



The Accounting Library

Top-Ranked Business Management Systems

2006

Executive Summary

As a result of an analysis performed in October 2006 utilizing *The Accounting Library*, one of the most respected software selection tools serving the needs of middle market companies, **Microsoft Dynamics GP**, **Microsoft Dynamics NAV**, and **Microsoft Dynamics AX** were determined to be among the top-ranked business management systems when compared against 100+ middle market accounting solutions in the following areas:

- 1) [Basic Functionality](#)
- 2) [All Features](#)
- 3) [Out-of-the-Box Functionality](#)
- 4) [Distribution Features](#)
- 5) [Manufacturing Features](#)

Background

The Accounting Library, developed by Solutions, allows companies to compare business management system requirements against a wide range of accounting solutions. By utilizing this tool, companies can define their functional requirements in as much detail as required and determine which of the products in *The Accounting Library* database are best suited to their specific needs. Analyzing the functional strengths and weaknesses of several products that most closely match these criteria can help in the system selection process.

The Accounting Library, first published in 1990, has helped thousands of organizations select the best-suited business management solution. This powerful needs analysis program contains a list of up to 3,700 features, functions and reports from which users can select to build their needs definition.

As each requirement is selected users can indicate their relative interest by specifying a value from 1 -9 (a blank response indicates no interest). Once the needs definition has been completed, users can then specify how each vendor's response will be rated. *The Accounting Library* allows vendors to specify eight different responses to each question:

- **Yes** (the requirement can be met out-of-the-box).
- **No** (the product cannot meet the requirement or the modifications required are too costly).
- The requirement can be met by integrating functionality provided by a **Third Party Product**.
- The report must be created in a **Report Writer**.
- The information can be tracked only by an **Added Field**.
- The requirement will be met by a **Future Release** of the product within 12 months.
- The requirement can be met only if the product is subject to relatively low level **Customization**.
- The requirement can be met only if the product is subject to more complex **Modification**.

Since any response that is not *Yes* may be less attractive, users can discount these alternate responses by anything up to 100%. This levels the playing field so that products with functionality that is supported out-of-the-box will receive a higher score in the actual analysis.

Once the needs definition has been completed and discounts assigned to vendor responses, the program will compare the user's requirements against each product and rank them based on their cumulative weighted score. The basic ranking report is one of several reports, each more detailed than the preceding report that users can generate to help them determine which products are best-suited from a functional perspective and how each product compares against others under consideration.

Functional Needs Analysis Findings

As a result of a full feature-to-feature comparison analysis of 100+ of the top accounting and business management solutions, conducted by *The Accounting Library* in October 2006, **Microsoft Dynamics GP**, **Microsoft Dynamics AX**, and **Microsoft Dynamics NAV** were determined to be among the top-ranked business management systems among 100+ accounting solutions in the following areas:

- 1) [Basic Functionality](#)
- 2) [All Features](#)
- 3) [Out-of-the-Box Functionality](#)
- 4) [Distribution Features](#)
- 5) [Manufacturing Features](#)

Microsoft Dynamics GP, **Microsoft Dynamics NAV** and **Microsoft Dynamics AX** are full-featured business management systems that meet the typical requirements of a broad range of businesses. In a side-by-side functional analysis of the leading mid-market products, those solutions were among the top-ranked products in each of the five different scenarios created: basic accounting, all modules including manufacturing and multi-currency, out-of-the-box functionality (meaning no credit was given for requirements that could be met only by using third party products, report writers, or some form of system modification), distribution, and manufacturing.

Note: Products indicated in bold in the needs analysis reports participate in the Product Certification program for *The Accounting Library*. This is a voluntary program whereby Charles Chewning, president of Solutions meets with each vendor on a regular basis and over a two-day period makes each vendor prove each of their responses by showing them the applicable functionality in their product. Mr. Chewning is the final arbiter with respect to the response that will be allowed.

Basic Functionality ([Figure 1](#))

The Basic Functionality category contains the requirements for General Ledger, Accounts Payable, Purchase Order, Accounts Receivable, Payroll, Human Resources, Inventory Control, Sales Orders, Job Costing, and Budgeting).

All questions in the listed modules have been selected and all questions received the same rating for level of interest. Finally discounts were applied to product responses as follows:

- Yes 0%
- No 100%
- Third Party Product 25%
- Report Writer 10%
- Added Field 30%
- Future Release 60%
- Customization 40%
- Modification 80%

Result: **Microsoft Dynamics GP** and **Microsoft Dynamics NAV** were the top-ranked products (along with Epicor Enterprise) meeting 83% of the requirements listed. **Microsoft AX** and **Microsoft SL** were tied for fourth place with a score of 81%.

Figure 1

<i>The Accounting Library</i> Product Ranking Basic Functionality			
% Needs Met	Product Name	Version	Vendor Name
83%	Microsoft Dynamics GP	9.0	Microsoft Business Solutions
83%	Microsoft Dynamics NAV	4.0	Microsoft Business Solutions
83%	Epicor Enterprise	7.3.6	Epicor Software Corporation
81%	Microsoft Dynamics SL	6.5	Microsoft Business Solutions
81%	Microsoft Dynamics AX	4.0	Microsoft Business Solutions
80%	Syspro	6.010	Syspro
80%	Sage MAS 500 ERP	7.0	Sage Software
80%	Sage Accpac 500 ERP	5.4	Sage Software
77%	Sage Pro ERP	7.3	Sage Software
76%	Sage MAS 90/200 ERP	4.2	Sage Software
67%	BusinessOne	6.8.317	SAP
61%	TRAVERSE	10.2	Open Systems, Inc.
42%	QuickBooks Enterprise	6.0	Intuit, Inc.
31%	NetSuite Professional	9.1	NetLedger, Inc.

This ranking measures only the core functions (GL, AR, AP, PO, IC, PR, HR, SO and JC)

All Features (Figure 2)

In addition to the requirements included in the Basic Functionality category, the All Features category was expanded to include manufacturing and multicurrency requirements as well as "General Questions" (system wide features that are not associated with an individual module).

All questions in all modules have been selected and all questions received the same rating for level of interest. Finally discounts were applied to product responses as indicated in the previous analysis.

Result: Microsoft Dynamics GP and Microsoft Dynamics NAV were the top-ranked products meeting 82% of the requirements listed. Microsoft Dynamics AX was rated third in the analysis with a score of 80%.

Figure 2

<i>The Accounting Library</i> Product Ranking All Features			
% Needs Met	Product Name	Version	Vendor Name
82%	Microsoft Dynamics GP	9.0	Microsoft Business Solutions
82%	Microsoft Dynamics NAV	4.0	Microsoft Business Solutions
80%	Microsoft Dynamics AX	4.0	Microsoft Business Solutions
79%	Sage Accpac 500 ERP	5.4	Sage Software
79%	Syspro	6.010	Syspro
79%	Epicor Enterprise	7.3.6	Epicor Software Corporation
78%	Sage MAS 500 ERP	7.0	Sage Software
78%	Microsoft Dynamics SL	6.5	Microsoft Business Solutions
75%	Sage Pro ERP	7.3	Sage Software
72%	Sage MAS 90/200 ERP	4.2	Sage Software
63%	BusinessOne	6.8.317	SAP
60%	TRAVERSE	10.2	Open Systems, Inc.
39%	QuickBooks Enterprise	6.0	Intuit, Inc.
31%	NetSuite Professional	9.1	NetLedger, Inc.

This ranking is based on all questions including Manufacturing, Multi-Currency, and system wide questions.

Out-of-the-Box Functionality (Figure 3)

Out-of-the-Box Functionality strictly looks at the functionality that is shipped with the product, meaning that no credit is given for requirements that can be met by Third Party Products, Report Writers, or any other form of system modification.

Result: Epicor Enterprise was the top-ranked product with a score of 72%. **Microsoft Dynamics GP** was ranked second with a score of 71%. **Microsoft Dynamics AX** and Sage MAS 500 ERP were tied for third with a score of 69%.

Figure 3

<i>The Accounting Library</i> Product Ranking Out-of-the-Box Functionality			
% Needs Met	Product Name	Version	Vendor Name
72%	Epicor Enterprise	7.3.6	Epicor Software Corporation
71%	Microsoft Dynamics GP	9.0	Microsoft Business Solutions
69%	Microsoft Dynamics AX	4.0	Microsoft Business Solutions
69%	Sage MAS 500 ERP	7.0	Sage Software
67%	Microsoft Dynamics NAV	4.0	Microsoft Business Solutions
67%	Syspro	6.010	Syspro
64%	Sage Pro ERP	7.3	Sage Software
61%	Microsoft Dynamics SL	6.5	Microsoft Business Solutions
59%	Sage MAS 90/200 ERP	4.2	Sage Software
57%	Sage Accpac 500 ERP	5.4	Sage Software
51%	TRAVERSE	10.2	Open Systems, Inc.
40%	BusinessOne	6.8.317	SAP
30%	NetSuite Professional	9.1	NetLedger, Inc.
28%	QuickBooks Enterprise	6.0	Intuit, Inc.

This ranking is based only on functions supported by each product out-of-the-box.

Distribution Functionality (Figure 4)

The first three needs analysis reports gave equal weight to each question. In actual practice users will assign varying weights to each question listed (from no interest at all to critical or must-have) depending on the industry in which they compete as well as their unique business practices.

In order to give readers of this report a balanced view of the products studied, two additional needs definitions were created. This first analysis assumes that the user is a distribution organization with requirements weighted toward Inventory Control and Order Entry. No Multi-Currency requirements were defined. Discounts were applied using the same factors indicated in the Basic Functionality analysis.

Results: Microsoft Dynamics GP and Epicor Enterprise were ranked first with a score of 91%. **Microsoft Dynamics NAV** was ranked third with a score of 90% and **Microsoft Dynamics AX** was ranked fourth with a score of 89%.

Figure 4

<i>The Accounting Library</i> Product Ranking Distribution Features			
% Needs Met	Product Name	Version	Vendor Name
91%	Microsoft Dynamics GP	9.0	Microsoft Business Solutions
91%	Epicor Enterprise	7.3.6	Epicor Software Corporation
90%	Microsoft Dynamics NAV	4.0	Microsoft Business Solutions
89%	Microsoft Dynamics AX	4.0	Microsoft Business Solutions
88%	Syspro	6.010	Syspro
88%	Sage MAS 500 ERP	7.0	Sage Software
88%	Microsoft Dynamics SL	6.5	Microsoft Business Solutions
88%	Sage Accpac 500 ERP	5.4	Sage Software
87%	Sage MAS 90/200 ERP	4.2	Sage Software
80%	Sage Pro ERP	7.3	Sage Software
79%	BusinessOne	6.8.317	SAP
74%	TRAVERSE	10.2	Open Systems, Inc.
57%	QuickBooks Enterprise	6.0	Intuit, Inc.
42%	NetSuite Professional	9.1	NetLedger, Inc.

This ranking is based on the needs of a typical middle market distribution organization.

Manufacturing Functionality ([Figure 5](#))

This analysis assumes that the user is a manufacturing organization with requirements weighted toward Inventory Control and Manufacturing. Multi-Currency requirements were defined as many manufacturers either purchase from overseas locations or sell their products to customers in other countries. Discounts were applied using the same factors indicated in the Basic Functionality analysis.

Results: **Microsoft Dynamics GP** and **Microsoft Dynamics NAV** were ranked first with a score of 91%. **Microsoft Dynamics AX** and **Syspro** tied for third place with a score of 90%.

Figure 5

<i>The Accounting Library</i> Product Ranking Manufacturing Features			
% Needs Met	Product Name	Version	Vendor Name
91%	Microsoft Dynamics GP	9.0	Microsoft Business Solutions
91%	Microsoft Dynamics NAV	4.0	Microsoft Business Solutions
90%	Syspro	6.010	Syspro
90%	Microsoft Dynamics AX	4.0	Microsoft Business Solutions
89%	Sage MAS 500 ERP	7.0	Sage Software
88%	Epicor Enterprise	7.3.6	Epicor Software Corporation
88%	Sage Pro ERP	7.3	Sage Software
87%	Microsoft Dynamics SL	6.5	Microsoft Business Solutions
86%	Sage Accpac 500 ERP	5.4	Sage Software
82%	Sage MAS 90/200 ERP	4.2	Sage Software
78%	BusinessOne	6.8.317	SAP
74%	TRAVERSE	10.2	Open Systems, Inc.
54%	QuickBooks Enterprise	6.0	Intuit, Inc.
39%	NetSuite Professional	9.1	NetLedger, Inc.

This ranking is based on the needs of a typical middle market manufacturing organization with Multi-Currency requirements.

The Accounting Library

At its core *The Accounting Library* is an easy to use but powerful computer-based software selection program by which users can:

- Understand how this whole accounting software selection process should be organized.
- Build as detailed a needs definition as required by selecting from a comprehensive list of up to 3,700 features, functions and reports that users and consultants have indicated to us should be considered.
- Compare their requirements against a wide range of products.
- Determine which of the 100+ products in our database are best suited given the user's unique needs.
- Analyze the functional strengths and weaknesses of each product.
- Select that one product with which the user can form an efficient and effective partnership.
- Prepare themselves for the process of installation and implementation.
- Analyze and improve every aspect of their organization to make sure that you they operating at top efficiency and effectiveness.

About the Company

Solutions, Inc was founded in 1987 to assist organizations increase their profitability through improved organizational effectiveness. As the accounting software industry began to grow, so did Solutions. *The Accounting Library*, a natural outgrowth of our business improvement specialty, was first published in 1990 as a DOS-based software selection program. A Windows version was introduced in 1995, and has been expanded and improved significantly each year. Currently 100+ products are featured in our databases with new products being added each year. While our initial thrust was directed at the PC accounting industry, we have expanded our product line to include the entire industry from QuickBooks to Oracle, PeopleSoft and SAP.

About the Author

Charles Chewning, Jr., the founder of Solutions, is a nationally recognized expert in the field of software selection. He has written articles for a number of magazines, is quoted in software selection reviews, and presents workshops to end-users, consultants and resellers.

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