



4th Quarter  
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# Sage ERP MAS 500 Newsletter

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## IT'S TIME TO DITCH THE SPREADSHEETS

Budgeting and Planning ... the phrase alone conjures up feelings of inefficiency, frustration, and a lot of tedious number-crunching. But in most cases, the aggravation can be directly attributed to the use of spreadsheets and manual adjustments for a process that requires something more powerful and automated. The good news is that there's a better way ... it's called **Sage Active Planner**.

### The Spreadsheet Method is Broken

If you're relying on the old spreadsheet approach to budgeting, you probably have multiple budget scenarios scattered across various hard drives, laptops, and databases. Each spreadsheet is an island without any link from one budget to another. No security, no controls, and no way to effectively update one spreadsheet without throwing a wrench in the delicate web of disconnected confusion. Good luck if you're responsible for the "role up."

Perhaps worst of all, the beginning of a new budget cycle starts the process again from scratch with a need to import or manually type fresh data into each sheet to reflect the new numbers and time span. There's little, if any, efficiency gained from one year to the next.

### Sage Active Planner

Active Planner is designed specifically to enhance the budgeting and planning process by making it easy to collect data, consolidate in a central database, manage multiple budget scenarios, perform side-by-side analysis, and create rolling forecasts.

'Plan sheets' (similar to spreadsheets) are arranged in a process plan flow which automates the passing of data and information from one sheet to another. That means numbers populated in one sheet (like salaries) are automatically summarized and 'passed up' to a higher level sheet. Decisions made at the top are easily dispersed among lower level plan sheets for 'top-down' budgeting.

Active Planner draws data from your MAS 500 general ledger which totally eliminates the need to manually key data into plan sheets or perform complex import/export routines.

### The Right Tool for the Job

With a powerful tool like Sage Active Planner, you'll turn a traditionally frustrating process into an opportunity to create insight and a meaningful roadmap to your strategic goals. You'll gain better insight from last year's outcome, clearly evaluate this year's results, and modify next year's plan to improve business performance.

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Ready to Ditch the Spreadsheets? [Contact Us](#) and discover a better way of budgeting and planning with Sage Active Planner or learn about the new Active Planner 2011.

# 5 Tips for a Successful Year End

To help you get a jump start to closing the year out smoothly, here are a handful of tips and reminders. We've also included information about important deadlines and tax information.

1. **General Ledger Closing** - While it's a good idea to close modules and purge historical data in a timely fashion, your General Ledger can remain open as long as you need while awaiting final processing in other modules or audit adjustments.
2. **Check Your Version Number** - Closing procedures can vary depending on the version of MAS 500 you're currently running. So be sure to check your version number and service pack before starting year end.
3. **Back Up Your Data** - Before you begin any year end process, be sure to execute a complete back up of your database. You should also **test the back up** to ensure it was successful and the data is readable. The only way to "reverse" year end processing is to restore your data from a back up. So do it now!
4. **Data Retention & Cleaning House** - In most cases, MAS 500 retains historical data based on the version you're running and the settings you've configured in each module. So it's a good idea to double check your settings so you don't lose important data during year end close.  
  
Year end is a great opportunity to "clean house" and determine whether it makes sense to purge old data you no longer need, create archive databases, or expand your storage capacity.
5. **Remember, We're Here to Help** - As you begin year end closing procedures and prepare to start fresh in 2012, be sure to contact us if you need assistance during this important time of year. As your software and technology partner, we're here to help!

## IMPORTANT DEADLINES & TAX INFORMATION



**January 31, 2012** - Deadline to issue W-2, 1098, and 1099 forms to employees & independent contractors.

**January 31, 2012** - Deadline for filing quarterly payroll & annual sales tax returns.

**Depreciation and Section 179 Expense** - Last year's Small Business Jobs Act (SBJA) of 2010 **increased** the Section 179 deduction to **\$500,000**. The phase out threshold for qualifying Sec. 179 expenses increased to **\$2 Million**, up from \$800,000 previously.

**Standard Mileage Rate** - Beginning on January 1, 2011 through June 30, 2011, the standard mileage rate for operating an automobile for business use is **51 cents per mile**. From July 1, 2011 through December 31, 2011, the standard mileage rate increases to **55.5 cents per mile**.

**HIRE Act Worker Retention Credit** - if your business hired a previously unemployed worker last year, 2011 is the year you qualify for up to a \$1,000 tax credit for keeping that person employed.

**Informational Reporting of Employer-Sponsored Health Coverage** - Reporting employee's annual cost of health insurance coverage on form W-2 is **NOT mandatory** until 2012. However, you have the ability to **voluntarily** report such information in 2011 using code DD in W-2 Box 12.

*\*Note: this information is intended as a helpful reference and is not to be relied on as tax advice from a licensed and qualified tax professional.*



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# "Measured" Improvement in Version 7.4

Sage ERP MAS 500 Version 7.4 introduced a number of major enhancements based on customer feedback from [www.Sagemas.com/MAS\\_500\\_feedback](http://www.Sagemas.com/MAS_500_feedback). One of those projects focused on improving the unit of measure conversions and the precision of rounding which we'll take a quick look at here.

## Devil in the Details

A number of customers indicated there was room for improvement in the way Sage ERP MAS 500 handled unit of measure conversions, rounding, and minute quantities that were too small to observe through the user interface. Particularly when it comes to raw materials and manufacturing, rounding and decimal precision play an important role. So the development team at Sage embarked on a comprehensive project to redesign unit of measure handling from the ground up.

## Results You Can Measure

The first step was the expansion of decimal precision in the data tables to 13 places to the left of the decimal. This improves precision in conversion calculations and helps to minimize rounding discrepancies.

Next, an "auto adjustment" feature was added to clear out remaining quantities when a transaction will leave a quantity too small to be accessed through the user interface. Simply put, the system will automatically generate an adjustment to clear out minute quantities. The adjustment is still included on the journals for audit purposes, but there is no longer a need to manually deal with these "leftover" quantities.

In addition, the Physical Count process includes

expanded decimal precision in the data tables. Therefore should there be a minute quantity remaining on an item, it can be cleared by entering a zero in Physical Count – similar to the auto adjustment feature.

Last but not least, MAS 500 Version 7.4 adds flexibility to Inventory Reporting and Inventory Transfers to use units of measure other than the Standard U.O.M. That means you can run standard Inventory Reports in any unit of measure you choose, ditch the calculator, and let the system handle the calculations automatically.

Go online and learn [What's New in MAS 500 7.4](#) or contact us if you'd like assistance with an upgrade.

## Product and Support Updates

**Product Update 1 (PU1)** for Version 7.4 is now available for download featuring the ability to:

- Post-authorize a credit card for an amount that exceeds the pre-authorized amount.
- Print an ACH remittance

**Support Update** - MAS 500 Versions 6.3 and 7.0 are now retired. Product updates (including year end) and telephone support are no longer provided by Sage. If you have questions about the Sage retirement schedule or need support for an older version, please contact us directly.

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