



accounting business solutions

# STAR-INFO

Newsletter for Sage MAS 90 and Sage MAS 200 ERP

February 2010 • Volume 10 • Issue 1

4646 Highway 6  
#124  
Sugar Land, TX 77478  
(281) 652-5947  
(281) 596-7273 fax  
info@accountingbusinesssolutions.com  
www.accountingbusinesssolutions.com

## Headline News

Sage FAS Asset Accounting received a perfect 5-star rating in the **CPA Technology Advisor 2009 Review of Fixed Asset Management Programs**. "Sage's FAS Asset Accounting system is the most widely used asset management program on the market, offering automated asset depreciation management capabilities for businesses with any number of assets, providing full support for IRS, GAAP and IFRS accounting standards, and giving users advanced asset life cycle tools," noted reviewer Isaac M. O'Bannon.



## Leveraging The Economic Downturn

### Invest Now To Position Your Company For Growth As The Economy Improves

**H**ow is your organization responding to the current economic downturn? Despite the natural inclination to go quiet and spend as little as possible during the downturn, a recession may actually be a great time to use market conditions to your advantage. In this article, we will take a look at ways that an organization can leverage a downturn to position itself to reap a bigger share of the market when conditions improve.

#### Economic Cycles

It is important to keep in mind that downturns always end. Since 1854, the U.S. has experienced 32 cycles of expansion and contraction, with contractions occurring for an average of 17 months and expansions 38 months. And during any downturn, consumers continue to spend—they just look for better deals and for companies that are aggressively pursuing their business. Taking a reasoned, systematic approach will determine the state of your business for years to come. Tough economic times come and go. It is what you do during a downturn that makes all the difference.

#### Focus On Your Customers

Keep your customer relationships strong. A weak economy makes everyone nervous and that includes your customers. You can help build confidence by instituting an ongoing communication plan. You can use Business Alerts to automatically send notes to customers who have not ordered within a certain



time period. And when customers do call, Business Insights Explorer provides quick and easy access to detailed information that allows you to deliver top-notch customer service. You can look up their last invoice based on their purchase order number and drill right down to the products or services they purchased and the prices they paid.

#### Stay On Top Of Accounts Receivable

This is the time to be very clear about the gap that might occur between paying your suppliers and having your customers pay you. You will want to focus on the day-to-day flow of cash and sharpen up your cash collection policies and procedures. Find out if certain customers are taking longer to pay by comparing collection patterns year-over-year and month-over-month. Zero in on specific

(continued on page 2)

## Leveraging The Economic Downturn

(continued from cover)

customers, and take immediate action if payment cycles are becoming protracted. Before writing off customer debts (or sending them to collections), find a creative and strategic way to settle the bill; for example, negotiate payment schedules, share talent or lead databases, or accept in-kind ownership shares.

Business Insights Explorer is the ideal tool for staying on top of outstanding balances. From your main customer view, you can filter your customers based on useful criteria such as total overdue balance greater than \$500. If desired, you could export your result set to Excel and give the report to a team member for follow up.

### Increase Your Market Presence

Resist the urge to bring your marketing efforts to a halt. Though one of the most common reactions in an economic downturn, it takes you off the radar and you are no longer top-of-mind with customers and prospects. Worse, rumors can start circulating that your business is failing. Few brands can survive without advertising and product promotion. History has shown that companies who become low-key during a downturn are in a far worse position in terms of profitability, market share, and competitive presence when an upturn becomes the new reality.

If you are using SageCRM, you already have a tool that can help you cost effectively plan and implement marketing campaigns that give you the most bang for the buck. We also recommend you evaluate the benefits of social networking. It has enormous potential as an inexpensive marketing tool, particularly if you are in a business that sells directly to the consumer.

### Attract And Retain Talent

During a downturn, often the first thought is to save money by reducing staff. Instead, we

recommend that you carefully consider your staffing needs for the future. As other companies lay off employees, many talented people will suddenly find themselves looking for work. Capitalize on the opportunity to identify and attract talented employees. Make sure you also focus efforts on retaining key talent by communicating frequently and honestly with employees. A slowdown also can be a great time to invest in training opportunities for your employees, so they can be better prepared when the economy revs up again.


If you don't already own Sage Abra, you may want to consider investing in this human resources suite, which integrates with Sage MAS 90 Payroll. Sage Abra Suite contains many of the tools you need to cost effectively attract and retain talent, and invest in your staff. For example, Sage Abra Train automates scheduling, record keeping, and correspondence to ensure employees receive the training they need. There is online recruiting management software available that can help you by automating and simplifying the workflows required to screen, interview, and hire new employees.

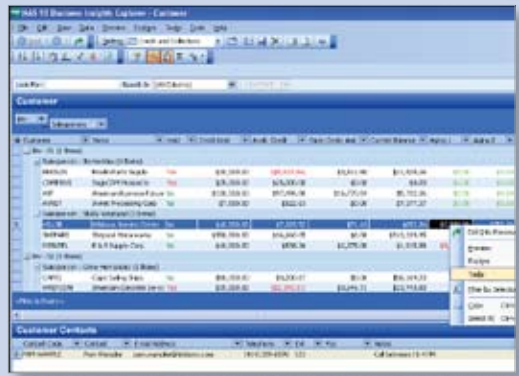
During slower sales periods, you and your staff may actually have more time available to effectively evaluate and implement new systems. There also are tax breaks available that allow you to fully depreciate or accelerate depreciation on capital purchases, making this the ideal time to invest in your infrastructure.

### Optimize Your Infrastructure

Infrastructure and technologies can be a great drain on resources if they are not being

used effectively. Take stock of your systems. Are they giving you the insight you need into your business? Are there roadblocks that can be smoothed with a custom report or better integration of Sage MAS 90 with other technologies, like credit card processing, auto-

ZOOM IN 



Here is an example of a Business Insights Explorer View that has been customized for Accounts Receivable management. Data columns for credit limit, outstanding balance, and aging amounts are in immediate view, and you have the ability to enter a cash receipt directly from the screen if the customer agrees to pay by credit card.

mated payroll tax filing, or e-commerce? Make sure your systems talk to one another and can give you a complete picture of your business. The more you know, the better decisions you can make. If you are like most companies, you can do a better job of utilizing the technology that you already have. Perhaps you need further training, improved integration, or customizations to improve your efficiency. We would be happy to help.

Here we have provided just a few ideas for capitalizing on the economic downturn. We hope they will help you generate ideas for additional possibilities. Give us a call with your questions. 