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Headline News

Sage MAS 90 ERP earned a perfect Five Star rating in the annual Review of Mid-Range Accounting Systems published in the September 2006 issue of *The CPA Technology Advisor*.

Sage MAS 90 earned the highest possible score in each of the evaluation categories: Ease of Use/Transaction Entry, Modules & Notable Features, Integration/Import/Export, Reporting, Support/Training/Help System, and Relative Value.

Software Utilization

See page 4 for more info!

End-To-End Business Solutions

To stay competitive as the business environment becomes more crowded, successful organizations continually evaluate their processes for areas of improvement. End-to-end system integration can reduce operating costs, enhance customer service, and increase staff productivity.

You use a number of business processes. Which processes are you still performing manually? Which business processes have you automated? Does information and data flow between your automated systems?

When looking to enhance your business processes two key areas to consider are: Automating Manual Processes and Connecting Automated Processes.

Automating Manual Processes

The first step in achieving end-to-end integration of your business processes is to automate existing manual processes. Let's take a look at some of the many automation solutions available from Sage Software and its business partners.

Core Accounting

Accounting is usually one of the first areas to be automated. As a result, you may not have



Which of these business processes are applicable to your organization? Are they automated and does information flow smoothly between them?

reviewed the efficiency of these processes for a while. How effective is your budgeting process? Does your financial reporting enhance decision making? Are your receivables collected on a timely basis? Consider using FRx Financial Reporter for automated report distribution and budgeting and Sage FAS Asset Accounting for asset accounting and depreciation.

Sage Extended Solutions include solutions to facilitate electronic payments, multi-company transactions, royalty tracking, commission enhancements, document management, and more.

Sage Software Business Partner solutions include multi-currency, property management, requisitions, vendor rebates, and many more.

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Distribution

If your business includes buying and reselling products, are your shipping and receiving processes as efficient as they could be? Are you carefully managing your inventory to avoid excess inventory while ensuring that product is available to meet customer demand? Consider adding solutions to increase your processing efficiency and reduce fulfillment costs, such as:

- ▶ Sage MAS 90 Modules: Bar Code, Credit Card Processing, RMA (Return Merchandise Authorization)
- ▶ Sage Extended Solutions: electronic document delivery and an On Demand Sales Order Fill report
- ▶ Sage Software Business Partner solutions: warehouse transfers, multiple bin locations, radio frequency warehouse automation, EDI (electronic data interchange), and route sales

Customer Relationship Management

Today, more and more companies are competing for the same customers. Tracking prospects through the sales cycle is critical to closing business. Sage Software offers three industry-leading products with varying levels of functionality. If you already own a Contact Management solution such as ACT! by Sage, it might be time to consider upgrading to a customer relationship management (CRM) solution. With Sage CRM or Sage CRM SalesLogix you can take advantage of sophisticated lead tracking and customer service tools.

Resource And Project Tracking

New labor force regulations are signed into law on a regular basis. Do you have the tools you need to stay in compliance? Is payroll a headache each pay period? Do you manually enter employee hours? Are your tax deposits paid on time?

If you track projects, do your systems automatically record labor costs so you can ensure projects remain profitable?

Sage Software offers three choices in payroll solutions for Sage MAS 90 (see article page 3 for more information), as well as Sage Abra HRMS for workforce management and compliance, and Sage TimeSheet online time col-

lection. There is an Extended Solution for the electronic delivery of invoices, and partner solutions for project accounting and service management.

Manufacturing

If you are a manufacturer, fully automating this process can result in enormous savings and may speed your time to market. It might be time to review your operation and see if you can benefit from the products available, such as the Sage MAS 90 Material Requirements Planning and Work Order modules. Expanded decimal precision is offered from Sage Extended Solutions.

Sage Software Business Partners offer solutions such as custom product configuration, job shop management, recipes, scheduling, rental management, and multi-bin management.

E-commerce

E-commerce used to simply mean having a Web storefront or the ability to send or receive an EDI transmission. Today it can mean much more. Self-service portals for customers and employees can provide dramatic improvements in productivity, because your staff will experience fewer interruptions to handle routine status inquiries. The Sage MAS 90 e-Business Manager module includes the following self-service portal applets that all run on the same underlying web engine: **.store**, **.order**, and **.inquiry**. There are also Sage Extended Solutions for adding ship-to addresses and bill of materials options to the above applets. Other Sage Extended Solutions for e-commerce include **Internet.Sales** (for salespeople), **.vendor** (for vendor self-service), and **.timecard** (for Web-based time entry).

Connecting Current Processes

Once the optimum software solutions are in place, you'll want to make sure data is flowing between them to create a true end-to-end solution. Integration eliminates duplicate entry, reduces potential errors, saves time, increases data integrity, and enhances reporting and business intelligence capabilities for better decision making. Many Sage Software products connect together to create an end-to-end solution. Let's take a look at areas where interconnectivity can

make your business processes more efficient.

Distribution to Accounting: Fulfilled orders and received shipments can post automatically to the receivables and payables systems, with accounting personnel having access to complete shipping information, such as package tracking numbers, serial numbers, and ship-to addresses. Credit card transactions can flow into the cash receipts system and post automatically against customer invoices.

E-commerce to Distribution and Accounting: Orders placed online can flow automatically into your fulfillment system, allowing for appropriate verification and check points. Credit card transactions can automatically flow from the Web into orders and cash receipts.

Manufacturing to Distribution and CRM:

When a production cycle is complete, you can automatically fulfill the customer orders in the distribution system. Your sales and customer service employees can query the manufacturing system for the availability of products. Your purchasing department can have access to the information about the raw materials needed for the next production run.

CRM to Accounting and Distribution: When you close a sale, your prospect becomes a customer. All the information about the prospect can flow into the customer records in accounting, and the products sold can become an order in your distribution system.

Resource Management to Manufacturing:

Employee time entries can flow into payroll, manufacturing, and projects.

If automation or end-to-end connectivity is missing from any of these areas in your organization, or one we haven't mentioned here, give us a call to discuss how we can help make your organization more efficient and profitable.

Now Is The Time To Act

As the year comes to a close and you conduct your business planning for the upcoming year, it's a great time to reevaluate potential inefficiencies in your business processes. Give us a call today to discuss your needs in creating a fully optimized end-to-end solution for your business. ★

Which Payroll Solution Is The Best Fit For My Business?

Challenges with payroll tax compliance are significant these days. There are over 10,000 taxing agencies in the U.S. constantly changing regulations and penalties (up to 11 percent of payroll tax deposit) for late or missed payments. While processing payroll is a necessary part of every business, maximizing efficiency is essential to control costs. What is the best payroll solution for your company?

Sage Software offers three choices in payroll solutions. There are two in-house options: the Sage MAS 90 Payroll and Sage Abra HRMS Payroll modules, and one outsourced option, Web-based Sage Payroll Services.

To help you to determine which product offers the best solution for your organization, we will take a look at the strengths of each solution in turn and why it may be the best solution for your company.

Basic Payroll Features

All Sage Software payroll solutions, whether in-house or outsourced, provide a robust set of basic capabilities for payroll processing. These include:

- ▶ Multiple department with security by department
- ▶ Earning and deduction tracking—automatic application of multiple earnings and deductions
- ▶ Benefit tracking such as 401(k), cafeteria plans, and fringe
- ▶ Print checks from multiple bank accounts, on blank (requires MICR font) or pre-printed stock or on direct deposit stubs
- ▶ 941 Report
- ▶ W-2 printing
- ▶ U.S. Federal and state tax table updates
- ▶ Integration with general ledger, human resource, and time-sheet solutions from Sage Software

Now let's take a look at the features of the three solutions from Sage Software.

Sage MAS 90 Payroll Module

Companies choosing the Sage MAS 90 Payroll module typically administer payroll from within the accounting department and enjoy the flexibility of processing payroll in house.

The Sage MAS 90 Payroll module is often

the best choice for construction and job shop organizations or companies that pay salesperson commissions. Companies that need to report tips also find it a good choice. Some features of this solution are:

- ▶ Certified Payroll (with Timecard module)
- ▶ Job Cost integration allows labor entries to post to both Payroll and Job Cost
- ▶ Account Receivable module integration allows commissions to be calculated and paid during the regular payroll run
- ▶ Supports tip reporting and minimum wage adjustment for restaurant and hospitality industry employees
- ▶ Expense and tax accruals are based on pay period ending date, allowing a percentage of time to post to previous month.

Sage Abra HRMS Payroll

Companies choosing the Sage Abra HRMS Payroll module typically have dedicated staff responsible only for payroll processing, and have complex tax reporting needs, such as multiple local tax jurisdictions within multiple states, multiple garnishments, or require employee self-service capabilities.

Here are some of the features and functionality of the Sage Abra Payroll module.

- ▶ Maintain rate information for over 4000 local taxation entities
- ▶ Calculate an unlimited number of local taxes per employee
- ▶ Supports annual pay rates
- ▶ Allows you to view accrual balances during time entry to prevent overpayment of benefits
- ▶ Performs gross-up calculations
- ▶ Calculates wage garnishments as a percent of disposable or net income
- ▶ Support for secondary jobs
- ▶ Detailed labor history
- ▶ Attach documents to employee records, such as W-4 forms, and store them electronically for easy retrieval, removing the need to store paper copies
- ▶ Report against multiple EINs in one company or database
- ▶ Add-on option available to print signature on checks
- ▶ Over 100 standard reports

Sage Payroll Services

This online outsourcing option is perfect for companies whose accounting personnel lack the time or knowledge to track changing compliance issues and tax liability. Your organization's responsibility is limited to recording an employee's hours worked and applying appropriate earnings and benefit codes and submitting the information on time. Entries are made real-time through your Web browser, making this a true online payroll solution.

Sage Payroll Services performs all the back-end processing: updates year-to-date balances, creates the direct deposit or prints the checks, produces the reports, handles the tax filing and produces W-2s, and performs year-end processing.

Sage Payroll Services manages all the tax calculations, tracks and applies tax rate changes, and submits payroll tax deposits, ensuring your organization will not get hit with penalties resulting from late or incorrect tax liability payments.

With Sage Payroll Services you still retain full control of processing. Multi-level security is provided, and payroll information can be reviewed in real-time before committing the payroll.

Additional features and benefits of the Sage Payroll Services solution include:

- ▶ Reduced capital and IT costs
- ▶ Time clock interface
- ▶ Check signing
- ▶ Integration with the Sage MAS 90 General Ledger module and with Sage Abra HRMS
- ▶ 24x7 access to data
- ▶ Real-time reporting and report archive
- ▶ On-demand check printing from the desktop
- ▶ Full data download—download complete payroll history at any time

Please give us a call for a review and recommendation of the ideal payroll solution for your business. ★

Not Getting What You Expected From Your Software? Part 2 of a 2-Part Series

Phil Martin, Founder and Director of Software Development



Phil Martin

Last issue we learned that not getting what you expect from your software is probably not the software's fault. We talked about individual user training and in this part, we'll examine software utilization at the organizational level. Certainly, these two are tightly intertwined; insufficient employee training will most likely result in ineffective utilization company wide. For this discussion, we're going to look at the business' processes and procedures.

The foundation for a successful and thriving operation includes good employees and good work flow. How about software? Well, weren't there successful businesses before the advent of accounting software? Arguably, a computer based accounting system is not a required building block. Such systems are tools, however, and we know that good employees work better and more efficiently with good tools. Successful and thriving are relative terms in a competitive business environment where employees and processes that can handle higher volumes with fewer errors and greater efficiencies are an advantage. Would anyone want to run a business of any size today without a computer based accounting system?

One benefit of accounting software is the intrinsic discipline built into the product. The way the software works defines its operating procedures. But what determines whether or not the software delivers the expected results? It's how well the business implements the software's operating procedures and integrates them with work flow processes to meet the organization's business requirements. The software's selectable operating parameters and the set of operational procedures available with the software must be matched to the businesses' work flow processes to get the expected results.

Initial software selection and implementation should include a System Review to identify business requirements and work flow processes. This becomes the criteria for setting up the system's optional parameters and selecting the appropriate set of software procedures. Over time, a business will change. Software procedure utilization can get out of sync with the ebb and flow of changing operational requirements. A periodic Systems Review will identify inefficiencies and misapplied software procedures.

A System Review analyzes business requirements, examines work flow processes, and develops functional specifications for automating accounting processes. Implementing the recommendations of a System Review is the way to insure that you are getting what you expect from your software.

Here Are The Benefits Of A System Review:

1. Identifies baseline requirements for software selection and initial system implementation.
2. Provides an analysis of business requirements and work flow processes.
3. Recommends changes or affirms existing software and procedures to meet business requirements.
4. Insures proper utilization of software.



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