

What Makes Best Software's MAS 90/200 Different?

When reviewing any accounting software solution, it is important to understand how the product is different from its' competitors. All products are developed with different tools, different philosophies, and with different objectives in mind. All products are targeted towards different sized customers, and different industries. When evaluating products, it is easy to get bogged down in the overwhelming complexity of the systems. The reality is that all accounting systems have a general ledger with account numbers and financial reports; they all have an average accounts payable module that works fine; they all have a bevy of standard features. Studying these common elements of an accounting system will get you nowhere. It is the key differences that provide keen insights that will allow you to effectively identify and select the right product for your needs. With this spirit in mind, presented below are the key characteristics that set MAS 90 apart from its competitors:

Best Selling Product - For starters, MAS 90 is the best selling mid-market solution in the world with approximately 86,000 customers, more than any other mid-market accounting solution. That's saying something. You do not get to be this successful unless you are doing a lot of things right. Because of this large customer base, you can be confident that the product is well-tested, well-proven, well-designed, and well-engineered.

Focus on CPAs - It is interesting to note that Best Software has always focused heavily on the CPA community. In the early days, David Samuels, CPA was the founder and President of State of the Art, Inc. (SOTA). Being a CPA himself, David made sure that the MAS 90 product line was written for, and marketed to the CPA community. In the 80's the product boasted time and billing, fixed assets, and client write up solutions designed to appeal to CPAs. SOTA also targeted the bulk of its marketing efforts towards the CPA community as well. In one case, 30,000 general ledger modules were sent out to CPAs free of charge in an effort to seed the CPA industry. During the early 90's, CPAs were allowed to become resellers of the MAS 90 product line for the low cost of just \$195, which included 10 modules which the CPA could then use in-house to manage their own CPA firm. The strategy was extremely successful at winning the mind-share of the CPA. An unfortunate drawback was that SOTA became saddled with several thousand CPA resellers who were only casually committed to the MAS 90 product line. These CPAs did little to learn the product or promote the product and eventually the company took measures to weed out these less productive resellers.

Backed by Large Accounting Software Company - MAS 90 is backed by one of the largest accounting software publishers in the world - Sage Software / Best Software US Operations. Unlike other accounting software companies such as Computer Associates, Oracle, and Microsoft, Best Software is dedicated solely to the accounting software market. This is an important note because other larger companies may be distracted or more focused on other product divisions such as databases for example. Because Best Software's success is solely dependent on it's accounting software solutions, I think that this forces the company to keep their

focus on those solutions - which makes Best Software's accounting software products a better bet over the long haul.

Strong BOMP - MAS 90 has some very strong modules, however the MAS 90 Bill of Materials Processing modules seems to have developed a particularly good reputation for being a strong module. This makes MAS 90 a fairly good fit for most any light manufacturing situation. With good support for multiple warehouses, serial numbers, substitute items, bar codes, split cases, fractional selling, effective dates for price changes, physical counts, picking lists, shipping weights, alias names, and more - MAS 90 is well suited for many tough inventory/distribution/light manufacturing needs.

Wide Breadth of Modules - MAS 90 offers one of the widest breath of modules in the mid-market, only a handful of product come close to matching MAS 90's completeness. The latest count shows a total of 44 MAS 90 modules.

Customize User Screens - MAS 90 provides excellent customization tools which allow the end user to tailor the product to his or her particular needs. MAS 90's customization tools provide access to each data input screen within MAS 90. The end user can insert new data fields, edit existing data fields, and build logical calculations. In my opinion, this is the most important feature in all of accounting software.

Fixed Assets - Many accounting software publishers choose not to offer a fixed asset module - it is perhaps the most frequently missing module in the industry. One of the reasons many publishers avoid writing this module is they have found it easier and better to instead link to Best Software's Fixed Assets module. In this case, both MAS 90 and Best Fixed Assets are owned by the same company, which virtually assures tight integration between these two products.

ACT! 2000 & Sales Logix - Best Software also owns ACT! and Sales Logix, perhaps the best value in contact management and CRM solutions on the planet today. Once again, because MAS 90, ACT! 2000 and Sales Logix are owned by the same company, this virtually assures tight integration between these products.

Abra Human Resources - Best Software also owns Abra Human Resources, perhaps the best value in HR solutions in the mid-market arena. Yet again, because MAS 90 and Abra are owned by the same company, this virtually assures tight integration between these two products.

Business Alerts & Business Insight Modules – MAS 90's Business Alerts allows you to create event triggered reports, which are then e-mailed to the appropriate persons in the event that a preset parameter is exceeded. These automatic, user-defined e-mail notifications can inform you, your sales representatives, your customers, employees, and vendors of date and time-sensitive events. Along similar lines, MAS 90's Business Intelligence module offers an executive dashboard for at-a-glance monitoring of key company information, ratios, and data.

Visual Integrator Module – MAS 90's Visual Integrator module allows you to build-in integration to other applications. To accomplish this feat, MAS 90 uses the Open Database Connectivity (ODBC) standard. Using ODBC, Visual Integrator allows you to schedule imports or exports of data directly to or from any ODBC-compliant application such as a custom or vertical software application. At the same time, MAS 90 applies business logic to maintain data integrity.

Crystal Reports, FRx, F9, & Excel – When it comes to financial reporting, there are no better tools than Crystal Reports, FRx, F9, & Excel. MAS 90 is well integrated with all four of these products. Crystal Reports is an industry standard report writing tool that enables the user to extract virtually any data out of the MAS 90 system and produce presentation-quality output. Further, all of the reports in MAS 90, including check forms, invoices, packing slips, etc are written in Crystal Reports, which makes it easy to edit these reports. FRx is the industry standard when it comes to financial statement reporting – nobody does it better. With FRx, financial statements can be scheduled and e-mailed to users, or groups of users, complete with password protection both at the report level and drill down level. And of course Microsoft Excel is the ultimate power users tool. Because the ODBC drivers are automatically installed with MAS 90, all MAS 90 systems are ready to export, import or hot-link to Excel. With F9, this process is even easier.

Custom Office - the Custom Office feature within MAS 90 allows you to send a personalized letter or e-mail with just one click of the mouse. This is a great productivity tool, which allows users to easily communicate. For example, assume a user has toggled to the customer screen and is viewing the customer data for a particular customer. The user clicks the Custom Office button at the bottom of the screen, which launches a menu of Word documents, Excel Templates, and e-mails. The user clicks on the e-mail entitled good customer discount, and immediately, an e-mail is sent to the customer notifying them that an additional .5% discount has been extended. It is a great feature, and you should take a look at it if you get the chance.