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Headline News

Sage MAS 500 ERP Version 7.0 is retiring. All monthly updates and Sage support for this version will end on May 31, 2009. If you have not yet upgraded, give us a call. Version 7.0's successor, Version 7.2, includes many exciting new features. Call us to learn more about Version 7.2 or to enquire about our free seminars and webinars: 1-800-719-3307 x 4330

Budgeting With Sage Active Planner

There are many approaches to the budgeting process, and no two companies will tackle this annual exercise in the same way. Whatever the approach, the importance of budgeting cannot be underestimated. Financial experts agree that a refined budget process is one of the single most important things management can do to make a company more effective—and it can return these benefits year after year.

In this article we will describe some of the benefits of an efficient, modern budget process and introduce a powerful tool, Sage Active Planner.

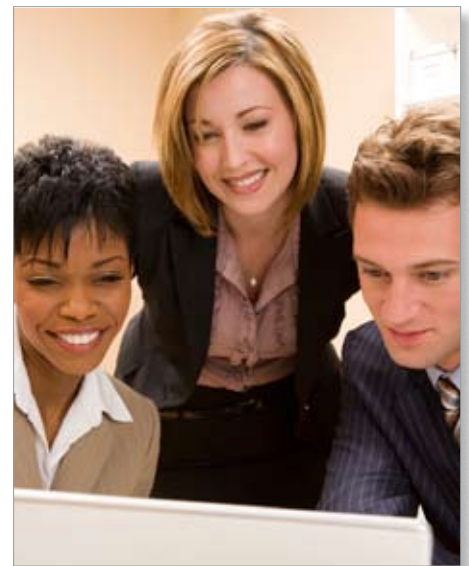
The New Thinking

Traditionally, budgets are an annual exercise that take months to complete. Often as soon as they are complete, they are in need of revision. Companies often think of budgets solely as a means to control spending.

A new way to think about budgets is as a strategic planning tool—as a dynamic, rather than a static process. The emphasis of the modern budget process is on the planning process as a means to achieving a goal rather than an end in itself. These budgets are typically reviewed and revised more frequently—quarterly or even monthly—in response to changing conditions and new data.

A Cost-Effective Undertaking

A PricewaterhouseCoopers Budgeting and Forecasting study conducted in 2007 found that fifty-six percent of budgeting



and forecasting effort is spent on low-value activities, including data collection and consolidation, reviews, approvals, and report preparation.

Improving your budget process can deliver significant returns in the form of time savings and improved data accuracy. Consider these facts uncovered in that same survey:

- » The average corporate budget process is four to five months.
- » High value people are typically involved.
- » Managers spend up to 20 percent of their time budgeting.

With these facts in mind you can see how the return on an investment in improving your budget process could be substantial. And when you factor in the value of having access to more accurate, up-to-the-minute data, effective budgeting is a winning proposition.

Budgeting With Sage Active Planner

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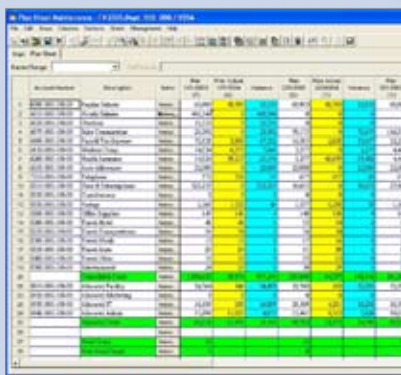
Beyond Spreadsheets

Statistics show that 78 percent of small and medium-size businesses still rely solely on spreadsheets for budgeting. Spreadsheet software, such as Microsoft Excel, is very capable, supporting the formulas and formats needed for budget and allocation calculations.

However, a spreadsheet application is not the best solution when security and control is required. It is difficult to limit access to data and to control who can change the basic setup and formulas of the spreadsheets. Spreadsheet applications also become time consuming when you need to integrate data from multiple sources or need to maintain multiple budget versions.

The ideal solution would be a purpose-built budgeting tool with the ease of use of the spreadsheet application. If you are looking to move toward a more accurate and efficient budget process, what tools are available to help you? As a Sage MAS 500 user, you can benefit from Sage Active Planner, a strategic budgeting and planning tool that integrates directly with your Sage MAS 500 system. Here are a few of the benefits of Sage Active Planner.

ZOOM IN 🔍



Familiar spreadsheet-style entry makes Active Planner easy to learn and to use.

Improved Security And Control

Sage Active Planner protects the integrity of your plan, controls sensitive data, and simplifies data entry by narrowing the choices. You have explicit control over who has access to the overall budget and who has access to sheets within a plan. You even have the ability to lock areas at the cell level to prevent alteration of set data or calculations.

Automatic Integration

Because Sage Active Planner integrates with the Sage MAS 500 General Ledger module, it automatically will be aware of the fiscal periods, chart of accounts, and account segmentation you have configured in Sage MAS 500. Imagine starting the budget cycle without having to manually upload or download data! In addition to the integration with Sage MAS 500, you also can calculate and deploy values from other data sources including your Payroll or HR applications.

Dedicated Budgeting Functionality

Unlike spreadsheet applications, Sage Active Planner is designed specifically for the budgeting process. Customizable, pre-built templates speed the creation of budget planning sheets while its familiar spreadsheet style interface makes for ease-of-use.

What-if analyses, such as corporate reorganization considerations, are easy to accomplish with Sage Active Planner. You can reorganize budget structures, including changing planning assumptions and variable drivers, to better gauge the impact of your decisions.

Calculation tools within Sage Active Planner enable you to apply calculations to a group of columns and spread back to individual periods using factors such as seasonal trends, business drivers, and prior year balances. You can set up formulas that can be

used by anyone in the system, eliminating the need for users to rekey standard formulas.

In a busy company with multiple departments, locations, or legal entities, consolidation can be a major task. Sage Active Planner gives you the ability to automate the consolidation of data gathered during the planning process.

Whether you need to allocate a revenue target or cost projection from the top down, or consolidate several different budget plans from the bottom up, Sage Active Planner will accommodate your organizational structure.

Web Accessibility

It's easy to involve your remote locations in the budget process with the Web accessibility built-in to Sage Active Planner. The data your remote team enters is available immediately, so the budget process can be completed more quickly than ever before. Additionally, with no workstation component to install, updates and support are simplified.

Sophisticated Analysis Tools

Sage Active Planner gives you additional power to analyze budget and actual data with Dimensions and Microsoft SQL 2000 Analysis Services. Within a data cube, you'll be able to view data in several dimensions (such as by territory, product, and customer), change an assumption or driver, and return it to the plan.

We would be pleased to show you more of the benefits of Sage Active Planner—just give us a call.

Business Insights Dashboard

In this information age there is certainly no shortage of information available; however it is often a challenge to format information so that it is immediately useful. How can you easily organize information and incorporate it into your daily business life?

One tool that can help is Business Insights Dashboard, a powerful desktop information source that is included in Sage MAS 500 ERP Version 7.2. Let's learn more about this handy tool.

What It Does

The Business Insights Dashboard module is a flexible and customizable tool that



brings together data from multiple sources into a single location where it can be viewed, organized, reported upon, further researched, and shared. Any kind of Web-based information may be incorporated, whether it's a user's favorite Web site, a real-time snapshot of the corporate balance sheet, or a sophisticated component that integrates Sage MAS 500 with various other analytical and collaborative tools. The Business Insights Dashboard module is included in Version 7.2 of Sage MAS 500 and is free to users on a current support plan.

Personalize To Suit

The Business Insights Dashboard can be personalized for each Sage MAS 500 user to give them access to pertinent information they need during the course of their day. Multiple data views are standard with the module, giving you quick access to sales, product, and customer information. Use these views and customize them to show the most meaningful data for each individual user. Or create entirely new data views (Web Parts), allowing you to track almost any business scenario imaginable. Use filters, user-specified categories, and summary or detail options to hone in on the data most important to your organization.

Once a dashboard template is designed, it can be shared among employees, making it quick to roll out this information tool.

Business Activity Monitoring

While you can include data from many sources, it will likely be the data from your Sage MAS 500 database that will most interest your executive team. With access to business-specific key performance indicators (KPIs), management can spot and quickly respond to problems or trends.

The Ratio Analysis Web Part, for example, displays a series of profitability, operational, and solvency ratios that allow you to see how your organization's performance stacks up against other companies in your industry.

Combine this information with views of Top Customers, Aged Receivables, and Inventory Analysis, and managers can readily monitor the success factors that matter to your business.

Leverage Another Powerful Tool

Within Business Insights Dashboard,

you have full access to the Business Insights Explorer (BIE) module. BIE provides sophisticated data analysis and reporting capabilities. Using the BIE views you can perform your own ad-hoc inquiries and drill downs without launching another application.

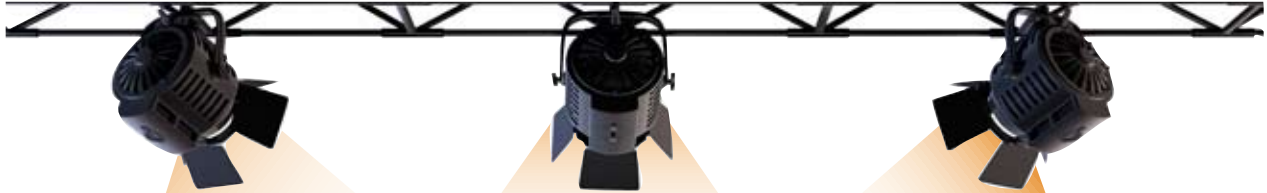
Remember, the Business Insights Dashboard module is included with Version 7.2. Call us with your questions.

((Tips & Tricks))

Processing a Vendor Return for a Non-inventory Item

A vendor return can be processed only for items received through the Receipt of Goods task. The steps below presume the item has a prior receiver:

1. Expand Purchase Order, Activities, and Vendor Returns. Double-click Process Return of Goods.
2. Create a batch and leave the Warehouse field empty.
3. Click Enter Return of Goods. Accept the next return number, and enter the transaction date.
4. Select the return lines from the original P/O receiver. Adjust the quantity to be returned and save.
5. Click Register/Post. Review the posting registers.
6. Expand Purchase Order and Activities. Double-click Process Receipt of Invoice.
7. Create a batch, and click Enter Receipt of Invoices.
8. Select Debit Memo from the Type list.
9. Create a new voucher number. Click the Return lookup button to select the vendor return and save.
10. Click Register/Post. Post the batch.



IN THE SPOTLIGHT: Sage TimeSheet For Sage MAS 500

Sage TimeSheet is an ideal project-oriented time and expense entry and tracking tool for Sage MAS 500 ERP. In addition to its integration with the Sage MAS 500 Project Accounting module, its flexible architecture makes it the ideal data collection tool for all major financial, project management, and payroll systems. While Sage TimeSheet has a strong expense entry and tracking component, in this article we'll focus on its time-tracking capabilities.

Multiple Time Entry Options

Sage TimeSheet offers three different Views from which employees can enter their time. You can decide which views to use depending on the workflow of your organization.

The Time Sheet View displays a list of tasks assigned to the employee. Entering time is as simple as clicking the cell representing the correct date and task. The spreadsheet look and feel provides an easy, intuitive interface.

The Day View provides a desktop calendar interface. Rows represent the hours of the workday. The range of time displayed is customizable for each employee. For example, you might choose to have the Day View display the hours from 8:00 AM to 6:00 PM in half-hour increments. Employees simply click on the appropriate row, and a dialog box opens allowing the employee to enter the details of their time entry.

The Time Card View allows employees to enter start and stop times for a specified day and task. The program then calculates the

elapsed time. This view is useful for organizations that must capture start and stop times.

Time entries recorded in one view are visible from any of the other views; employees can select the entry view most appropriate at the time.

Flexible Approval Process

Sage TimeSheet provides an approval process that allows for multiple approval steps and can be configured to match your company's procedures and policies.

Do your employees divide their time between multiple projects, with potentially several project managers? In Sage TimeSheet, project managers can review and approve the hours for the projects they manage.

Easy Access

Sage TimeSheet offers both PC and Web-based time sheet interfaces, to give your employees easy access whether they are in the office or working remotely.

Informative Reports

Comprehensive reporting tools provide access to the data held in Sage TimeSheet. Analyze your data in multiple ways—by project, task, employee, manager, and more. Sage TimeSheet makes it simple to export your report data to Excel, Word, or PDF for further analysis, or to share via e-mail. You can also use Crystal Reports® to create custom reports.

Sage MAS 500 Integration

Sage TimeSheet integrates seamlessly with your Sage MAS 500 Accounts Payable, Accounts Receivable, and Project Accounting modules. It can create Accounts Payable invoices for your employee expenses, Accounts Receivable invoices for employees' billable time, and transfer both time and expense data into the Project Accounting module for an accurate picture of the profitability of your projects.

Call us to learn more.

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