version of the vendor's self-branded full product NetSuite. Both versions of the program are completely web-based, having been designed specifically to be offered and operated through a web interface. Small Business is essentially an enterprise resource planning (ERP) system for smaller concerns, offering considerable functionality and fully integrated modules that include a full accounting system as well as front and back office management functions, sales, HR and payroll, inventory, service, electronic commerce, and web site management. The system costs $99 per month for the first user, including setup costs, and an additional $49 per month for each additional user, with discounts available for larger numbers. It can support an unlimited number of concurrent users.

Ease of Use/Basic Functionality – 5 Stars

The interface for NetSuite Small Business is centered around a series of "dashboards" that are customized for particular users or types of users, and then subsequently by task. This enables administrators to allow users access to only those items that they need for their roles, whether it is a sales manager, inventory clerk, bookkeeper, vendor or client. These dashboards show Reminders, Recent Records accessed by the user, and a Quick Search function, and can be further customized by the user to provide shortcuts to the functions they use the most as well as provide instant snapshot summaries of key performance indicators within the parameters set by the administrator. As a part of the customization features of the program, users can easily drag and drop components to rearrange their dashboards. An interactive calendar provides further customization features, and allows users to schedule activities, integrating with the communications functions for recording project information, events, phone calls and e-mail.

NetSuite Small Business provides a tabbed bar for accessing program modules available to the user, making it simple to access financials, reports, vendor data,

payroll or other activities. Each of these tabs provides mouse-over menus for directly

As mentioned earlier, NetSuite Small Business includes several modules, including an accounting system that provides complete GL, AR and AP functions, time and billing, inventory, payroll, sales, calendaring, web management, web-based retailing and reporting. The system includes a few templates for setting up charts of accounts based on the type of company (product or service-based), but could use additional verticalization capabilities to tailor it to more types of businesses. Also, although many small business owners own more than one business and use the same accounting program to support each of them separately, each subscription to NetSuite Small Business supports only one company. Sean Rollings, NetSuite's Senior Director of Product Marketing, noted that in instances where a user wants to support multiple companies, NetSuite can make special pricing arrangements for the customer.

Expandability – 4.5 Stars

NetSuite Small Business is based on the same code as the full version of NetSuite and, since all data is housed on the vendor's secure servers, no data transfer is required to advance to the more robust system. Users can also upgrade individual components as their needs change. Another advantage of the web-based nature of the system is that all program updates and maintenance are performed by the vendor, and the program performs data backups, freeing the user from these tasks. NetSuite Small Business can import and export in XML and *.CSV formats, enabling sharing spreadsheets, and offers web store capabilities that help create and run a dynamic online store that is personalized to its users and integrates with inventory, accounting and sales.

Reporting & Management Functions – 5 Stars

NetSuite offers a very impressive collection of tools and features that are included in

the pricing mentioned above. These include strong financial management

allowing all parts of the company to stay on top of inventory and pricing. For web-based
businesses, the integration extends to the Web Store module, allowing pricing, captions, images and other information displayed on the web site to be managed from within the inventory module. Online and traditional sales automatically post to the inventory system.
NetSuite Small Business also includes an analytics system with drill-down capabilities to the program's more than 100 standard reports. It allows customization and creation of new reports, as well as the ability to generate graphs and charts. The system also houses time and billing, employee management and payroll modules.

Audit Trail, Integrity & Accountant Control Tools – 5 Stars

NetSuite Small Business includes a full-time audit trail that provides drill-down capability to the transaction level, and the system's profile-based dashboards allow restricting of tasks, modules, sensitive reports and other data. Basically, if a staff member isn't granted access to view or work in certain areas of the program, those items are not made available on their dashboard. In addition to security advantages, these dashboards provide great benefit by allowing the user to keep on top of the key business financials that are most important to them. As an example, logging in as the company's controller, an authorized user can view current and historical summary data for bank balance, sales, receivables, payables, orders and other data, along with percentage changes in these items over variable periods.
The system makes report customization fairly easy,
and its integration with
Outlook simplifies e-mailing or exporting finished reports.

Help & Support Options – 5 Stars

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2005 Overall Rating – 5 Stars

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