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From the Sept. 2007 Issue

I may be dating myself, but my first job out of school used a computer as large as my home office. The workstations themselves took up an entire office. And the floppy disks were as large as the mouse pad that now sits next to my laptop.

Yet today, as I finished up the Mid-Range Accounting product reviews, I realized that I can access powerful accounting software from the neighborhood coffee shop, directly from my laptop.

Things have indeed changed.

We've seen tremendous movement in the software industry over the last 30 years. Even small to midsize businesses have come to realize the advantages of running a solid accounting and financial software product. Features that previously were available only in high-end software products are now available at a fraction of the cost. Today, with the excellent selection of accounting and financial products available, there's really no excuse for not getting a solid software program that can help your business grow.

But where exactly do you start?

One of the most important things to consider when choosing a software product is how well it can transition with your business.

Click Mid-range financial software fills a special niche in business today. Designed for to pick up where entry-level software products leave off, mid-range products full can run the gamut from 'fill-in-the-gap' functionality to a product that will image.continue to grow and expand along with your business.

A typical small to midsize business may look to replace its financial software for a

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in smaller companies. While there are numerous things to consider when purchasing software, we narrowed our focus down to the following six areas:

Ease of Use/Transaction Entry

Ease of use is totally subjective and may be the most difficult category to pin down. What's comfortable for me may not be comfortable for another end user. That's why visits to the vendor's websites and demo downloads are important. Transaction entry looks at data-entry screens, real-time versus batch processing, and how easy (or not) it is to process a simple transaction.

Modules & Notable Features

What modules are included with the software? What additional modules are available? What makes this software stand out from the competition, if anything?

Integration/Import/Export

Do all of the modules work together? What other products will integrate with the software? Can you easily import or export data?

Reporting

Reporting is an important category to consider when upgrading software. Many businesses upgrade their software solely on the fact that they need more sophisticated reporting capabilities.

Support/Training/Help System

This is another area that is difficult to gauge, particularly the area of support. I can tell you about the various options available, but support quality is truly determined when it's needed.

Relative Value

The relative value is measured not just in software cost but in what a product offers

in long-term value, as well.

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Cougar Mountain Software — Cougar Mountain Professional Accounting

The latest version of Cougar Mountain Professional Accounting (Version 12) is due to be released by the time this issue goes to press. Designed for small to mid-sized businesses, Cougar Mountain offers a modular program that you can add to as needed.

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[Review](#)

CYMA Systems, Inc. — CYMA Accounting For Windows

Since 1980, CYMA has been offering its financial management system to small and mid-sized businesses. Version 9 of CYMA contains numerous system enhancements designed to increase user productivity.

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Intacct Corporation — Intacct Enterprise

Intacct Enterprise is an on-demand financial software product offered by Intacct Corporation. Geared more towards mid-sized businesses with multiple locations or franchises, Intacct also offers Intacct Xpress and Intacct Small Business for smaller companies with less stringent needs.

Accessible via a web browser, Intacct provides secure access to a business' data at the user's convenience .

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Intuit, Inc. — QuickBooks Enterprise Solutions 7.0

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The latest version of NetSuite (Version 2007.0) launched in May 2007, offering a fully integrated financial management system designed for small to mid-sized companies. NetSuite supports company-side operations including ERP, CRM and e-Commerce.

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[Red Wing Software, Inc. — TurningPoint Software](#)

TurningPoint from Red Wing Software, Inc. fills an important niche in the business community. Although an excellent entry-level product, TurningPoint is truly designed for businesses that have grown beyond their current software product, but do not yet have a need for more expensive, sophisticated accounting systems.

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[Sage Software, Inc. — Sage Accpac 200 ERP 5.4](#)

Designed for small to mid-sized companies looking for the flexibility normally found in more complex and expensive systems, Sage Accpac 200 ERP provides flexible product deployment options, good customization, and the ability to purchase only the modules needed up front, and add the rest later.

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[Sage Software Inc. — Sage MAS 90/200 ERP](#)

Sage MAS 90 and 200 ERP is an accounting and financial product that provides flexibility and customization to mid-sized businesses.

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