the bill, to detail the components that make up the bill. You may then add or delete components or change their quantities. You can even tell the system whether or not to print the individual components on the forms. As that Sales Order Invoice is updated, it is the individual components, not the bill item that are removed from inventory. A Kit bill is the only bill type that can be used in this way in the Sales Order module. Note that a Kit bill can only contain inventory items and comment lines, not miscellaneous charges.

Building A Bill

Typically manufacturers and businesses choosing to stock sales kits in the same manner that regular manufactured items are stocked will use the **Production Entry** task in the Bill of Materials module. It is here that you enter the bill item you have built and in what quantity. Here too, the bill is exploded into its components, and you may adjust them as necessary. When you update the **Production Entry Register**, the assembled bills are recorded, the completed bills are received into inventory, and all components are relieved from inventory.

Reporting

The Bill of Materials module includes a number of valuable reports to help companies manage their manufacturing process. Several of those reports would also be useful to our ABC Company.

The **Gross Requirements Report** lists the total component quantities required to make a certain number of selected bills. You enter the bill number, revision number, options, quantity to be produced, and the component warehouse and the report details the quantity required, quantity available, and quantity short for each component.

If our ABC Company were to learn that their supply of teddy bears was drying up, it would be helpful to know which gift baskets used that component item. The **Where-Used** report lists all bills that contain a specified component item, and the quantity used in produc-

tion. There is also a **Where-Used** inquiry option that provides much the same information in a quick on-screen view.

Labels

Production Label Printing allows you to produce labels for the items you manufacture or assemble. Those labels can include all applicable information, and can even include bar-coded fields as required by your operation.

Interface With Other Modules

The **Inventory Management** module is required for the Bill of Materials module to function. This integration allows you to track the issue and receipt of inventory items. As components are used in production entry, those usage entries are recorded as issue transactions in Inventory. Your production entries for parent items are recorded as receipt transactions.

You can integrate the Bill of Materials module with the **Sales Order** module. This adds the ability to sell Sales Kits or Kit Bills. When using Sales Order Entry and Sales Order Invoice Data Entry, the system commits and relieves all components in a kit. The cost of goods sold associated with the sales kit is determined by the total cost of all component items. The price of the kit is calculated as the standard price for the item plus the total of all applicable option prices specified for each selected option code. Any discount or price adjustment that applies to the customer is based on this calculated price. The cost for individual components is determined by the costing method used by each component.

The Bill of Materials module also integrates with the **Work Order** and **Material Requirements Planning (MRP)** modules to provide a comprehensive manufacturing solution.

Is It Right For You?

We've just given you a general overview of the capabilities of the Bill of Materials module in an effort to demonstrate its value to non manufacturers as well as manufacturers. We'd love to help you determine if this module is a good fit for your organization, please give us a call. ☆

FRx Add-On Solutions

Many of you are familiar with the financial reporting power of FRx. A single-user copy of this industry-standard report writer is included with the Sage MAS 90 ERP General Ledger module. FRx helps simplify the design and production of even the most complex financial reports, but are you aware that it also offers tools to make sharing those reports simple and efficient? There are many options available for distributing and sharing your FRx reports, and we've provided an overview of some of the additional functionality available to Sage MAS 90 and FRx users below.

DrillDown Viewer

The FRx **DrillDown Viewer** simplifies online report viewing. You can distribute this viewer with your reports, allowing others to view the report without access to your data, and without requiring that they run FRx. Using the FRx Drill-Down Viewer, you can allow your report recipients to drill down from the summary level all the way down to core transaction level detail, answering their own questions. With FRx Drill-Down Viewer you can generate a single, comprehensive report and comfortably send it to all report reviewers. Security rights are predefined and each recipient can access only the information allowed under their viewing rights. Drill-Down Viewer licenses are sold individually, with a price break for quantities above 50.

Report Launcher

You will likely have personnel who need to generate and view FRx reports, but do not require the ability to create new or modify existing reports. For these users, the **Report Launcher** is less expensive than buying a full Desktop user license. Using the Report Launcher, users can modify report properties including the report date and output format, but cannot change the report design. The DrillDown Viewer is included in the Report Launcher license. The FRx Report Launcher is ideal for executives, managers, and others who need quick access to the information in commonly used company reports. Report Launcher licenses are sold individually.

Report Server Engine

If timesaving automation appeals to you, the Report Server Engine is sure to please. This tool allows you to schedule automated report generation on a dedicated server or PC. By sending your reports to the FRx Report Server for processing, you free your workstation from that overhead. The reports generated can be automatically emailed in a variety of formats to the finance department, department managers, and



The FRx DrillDown Viewer simplifies online report viewing and allows you to easily share online reports with others.

others. The Report Server Engine is sold on a per-machine basis.

Web Servers And Viewers

The **WebView Server** is a fabulous tool to provide to your remote or mobile users, your accounting firm, even select customers. It allows users to view generated FRx reports from a browser, over the Internet or Intranet. Full drilldown capabilities are available from the browser view, but users are unable to make changes to the reports. No client software is required, making it simple and easy to share. Each WebView Server is bundled with 20 viewers and additional WebView Viewers can be purchased in blocks of 10.

The **WebPort Server** is an extension of the

WebView Server and is a financial portal that allows you to publish, store, and manage FRx reports via the Web. It provides both report administration and report viewing online via a Web browser. In addition to FRx reports, WebPort Server also can store and view other documents and files such as Microsoft Word and Excel files, Adobe Acrobat documents, and OLAP cube files.

FRx Professional


FRx Professional is available as an upgrade from your FRx Desktop version. It includes two Designers, four Report Launchers, eight Drill-down viewers, and ten WebView Viewers with the WebView Server and Report Server. An ideal combination of tools for the power user.

FRx Forecaster

FRx **Forecaster** is a Web-based budgeting and planning tool that includes helpful wizards and intuitive planning screens making it easy to learn and use. With automated functions and streamlined data entry screens, and integration with the Sage MAS 90 General Ledger module, Forecaster will help your company to budget and plan quickly. Forecaster is available as a single-user server or five-user server with single-user add-ons available.

Reporting Power To Share

With the flexible design of FRx, you can measure the financial health of your organization more efficiently and more often. You can track key performance goals in real time, generate customized reports on-the-fly, and perform complex consolidations with just a few mouse clicks. A single-user copy of **FRx Desktop** is bundled with your Sage MAS 90 General Ledger module. It allows you to design, generate, and view financial reports. Additional seats are available for purchase in three-user increments. Each of the other viewing and distribution options described here is available to you as well. Give us a call for full details and pricing.

We would like to help you learn more about FRx and the powerful add-on tools available. Please call us for additional information or training on FRx. 

The Wisdom Of Software Maintenance Subscriptions

Phil Martin, Founder and Director of Software Development



Phil Martin

When Sage Software first introduced the annual Software Maintenance Subscription Plan some years ago, frankly, we didn't like it. Up to that point, version upgrades had been priced individually and were an optional investment. Now our customers were being asked to pay in advance for version upgrades that might contain features they wouldn't opt for otherwise.

At the same time, and seemingly unrelated, we were experiencing an occasional loss of a long term Sage MAS 90 or Sage MAS 200 customer to a competitive product. While things like this are certainly not uncommon in the software business, we made an important new discovery. These customers had become disenchanted with Sage MAS 90 over the years and had replaced their software with another mid-range accounting product with similar capability. They were paying the acquisition cost of a brand new product, plus the expense of retraining, and were subjecting themselves to the uncertainties of a conversion and a future of using an unfamiliar tool to run their business. Why?

The answer has a lot to do with making periodic maintenance investments in software assets. Almost every one of the customers who had spent so much money to buy a new accounting system shared something in common. They had not kept their Sage MAS 90 software at the current version. Over the years, new features and improvements in functionality had been added both to Sage MAS 90 and to competitive products. Six or eight years can be a lifetime for a software product. It isn't hard to become disenchanted with vintage software when comparing it to current technology and the prevailing set of features and functions that have come to be expected.

The solution turns out to be the Software Maintenance Subscription Plan. It keeps the software new. For a predictable amount that can be budgeted each year, the software is updated every time a new product version is released. In six or eight years, the customer will still have brand new competitive Sage MAS 90 software that is comparable to any current product in the market. It will be using current technology with the latest look-and-feel and will deliver all of the expected integrations, ease-of-use, and processing capabilities.

Here's Why You Should Be On The Software Maintenance Subscription Plan

1. The software stays current and competitive with comparable products available in the market place, year after year.
2. The cost to maintain the software is predictable and can be budgeted.
3. Typically, in six to eight years, the cumulative annual cost of the Software Maintenance Subscription Plan will approximate the new acquisition purchase price. However, the software is updated with each release and is the most current version during each year of the period. On the other hand, if new software is acquired every six to eight years, it is current for only one year during the life of the product.
4. Assuming a six to eight year life cycle, the entire replacement cost must be funded at the time of acquisition if purchasing new software. With the Software Maintenance Subscription Plan, the replacement cost is distributed over each year of the product's life and the new product is already paid for when it is time to be replaced.
5. There is no need for a system-wide conversion or major retraining to get the latest in software capability. Changes from year-to-year are easily absorbed and implemented into the workflow.



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