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**Sage MAS 500 Version 6.1 To Retire**

With the upcoming release of Sage MAS 500 version 7.0, Sage Software announced that it will retire Sage MAS 500 version 6.1 after the 2005 1099 Year-end Service Pack update in December 2005. Sage Software commits to support the current version and two versions back—this means that versions 6.2 and 6.3 will continue to be supported.

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for more info!

**Sage MAS 500 Project Accounting**

**T**he Sage MAS 500 Project Accounting module gives you the power to control and monitor your projects, and helps you to prevent cost overruns and late project delivery while optimizing project profitability.

Let's take a closer look at the Sage MAS 500 Project Accounting module and the benefits it can bring to your organization.

**Overview**

The comprehensive Project Accounting module can help you to manage your projects more effectively and profitably. It delivers the ability to monitor costs, track employee time and expenses, bill customers, and analyze and forecast project data. With an available link to Microsoft Project you can import projects into the Project Accounting module. All details of your project, including estimates, change orders, purchase orders, timesheets, and billing are easily monitored. You may choose from six GAAP-compliant profit recognition methods and multiple project types. Detailed employee contract rates can be assigned at the project, project title, or resource level providing significant flexibility for costing and billing.

You may change or adjust estimates for mul-

iple cost types as needed using this module's full change order processing feature. The Project Accounting module helps improve your company's cash flow by helping managers accurately forecast receivables and payables associated with projects. Managers know when expenses will hit the books and when to expect payment from customers. This tool helps to prevent cost overruns and generate bottom-line savings by providing you with accurate and real-time information about each project.

**Could You Use This Module?**

It's been said that every company is in some sense a project-based company. Professional services firms, creative development firms, and industrial or manufacturing organizations are traditional users of project accounting. However, any company wishing to track time and expenses associated with a discrete project, asset, or event can benefit from the Project Accounting module.

**Time And Expense**

For many companies, labor costs are the single biggest expense to its projects. The ability to easily collect, process, and apply those costs is key to running a profitable project. The Project Accounting module offers two separate options for the col-



Sage MAS 500 Project Accounting module gives you the tools to manage your projects more effectively.

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# Sage MAS 500 Project Accounting CONTINUED

lection of time and expense data: **Sage MAS 500 eTimeSheets** and **Sage TimeSheet**. Beginning with Sage MAS 500 Version 7.0, both options are included with the Project Accounting module.

The browser-based, easy-to-use **TimeSheets** tool is used for entering both time and expenses for projects. Remote users can connect in real-time and enter information in the Project Accounting module. The ability to enter time remotely increases accuracy, eliminates redundant data entry and keeps the Project Accounting database up-to-date—even when employees are in the field.

Project-oriented **Sage TimeSheet** solution is for time and expense tracking. It is fully integrated with the Sage MAS 500 ERP solution. The Sage TimeSheet solution offers a convenient spreadsheet-style expense sheet entry that facilitates fast and accurate data entry. A flexible approval process allows you to configure it to match your company's procedures and policies.

## **Down To Details—Phases And Tasks**

With the Project Accounting module you may divide a project into Phases to more effectively monitor the project. Each Phase is assigned a default cost classification such as: material, labor, or overhead. Within each Phase are Tasks. Tasks allow you to break down the project information so that you can monitor it at a more detailed level. For example, a Phase called *Installation* might have associated Tasks of *Data Conversion* and *Documentation*. You will be able to track cost and revenue down to the individual task level.

## **Assess Profitability**

The Project Accounting module helps you understand which projects are truly profitable, and can identify which employees, items, and tasks are less than profitable. Project managers can compare actual versus estimated costs, sales, and profit. With up-to-date time, expense, and project costs you can monitor current project profitability easily at any time.

With access to accurate project profitability and historical trend information, you can best decide where to focus your efforts. Whether you want this information delivered in the form of a printed report, an email alert, or a comprehensive inquiry screen, This module has it covered.

## **Improve Customer Satisfaction**

You know that customers are happiest when a project comes in on time and on budget. This

module provides the ability to precisely define and set up project cost and revenue parameters. Using the historical data the Project Accounting module makes available, you can establish accurate estimates.

Project managers can quickly determine which projects are behind or ahead of schedule, and which projects have strayed from cost estimates. This knowledge allows managers to shift resources as appropriate to meet a deadline. With the ability to proactively monitor each project, and react before a project gets off track, your projects are more likely to be both financial and customer service successes.

## **Alerts Keep You Informed**

With several complex projects proceeding at the same time, it's easy to overlook a vital detail. You can easily create alerts within the Project Accounting module to notify project managers of various project conditions, exceptions, or overruns or to keep the project staff informed of project-scope changes and workflow approvals. The alerts are simple to create; you need not possess programming knowledge to create and execute your own custom alerts.

## **Invoicing Flexibility**

Project Accounting offers a wide variety of invoicing options to suit the needs of a variety of companies. You can bill for the entire project, or just specific portions of it. You can bill customers by date, percentage, contract, or project. Create customized invoice layouts for each project if you prefer. Invoices can appear in summary or in detail, and you may elect to include timesheet comments on the invoice. Where necessary, you can track project retainers by either amount or percentage.

## **Reporting Power**

The Project Accounting module includes many valuable standard reports. Using your knowledge of Crystal Reports®, you will be able to modify any standard report or create customized presentation-quality reports of your own. You can electronically distribute your reports via email, or output directly to a variety of file formats such as Excel, HTML, Microsoft Word, or ASCII. With the addition of the **Web Reports** module, all Project Accounting reports can be generated and viewed through Internet Explorer, allowing you to share key project data securely with off-site managers or employees.

## **Integration With Other Modules**

The Project Accounting module may be used in conjunction with several other Sage MAS 500 modules eliminating redundant data entry time and enhancing usability through the sharing of common information. **Accounts Payable** invoices may be associated with a project, providing a key entry point for project costs. Use the **Accounts Receivable** module to create and post invoices and write the sales amount back to the project record. If you utilize parts during the course of a project, you may transfer inventory items and their associated costs into and out of general inventory. **Purchase Orders** can be created automatically for non-inventory items required for a project, and you can track a project's purchase order commitments. Manufacturers can leverage the **Material Requirements Planning (MRP)** module for material demands on a project. If you have multi-national projects, The Project Accounting module supports the Sage MAS 500 **Multicurrency** module.

## **Powerful Inquiry Options**

No matter how feature-rich your project accounting system is, if you do not have ready access to the data, you won't be able to put it to optimal use. The Project Accounting module provides numerous views into the status of each project, some isolate specific types of transactions such as expenses or timesheet entries, and other views offer a broad summarized picture of the entire project. See our article on Page 4 for more information on how **Business Insights Explorer** can keep you apprised of your projects' progress.

## **Microsoft Project Link**

Microsoft Project Link is a bi-directional data link that allows for sharing data between Sage MAS 500 Project Accounting and Microsoft Project. It provides a single point for both time and expense entry. It is an excellent tool for developing time and resource plans. Using the link you can upload those plans directly to the Project Accounting module. Also with the Link, you can generate Microsoft Project Tasks from built-in Project Accounting tasks.

## **The Project Solution**

The Project Accounting module provides a highly reliable method for tracking the costs and profitability of your company's projects. Please call us for pricing and a full demonstration of Sage MAS 500 Project Accounting. ★

# Changes Ahead For Starship And Sage MAS 500

StarShip is the automated manifesting and shipping solution from V-Technologies that integrates with the Sage MAS 500 solution. While StarShip isn't new, there is a new version available, with two more versions on the horizon. If that's not enough, Sage MAS 500 Version 7.0 offers additional integration options making the Sage MAS 500 and StarShip products an even more powerful team. Let's take a look at what's available now and what's coming in the near future.

## StarShip Present And Future

StarShip Version 9.0 is available now, and includes a number of new features that make this comprehensive freight manifesting solution better than ever.

## New Wizards

New friendly wizards guide users through the StarShip installation and setup process, helping make implementation of this tool easier than ever. The wizards will help you set up options relating to company, printing, carriers, scale, and interface.

## Fuel Surcharge Simplified

The rising cost of fuel is of concern to all shippers, and StarShip Version 9.0 introduces a better, faster way to get the latest fuel surcharge rates delivered automatically to your users' desktops.

The Fuel Surcharges utility displays the current fuel surcharge percentages by carrier in an easy-to-read grid. For each carrier you can maintain a start date and an expiration date for each percentage. It's quick to modify the dates using a pop-up calendar. If you've decided to permanently or semi-permanently mark-up your rates using the fuel surcharge, simply set the rate expiration date to a time in the distant future.

You can elect to turn the automatic rate update On or Off, and you have the option to notify users what fuel surcharges are successfully updated, or when a fuel surcharge rate has expired. In addition to automatic rate checking, a link on the surcharge utility window lets you download surcharge rates on demand.

## Next Barcode Reference Number

StarShip 9.0 establishes a centralized database of the barcode reference numbers used by all workstations sharing a data folder. This global tracking number reference will simplify setup

on multiple workstations. The change is valid for UPS®, USPS, and Spee-Dee.

A new Edit button in Setup allows the StarShip administrator to modify the range of available reference numbers. StarShip will use the listed range and then wrap to the beginning upon reaching the range's end. To increase convenience, a range is automatically assigned for new installations and upgrades, based on the currently used reference number, in order to avoid duplication.

## Upcoming Releases

V-Technologies has two additional releases of StarShip planned for the near future. Following shortly on the heels of the 9.0 release is Version 9.1, with several enhancements, such as added support for NPS as a third-party insurance provider, and support for USPS flat rate box. The FedEx carrier will be enhanced to use Web Direct tools instead of the ATOM server, and support is being added for FedEx international shipments. Lastly, with the release of Version 9.1, you'll be able to customize the label bottom for UPS, Spee-Dee, and USPS in setup.

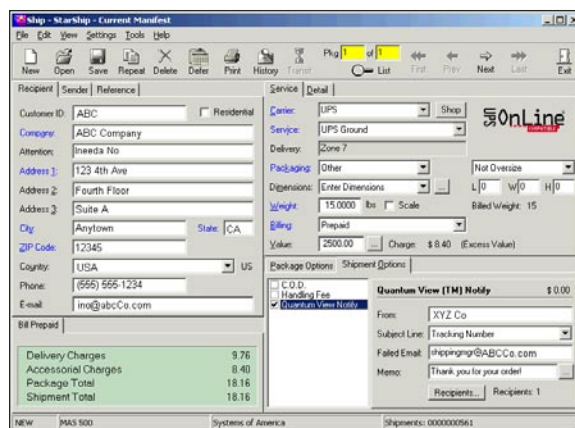
While no release date has been announced, Version 9.2 promises the widest variety of the most usable changes. With this version, you'll be able to customize and design shipment email notifications to send to your customers. Customize those emails to include your company logo and even an attachment such as a PDF copy of the invoice. You can send these emails immediately as shipments are processed or in a batch at the end of the day. When late deliveries cannot be avoided, this version of StarShip will perform time-in-transit and tracking tasks in the background. You can then generate a report detailing late deliveries for a specified time period.

## Software Integration

Sage MAS 500 Version 7.0 software will provide a tighter integration with the StarShip product resulting in a complete, automated shipping and manifesting solution.

You'll be able to launch StarShip from Sage MAS 500 Edit Shipments or Pack List Entry, just when you need it most. Several new fields will flow to StarShip from the Sage MAS 500, solu-

tion including the customers' email address, a hazardous item designation, and residential address flag.



Integration means you can launch StarShip from various Sage MAS 500 applications and the screen will open loaded with relevant customer information.

The distribution changes included in Version 7.0 update also work well with StarShip. Your warehouse personnel can define the dimensions of packing containers and those dimensions will be automatically fed to StarShip, eliminating the need to manually enter package dimensions.

## The Future Is Now

StarShip Version 9.0 is available now. If you have any questions about this update, give us a call. Note: StarShip subscribers can download this update at:

[www.vtechnologies.com/starship\\_updates](http://www.vtechnologies.com/starship_updates) ★

## Headline News

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## FRx 6.7 Service Pack 3 (SP3)

Sage Software (formerly Best Software) announced availability of Microsoft FRx 6.7 Service Pack 3 (SP3) for Sage MAS 500 customers. As an added subscription benefit, SP3 includes a new Report Wizard tool designed to simplify the process of generating key financial reports.

The five key reports created by the Report Wizard are: Balance Sheet, Income Statement (three kinds), and a Trial Balance Report. The new Report Wizard promises to make creating these financial reports easy, even for a novice. ★



## Spotlight On Sage MAS 500 BIE For Project Accounting

The new Business Insights Explorer module (BIE) is available with the upcoming Version 7.0 release of Sage MAS 500. This exciting new module has the potential to dramatically improve the workflow and information exchange within a business. Project-oriented businesses depend on current, reliable project data such as status and profitability. Business Insights Explorer can deliver that data effortlessly, right to your desktop and the desktops of others in your organization who need to know. In a previous issue of \*info for Sage MAS 500, we provided an overview of this new module. In this brief article, we'll consider the unique benefits that the BIE module will lend to project-based organizations like yours.

### Project Information At Your Fingertips

The BIE module provides centralized access to key data; no longer will you be required to visit a maintenance screen, call up an inquiry, and run a report to gather the various and detailed information you need concerning your projects. This module lets you explore all project data from a single point of access—it's a project-centric navigational portal.

During the day-to-day management of your projects you may want to know what projects are open for a particular customer, what invoices are open for a particular project, whose time has been charged to a project, which team members are part of the project, what expenses have been applied to the project, and so on. Without the BIE module you would need to visit several screens and perhaps generate a report to gather this data. With this module you'll have ready access to all of this data and more, from one location.

The ability to easily drill down to uncover transaction detail, and drill around to take a completely different view of the project is part of the strength of the BIE module. For example, as you query a customer's open invoices, and notice one is past due, you'll want to uncover as much information about that tardy invoice as possible before you make a collection call or send a dunning letter. Is the invoice associated with a project? Who is the project manager? Is the project complete? Did you perform any write offs against that project? Is the project profitable? Is the project part of a master project? What other projects are pending for this customer? The BIE module allows you to uncover this information easily, saving you time and effort.

### Using The BIE Module

Whether you need to view project data by customer or by project, you'll find that the BIE module presents your data in an intuitive, easy-to-navigate format arranged into Preview, Explore, Analyze, and Manage options.

From the Preview option, you can view key information about a customer or a project, combined with related transaction header information such as open invoices or open projects for a customer, and estimate lines or open project invoices for a project.

From the Explore option you are able to drill around into related customer and project data. While exploring Projects, for example, you can view associated time sheet entries, expenses, inventory transactions, purchase order commitments, and voucher lines.



## Atlantic Software Alliance

Charlotte, NC

(704) 283-0311

Raleigh, NC

(919) 786-9191

Richmond, VA

(804) 935-1900

Virginia Beach, VA

(757) 461-1280

Columbia, SC

(803) 931-0170

Greenville, SC

(864) 297-6263

Alexandria, VA

(703) 837-0447

Roanoke, VA

(540) 986-1300

Web Site:

[www.atlanticsoftwarealliance.com](http://www.atlanticsoftwarealliance.com)

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The Analyze option offers several ways to graphically display and analyze project data. View project profitability or resource utilization in the form of full color charts and graphs. Here too, you can drill down into the details behind the data presented.

The Manage option within the BIE module presents a list of common data entry tasks, saving you the step of navigating to these options. Create a new project, generate invoices, or perform customer maintenance tasks without ever leaving the module.

### Customize Your View

While the BIE module offers dozens of views into your project data in the standard module, you also can create custom views of your data by dropping existing columns, adding new columns, renaming columns, and sorting and filtering the data within the grids to isolate just the records of interest to you. Creating these custom views is simple, and requires no programming skills. Save your filtered and customized views for future use. For example, create a filter to show only Projects that you manage or only Invoices overdue by 30 days or more.

Once you try the BIE module, it's likely to become an integral part of your workday. The Business Insights Explorer module is available with Version 7.0; call us for further information.

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