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NetSuite was one of the original developers of SaaS for the small and mid-sized enterprise, but we do not include them along with the other systems in this review because they are priced just outside of the margins we set for products for the small business market. The program is exceptionally well designed and is certainly powerful, but it is above our own definition of the small business market, which is a business that would use a professional public accountant for periodic services.

However, since many small businesses at the top of our sphere may be nearing need for such a program, we have included information on NetSuite (and in the same general order as the reviewed programs), but have not provided star ratings, since we do not believe it to be on the same playing field as the other programs, which are more geared toward smaller entities.

## Basic System Functions

NetSuite includes accounting, sales, CRM, ERP, inventory and ecommerce solutions, as well as various industry-specific utilities and functions designed and implemented by a large base of independent consultants. The most recent version, NetSuite 2010.1, also provides optional modules for managing complex business processes for small to large entities.

The system offers customizable interfaces for each of the users, based on their functions and position within the company. As such, while executives may have access to all system functions, their dashboards are more likely to reflect top-level business indicators and management functions. Regardless of the user role, the program opens through the user's web browser, with dashboards comprised of various graphical and numerical data, with the ability to drilldown into underlying information, all the way to transactional and other details.

Each user can have multiple dashboards, accessible via tabs across the top of the

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accounts and other business details can be started with industry templates, such as software developers, wholesale/distribution entities, ecommerce, retail, services, media, IT resellers, advertising, agriculture, manufacturing and nonprofit organizations. The system can also include features specific to each of these industry types.

NetSuite is a very comprehensive collection of tools and business management resources, but the dashboard views help streamline much of the tasking for users. Extensive online support resources are available both through the program and through the vendor's support website, including full documentation, video tutorials, a live user and support community, and training and implementation options. Live support is included with system subscription pricing.

## **Core Accounting Capabilities**

The base of the system is the NetSuite Financials component, which provides a solid GL, AR and AP base, along with comprehensive budgeting and reporting capabilities. The system includes a full-time audit trail and is designed to support entities with multiple locations, including businesses with locations and even sales in multiple countries. The audit trail has additional features that not only note the user and the tasks they performed in the system at a particular time, but also shows the IP address of the computer that they used to log into the system.

NetSuite includes versions in many languages, as well as international currency conversions and compliance functions for many international markets. Sales tax rates can be managed manually by businesses, or NetSuite can be used in conjunction with the automated sales tax functions from Avalara, which integrate with the sales and financial components to ensure accurate rates for all jurisdictions and also to help automate reporting.

# Day-to-Day Operations

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The optional NetSuite CRM adds exponentially to the customer relationship management functions, including sales force and marketing automation, customer support features and extensive customization options. The CRM package also integrates with the back office functions for order management, fulfillment and financials, which can help speed resolution of support issues. Additional tools and modules are also available, including payroll and staff benefits management capabilities through integration with outside packages.

## Management Features

NetSuite is focused on its dashboard views, which are completely customizable and provide excellent overviews of key data, based on user needs and access rights. Dashboards can include virtually any data, from receivables aging, to period comparisons and communications, depending on the user's role in the business. This allows senior management to more closely watch the financials, while other staff members focus on their own departments.

The dashboards also provide quick access to reporting functions, which are also available through the reports overview screen. Reports can be emailed directly from within NetSuite or can be output into Word, Excel or PDF formats.

## e-Features

As a web-based system, NetSuite can be logged into from virtually any location, and there are also smartphone apps available for the iPhone and BlackBerry. The system natively includes email options for report output, along with collaboration tools, the ability to attach digital documents to transactions and other paperless-focused features. The system integrates with electronic shopping carts for ecommerce functions, can be tailored to offer customer portals for collaboration, and also has e-payment and banking integration options through its Online Bill Pay feature.

# Integration/Import/Export

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access to real-time business data.

## Summary & Pricing

NetSuite is ideally suited to mid-sized and larger businesses that need multi-location support and have extensive CRM needs. The system has outstanding ecommerce capabilities and multi-currency support, but many of its features may be overboard for smaller businesses. NetSuite pricing starts at a base cost of \$499 per month, plus \$99 per month per user seat.

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