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of Contractor/Construction Accounting Systems*

Peachtree has continued to strengthen its presence in the accounting software industry in recent years with the addition of several industry-specific versions of its popular software, including Peachtree by Sage Premium Accounting for Construction 2008, which has been updated to work on Vista and to take advantage of Microsoft Office 2007 functionality.

Learning Curve/ Ease of Use — 5 Stars

Peachtree offers several ways to access system functions, including the drop-down menu bar at the top of the screen, along with the vertical menu bar to the left. Clicking on a system function vertical menu will update the flowchart displayed to reflect the features found in that function. The toolbar customization feature can be used to create lists and display only the functions desired. The new company setup wizard assists with entering the required information for a company, and the inclusion of a sample company allows users to become familiar with the software. Program navigation is simple. The Maintain Jobs function allows users to enter new job information, utilize job phases to better track job detail, choose the billing method to use, and enter job beginning balances. Data-entry fields can be customized to suit a business' needs, and retainage can be assigned based on the percentage amount chosen. Quotes and proposals can be easily produced and e-mailed directly from the quote screen. Job codes can consist of up to 30 alphanumeric characters. Inventory and labor costs can also be applied to jobs as can overhead. Various expenses can be applied, as well, including purchases and other expenses to sales invoices.

Modules & Functionality — 4.5 Stars

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addressing and shipping programs, and third party reporting applications. And for those who outgrow Peachtree Premium, an upgrade is available to Peachtree Quantum, which is suitable for up to 10 individual users. Some of the new enhancements found in the 2008 release include reporting and form design improvement and the ability to add attachments, which will be discussed in the next section.

Productivity Tools — 4.5 Stars

My favorite feature in Peachtree by Sage is the Internal Accounting Review, which performs a system check on 15 specific areas for any period selected. Red flags appear on the areas that need to be reviewed or corrected. The Cash Manager forecasts cashflow on a weekly, biweekly or monthly basis. Other similar 'managers' are available for collections, including numeric information or a graph, payments, and financial information. As previously mentioned, the product now offers the ability to add attachments for customers, vendors and inventory. All file types are supported, including Microsoft Word and Excel, along with photos and scanned documents, making it easier to gain and maintain control over files.

Import/Export/ Integration — 5 Stars

The Import/Export Filter allows users to select the files they wish to import or export. Data can also be imported from Timeslips by Sage, and data from QuickBooks

can be converted into a Peachtree format. The Dynamic Data Exchange feature allows for the sharing of data between Windows programs. And the Outlook Synchronization

feature allows for the synchronization of data between Peachtree and Microsoft Outlook, eliminating duplicate entry and simplifying customer data maintenance.

Reporting — 4.5 Stars

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Support & Training — 5 Stars

The vendor offers various support options including Peachtree Business Care, which offers both the Essential Plan and the Preferred Plan, offering annual product updates and upgrades as well as support. Support is available via phone or e-mail, and calls are unlimited. Peachtree Accounting Line Support offers the Freedom Support Plan, PeachCare Support and the Peachtree Business Care Plan. Per-incident support is also available, and the Peachtree Knowledgebase is available for no cost at any time. Training options are also numerous and include self-study guides and an accounting tutorial. Local training is also available.

Relative Value — 5 Stars

Peachtree by Sage Premium Accounting for Construction 2008 costs \$599 for a single user and \$1,199.99 for a multi-user version. Peachtree is an excellent product for smaller construction companies that need the specialized job costing capability that the product provides along with a price that's affordable. As an entry-level product, Peachtree by Sage Premium Accounting for Construction 2008 has surprising staying power and is well worth the investment.

2008 Overall Rating: 5 Stars

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