

The Sage Peachtree Insider | March 2011

An Inside Look at Sage Peachtree and Your Business



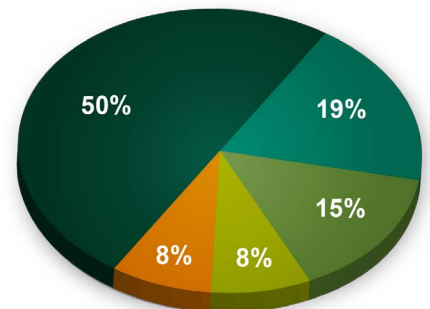
INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- **Feature Article: Business Spring Cleaning** **Page 2**
Tidying up your Sage Peachtree records and data.
- **Sage News: Sage Summit 2011** **Page 2**
Don't miss out on the Early Bird savings.
- **Social Media: Be Part of the Conversation** **Page 2**
Twitter for Your Business.
- **Twitter Apps** **Page 3**
Ready to get started? Here are some apps that will help.
- **Heads Up: Regulatory Issues We're Watching** **Page 4**
Legislators have been busy. Don't miss these updates.
- **Retirement Readiness: 401(k) Plans** **Page 4**
Brought to you by Retirement Services for Sage Customers
Don't sweep fiduciary duties under a rug.
- **Tip of the Month: How to Reset Disabled Prompts** **Page 5**
You turned them off, but you can reactivate them!
- **Business News: Work More Efficiently** **Page 5**
Get more time in your day with these efficiency tools.
- **Customer Spotlight: Catoctin Creek** **Page 6**
See how this Sage Peachtree customer successfully uses social media.

Previous Poll Results

What is the most effective way for your business to gain new customers?

- 50% Referrals
- 19% Networking
- 15% Advertising
- 8% Reducing Prices
- 8% Cold Calling



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Feature Article: Business Spring Cleaning

Spring Cleaning – for your Business!

Spring cleaning. . . years ago that meant hanging carpets outdoors and using a carpet beater to get rid of the dirt. Or washing, starching and ironing kitchen curtains. Today we have Roomba® the vacuum cleaning robot, and Swiffer® better-picker-upper mops and dusters. Now that's progress!



Business spring cleaning has changed, too. You still have files to clean out and contact information to clean up, but much of it is stored within your software now. Still, spring cleaning is a good idea.

What kind of "tidying up" is needed for your Sage Peachtree software? Well, when's the last time you backed up your information? Archived your company data? Run the data verification utility? Marked outdated customers inactive? Run an internal audit of your data with the Internal Accounting Review?

Whew, that's a lot to think about, but it's a good practice to do a periodic audit of your system status. The software will sometimes give you an alert message; some of it you have to remember to do yourself.

There are many good tips and ideas in this March issue of the Sage Peachtree Insider, so read on. In the meantime, here's a sneak peek of a new feature in the soon-to-be-released Sage Peachtree 2012.

What would you say to an at-a-glance System Check that would give you a single place to get statuses and prompts for the above chores and more? Think it would save you time? Help you remember critical tasks before it's too late? We were thinking of you when we designed it, and we can't wait to show it to you. Coming in May, Sage Peachtree 2012! Now get back to your spring cleaning.

[Comment on this article](#)

Sage News: Sage Summit 2011

Sage Summit

Sage Summit 2011 Early Bird Registration

Planning on attending Sage Summit this year? [Early Bird registration](#) began March 8 and there's a significant discount for signing up before April 1. The conference runs July 12 – July 15 for Sage customers (July 10 – 15 for Sage partners).

This year's conference is located at the Gaylord National Hotel and Convention Center, the crown jewel of the newly developed [National Harbor](#) in the Washington, DC area. Sage has negotiated discounted hotel rooms at the Gaylord National and other hotels located just steps away – along the shoreline of the historic Potomac River.

Here's [the agenda](#) for your action-packed four days of [networking](#) and [learning](#) opportunities. Besides that, the Washington, DC area is a [sight-seeing paradise](#) – much of it free – so bring the family. You'll never have a better opportunity to combine business with pleasure.

Worried about the cost? There's an installment payment plan if you register by March 31. Need to justify the expense? We've put together an air-tight business case that outlines the reasons why attending is an investment that will pay dividends long after the conference has ended. (You can even customize it!)

The Sage Peachtree product team will be there and we'd love to meet you and show you how to get the most out of your software – and your business!

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Social Media: Be Part of the Conversation

Twitter for Your Business

By Kim Dixon, Sage Peachtree Product Team

January's poll shows that only 2% of you are using Twitter for your business. I'll be honest; when I started this series Twitter was foreign to me. I could never figure out who's tweeting what, or even how to tweet. It was confusing.

What I did learn is that if you are a business you should probably be on Twitter. I know I said this with Facebook, too. Basically, both are great ways to reach and interact with your customers and potential customers. Plus, research firm eMarketer predicts that by the end of 2011, 16.5% of adult social networkers will be using Twitter.

During my Twitter research I saw so many great business examples that it inspired me. Now I'm "that person". I've signed up for an account. I'm talking about it everywhere, although the other baseball moms are not nearly as interested as I am. Stops at the dance studio, piano lessons – they should all be tweeting!

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Social Media: Be Part of the Conversation

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What is Twitter?

Twitter is like blogging, only shorter. Messages are limited to 140 characters. Twitter users can send and receive messages via the web and third-party applications.

Getting set up is easy. Sign up at [Twitter](#). Fill out your profile. Use your real name or company name. Put in your location, 1-2 lines about your company and interests, and web site (if you have one). Add a photo, image or logo. Remember, nothing silly or embarrassing; this is your public profile.

What to tweet.

- Tweet about an event
- Ask a question related to your business niche
- Answer someone else's question
- Share your opinion on topics of interest
- Retweet someone else's tweet
- Share links to web pages you like. If the URL is too long, use a [URL shortening service](#) like [TinyURL.com](#).

Who to follow?

Look for some of your favorite bloggers or web sites. Click on "Find People" to look for friends. Or use [Twellow.com](#) or [JustTweetIt.com](#) which are like Twitter "yellow pages". And be sure to follow [@SagePeachtree!](#)

Check out how [@kogibba](#) grew their one truck BBQ delivery service by informing their followers where they will be and having them help decide what will be on the menu. Also, [@coffeegroundz](#) started taking orders via twitter. Our customer, [@catoctincreek](#), does a great job informing his followers of events, posting reviews, and pictures of customers with his products. Some big businesses you may want to check out for inspiration: [@zappos](#), [@fastcompany](#), and [@amazon](#).

Take your time. Figure out what your business goals are. Make sure your tweets line up with your business "persona". And don't be afraid of finding a negative comment about your business. Respond openly and honestly; they'll appreciate it. In many cases, dissatisfied customers just want to be heard.

Just like all social media, be consistent. Once you get out there, stay there. Happy tweeting!

[Comment on this article](#)

Twitter Apps

If you read Kim's Twitter article and are ready to get started, here's more info. There are many desktop and mobile applications available that make Twitter very easy to use. The benefit of running a desktop application is that it can sit minimized in your system tray, and it will notify you when someone sends you a message. You can do everything that the website lets you do, all in a re-sizeable, convenient application that notifies you when you receive a message directed to you.

[twirl](#) is a social software desktop client, based on the [Adobe AIR platform](#). Some of twirl's features:

- runs on both **Windows (2000/XP/Vista/Win7)** and **Mac OSX**
- connects to multiple [Twitter](#), [laconi.ca](#), [Friendfeed](#) and [Seismic Video](#) accounts
- displays **notifications** for new messages
- **shorten long URLs** (using [digg.com](#), [bit.ly](#), [snurl](#), [twurl](#) or [is.gd](#))
- **cross-post** your updates to other sites like [Facebook](#), [MySpace](#), [LinkedIn](#) and more via [Ping.fm](#)
- **post images** to [yfrog](#)
- **search tweets** using [Twitter Search](#) and [TweetScan](#), and follow topics in near-real time with **saved searches**
- automatically **find tweets mentioning your @username**
- **record a video on Seismic Video**, and share it on Twitter immediately
- get your **Seismic Video updates in real-time** using XMPP
- **English spell checking**

[TweetDeck](#) is much like twirl. Its unique selling point is that it lets you group the people you follow by creating different columns which display each group's updates. If you interact with a large community on Twitter, this can be very useful.

[TwitterFeed](#) will automatically post your latest blog to your Twitter and Facebook accounts.

[Twitpic](#) and [Yfrog](#). These apps let you upload pictures and videos, then link to them from a tweet. Here are some [pics posted by SagePeachtree](#).

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Sage Peachtree Tweet of the Month

Last months' most popular [@SagePeachtree](#) Twitter post:

Solid advice! RT [@streamline_mn](#): Backup, backup, backup. And make sure the backups don't all just live on the server.



SagePeachtree

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Heads Up: Regulatory Issues We're Watching

Regulatory Changes Affecting Employers in 2011

Believe it or not, your first quarter is coming to a close. Representatives in Congress as well as state and local legislators have been very busy. Hundreds of new laws and extensions of existing laws have occurred that affect all Americans, and many of those changes directly affect small businesses across the country.

Here's a highlight of just a few subtle changes business owners need to be aware of in 2011:

- A temporary reduction in the employee's share of the Social Security tax is in effect for 2011 as a result of the Tax Relief, Unemployment Insurance Reauthorization, and Job Creation Act of 2010. The portion of the tax paid by employees has been reduced to 4.2% from 6.2% for the first \$106,800 in wages paid to employees during 2011. Benefits for employees recorded by the Social Security Administration will be unaffected by the reduced employee rate and the employer's share of the tax will remain unchanged at 6.2%. More information on this tax reduction can be found in IRS Publication 15 at <http://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/p15.pdf>.
- The Tax Relief, Unemployment Insurance Reauthorization, and Job Creation Act of 2010 include an incentive that allows businesses to invest in capital equipment and deduct 100% of that investment.
- The HIRE Act, which exempted employers from paying their share of Social Security taxes on the wages of certain employees who were newly hired after February 3, 2010, and before January 1, 2011, does not apply to wages paid after December 31, 2010. However, employers may still be eligible for a \$1,000 tax credit to be applied when they file their 2011 tax return for any eligible employee hired under the HIRE Act that remained in their employment for at least 52 consecutive weeks.

Compliance issues seem to be ever-changing. However, don't worry! Sage Peachtree Payroll Solutions, including the fully outsourced Sage Peachtree Managed Payroll (powered by CompuPay), regularly enhance their payroll applications to accommodate new legislation.

Next month's topic?

Recent payroll tax quarterly reporting changes. Stay tuned here, or use the Comment button for feedback or to ask a question.

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Retirement Readiness: 401(k) Plans

Don't Sweep Fiduciary Duties Under a Rug

Brought to you by Retirement Services for Sage Customers

There has been a lot of talk recently in the retirement industry about the different types of fiduciaries. 3(38) this and 3(21) that. But what is a fiduciary and what are the responsibilities?

In plain English, a fiduciary is a decision maker. Fiduciaries are people who make decisions around a plan's design, investment selection, and service provider engagements, among other things. You might be one, even if you're not the company president or plan trustee.

Your investment advisor may or may not be considered a fiduciary. Based on the fiduciary capacity your advisor is able to provide, their involvement may or may not remove liability from the plan sponsor.

Ultimately, fiduciaries are responsible for prudent plan management and employee wellbeing. If you're a business owner, this means you could find yourself in the middle of a conflict of interest: Do what's right and beneficial for your employees? Or benefit your company's bottom line? As a fiduciary, it's your obligation to put the employees first.

Choose otherwise, and the consequences could be damaging. If employees feel the plan is not being managed fairly, or that proper investment education isn't provided, they can file a complaint with the Department of Labor (DOL). The DOL takes employee complaints of retirement plan mismanagement very seriously.

If fiduciaries slip up, they can be held personally liable to restore any losses to the plan that resulted from their mistake. This exposes the fiduciary's personal assets, home, and business to risk. Fiduciaries that have willfully violated their responsibilities can also be subject to criminal penalties and civil action.

Don't let this happen to you. Review your company's fiduciaries and their responsibilities. And make sure you (or they) are making decisions in your employees' best interests.

Find [more information here](#) and access a [fiduciary checklist](#).

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Become a Fan!

The Sage Peachtree [Facebook Fan Page](#) has business news, special offers, tips and occasional contests. "Like" us and become a fan today!



Tip of the Month

Reset Disabled Prompts and Messages

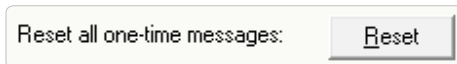
As you work in Sage Peachtree, you may have at some point turned off a one-time message prompt by selecting the Do not display this message again check box in the message.

Here are some examples of these one-time messages:

- When you attempt to print a sales invoice with an invoice number that already exists for another customer, Sage Peachtree will prompt you asking if you would like to proceed.
- When you change accounting periods, Sage Peachtree will ask if you would like to run the Internal Accounting Review.
- If you are in one company and attempt to open another, Sage Peachtree will ask you if you would like to keep the current company open.
- When you are creating a new invoice for a customer that has open proposals, Sage Peachtree will prompt you with instructions on how to select a proposal for billing.

Although the information and options offered in these types of prompts are non-critical, there may come a time when you would like to enable them again. To do so, follow these easy steps:

1. In Sage Peachtree, select Options from the file menu and select Global.
2. In the Maintain Global Options window, select the General tab.
3. At the bottom of the General tab, click the Reset all one-time messages button.
4. Click OK to exit Maintain Global Options.



And that's it! All disabled one-time messages will be now be reactivated, and will appear at the appropriate time.

Want more tips like this?

Follow [Peachtree Sage U](#) on Twitter.

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Business News: Work More Efficiently

Creating Business Efficiencies – the Ultimate in Spring Cleaning

The best part about spring cleaning is that reducing clutter makes it easier to find things – and, for businesses, to get more things done. If you're looking for ways to save time (and who isn't?) then consider taking advantage of the available Sage Peachtree integrations. They let your accounting software work a little harder (instead of you).

Sage Act! Link for Peachtree lets you sync your Sage Peachtree customer records with your Sage ACT! contacts. It reduces double entry and makes your processes more efficient. Plus, [it's included](#) at no additional charge with the purchase of any Sage Peachtree product.

Back up your data. Did you delete one too many files when you were cleaning up your Sage Peachtree records? No need to worry if you take advantage of [Sage Peachtree Online Backup](#) (powered by Iron Mountain). This service securely encrypts and stores a copy of your data online, making it safe from virus attacks, PC failures and natural disasters. You can set the backups to run automatically, even while you work. Plus, you get 100MB free with purchase.

Payment processing. Every business owner would like to have a speedy, secure and flexible way to accept and process payments. Did you know that you can help streamline the payments process by integrating your Sage Peachtree accounting software with [Sage Payment Solutions](#)?

Here's how one company approached payment integration with Sage Peachtree and Sage Payment Solutions.

"We launched a web storefront for our new BtoC business and wanted to make it easy for consumers to buy with a credit card – and make it easier for us to process these orders,"

says Sage Peachtree user Jessica Granda, Treasurer, [Grandall Distributing Co., Inc.](#)

"We are very satisfied with Sage . . . it's helping us increase sales and get paid more quickly."

In many small businesses one person can wear many hats, so why not be one to take the time now to evaluate how one or all of these integrations can get real results for your business this spring?

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Top Online Community Discussions

The most viewed discussions at the Sage Peachtree Online Community over the past month:

- [Peachtree Complete Accounting 2010](#)
- [Outlook 2010](#)
- [Peachtree Accounting 2011 Start-up Problem](#)
- [Importing Assembly Items](#)
- [Recalculating Prices](#)

FAQs

Q What's the best way to quickly get important details for a single customer?

A You can use the **Customer Management** tab on the Customers & Sales navigation center to see all the information you want to know about a single customer. You can choose which sections you want to see, including transaction lists, contacts, item sales history, aged receivables, jobs and more.

Simply select the customer whose information you want to see from the Customer ID dropdown list. To add or remove sections, click the **Customize this page** button.

Q What's the best way to quickly get important details for a single inventory or service item?

A You can use the Inventory and Service Management Center to quickly find and view information about your inventory and service items. It allows you to easily conduct research, make comparisons, and make decisions regarding the items sold and the services offered by your business.

To view this dashboard, go to the Inventory & Services navigation center and select the **Inventory/Service Management** tab. Simply select the inventory or service item you want to see from the Item ID dropdown list. You can customize the sections that appear to meet your specific needs by selecting **Customize this page**.

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Join the Sage Peachtree Community!

Get answers and advice from the thousands of members of the Sage Peachtree Online Community.

Join in the discussion at <http://community.peachtree.com>



Customer Spotlight

Catoctin Creek Distilling

Here's a "reprint" of a recent Sage Peachtree Community [blog](#). We thought you'd be interested in learning how this Sage Peachtree customer is taking advantage of certain social media tools for his business.

Last week the product team was host to campus visitor and Sage Peachtree customer Scott Harris of [Catoctin Creek Distilling](#). I wish you could have sat in on our conversations because we learned about several things that Scott and his wife, Becky, are doing well, even in a challenging economy.



Scott and Becky would be quick to say that owning their own business is hard work. It helps to be passionate about it, and they are. Nonetheless, there are certain tasks that are time-consuming and repetitive – things like the bottling process. It's all done by hand: bottling, sealing and labeling. When one batch is done, there's another on the way.

Their solution? Turn it into an event! Every couple of weeks they invite a select number of Catoctin Creek fans for a special tour, followed by lunch. Then everyone receives an assignment and they get to work. At the end of the process everyone signs a label or two – and, later, search for "their" bottles on store shelves.

We were struck by the creative problem-solving by these business owners; turning lemons into lemonade (although they'd be quick to add one of their organic, kosher products to that lemonade!). And because they identified, developed and maintain specific social media channels – website, Facebook and Twitter – they're never short of volunteers.

Social media is generally an inexpensive method of marketing, but it does require time and effort to maintain it. By understanding their customers, Scott and Becky identified the appropriate social media channels and focused their efforts there. And it's working!

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