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Oct. 16, 2012

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Many accounting professionals who have made a career providing historical, GAAP-based financial statements, payroll preparation and income tax reporting are supplementing their traditional, compliance-based services with real-time performance measurement and benchmarking. Fortune 500 companies use benchmarking reports, which compare actual performance to expectations based on goals such as budgets, key performance indicators, and industry performance comparisons, to understand their operating statistics in the context of the industry and the current operating environment. Today's small business leaders need these same tools but cannot afford to set up a cubicle farm full of management accountants to create the necessary systems and reports. Sage Peachtree and Sage Peachtree Quantum include hundreds of customizable standard reports, interfaces for sophisticated custom reporting tools, and integrated business analysis with benchmarking to help small businesses have the information they need to succeed.

## Reporting Tools

Although Peachtree includes hundreds of standard reports, many executives may want a short, quick, combined summary of the status of the entire business. Other managers want slight changes or tweaks made to these "standard" reports to fit the organization's processes or need for specialized information. Finally, some reporting needs cannot be easily accomplished by adding a column or changing a sort field, and may require cross-referencing data in the accounting system with data from outside sources.

Many companies are either exploring or implementing “dashboard reports,” which

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choose the type of information on this report, which is available on demand from menus within the application.

Peachtree Quantum replaces the Business Status Report with role-based dashboards called “My Dashboard.” These reports are individually customized with the key information needed for users with roles such as A/R Manager, A/P Manager, Sales Representative, Payroll Manager and Accountant. Additional roles and dashboards can be created as needed by end users using a simple, menu-driven system, with pre-defined report segments.

Peachtree 2011, which was released in May 2010, includes some additional job reporting features for users who track the costs of projects. Users can assign customizable status codes to each job like On Target, At Risk or Behind Schedule, as well as use custom color coding (e.g. red, yellow, green) to visually indicate the status of an individual project. The newest version of the application also includes an interactive job report builder, which is accessible from the dashboard view that permits users to create hundreds of custom job reports that are exported to Microsoft Excel for further analysis.

Peachtree and Peachtree Quantum also include a management report called the Internal Accounting Review. This report looks at 15 common issues within a company file that are either unusual transactions, internal control risks or errors that may require follow up by owners and/or outside accountants. Issues reviewed by this report include bank accounts that have not been reconciled, payments and receipts that are posted to unusual accounts, transactions posted to inactive records, and many more.

*Image 1 – Internal Accounting Review*

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modifying the sorting or grouping of data. Once changes are made, the customized versions of these reports can be saved and exported to other companies with similar reporting needs. Complex reporting tasks are those that require the use of third-party tools such as Microsoft Excel, Microsoft Access or Crystal Reports to combine, select, and display information from multiple sources. Sage bundles a leading report writer application, Crystal Reports, with certain versions of Peachtree, and also supports read-only Open Database Connectivity (ODBC) access to Peachtree company files. Once a custom report is completed, a report definition file can be shared among other users, who can use a runtime application to rerun the report with the press of a button. While these tools are not needed by every user, and may require the use of an IT professional or an outside consultant, the interfaces for these sophisticated tools are in place, and assistance can be easily accessed from either a Peachtree Certified Consultant or diagnosed with Peachtree's U.S.-based technical support team.

## **Business Analytics**

Peachtree Business Analytics, powered by iLumen, is a benchmarking tool that provides a variety of financial metrics to measure your company's profitability, liquidity and operating efficiencies. These metrics can be compared to aggregate data from other users of iLumen's business analytical services in over 500 different industry groups to show how an individual company compares to other organizations within the same industry. Once the service is activated, a company's trial balance and account structure are uploaded each month to iLumen, who compares the company's accounting data to the real-time performance data from others in the same industry, and generates online dashboards and Excel-based reporting from this data. Some of the available reports include analyses such as common sized statements, projections, debt capacity calculations, working capital requirements and many others. This feature has been available to users of Peachtree Complete and higher for the last four years.

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Technology

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