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Nov. 28, 2007

*From the [Dec. 2007 Review](#) of
High-End Accounting Systems*

Sage Accpac 500 ERP 5.4 is, at core, a sophisticated, robust accounting, enterprise resource planning (ERP), and operations business management system designed for small and mid-sized businesses. With this system, users can create a strong, lasting fit for their business by implementing only the modules needed today and then building out the financial system over time by adding more modules and options. Sage Accpac ERP is scalable with three Sage Accpac editions from which to choose (100, 200 and 500). Users don't have to worry about outgrowing their ERP system in the future. With Accounting and Operations, plus integrated Business Intelligence and Reporting, Customer Relationship Management (CRM), E-Commerce, Fixed Asset Management, Human Resources Management System (HRMS), Point-of-Sale (POS), and Warehouse Management System (WMS) application options, to name a few, most of the bases are covered with this end-to-end business management system.

Not a lot has changed in the product for 2007, although the vendor released a number of key updates to complement Version 5.4, such as a new Return Merchandise

Authorization (RMA) module. Much of 2007 has been in research and development in preparation for Version 5.5, which is scheduled to be released in the first half of 2008. Version 5.5 promises to offer some exciting upgrades including digital dashboards, and more.

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technology through Sage Accpac WMS. Serial and lot tracking functionality continue to be sold separately from the Inventory Control module as additional enhancements.

Although potential buyers may see this as a drawback, the serial and lot tracking modules are treated as add-ons intentionally as most users in the target market would not use this functionality, and Sage Accpac is committed to helping clients maintain simplicity.

Sage Accpac 500 ERP seems to be strongest in the distribution and retail areas. Version 5.4 allows companies doing assembly work to set up multi-level bills of materials (BOM) in Inventory along with support for sales kits. For the manufacturer, third-party add-on modules are written using the Sage Accpac Solution Developer Kit (SDK).

The Sage Accpac architecture supports multitier environments, which enhance performance and scalability. Sage Accpac ERP's scalability is further enhanced as it comes in three different editions: Sage Accpac 100 ERP, which is limited to five concurrent users; Sage Accpac 200 ERP, which scales to 10 concurrent users; and Sage Accpac 500 ERP, supporting unlimited users. This provides significant advantages to the end user. The value of not having to change the look and feel of your software as your business grows is a benefit that is measurable in dollars and cents, but the piece of mind knowing that your investment will grow with you is immeasurable. Essentially all you have to do is purchase the additional user support to move from Sage Accpac 100 ERP to 200 to 500 with no data conversion or end-user retraining. And all three editions are compatible with the complementary web-based applications. The bottom

line is that a very small company can begin with Sage Accpac 100 ERP and grow

all the way to a small enterprise without having to undergo the pain and suffering

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seems to be quick and easy. All the modules have the same look and feel, so once you learn how to move through one module, the learning curve is short for the others. Screens are designed to enable users that are tasked with more traditional heads-down data entry to enter all required data from a single screen. Additional flexibility is available by enabling users two options for data entry: "spreadsheet" style or "pop-up" style.

Drilldown and drill around features are solid in this version. This feature enables a user to quickly access transaction details starting from a trial balance, account inquiry or company financial statement, all the way back to source transactions.

There is even a drilldown capability from Microsoft Excel back to source data. Sage Accpac 500 ERP can also be deployed in a web-browser, which eliminates the need to install the program on each local workstation. The web interface is clean and intuitive, especially to users comfortable with web-based applications.

Security in the system is very strong with the ability to restrict activity by function. A nice security feature is the ability to remove modules, tasks, reports, etc., from the screen if a user is not authorized, allowing for a business to easily set up role-based business management. This also removes clutter from the screen and potential user confusion.

Extensibility – 5 Stars

Sage Accpac's success in the industry is based on a strong software architecture. The separation of core business logic from interface and database services allows Sage Accpac to embrace industry-standard technology quickly and custom fit the software to the user's needs. The Sage Accpac SDK and APIs enable developers to write applications to extend the functionality of Sage Accpac 500 ERP. Since the program is such an international product, with deployments in over 130

countries,

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Sage Accpac 500 (financials, accounts management and information), Sage Payroll Services, Sage Accpac Insight (business intelligence tool), Sage Accpac FAS (fixed asset management), and eCommerce for Sage Accpac ERP.

Integration/Customization – 5 Stars

Sage Accpac 500 ERP enables end users to import or export data from virtually any data-entry screen in various formats including Excel, *.CSV, Access, XML and ODBC. This functionality is included with the system and does not require the purchase of an additional module. Sage Accpac ERP can help your business be more productive and more informed with its ability to communicate end-to-end with your web store, your warehouse, your sales department and many other areas of your organization. Sage Accpac ERP also comes with the option of hosted deployment,

a cost-effective way of providing secure system access to anyone with a web browser and Internet access.

Sage Accpac ERP screens can be modified to include buttons from third-party vendors or to execute Visual Basic for Applications (VBA) code. Using the Transaction Analysis and Optional Fields module, Sage Accpac 500 ERP provides for an unlimited number of user-defined fields across the product. By exposing the business logic to Visual Basic, users or developers can access Sage Accpac ERP product functionality from within their own applications.

Reporting – 5 Stars

Sage Accpac Insight is an enterprise-wide reporting, budgeting and consolidations application. It allows users to quickly capture and integrate information into meaningful reports and securely distributes them across the entire enterprise on demand. With Sage Accpac ERP as the foundation, a business can use Insight to enhance its business intelligence with sophisticated and customizable budgets, analytics and reports. Author is a wizard-driven tool in Insight that allows users to create new templates quickly and easily in Microsoft Excel. Once the

reports have been generated, users have the full capabilities of Excel at their

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using Crystal Reports. Drilldown is also available from the report back to source data. Sage Accpac 500 ERP can also use any Microsoft Office module (Excel, Word, Access, etc.) or any other ODBC product for reporting and analysis.

Support, Training & Help – 5 Stars

Sage Accpac 500 ERP has a software assurance program available at the cost of 18 percent annually of the suggested retail price of the software. The software assurance program provides users with automatic version upgrades, Knowledgebase access, education sessions, online account access, and an e-newsletter. Unlimited telephone support is available for one flat fee of \$1,500 per year. Sage Software University (www.sagesoftwareuniversity.com)

provides classroom training, onsite training and online training for users of all skill levels. As well, training and support is also available through Sage's extensive network of resellers and consultants.

Overall Assessment

Sage Accpac 500 ERP is a comprehensive, web-based business management solution with powerful financial and operations management, e-business, and customizable capabilities. This edition supports unlimited locations and a global marketplace. With powerful analysis, reporting and customization options, Sage Accpac 500 ERP is ideal for companies requiring a highly scalable system that supports international business infrastructures. With an advanced technology platform, a strong internal development team and a host of fine development partners worldwide,

Sage Accpac 500 ERP should remain one of the premier ERP solutions available to mid-market companies.

2007 Overall Rating: 5 Stars

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