CPA

Practice **Advisor**

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Peachtree Premium Accounting 2005 is Sage (formerly Best) Software's top-end accounting suite for small and mid-sized businesses, providing traditional GL, AR, AP and payroll functions, as well as advanced reporting, financial analysis tools, increased inventory capabilities, contact management and time and billing. Best Software's other small business accounting applications include Peachtree First Accounting, Peachtree Accounting and Peachtree Complete Accounting. Premium Accounting is also available in industry-specific versions for distribution and manufacturing focused businesses, as well as an accountant's edition. The software is priced at \$499 for a single user; \$999 for a multi-user site license. The industry-specific editions are \$599 single; \$1,199 multi-user.

Ease of Use/Basic Functionality – 5 Stars

Peachtree Premium Accounting opens to a very well designed interface that eases navigation and access to the system's primary features. In addition to traditional pull-down menus across the top of the screen, the program includes navigation links at the bottom that go directly to the Sales, Purchases, Payroll, GL, Inventory, Time & Billing, Analysis and Company Data sections of the program. Accessing one of these sections

provides the user with a menu screen that offers access to the functions within that module, with items divided into three categories: maintenance functions, tasks and reports. The options within the tasks area includes a flowchart diagram that follows basic business workflow processes, which should greatly assist new and novice users. The system also includes a variety of wizards and setup assistants that aid in setting up a company's charts, accounting methods, posting methods and periods, with the option to select pre-built charts of accounts from a selection of more than 75 sample company templates. The program includes a sample company that can be viewed or interacted with to assist users in gaining experience.

The My Business console provides business activities, including AR, sales, aged

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Available Modules/Customization for Vertical Industries – 5 Stars

As noted above, Peachtree Premium Accounting has two industry-specific versions, Manufacturing and Distribution, as well as a version specifically designed for public accountants managing the financials for multiple small business clients. The non-industry

specific version of Premium Accounting is geared primarily for service and retail firms, with very good inventory functionality for a small business program, including the option to use LIFO, FIFO, average costing or specific unit control methods. It can be set to automatically generate purchase orders when an inventory item falls below a set quantity. At the same time, it provides a time and billing module for professional services companies that integrates with the payroll module within the program. Best Software offers a variety of add-on and integration options, including credit card processing, payroll processing, offsite data storage, remote access, web building tools that can build an e-commerce site linked to the accounting software, and integration with ACT! and Timeslips.

Expandability - 5 Stars

With four product levels, Peachtree provides good support for small business growth. All of the Peachtree programs are based on the same programming code, which enables smooth transition between products, with data immediately recognized, so no import or export is required. This enables new or very small companies to start out with

a Peachtree system with less power, such as First Accounting or the Peachtree standard, and move into a system with greater capabilities as the business grows and its needs change. Best Software also produces higher-level accounting systems for larger businesses, most notably the MAS line, which can easily import Peachtree data.

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integrates with Word and Excel and also includes Crystal Reports, which provides almost unlimited reporting functions, including the ability to create custom reports using any data from within the system. The reporting tools provide excellent visual graphical elements, aiding small business users in seeing the condition of their business. A new "find" feature in the reporting utility lets users quickly locate specific data.

Premium Accounting's inventory system includes serialized inventory tracking with the ability to assign serial numbers to specific inventory items and the ability to set up to 10 customized item pricing levels. A new Inventory Trend analysis produces graphs that display an overview of key statistics on inventory, including the fastest and slowest selling items, as well as more advanced reports.

The time and billing system allows multiple billing rates per staff member, as well as flexible reporting based on worker productivity. The payroll functions within the

program provide support for direct deposit. Peachtree also offers an outsourced payroll

processing service. The Payroll Tax Update Service costs \$229.95 per year. Premium Accounting also integrates with UPS Shipping. Through a remote access module, the system also allows secure access to accounting data when users are away from the office.

Audit Trail, Integrity & Accountant Control Tools – 5 Stars

Premium Accounting allows locking of periods such as months or quarters, and includes a detailed security system that enables password protection down to specific tasks. The system includes an audit trail that can be turned off by authorized users.

This audit trail monitors all transactions and changes to data, including date, time,

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Help & Support Options – 4.5 Stars

Peachtree Premium Accounting includes a well-built help utility that offers right-click menus and content-specific assistance. Additional support features include a sample company, a guided virtual tour of the program, a training library with self-study and program use guides, and an accounting tutorial. Sage also offers its online Peachtree Knowledge Center, which provides useful hints, "how-to" tips and FAQs. Several support plans are also available.

2005 Overall Rating - 5 Stars

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