Sage Accpac **|** White Paper

Vision and Product Plan

May 2009

sage

Executive Summary

In 2010, the next generation of Sage Accpac ERP–a leading midmarket business management software application–will be launched. Sage Accpac 2010 will harness the power of Web 2.0 technology to deliver a better user experience, lower total cost of ownership, and enhanced functionality. Sage Accpac 2010 will allow companies to spend less time managing their software and more time optimizing their business.

The release of the next generation of Sage Accpac will be the culmination of three decades of customer-connected innovation that has seen Sage Accpac ERP become the business management solution of choice for 40,000 customers and over 200,000 users in 169 countries. This success has been built upon two fundamental business principles: create value for customers and continually innovate.

Since the l970s when Sage Accpac introduced accounting software to the first PCs, we have built a long distinguished track record of technology innovation. Complementing our drive to be a technology leader is our passion for developing solutions that exceed our customers' expectations. Customer-connectedness is core to our approach and is reflected by our user-centric design philosophy, our focus on extensive customer research, and our adherence to customer satisfaction metrics.

Today, Sage Accpac empowers businesses to operate more efficiently and capitalize on growth opportunities. Sage Accpac 2010 will further support these customer objectives. Based on a guiding principle of simplicity, the upcoming series of Sage Accpac releases focus on creating solutions that are simple to learn, simple to use, simple to implement, and simple to upgrade. Customers will benefit from:

- Improved productivity through better interconnectivity between applications
- Enhanced usability for the end-user
- Simplified business intelligence and reporting tools

For three decades, Sage Accpac has been helping small and midsized businesses achieve their goals. Sage Accpac 2010 represents the next step forward in this successful partnership. Current and future Sage Accpac customers can rest assured that their needs will continue to be met for many years to come.

Introduction

With roots back to the 1970s Sage Accpac ERP has long been a midmarket leader for business management software solutions in many regions of the globe. From running accounting for small businesses to automating complex processes for large scale manufacturers to managing operations for brand name retail outlets, Sage Accpac serves a variety of needs for its 40,000 customers and over 200,000 users in 169 countries. The success of Sage Accpac has been built on fundamental business principles–create value for customers and continually innovate. In this paper, our aim is to demonstrate how this culture of customer-connected innovation translates to customer success today and into the future.

Innovation Leadership

Sage Accpac has a distinguished history of blazing new trails in the world of business management software. From bringing accounting software to the first PCs to building the industry's most flexible architecture to delivering on the end-to-end business management software vision, Sage Accpac has a long track record of technology innovation.

Sage Accpac is poised to make its next innovation leap by releasing a Web 2.0[1]-based ERP (enterprise resource planning) software solution that can be deployed on-premise or on-demand. The 2010 release of the next generation of Sage Accpac (referred to as Sage Accpac 2010 in this paper) will provide customers with the latest in Web technology. The browser interface will be fully-customizable and Web 2.0-based. The work flow will be based on personalized portals that allow each user to easily complete their role-based tasks. The system will be simple to learn, simple to use, and simple to deploy thereby lowering the overall costs.

Today, Sage Accpac's multitier architecture provides customers with the flexibility to choose operating systems, databases, deployment methods, and more. The architecture also enables the system to be adapted to changing technology and changing business requirements. For Sage Accpac customers, the transition to Web 2.0 will be smooth as the core business logic–refined over the past three decades–remains unchanged. For many of the alternative solutions on the market, to take advantage of the possibilities opened up by Web 2.0, their systems will need to be rewritten completely, likely causing disruptions and increased costs for customers.

Sage Accpac: Defining moments in our pioneering history	
1977	Launched first PC-based accounting software
1980s	Recommended accounting software of Big 8 Public Accounting firms
1994	Introduced support for Microsoft Windows platform, introduced multitier architecture to enable multiple database, operating system, and user interface support
1998	Introduced first Web-browser based client
1999	Released first version of "extended enterprise" suite of end-to-end business management software
2000	Introduced Sage Accpac Online (on-demand deployment option)
2002	Introduced support for Linux platform
2008	Version 5.5 bundled SageCRM at no additional charge
2009	Version 5.6 bundles business intelligence suite at no additional charge
2010	Launch first Web 2.0 version of Sage Accpac

Why Architecture Matters?

Top three benefits of a world-class architecture:

- It allows the software to rapidly adapt to changing technology, changing business requirements
- It allows for choices–deployment, interface, database, customization
- It supports growth–adding users, adding functionality, extending the solution

1 Web 2.0 refers to the second generation of web development and design that facilitates communication, information sharing, interoperability, and collaboration on the World Wide Web.

Customer-connectedness

Innovation for the sake of innovation is pointless. For the Sage Accpac team, innovation and driving value for our customers go hand in hand. Our passion for developing solutions that satisfy our customers' needs is born of our learning culture. Led by dedicated User-Centric Design teams, we strive to understand not only how customers interact with and use our software, but also how their businesses work and how we can help to solve their core business issues. Over the past year, 5000 customers and partners worldwide have been consulted through on-site visits, surveys, interviews, and observational studies in our state-of-the-art usability laboratories. The results of this rigorous research are poured into the product development process helping us to design and build better software. To determine whether we are succeeding at this, we measure ourselves using Net Promoter Scores[2]—an industry-standard customer satisfaction rating. Net Promoter is so core to our DNA at Sage that the codevelopers of the Net Promoter methodology have featured Sage's best practices in their latest book[3].

Supporting the Sage Accpac team's customer-focused approach is our parent company, The Sage Group plc, a top provider of business management solutions for small and midsized organizations. In addition to the domain expertise that is earned serving 5.8 million customers, Sage delivers peace of mind for customers. While competitors may become distracted chasing after Global 1000 mega-corporations or devote greater portions of their resources to their gaming console or tax preparation businesses, 100 percent of Sage's focus is on providing the best business solutions for companies like yours—small and midsized organizations.

Sage Accpac: Driving Customer Value Today

Today's marketplace presents some very exciting opportunities. Whether the economy is up or down, some underlying market trends are constant. The business world is becoming more global opening access to new markets and new partners. Technological advancements enable new and innovative business models that get products to market faster, deepen connections with customers, and streamline how business gets done. Companies of all sizes must be prepared to capitalize on these trends to accelerate their growth, to drive down the costs of doing business, and to stay competitive.

Accelerate growth by finding more customers and keeping them longer

Go Global

Expanding business beyond home borders is one key growth opportunity for many small and midsized businesses. With a large established worldwide footprint (customers in 169 countries and local offices in over 60 countries), Sage Accpac has more experience, more capabilities, and more expertise to support your global aspirations. Product capabilities include support for multicurrency, multijurisdiction compliance, multiple languages, general ledger consolidations, and intercompany transactions. Additionally, Sage Accpac can be deployed to manage workforces distributed across multiple locations while keeping core accounting and operations functions centralized on a standardized back-office system.

Sage Offices Across the Globe

NORTH AMERICA
United States
Canada
Partner Offices
Canada
Caribbean
Latin America
United States

EUROPE
Ireland
UK
Partner Offices
France
Russia
Switzerland
UK

AFRICA
South Africa
Partner Offices
Algeria
Botswana
Cameroon
Congo
DRC
Ethiopia
Gabun
Ghana
Kenya
Lesotho
Madagascar
Malawi
Mauritius
Morocco
Mozambique
Nigeria
Namibia
Senegal
South Africa
Swaziland
Tanzania
Zambia
Zimbabwe

ASIA/OCEANIA
Australia
China
India
Malaysia
Middle East
Singapore
Partner Offices
Australia
China
Fiji
Hong Kong
India
Indonesia
Japan
Malaysia
New Zealand
Philippines
Saudi Arabia
Singapore
South Korea
Sri Lanka
Taiwan
United-Arab Emirates
Vietnam

Deepen relationships with customers

Building and maintaining a large, loyal base of customers require deepening your relationships with them. Understanding their needs and buying patterns. Providing world-class customer service. With 2.8 million users, Sage is the world's largest provider of CRM (customer relationship management) tools that help you accomplish this. SageCRM–part of Sage Accpac Extended Enterprise Suite–gives your team sales, marketing, and customer service automation solutions that allow you to win more deals and to deliver a better support experience to keep customers happier.

**Pinpoint opportunities with actionable intelligence**

Today, Sage Accpac offers a variety of BI (business intelligence) tools to gather, analyze, and understand information to support sound fact-based business decision-making. And with this actionable intelligence, you are able to pinpoint new business opportunities to grow your business. Sage Accpac's inquiry and analysis tools enable you to drill down into specific areas of your business to quickly examine key metrics like sales trends by region, day sales outstanding, or best-selling products by category. The results of this analysis can be made available to stakeholders through standard or custom reports or as graphical KPI (key performance indicator) charts.

Drive down costs with improved productivity

Streamline your processes

Chief among the benefits of implementing a business management system are the cost savings through streamlining of processes, elimination of manual tasks, and improved collaboration. Often business processes span multiple systems and involve multiple workers (for instance, the order management process). Many business management solutions available today are not able to bridge the gaps. As a result, multiple systems have to be cobbled together, nullifying many of the cost savings. Ability to connect disparate systems, a weakness of competitive solutions, is an area in which Sage Accpac has excelled for over a decade, since the introduction of the first-generation end-to-end business management solution. Sage Accpac's integration between the accounting and operations back-office and the customer-facing front-office is now in its fourth generation. Customers have realized a long list of benefits from this tight interconnectivity, including:

- Optimized cash management through the streamlining of critical business processes like order-to-cash or purchase-to-pay
- Improved customer service by providing front-line staff access to current, accurate back-office information (such as order status, price lists, stock availability, and customer credit status)
- Automation of industry-specific processes for a wide variety of sectors and verticals such as distribution, manufacturing, retail, hospitality, professional services, mining, construction, and more
- Specialized functionality by extending the system to offer service management, document management, project and job costing, warehousing management, and more
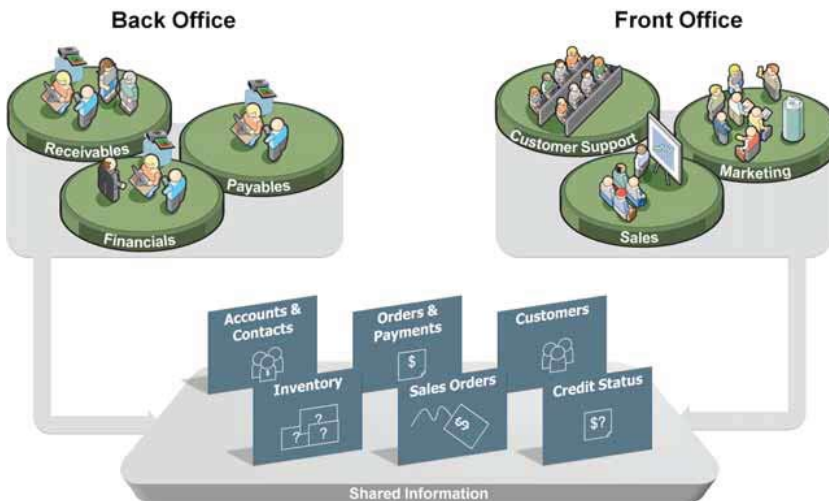
Sage Accpac integration model: front- and back-office workers are able to share information to gain a holistic view of the customer.

Enhance collaboration

Collaboration is another area where business management systems hold much promise for cost savings. Sage Accpac offers interconnectivity between systems that drives better collaboration between departments–both in terms of sharing information and facilitating communications. For example:

- Front-line staff can enter orders directly into the order fulfillment system and track the status of the order to provide the customer with updates
- HR staff can enter new employee information into the payroll system
- Customer credit approvals can take place automatically without the typical back-and-forth between the accounting team and the account manager

Sage Accpac also extends collaboration to the entire value chain. For example, EDI (electronic data interchange) helps to smooth your interactions with suppliers and partners. Over 300 independent software vendors (ISVs) build applications from the ground up to extend the functionality of Sage Accpac. Use of the Sage Accpac SDK (software development kit) ensures interoperability and a common user experience.

Sage Accpac: The Next Generation

The release of Sage Accpac 2010 marks the next milestone on Sage Accpac's customer-connected innovation journey. Our extensive customer research has led us to adopt simplicity as a guiding principle for our upcoming series of releases. Customers want solutions that are simple to learn, simple to use, simple to implement, and simple to upgrade.

In the near term, Sage Accpac will be focusing on these areas to deliver on the promise of simplicity:

- Improving productivity through better interconnectivity between applications
- Enhancing usability for the end-user
- Simplifying business intelligence and reporting tools

Better interconnectivity, better results

Forrester Research[4] has indicated that one of the challenges with business management software today is the lack of interoperability standards. To address this and support better interconnectivity between systems, Sage is introducing a common technology platform based upon industry standards like ATOM, RSS, and XML. Using the Google Web Toolkit as its foundation, the Sage Web Toolkit (SWT) provides developers within Sage and in the extended Sage development community tools to easily and rapidly build applications that integrate into the Sage Accpac. Applications built using the SWT have a common consistent look, are able to share and synchronize data, and seamlessly launch one another's screens within the Sage Accpac portal environment.

What does this mean for you? Similar to iGoogle or My Yahoo!, Sage Accpac 2010 will be built around Web portals. Each end-user will have a personalized page that contains application functionality based on that end-user's role. Each user will be able to view key information, and rapidly navigate to and complete tasks at hand. Not only will applications currently integrated with Sage Accpac become more accessible and user-friendly but also–because of the technology standards approach employed–more applications will be built to directly interact seamlessly within the Sage Accpac portal.

Initially, enhancements to interconnectivity will focus on the areas of most immediate interest to our customers–better integration between the front-office and the back-office including enhancing the quote-to-order entry processes; allowing mashups[5] of sales, marketing, accounting, and operations functionality within a single portal; and making BI dashboards available to all employees.

Sample screen: Invoice Entry

A system that works the way you want it to

With the introduction of roles-based personalized portals, users will experience a system designed to work in a way appropriate for their specific role. The flow of work will be appropriate for each user even when it traverses multiple systems. Time wasted waiting for different applications to launch will be virtually eliminated. The user will feel he/she is working in a single unified system even if data or functionality is contained in separate applications.
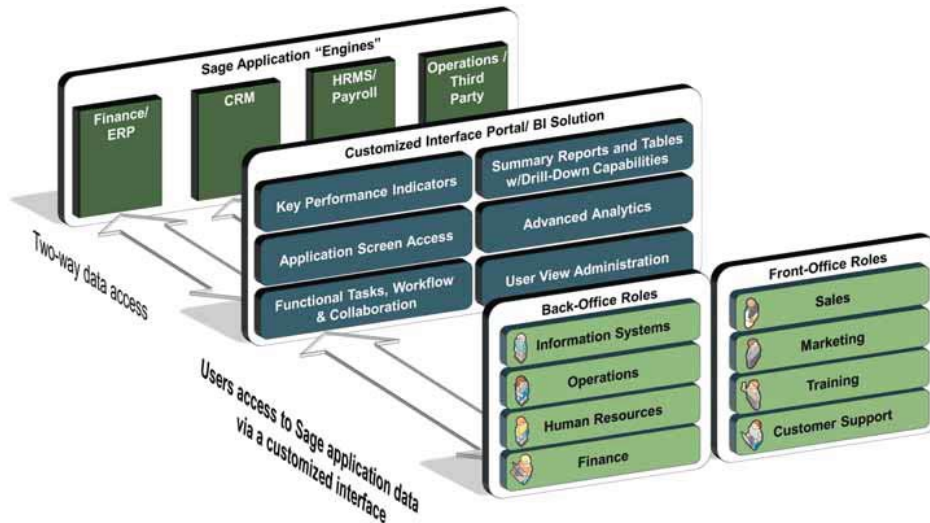
Sage Accpac roles-based model

With Sage Accpac 2010, each user will be able to design his or her own truly personalized portal simply by dragging and dropping their chosen widgets–or mini-applications–anywhere on the screen. These personalization capabilities also allow an individual to perform tasks for multiple roles (for instance, a single accounting clerk may do AR, AP, purchasing, and more) and tailor the environment to his or her particular requirements. Whether you are a complex organization with distinct roles and pre-defined processes or a more basic organization where there is less separation between roles and processes are more fluid, Sage Accpac can adapt to your requirements.

Finally, the Web browser-based environment supports the point-and-click work style preferred by many of today's workers. And to ensure that current users of Sage Accpac can transition smoothly to take advantage of the new Web 2.0 experience, the system will continue to support the familiar, Windows-based user interface in parallel.

Sample screen: KPIs

Business Intelligence on every desktop

To complement an already strong lineup of BI tools, later in 2009, we will be introducing a new member to Sage Accpac Extended Enterprise Suite–Sage Accpac Intelligence. A fully integrated BI and reporting suite, Intelligence will be made available to Version 5.6 customers for no additional charge.

Based on Microsoft® Excel®, this easy-to-use BI suite will put powerful inquiry, analysis, and reporting on the desktop of every end-user. Financial managers will now be able to access standard reports in areas such as purchasing, sales, and inventory; perform additional analysis; and drill down to the detailed transaction level. The product allows the authoring of new reports and the administration of security settings. Sage Accpac Intelligence also supports Web-based distribution of reports and full multidimensional analysis. Sage Accpac metadata can be analyzed through OLAP (On Line Analytical Processing) data cubes in an easy-to-use, drag and drop way for managers to get insight into information that goes beyond transactional data.

With Sage Accpac 2010's roles-based portals, each end-user will be able to access relevant BI information. This contextual business intelligence[6] approach means that, for instance, an accounting clerk would see a dashboard of aged receivables/payables and AR/AP balances. Senior executives would have information at their fingertips about the top ten customers, gross sales, net sales, net returns, and total returns. The portals allow end-users to drill down to the transaction level and to adjust the parameters "on the fly." Inquiry tools will be integrated into portals to allow for faster, more precise searching, right down to the actual transaction level.

6 Contextual business intelligence refers to relevant information made available to individuals within their work environment and based on their actual role and information requirements.

Conclusion

The 2010 release of Sage Accpac ERP represents the next step in the evolution of business management software. The move to Web 2.0 technology will enable Sage Accpac to further build on the value it delivers to its 40,000 customers worldwide. Customers will benefit from a better user experience, lower total cost of ownership, and enhanced functionality allowing them to focus on building their businesses, not managing their software.

Sage
13888 Wireless Way, Suite 120,
Richmond, BC, Canada V6V 0A3

604-207-9480
www.SageAccpac.com