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Sage Software — Peachtree Premium Accounting 2007

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Sage Software's Peachtree Premium Accounting 2007, which becomes available at retail in early July 2006, is the continuation of the former Best Software program, incorporating GL, receivables, payables, inventory and strong payroll functions, along with an array of small business productivity features such as contact management, time & billing, financial analysis and advanced reporting functions. Now in its 30th year, the 2007 version represents a major revision to the program, with the addition of several new features and enhancements. Premium Accounting is available in industry-specific versions for construction fields, distribution, manufacturing, nonprofits and professional accountants. Pricing for the program starts at \$499 for a single user; a multi-user site license is available for \$1,099.

Ease of Use/Basic Functionality — 5 Stars

One of the key areas that Sage Software concentrated on while enhancing the new version of Peachtree was its user interface. The program opens to an exceptional dashboard system that shows a collection of data based upon the task selected. Dashboards include Business Status, Customers & Sales, Vendors & Purchases, Inventory & Services, Employees & Payroll, Banking, and Company. The

Business Status dashboard offers customizable views that can include data such as account balances, outstanding receivables and payables, revenue, cash flow, and virtually any other information, with dynamic charts and graphs providing visual data representation and one-click access to income statements, balance sheets, account lists, reconciliation and other functions. Each of the other dashboards offers similar information sections, all of which are easily customizable using the “Customize this Page” button at the top of the screen.

Users can also select which of the dashboards to use as their default homepage. The data available to each user is based upon their access rights. Another focus of the software developers was making it easier to access the more than 25 lists in the 2007 release, with at-a-glance information along with drilldown, print and search capabilities.

The program is very easy to install and set up, with a Setup Guide directing the process of creating customers, jobs, vendors, inventory, services, employees, charts of accounts and security preferences. The system houses more than 75 standard charts of accounts for various types of businesses and general industries, and also has the ability to import or convert charts from other accounting programs or to consolidate two or more companies into one.

Data-entry screens offer tabbed interfaces with quick-find lookup lists for inventory items, customers, vendors, accounts and other data. Customer files enable multiple addresses, payment and sales defaults, customer-specific terms and credit limits, and full customer histories are very easy to bring up. AutoFill and self-building selection lists also speed entry for various data fields.

Overall, the system is exceptionally easy to use and understand, with task icons and lists intuitively designed and organized around a common workflow.

Modules/Customization/Expandability — 5 Stars

As previously noted, Peachtree by Sage is now available in several industry-specific versions, including construction, distribution, manufacturing, nonprofits and professional accountants, while the general version of Premium Accounting 2007 is generally targeted at retail and services companies. All of the versions share the same core modules, including the system’s strong inventory functionality, which supports FIFO, LIFO, average costing and unit control costing methods. Serialized inventory tracking is supported, as is multiple pricing levels per inventory item.

The system also offers integration between the time and billing and payroll systems, enabling services companies to more accurately bill their customers. The time and billing system allows multiple rates per staff member, and offers various reports including worker productivity. Payroll functions include optional direct deposit service. The Customers and Sales module provides total management of the customer relationship, from prospect through the sales order process and AR and receipts, while the banking system provides equally strong functionality through checkwriting features, electronic account management and reconciliation, budget tracking, and electronic payment of bills. Sage also offers optional modules for credit card processing, remote access capabilities, outsourced payroll processing, remote data storage and website building systems that integrate with the accounting software for online businesses.

Peachtree is very customizable by the user, with total control over the dashboards, (contingent upon the user's access rights), the ability to group reports into sets, and to set user preferences for several functions. Shortcuts can also be created and added to the left-hand panel, linking to any location in the program. Sage also offers mid-market and enterprise solutions through its Accpac, MAS and BusinessVision lines, enabling companies that outgrow Peachtree to easily migrate data.

Reporting & Management Functions — 5 Stars

Premium Accounting provides outstanding reporting capabilities, with the ability to customize or create your own reports that include visual elements such as graphs and charts. One such report is the Inventory Trend analysis, which provides a summary of inventory issues such as vendor delays, fast-selling items, and stagnating items. All of the system's more than 145 pre-built reports, including financial statements, aging, ledgers and journals, can be output in Word or *.PDF format, and many into Excel, allowing additional analysis by third-party systems. Additionally, the system can be used to e-mail quotes, invoices, sales orders and customer correspondence. It can print 940s, 941s and W-2s, and includes print-and-sign tax forms when combined with the Peachtree Payroll Tax Update Service, and a comparative budget spreadsheet creator, which has been enhanced. The new system makes it easier to create budgets and acts like a spreadsheet, where users can use actual financials from Peachtree or can pull from or export to Excel. The budget spreadsheets can hold up to four years of data, with an unlimited number of budgets for Peachtree Premium users.

Peachtree Premium Accounting's entire interface serves to enhance management of all company issues, providing easy access to summaries for everything from financials

to inventory to cash flow, with graphically appealing screens and charts and the ability to customize the screens to show specifically what the user wants to see, so long as the user has access rights.

Audit Trail, Integrity & Accountant Control Tools — 4 Stars

Peachtree provides a full-time audit trail that tracks all changes to all data (with 2007, the audit trail is always on). This offers protection against errors and alleviates the possibility of untraceable manipulation by high-access users. Security preferences can be set to allow or disallow access to virtually every part of the program, from company and payroll data, to client information.

Import/Export/Integration — 4.5 Stars

Peachtree links with ACT! by Sage for advanced contact management, and also integrates with several other applications, including Timeslips by Sage, Excel and Word. The new version of the program offers enhanced Excel integration, with more control features that include the ability to maintain Excel formulas when transferring data between Peachtree and the spreadsheet program. The system also offers Outlook integration that includes synchronization of contact management files.

Help & Support Options — 5 Stars

Peachtree Premium Accounting has excellent built-in Help functions that include right-click menus and content-specific assistance, as well as sample company data, an accounting tutorial, a training library and a virtual tour of the system. Online support features include the Peachtree Knowledge Center and FAQs. Support is free during the first 30 days, after which optional support packages are available.

Relative Value — 5 Stars

Peachtree Premium Accounting is an exceptionally strong program, and the major enhancements to the 2007 version of the system make it even more user friendly and powerful. The system offers excellent at-a-glance information screens, very strong reporting and management capabilities, and smooth-like-butter navigation. The enhanced integration with Excel, improved comparative budget spreadsheet

creator and expanded customization options make this program a top contender for virtually any small business with up to five named users.

2006 Overall Rating: 5 Stars

Sage Software, Inc. • Article

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