

>> SOFTWARE REVIEW

## The boom in mid-market accounting

BY DAVE MCCLURE

It's always interesting to see when software trends are failing. Four years ago, software vendors couldn't get over their love affair with the big "enterprise" customers, ditching their small business and mid-market customers in favor of wealthier global concerns. The accounting software industry was no exception.

Now the trend is reversing itself, due in part to the fact that there are only a relative handful of enterprise customers to be had — and most of them do not want to go through the pain and cost of switching accounting systems unless it is absolutely necessary. Today, the mantra is to move into the mid-market, where companies are forced by growth to upgrade their systems. Little software vendors are moving up to the mid-market; big vendors are moving down.

But it is more than that.

The globalization of the marketplace and the growth of electronic commerce are causing fundamental shifts that make the mid-market an important — if not the most important — segment of the marketplace. Added to that are three trends within the industry:

▶ **The growing importance of integrated customer relationship management.** The wall between the front office and the back office has crumbled as companies demand better, faster access to key data at every level of the organization.

▶ **Online integration.** It's not enough to have the data available — it has to be accessible throughout the organization, across national boundaries and in multiple locations. This shift makes reporting tools and

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intranets as important as the Internet to today's company.

▶ **Better customization tools.** With the advent of better SQL platforms and programming tools, it is possible to build a custom accounting solution for an industry — or even a single company — faster and at a lower cost than ever before. The result is that accounting software companies are branching into two camps — those that use a toolkit of separate but integrated applications, picking and choosing the building blocks for each client, and those that use a basic set of open-source modules that can be rewritten to meet the needs of each.

What this means for mid-market companies is that accounting and business support is better than it has ever been before, at a lower cost and with fewer headaches.

### ACCOUNTMATE 7 FOR SQL

AccountMate is a modular accounting system built on the Microsoft SQL Server platform that is designed to give companies and their consultants an optimal means of configuring



the software for special requirements and future growth.

The system is built on 21 modules that span the full range of accounting, payroll, inventory, manufacturing, CRM and other business applications. These are managed through a control center called the system manager module. From within each module, users have access to Microsoft desktop and Office applications, up-to-the-minute bank balances (with an instant

view of unreconciled transactions), and the ability to attach supporting documents to transactions and account records.

AccountMate 7 has multi-currency and multilingual capabilities, and is able to handle multiple warehouses with unlimited bin locations. Source code is available for each module in the event that additional modifications are needed, and to provide maximum scalability. The modules can accommodate hundreds of concurrent users, are very scalable and offer substantial security features to protect the database. For smaller mid-range companies, there is an AccountMate for Express version that accommodates up to five concurrent users, built on the same modules and available as configurable source code.

Introduced in June of 2006, AccountMate 7 for SQL automates critical new processes such as landed cost accrual and allocation, and adds an enhanced payroll module. With its secure password policy additions, it ensures that customers can meet recommended settings for Sarbanes-Oxley. Other recent enhancements include a new upsell management module for customer ordering, upgraded payroll module functionality, and tighter integration for CRM to convert sales quotes to sales orders.

Well-crafted and easy to navigate, AccountMate is an impressive and powerful system that meets the diversified needs of growing mid-market companies. It is flexible, scalable, security-minded and reasonably priced at \$1,500 per module. Of note is the built-in CRM functionality tied to Microsoft Office, which eases training and usability problems typically encountered in the move to a mid-range accounting system.

## VENDOR INFORMATION

### AccountMate 7 for SQL

AccountMate Software Corp.

Novato, Calif.

(415) 883-8873

www.accountmate.com

Pricing: Compiled modules — \$1,500; source code — additional \$1,500 per module. System Manager — five users, \$7,000; each additional group of five, \$6,000.