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Small Business Accounting Systems

Business! Standard Edition from Database Creations provides a customizable small business accounting and management system built on Microsoft Access. The program's core modules include GL, AP, AR, inventory, sales management, customer management, point-of-sale, checkwriting, 1099 generation and report tools. Available optional modules include payroll, online sales, fixed assets, credit card acceptance, and extended inventory functions such as a barcode warehouse
module and barcode printing. The vendor also offers a more comprehensive system through its Professional Edition of the software. Business! Standard Edition costs $795 for one user; $995 for a site license that supports up to five concurrent users. Database Creations also offers a developer license that includes the full source code and the authority to customize the program. Microsoft Access is required to use and customize the program, but users can also create a runtime version that does not require Access.

Steven W. Shaner is the president and senior developer of a small custom software solution company called Database Solutions (www.dbsolutions-us.com) that specializes in database programming. His company has one full-time employee and six subcontractors with clients in Utah, Colorado, Kansas and Nebraska. Shaner says the most beneficial aspect of the program is the open source nature of the product. "It's built on a Microsoft Access foundation, so we are able to easily customize the product to meet the needs of our clients," he said.

"We have built modules that run in tandem with the accounting software,

get the most benefit from its use and reduce the sharpness of the learning curve.

Ease of Use/Basic Functionality — 4.5 Stars
The program opens with Microsoft Access to a multi-tabbed window that offers easy access to the core modules, each of which, when opened, provides a customizable
homepage for that module that offers icons for various tasks, such as entering checks or managing bank accounts in the Banking module, or receiving payments, managing receivables or reviewing customer sales histories in the Customers module. All features are intuitively laid out, simplifying navigation. Business! supports multiple companies and an unlimited number of customers and vendors.

Data-entry sheets offer field selection lists for selecting account numbers, clients, vendors and other frequently accessed information, and utilizes a batch processing method. Initial company setup, as well as setup of clients and vendors, is guided by a series of wizards, while a selection of template charts of accounts for various industry types assists with setting up the core accounting functions of the program. Basic company information is automatically transferred to all forms and reports, and users can set defaults for sales orders, invoices and other items to speed invoicing and other data-entry tasks. The program also allows for a variety of invoice types, shipping methods and inventory methods, while allowing tracking of sales commissions, sales people, and monitoring of undeposited checks. The system generally provides a simple interface that is enhanced if users have some familiarity with MS Access.

Modules/Customization/Expandability — 4.5 Stars
All of Business! Standard Edition's integrated core modules work seamlessly with each other, transferring data as necessary and posting transactions either individually as directed or using a batch processing function. The program offers a strong inventory system that can be used for retail, wholesale, distribution

or manufacturing entities, that allows FIFO, LIFO and average costing methods,

functions, changing interface appearances and even modifying terminology used in the application to more accurately reflect a particular industry. The ability to extensively modify the program offers some scalability, while the Professional Edition of the program allows companies to expand their user base and increase features as a business grows.

Reporting & Management Functions — 5 Stars
The program provides more than 200 standard reports that are grouped in categories for sales, customers, purchases, suppliers, accounting, banking and inventory, that can be customized using MS Access, as well as the ability to add homemade reports to the system. Reports can be output into Excel, *.PDF and Word. Business! also offers a very beneficial Analysis section that includes inventory projections, sales analysis, purchase order analysis, and cash flow management forecasts. Management functions also include a good banking system that supports MICR printing
and electronic management and reconciliation of bank accounts, with support for any number of accounts and analysis features specific to this module.

Audit Trail, Integrity & Accountant Control Tools — 5 Stars
A full-time audit trail is built into Business!, providing a record of all transactions, with drilldown capabilities that show data including the user, date, changes and debits or credits resulting from the change. Security administration allows user- and function-level restrictions, enabling management to restrict access to specific data or sections of the system. Additional field-level password protection can be added to specific transaction tasks. The system utilizes a traditional double-entry accounting system.

Import/Export/Integration — 4.5 Stars
Database Creations is a Microsoft Partner and has geared its products to offer

strong integration with Microsoft Office programs. Being based on MS Access,

downloadable
program updates. Initial installation support is free; continuing or subsequent support is available through optional assistance packages.

Relative Value — 4.5 Stars
Business! Standard Edition is fairly easy to use (more so for those with MS Access experience) and provides a good suite of accounting modules for small businesses. The system's inventory functions are particularly noteworthy, offering significant flexibility and depth. As such, the program is best suited to small businesses with strong inventory needs, whether retail, manufacturing or distribution.

2006 Overall Rating: 4.5 Stars