

Hello. It looks like you're using an ad blocker that may prevent our website from working properly. To receive the best experience possible, please make sure any blockers are switched off and refresh the page.

If you have any questions or need help you can email us

Nov. 29, 2006

*From
the Dec. 2006 Review of High-End Accounting Systems*

Sage Software MAS 500 ERP targets the upper mid-market space and represents the most powerful member of Sage Software's strong lineup of mid-market accounting solutions, which also includes Sage Accpac ERP, Sage Pro ERP, Sage MAS 90 and MAS 200 ERP, and Sage PFW ERP. First released in 1997, the system has grown to a full suite of modules that includes distribution, manufacturing and project accounting. MAS 500 was developed from the ground up, exclusively using Microsoft tools (Visual Basic, Visual Studio.net and Microsoft SQL Server) and is optimized to take advantage of the Microsoft platform in ways that competing multi-platform products cannot.

Version 7.0 introduced significant enhancements to the Sage MAS 500 distribution suite that included streamlined distribution workflow, warehouse management and automation (pick, pack and ship from radio frequency devices), Accounts Payable – Accounts Receivable invoice settlement, support for phantom routings in manufacturing, enhanced expense tracking and project approval within their TimeSheet module, and Business Insights Explorer — a powerful, integrated business intelligence tool that leverages Microsoft's .NET technology.

Modules/Scalability — 5 Stars

Generally speaking, Sage MAS 500 is ideally suited for companies with 50 to over 1,000 employees, high transaction volume environments, or complex environments

that require extensive customization or integration with a specialized vertical application. Sage MAS 500 is available in three editions: Small Business (10

or fewer concurrent users), Standard Edition (up to 50 users) and Enterprise

Hello. It looks like you're using an ad blocker that may prevent our website from working properly. To receive the best experience possible, please make sure any blockers are switched off and refresh the page.

If you have any questions or need help you can email us

GL includes built-in capabilities to handle Intercompany Transactions, which typically requires an additional module in most other systems. One of the other features that sets Sage MAS 500 apart from the competition is the ability to provide a secondary tag for all transactions, thus allowing the user to analyze GL transactions by codes that could represent a salesperson, employee, project, etc.

Manufacturing options include Light Manufacturing (back flush only capability), Advanced Manufacturing (full work order processing with labor, material and outside processing entry), MRP, Advanced Scheduling, Product Configurator, Estimating, and Engineering Change Management modules. The wholesale distribution suite includes Purchase Order, Sales Order, Inventory Management, RMA, and Advanced Kitting. The 7.0 release added modules for warehouse automation and warehouse management, including support for handheld barcode scanners. Inventory also includes a very robust demand replenishment module that factors in user-defined demand, safety stock and lead time formulas to forecast demand. Sage Software consulted directly with inventory management guru John Schreibfeder in developing this module. Project Accounting includes remote time and expense capture and built-in integration to Microsoft Project.

Sage MAS 500 business intelligence tools include an executive dashboard and robust analysis tools, including eExecutive and Business Insights Analyzer (BIA). Business Insights Explorer (BIE) extends BIA to include ad hoc inquiry, drilldown and drill-around functionality. The BIA and BIE tools can be used to analyze data in pivot and chart views; export data to Excel, Word and XML formats; and easily create reports using the Business Objects report creation wizard.

Usability/User Experience/Security — 5 Stars

Hello. It looks like you're using an ad blocker that may prevent our website from working properly. To receive the best experience possible, please make sure any blockers are switched off and refresh the page.

If you have any questions or need help you can email us

By viewing a sales order or a sales entry, drill back to the source invoice, drill to that particular customer's information or ledger, and finally navigate to sales history for that customer for a specified period of time — all without ever using the menu tree.

Ample lookups are provided on all screens using the Sage MAS 500 Navigator that allow the user to easily search using simple strings or advanced filters involving multiple fields and criteria. The Navigator can be customized to add or remove columns and to save specific filters. Search results obtained from a Navigator query can be exported to Excel. Tasks are organized by module in a consistent manner from module to module, and users may define their own personal task list coinciding with their workflow. Task menus can also be designed and saved for specific users or roles. Sage MAS 500 Office allows users to easily attach documents to just about any record.

As mentioned above, Sage MAS 500 version 7.0 introduced significant workflow enhancements to the Sales Order module including a personalized grid interface that provides for efficient line entry based on individual user preferences.

As with any grid in Sage MAS 500, the user can easily export contents to Excel with a simple right-click. Security is role-based and is easily set up using a grid entry checklist to define security for each task. Supervisor, Normal, Display and Exclude permission levels can be assigned for each task. Permission for security events such as price override or credit limit override can also be assigned to a role. Optionally, users can have a unified login that allows Sage MAS 500 to authenticate using a Windows logon.

Extensibility — 4.5 Stars

The Sage MAS 500 Application Framework (essentially a software development kit) and its extensive library of APIs (Application Programming Interfaces) allows

companies that have in-house Microsoft Visual Basic and SQL programming

Hello. It looks like you're using an ad blocker that may prevent our website from working properly. To receive the best experience possible, please make sure any blockers are switched off and refresh the page.

If you have any questions or need help you can email us

modules also provide solutions for customer service, order entry and sales force automation over the web. While integration to Sage Software's Payroll and Fixed Asset solutions are included in Sage MAS 500, integration to its two mid-market CRM solutions is not as robust as what may be found in a few other competing products. Sage recently acquired DynaLink, which provides Sage MAS 500 integration to Sage CRM SalesLogix, and integration to Sage CRM is available through a third-party developer called Greytrix.

Integration/Customization — 5 Stars

With source code and a software development kit available to purchase along with an extensive list of APIs, Sage MAS 500 may arguably be the product of choice for any company looking to replace a highly customized legacy system or develop a unique vertical solution that must be integrated to an accounting solution. Database schema and documentation is included with every copy of Sage MAS 500. For those with only moderate customization requirements, the Customizer module facilitates almost any change to the appearance of Sage MAS 500 screens to improve data-entry speed and accuracy. It also provides the ability to add an unlimited number of user-defined fields to any screen, though some programming experience is required to accomplish the task. Custom controls that launch third-party applications or execute additional programming code can also be added.

For those who need to import data into Sage MAS 500, a number of tools are available to successfully accomplish the easiest and most difficult type of import. Master files (customers, vendors, inventory items and GL accounts) can be imported from ASCII or *.CSV files using import utilities included with each module. Data Porter allows users to easily create and import data from an Excel template. And finally, the Data Migrator module provides an import solution for companies that are migrating from legacy or other accounting systems or

those that have sophisticated integration requirements. Exporting data from

Hello. It looks like you're using an ad blocker that may prevent our website from working properly. To receive the best experience possible, please make sure any blockers are switched off and refresh the page.

If you have any questions or need help you can email us

previewed or exported to Excel, Word, *.PDF and a variety of other file formats. The Business Insights tool also allows the user to easily create mail merges using Microsoft Word.

Sage MAS 500 has built-in standard financial statements and also includes Microsoft's FRx Financial Report Writer to create and publish user-defined financial statements and reports. Unique to Sage MAS 500 is its common report interface that not only allows the user to specify multiple sort and selection criteria, but also allows the user to define multiple non-contiguous selections using "and/or" logic. For instance, a user may define a report that includes account 4000, 5525 and 6650 and thereby exclude all accounts in between.

ITA Survey Feedback for Sage MAS 500 ERP

Competitive Advantages:

- Good vertical fit for distribution
- SQL database designed for high volume of activity
- Great inventory replenishment
- Very strong manufacturing functionality

Competitive Disadvantages:

- Relatively small installed base
- Fat client will require Citrix in large environments
- Not multi-lingual

Support, Training & Help — 4.5 Stars

Sage MAS 500 has readily available support, training, online context-sensitive Help and online manuals. Three annual ClientCare support plans let the user choose the service level they desire. The Subscription Plan includes all program updates for one year and access to the Sage Online Knowledgebase that provides

Hello. It looks like you're using an ad blocker that may prevent our website from working properly. To receive the best experience possible, please make sure any blockers are switched off and refresh the page.

If you have any questions or need help you can email us

that are commonly found in other competing mid-market manufacturing solutions. Third-party alternatives written using the Application Framework have plugged some of these holes. Integration with Sage Software's CRM applications is weak and needs some real attention from the vendor's development resources. Sage MAS 500 also lacks any multi-lingual capabilities, and, as a result, may not represent the best fit for multi-national companies.

Notwithstanding minor weaknesses, Sage MAS 500 should be on the short list of any company that is looking for a mid-market ERP solution that will adapt to and grow with their business for years to come. Sage MAS 500 offers a complete, robust, highly adaptable enterprise management solution. Particularly, it represents an excellent fit for distributors and discrete manufacturers as well as other high-transaction volume businesses that demand a good deal of customization to meet their business requirements. The product is well engineered and easy to install, and maintenance does not require a full-time database administrator. Core accounting and distribution modules contain rich functionality, some of which is difficult to find in some of the larger tier-one ERP systems.

2006 Overall Rating: 5 Stars

Technology

CPA Practice Advisor is registered with the National Association of State Boards of Accountancy (NASBA) as a sponsor of continuing professional education on the National Registry of CPE Sponsors.