eagle Consulting Group

*info

For MAS 500®

MAS 500 Version 7.0 And Beyond

Upcoming Distribution Features And Functionality

In a previous issue of **info for MAS 500*, we highlighted many of the distribution-centered features planned for release with MAS 500® Version 7.0. Best Software has released more information recently, covering tempting new features, entirely new modules, and more details on the previously reported features. Here's what we have learned.

Packing And Shipping

The changes planned to the packing and shipping process will allow you to capture more bill of lading and packing information for shipped orders. You will have the ability to enter the number of boxes for the shipment lines, tracking numbers for the boxes, and to designate which items are within each box and the quantity of the items in the boxes—all from the **Edit Shipments** function. You may assign multiple items to one box or split a single ship line into multiple boxes. A convenient dialog box allows you to move available items into or out of the current box or drop the rest of the shipment into the current box with one keystroke.

The information you enter in Edit Shipments will be available for both pack list printing and bill of lading printing.

From **Edit Shipments**, you'll have several printing options, such as: Shipment Proof Document, Bill of Lading, Summary Pack List, and Pack List With Contents. You also will be able to commit your shipment and print the invoice.

Many new features are added to facilitate distribution, including a new Warehouse Management module.

New Module

A new **Warehouse Management Module** premiers in Version 7.0. The new module includes some features currently part of Inventory Management, as well as new advanced distribution functionality. The aim is to increase the options distributors have in selecting the suite of MAS 500 modules that best suits their needs. Current users will not lose any functionality, as Warehouse Management will be made available to all Inventory Management owners with a current subscription plan.

Here's a look at the features scheduled to be included in the first release of Warehouse Management.

One of the new features included in the Warehouse Management module is **Warehouse Zones**. This change offers a significant improvement for busy distributors as it provides you with the ability to assign bins to zones within your warehouse. The use of zones can help you better organize your warehouse; establishing different areas for different storage purposes. A zone could potentially represent a type of product, or different zones could represent the different rate of turnover of the items within the

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Headline News

The Sage Group, plc (Sage) recently announced that it intends to resume use of the **Sage** name and mark in North America. Some of you may remember that Sage adopted the Best Software name for its Canadian and U.S. operations in 2001, after a trademark dispute with an American company. The Sage Group plans to fully adopt the Sage brand for its North American business by March 2006.

Timesheet Professional

See page 4 for more info!

Distribution Features CONTINUED

zone. When using the Sales Order Picking feature, you can elect to *Pick by Zone.* In this way you can effectively reduce the number of trips pickers take through the warehouse.

The existing Inventory Management feature that allows you to track item quantities within each bin will become part of the new Warehouse Management module. The three-step transfer functionality currently available in Inventory Management will become a part of Warehouse Management as well.

StarShip Integration

Are you a StarShip user? Version 7.0 strengthens the integration between StarShip and MAS 500. A Carton Table will be included to allow you to define the dimensions of all packing containers such as packs, boxes, and cartons. The carton dimensions you enter will be automatically fed to StarShip, eliminating the need for your warehouse personnel to manually enter package dimensions.

In Version 7.0, you can flag inventory items that are considered hazardous materials, and the hazardous designation flows through the order process into packaging, appearing on your bill of lading and in StarShip.

Enhanced Picking Functionality

Just as it's important to stall the order fulfillment process for customers with unresolved credit issues, it's equally important to get those orders back in the queue when the credit issue is settled. In Version 7.0, you'll have the option of running a new credit check routine that will both place orders on hold, and remove the credit hold from other orders as credit issues arise and are resolved. Orders that cannot be shipped due to the hold status are identified during the picking process. Users can view both the order and its lines, providing your team with full awareness as to what can potentially ship as those credit issues are handled. You assign the security privileges that allow users to lift order holds, line holds, and credit holds within the picking function.

Another set of newly announced features that will help streamline your picking process involve the **Create Pick List** function. Here you'll find two tabs: **Orders To Pick** and **Lines To Pick**. The Orders To Pick tab shows you just the lines for an individual order you select. The Lines To Pick tab shows you all lines on all orders. This flexible functionality will accommodate you whether you typically pick on an order-by-order basis, or collect all items at once and then sort by order.

A new radio button on each tab labeled *Only Short Picks* isolates the lines where the pick quantity is less than the open to ship quantity making it easy to identify those lines that need attention. Need to make a substitution? Choose either automated or manual item substitution right from picking.

New MRP Process

Version 7.0 will introduce a new **Forecast Demand Smoothing** process to the MRP module. Demand Smoothing is a forecasting method referring to the process of leveling production to a stable rate across a specified time frame. The new process allows manufacturers to project demand over various inventory periods using one of six methods: Daily, Weekly, Monthly, Quarterly, Annually, or Planning.

Item And Warehouse Costing

You may have different labor rates, material costs, and shipping costs for each of your warehouses, particularly if they are located in separate parts of the country. In Version 7.0, routing maintenance will allow you to set up multiple item and warehouse combinations as ***standard routing*** for costing purposes.

MAS 500 Goes Wireless

Coming closely on the heels of the Version 7.0 release of MAS 500, Best Software is stepping into the wireless world in the form of the new **Warehouse Automation** module.

Wi-Fi or Radio Frequency networks offer real advantages to manufacturers and distributors seeking to streamline warehouse operations. Radio Frequency Identification, or RFID, is a related technology that many MAS 500 customers are being forced to adopt due to mandates by large customers such as Wal-Mart. The cost of wireless networks and RFID technology is now at the point where they are viable options for many companies. Best Software has not released all the details of this exciting new module. We'll share more share more details with you as they become available.

As you can see, Best Software is continuing to build on and improve the distribution power of MAS 500. Expect the release of MAS 500 Version 7.0 during the third quarter of this year.

Two Timesheet Options

Beginning with the MAS 500 7.0 release, TimeSheet Professional will be included as part of the standard MAS 500 package, along with eTimesheets. If you are currently using eTimesheets, you may want to compare the two products and select which suits your business processes best. Here's a chart allowing you to make a quick comparison.

For more details on TimeSheet Pro, refer to our article on page 4.

	TimeSheet Pro	eTimesheets
Time Entry Views	Grid entry Day-view entry option Time-card entry option	Grid Entry
User Defined Fields	12 user-defined status fields in Time Entry	None
Approval Process	User-defined workflow with unlimited steps. Email notifications, color coding to indicate status.	3 Status Options: Pending, Approved, and Not Approved.
Task Detail	Up to 9 user-defined levels	Project, Phase, Task
Reporting	Summary (rolled-up spread sheetstyle reports) Detail (Crystal Reports) PDF Export User defined filters. Custom report capability	Inquiry/Designer/Viewer shows user-defined tabular reports in grid format. Print or email timesheets from entry window.
Spell Check	Available in all notes fields	None
Audit Trail	Optionally enabled	None
Payroll Support	Can calculate pay rate. Export to Abra or other PR system included.	None

New Module—Business Insights Explorer

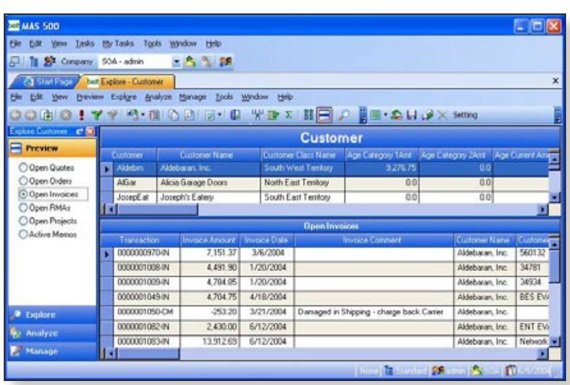
We've reported the benefits of the popular Business Insights Analyzer module in previous issues of **info for MAS 500*. It allows you to organize, graph, and format much of the data held within MAS 500®. With Version 7.0, Best Software takes the next step with the introduction of **Business Insights Explorer,** an inquiry and information tool. This tool will make drilling down and drilling around to find the data you need faster, easier, and more intuitive. Let's take a closer look at what Best Software has planned for Business Insights Explorer.

What Is Business Insights Explorer?

Part of the Business Insights suite, Business Insights Explorer is a new module that will allow you to Preview, Explore, Analyze, Manage, and Personalize key information about a MAS 500 entity such as a Customer, Vendor, Item, Warehouse, Project, or Work Order. It provides centralized access to key data, and supports extensive drill-down and drill-around capabilities through related data.

To give you a better idea of how this module can help you, we'll follow a typical scenario through the five core features of Business Insights Explorer: **Preview**, **Explore**, **Analyze**, **Manage**, and **Personalize**.

Lets' say a customer calls with a question about a recent invoice they have received from you. You bring up Business Insights Explorer, and choose the Explore Customer option (as opposed to the Explore Vendor, Explore Item, etc.).



The new Business Insights Explorer module Preview option.

Preview

The Preview option within Business Insights Explorer allows you to view key information about a MAS 500 entity, in our example, a customer, as well as related transaction data such as invoices, vouchers, orders, or projects.

For our example, you will first choose the Preview panel from Business Insights Explorer's menu of features. From there you will have access to several views: Open Quotes, Open Orders, Open Invoices, Open RMAs, Open Projects, and Open Memos. You're interested in invoices today, so you'll select the Open Invoices view. You only want to see Acme Electric's invoices, so you filter the view by highlighting Acme from the customer list to restrict the data displayed to only Acme's invoices.

Explore

The Explore function extends the Preview option by allowing you to drill down and around into data related to the view you select, and even change the primary view to a new set of views.

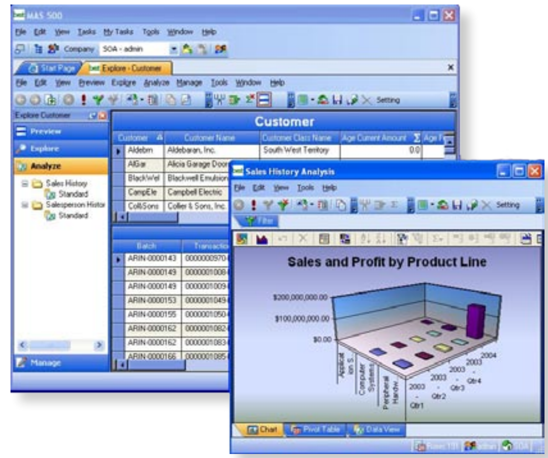
As you preview Acme's Open Invoices, you identify the invoice in question. With this function, it's easy for you to *Explore* that invoice, drilling down to see the history of payments against the invoice. Business Insights Explorer allows you to move from view to view, from open invoices, to recent shipments or payments.

The Explore option allows you to drill-around to related views that you have customized with your own preferences and data filters. While you're Exploring invoices, Acme asks what orders they have outstanding. After a few mouse clicks, you're looking at a customized Sales Order view that includes orders placed within the past 30 days. As you change your view, Business Insights Explorer *remembers* the original context, in this case your customer, Acme, and shows you only the orders that Acme placed.

Analyze

If you have used Business Insights Analyzer (BIA), you already appreciate this module's ability to graphically display key data, and allow you to drill down into the data beneath your charts and graphs. Business Insights Explorer is tightly integrated with Business Insights Analyzer (BIA), allowing you to jump directly to specific BIA views from within Business Insights Explorer. What's more, Business Insights Explorer passes the original context to BIA, so that the views present the precise data you're looking for.

As you look at Acme's invoices, perhaps it would be helpful to see a graphic history of this customer's sales. Analyze allows you to navigate to the BIA views for this customer's Sales History. Instantly you see a full color chart showing Acme's sales history by product line.



The Analyzer option allows you to navigate to BIA graphs from Business Insights Explorer.

Manage

Manage options give you more than inquiry-only functionality—each Business Insights Explorer view has a set of related tasks associated with it. The Customer view has tasks for updating customer information and entering a new order, for example.

While you're viewing Acme's invoices, they mention their company phone number has changed. You can instantly launch the Maintain Customers task with Acme already loaded as the Customer.

Personalize

You've come to expect a high degree of flexibility with MAS 500 and Business Insights Explorer follows suit. In Business Insights Explorer, you'll find options for sorting, grouping, reorganizing, and renaming columns within grids. Save your filtered and customized views and access them in the Business Insights Explorer Explore function.

Business Insights Explorer is sure to become one of your most-used modules. Think of it as a quick-access control panel to explore, analyze, and manage the most used data in your system. Look for the premier of Business Insights Explorer with the Version 7.0 release.

Spotlight On MAS 500
TimeSheet Professional

TimeSheet Professional v9.5 will be available for MAS 500® beginning with the Version 7.0 release. Let's take a closer look at the benefits TimeSheet Professional can provide to you.

Expenses

Spreadsheet-style data entry is speedy and convenient. Most of us are familiar and adept with this type of data entry where we can press the Enter key to quickly save an entry and move to the next cell.

TimeSheet Professional includes a new **Expense Sheet View** where users can enter their expenses directly into a separate entry grid without loading a dialog box from the time-entry view. In the Expense Sheet view, the rows represent tasks and the columns represent dates. If a user needs details about the expense codes or expense groups associated with a task, they simply expand the task cell to display the details.

Users will always see a running total of their expenses by day and period, and TimeSheet Professional v9.5 even applies any markup/markdown or tax rate to the expenses before displaying the total.

It's not always convenient to approve expense reports along with an employee's time sheet; many companies may process time sheets weekly, but expense reports monthly. TimeSheet Professional v9.5 facilitates this by allowing managers to approve employee expense sheets independent of their time sheets.

Using defaults can save you valuable data entry time, and reduce the opportunities for data entry errors. With TimeSheet Professional v9.5, you can define several default expense values, for example: price, quantity, markup/markdown percentage, or tax percentage for each expense item. In addition, you can define a default description for each expense. For example, you could establish an expense item description "Rental Car" with a default quantity of one.

Project Budgeting

Budget View allows your organization to create project budgets based on two formats. Whether your organization budgets from the top down or the bottom up, TimeSheet Professional can handle it. The *Rolled-up* budget format allows you to define the budget associated with each project phase first, which is then rolled up in to the overall project budget. Alternately, use the *Pushed-down* budget format to define the project budget first, and then assign a percentage to each project phase.

The **Resource Allocation View** allows you to schedule work hours for employees by creating budget entries. The budget total for each task is then adjusted according to the budget entries you schedule. As your employees enter their hours for each task, TimeSheet Professional will automatically update your budget totals, keeping your data accurate.

Project-Level Approval Process

It's likely that your employees divide their time between multiple projects, with potentially several project managers. In TimeSheet Professional v9.5, project managers can review and approve the hours and expenses an employee worked for the project(s) they manage.

Excel-Based Reporting

Chances are you and the rest of your organization's MAS 500 users and project managers are already familiar with Microsoft Excel's reporting and analytical powers. TimeSheet Professional v9.5 lets you leverage that familiarity. You can create report templates in Excel that may include pivot tables or charts, and display TimeSheet Professional report data in that report template. With this new feature, your organization's reporting and analytical power is expanded without the need to master a new reporting tool.

eTimesheets Still Here

While TimeSheet Professional v9.5 will be a part of MAS 500 beginning with 7.0, you won't have to give up eTimesheets if that's the tool you rely on—as MAS 500 also will continue to include eTimesheets.

Analyze the features and advantages of both, and choose the tool that best meets your organization's needs. As always, we're here to help, give us a call with your questions.

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best software
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