NPT SPECIAL REPORT

Accounting Software Adding Up To More Analytics

Tabulating results starting to become a secondary function for many tools

By Paul Clolery

The national recession, the one that is still being felt despite federal statistics saying it's over, pretty much froze spending in the charitable sector. As less money came in, charities were forced to make some tough decisions, like feed some kids or buy a new piece of equipment or software.

For organizations of longevity, there was heavy spending on technology during the Y2K turn of the century technology scare. Executives feared all would be lost as computers rolled from 99 to 00 and they spent like drunken mariners on liberty in a foreign port.

The recession hit just as the need to upgrade from a decade ago was becoming a pressing issue. The issues are different this time.

There is "greater demand for tighter integration between the fundraising, ticketing and accounting systems. Fortunately, the technology is almost universally available to make this an attainable goal today," said Steven Birnbaum, chief operating officer of Jacobson Consulting Applications (JCA) in New York City.

In fact, accounting software no longer parties like it's 1999. There is more emphasis on qualitative analysis versus simple compliance from finance departments and executives have a greater interest in tools to support those functions.

"Rather than producing traditional financial statements only, smaller nonprofit organizations are looking for tools that enable trend analysis, evaluation of financial results based on multiple dimensions (funder, program, category, location) with ability to slice and dice that data in real time," said Tom Thornton, vice president of sales for JMT Consulting Group. "Tools to present this information in a traditional report format or in more aggregate forms (charts, graphs, ratios) are part of the requirements presented in most of our new client engagements. This has also manifested itself in the form of interest in business intelligence (BI) and BI-like tools that are fully integrated with their accounting data (and other data silos, in some cases)."

Both JCA and JMT are firms that are often referred to as Value Added Resellers (VARs). The firms work with numerous, often competing, software packages to find a fit for the nonprofit.

"This year our clients and prospective clients have retained us to do more comprehensive business process reviews than they have at any time in the past," said Thornton. "While this might be partially attributed to the financial crisis driving more deliberate, careful decision processes, many organizations are recognizing that the problem might not be the tools themselves, but how they leverage them."

Pending a palpable turnaround in the economy, "there is enormous pent-up demand for new features and functionality, particularly those relating to advanced analytics and business intelligence," he said.

Birnbaum might be right, particularly with larger organizations. According to a recent survey of 3,800 nonprofits by research firm Campbell Rinker in conjunction with Techsoup Global, smaller nonprofits (those with less than $1 million in revenue) are more likely than larger nonprofits to keep their current solution when they next review the accounting programs they use. Larger nonprofits (those with more than $1 million) are more likely to upgrade their current systems when they next review them.

Many providers of accounting software have upgrades for 2010. For example, **AccuFund Accounting Suite's 3.08 version** has been updated. Users can now work on detailed planning at the monthly level and list budget details in each account, such as the positions being funded in a particular department. Its Budget Development now stores account expressions, which calculate values based on other accounts in the worksheet.

For example, a budget line item based on demographics, such as units of services, or other categories, can be defined. Users can also lock a finished version of a budget at the monthly level and then start a new version.

Its Budget Development segment integrates with the Grants Management module, allowing budgets developed through Grants Management to be processed through Budget Development, and then posted to the General Ledger. When budgets are being developed, the user can determine which areas of the General Ledger are going to be budgeted, whether the project is connected to Grants Management and what period it will post to in the General Ledger. A budget project can be posted to as few or as many periods as desired, or across an organization's fiscal year.

AccuFund has also enhanced the Allocations module to function better with Budget Development and allow revenues and expenses to be allocated across all accounts in a project. Users can see all expenses, including overhead, for all programs and departments within a budget project.

With its Financial Report Writer, AccuFund now integrates financial data in the General Ledger with data in Budget Development, allowing managers to view the full history of data with budgets for all activities.

Agilon's Business Financials spins from a partnership between Agilon and Unit 4 Agresso. It couples data management (Information Warehouse), process modeling (Business Processes) and information delivery (Analytics/Reporting), so that a single change made to your data or business processes is reflected throughout the solution, according to Amanda Miller, marketing manager at Agilon.

Upgrades to the system include a Service Maintenance module for the Field Force product suite. Users can perform advanced planning and maintenance scheduling of service contracts for both internal and external projects and services.

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There is also a new human resources component. It provides a bridge across the different administrative areas covered by payroll and human resource management by providing a tool for streamlining the regular process of negotiating and setting new salaries.

A new user administration Web service allows the administration of users by linking Agresso with Active Directory. This allows user profiles that are already held in Agresso to be updated and amended quickly.

Enhancements to other modules include Procurement Document handling where there is visual indication that there is an attached document in approval screens. Documents linked to a requisition can be transferred to a purchase order and attachments can be included in XML orders sent to suppliers.

As for Payroll, there is a new element for date-based calculations for leave rules and length of service and age, etc.; reason code for rate changes; up to 50 value references available for calculated rates; and, support for minimum pay deals in the automatic increment process.

Agilon's new fixed assets module includes autonumbering, flexi-fields, document archive, multiple deprecation books, multiple depreciation methods, depreciation tables, depreciation simulation, indexation, revaluation, impairments, split assets, additions to assets, grouped assets, assets under construction, sales and disposals, indirect grants, capital charges. It is integrated with GL, AP, PCB and Planner.

Blackbaud added several ease of use upgrades to The Financial Edge Version 7.8. A personalized Home Page customizes the user experience and makes it easier to retrieve information. Users of The Raiser's Edge, Blackbaud's constituent relationship management system, get the same Web look and feel with The Financial Edge.

The latest enhancements to The Financial Edge include the availability of WebPortal, streamlining and extending accounting procedures to the Web. Blackbaud also recently added F9 for The Financial Edge, a financial reporting tool that enables users to create flexible, customized financial reports in Microsoft Excel. F9 features include: cell-based reporting for accounts and projects, budget reporting and analysis, drill down, graphing and analytical tools, Excel's built-in formulas and formatting options, and reporting analysis.

The Financial Edge's modules were expanded through the Blackbaud Connect Partner Network to include tools such as PaperSave, Advanced Budget Management, and Counterpoint.

Blackbaud recently unveiled a new Knowledgebase, with more than 60,000 solutions to frequently asked questions. There is also a very active user community.

Cougar Mountain Software's CMS Professional 2010 FUND includes new features including enhanced filtering and internal and external reporting abilities that expand the user's ability to retrieve information and present that data in a customized format.

The new product, Cougar Dtails, A Financial Dashboard, provides users with a visual perspective of the organization's health and performance by displaying its Revenue & Expenses, Cash Flow and Financial Indicators in a graphical format. The feature pulls its information from General Ledger data and is available for FUND Suite users as well. The program lets the user drill down (up to four levels) into their dashboard data to closely examine any financial anomalies.

The new product allows users to set default preferences (especially if reviewing this data on a regular basis), customize the graphs by zooming in on the data displayed, compare the data with budgets, or viewing only specific accounts, and exporting the transaction details to a spreadsheet or PDF file.

New features for CMS Professional 2010 FUND include a Filter Option in Lookups. Users can more easily track down a fund account by entering only the first few numbers or letters of the account. It also allows users to export select reports as a .CSV file and open it in a spreadsheet such as Microsoft Excel. This new feature is based on customer request. Users have the ability to sort and compile their data, import it to other systems and develop graphs, charts, or any other visual representation of the data.

The applicable reports that will export to a .CSV file include: Bank Reconciliation: Bank Register (single line); General Ledger: Audit Trail (single line); and, Budget Performance (expense or revenue, percentage used), Budget (standard), Chart of Accounts, Trial Balance

The vendor's Custom Modification Department offers modifications for all of the CMS Professional software. Custom Modifications can increase security within the software, get critical information to the user in a time-efficient manner, and integrates with all other programs and processes critical to the users business. This is our way to make our software work for more users, so that they can use their Cougar Mountain software to its fullest potential. The new modification Web site is www.customcougarmtn.com.

Software provider **CYMA** has ratcheted up its Financial Accounting Standards Board (FASB) offerings, along with integrating accounting with online human resources package and workflow control element.

CYMA has several FASB 117 reports and is working with one of its resellers to make the reports more flexible.

CYMA developed a Payroll Portal that can either be set up for Internet access or restricted for Intranet only use. The Payroll Portal allows employees secure, self-access to payroll information such as current and historical W2s, check history with printable check stubs and personal information. Use of the CYMA Payroll module is required.

Enhanced CYMAIV is a control center that uses an integrated Web browser to allow for customization and Intranet integration. This "CYMA eDesk" can also access CYMA menu items from a specially-formatted HTML link. With Version 10, CYMA established a customizable Control Center where users can arrange menu access just as they wish for easier

KICKING THE TIRES
ACCOUNTING SOFTWARE YOU MIGHT WANT TO LOOK AT

AccuFund Inc.
AccuFund Accounting Suite Standard
Single-user: $2,995; three users: $6,495; add $895 for each additional user.
AccuFund Accounting Suite Professional
Single-user: $6,595; three users: $8,995; add $1,195 for each additional user;
781-433-0233
www.accufund.com

Agilon
Agilon Business Financials
Starts at $27,000 for 1 to 4 users
Starts at $42,000 for 5 to 10 users
800-480-9015
www.myagilon.com

Blackbaud
The Financial Edge, version 7.8
Accounting models start at $2,995 for single user; $6,995 for multi-user
Subscription pricing starting at $5,500 per year single user; $8,000 per year multi-user.
858-795-3000
www.blackbaud.com

Cougar Mountain Software
CMS Professional 2010 FUND
Single user $1,208; multi-user $3,624
CMS Professional 2010 FUND Suite
Single user $3,870; multi-user $6,411
CMS Professional 2010 FUND Revenue Center
Single user $1,450; multi-user $1,752
800-388-3038
www.cougarmtn.com

CYMA Systems, Inc.
CYMAIV Not-For-Profit Edition
Starts at $645 per module
Typical 5 User System with Grant Tracking: $5800
800-292-2962
www.cyma.com

Donor2/Campus Management Corp.
Donor2 Accounting
Starts at $2,655 per user
800-548-6708
www.donor2.com

Executive Data Systems
NonProfit Starter Kit
Single-user $400; unlimited $600
Fund Accounting Software Series
Single user $1,000; unlimited $1,500
800-548-6708
www.execdata.com

Fund E-Z Development Corp.
Fund E-Z Fund Accounting, version 10
Single user $1,995; each additional user approximately $500
Fund E-Z Fund Accounting (Pro add-on) $1,495
877-696-0900
www.fundez.com

GMS
GMS Accounting and Financial Management/Reporting System
One to two users $7,200; three to four users $10,000; five or more users $11,500. Additional $2,000 for SQL version. License costs additional $35 per month per user.
Revolving Loan Servicing System
One to two users $3,300; three to four users $3,800; five or more users $4,300.
800-933-3501
www.gmsactg.com

Intuit Inc.
Quickbooks Premier for Nonprofits 2010
Single user $399.95; Two users $749.95; three users $1,099.95
Quickbooks Enterprise Solutions for Nonprofits
From $600 per user
866-676-9668
www.quickbooks.com

Open Systems Inc.
TRAVERSE for Not-for-Profit
Approximately $1,500 per application and approximately $400 for each additional user.
800-328-8876
www.osas.com

Sage North America
Sage MIP Fund Accounting
Single user starts at $2,995
800-811-0961
www.sagenonprofit.com

Sage North America
Peachtree Premium Accounting for Nonprofits
Single user $499.99
Five users $1,199.99
877-495-9904
www.peachtree.com

Serenic Corporation
Serenic Navigator
Starts at $3,000 per user for basic Business Essentials suite to $6,000 per user for Advanced Management suite
877-737-3642
www.serenic.com

processing. Additionally, the Control Center provides optional visual workflows.

CYMA has integrated its online human resources package with its desktop software. It can also be used in a standalone environment. It has three levels of access: Administrator, Manager and Employee. Managers and Administrators can manage the process, while employees gain access to medical information, emergency contacts and employee news.

FUND E-Z Fund Accounting (Version 10) Software was rewritten in .NET 2.0+ and SQL Express 2005+. The user interface has also gotten a facelift and now utilizes ribbons, such as MS Office 2007.

According to John Gaugler at FUND E-Z Development Corp., the firm added more than 150 new features to Version 10 from the prior Version 9. There is also an additional add-on to the FUND Accounting software called Pro, which adds features at an increase in cost.

The **GMS** Accounting and Financial Management/Reporting System integrates all accounting activity into an entity-wide system. The GMS Accounting system is not sold as separate modules but rather as a package containing all the necessary functions.

The underlying system design provides an integrated accounting system that performs all accounting activities -- General Ledger, Cash Receipts, General Journal, Budget Preparation, Cost Allocation, Accounts Payable, Payroll, Timesheet Accounting, Financial Reporting and Security features. Systems are available in a one to two users, three to four users and five or more users either in Access or Sequel Server applications.

GMS's Revolving Loan Servicing System maintains loan profile data, records loan transactions and meets the reporting requirements of state and federal programs. GMS-RLSS is specifically designed for organizations that must keep track of information for different funding sources, even for multiple funded loans.

Loan files capture statistical, demographic and financial data for reporting, and include user-defined fields. "Master Query" allows users to create hundreds of special reports that can be saved and used month after month. It produces mailing labels, rosters, spreadsheets, counts and tickler lists.

Repayments and disbursements are easily recorded and loan-to-date histories can be instantly retrieved. Complete reports may be produced for all loans by city, county, funding source or loan status.

Users can integrate GMS-RLSS with the GMS Accounting and Financial Reporting System or operate GMS-RLSS as a standalone system.

Open Systems' NFP Version 11 uses Microsoft technologies such as .NET and SQL Server. It allows users to adjust menu terms and organization, and create and save individualized views of data for inquiry and reporting.

The TRAVERSE Design Studio, new with this version, lets users add custom fields, change the layout of forms, and build import and export definitions to provide integration to other business software or automation equipment. Any changes made to the software design are preserved when service packs and other updates are applied to the software, according to Carla Alarcon, director of marketing at Open Systems.

Serenic Navigator applies Microsoft Dynamics NAV 2009 technology and functionality to Navigator's core features with a new User Interface (UI) and User Experience (UX) through the use of Role Centers that leverage productivity features within the newest Dynamics NAV platform.

A Role Tailored Client provides your employees with personalized Role Centers that give an overview of the information and tasks most relevant to their jobs right on their desktops, or through the Web. A visual map with elements specific to employees' own jobs takes complexity away from the system's UX and leads to faster adoption among users.

Navigator 2009 has content specific to its customers' organizational requirements, and employees can easily personalize their Role Centers to fit their own unique work styles and information needs.

A Role Center for a typical accounts payable clerk includes visual cues of the

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work to be performed, giving the individual user a single, integrated view of the job-specific information and tasks on the desktop. Notifications and alerts initiated by automated workflows are displayed in each Role Center to keep critical tasks and projects on track.

A link for a "new vendor" takes the clerk straight to what needs to be entered for a new vendor relationship and becomes part of a managed list of vendors the person is responsible for in the Role Center. A cue indicating "28 invoices due today" helps prioritize tasks and manage deadlines.

A Three-Tier Architecture was introduced in the underlying Microsoft Dynamics NAV 2009 to provide upgraded Web services, user experiences and graphical reporting. Web Services support is built-into Navigator 2009 and can connect to other applications.

Within Navigator 2009, Role Centers present specific information based on your employees' job functions to help people easily prioritize tasks and make quick business decisions. Users work in their own tailor-made "home pages" – or Role Centers – with very minimal training.

Peachtree by Sage: Premium Accounting for Nonprofits has several upgrades. A Customer Management Center allows users to view donor and volunteer details all in one place, with customized dashboard views and the ability to export to Excel or PDF.

With 2010 version, system backup is automated, and can be scheduled to take place at any time that's convenient, so it doesn't impact the normal flow of activity. The Employee Management element stores all employee and volunteer information in one centralized location, including emergency contact info, review dates, hire date, employment verifications, and more. Companies can also set alerts to stay on top of upcoming tasks, such as employee reviews.

The new Peachtree by Sage: Peachtree Quantum includes My Dashboard, customizable dashboard views of the areas of the organization of most interest to the volunteer or employee, enabling quick and easy reference.

Sage MIP Fund Accounting v10.2 includes a customer feedback portal, plus numerous reporting enhancements, expanded email functionality, and expanded import capabilities.

The New Customer Enhancement Portal allows users to view existing enhancements and watch for status changes and gives them the ability to submit their own ideas.

As for Reporting enhancements: Form 990 reporting now includes Part 1, 8, 9 and 10, with both summary and detailed formats; New State Unemployment Tax Act (SUTA) reporting fields make it easier for users to reconcile, track, and file their state unemployment taxes. The GASB (Governmental Accountings Standards Board) module is more flexible, with improved settings for agencies in the public sector; and, improved report drilling functionality from within financial statements allows users to more accurately search financial records.

There are also numerous enhancements to the email functionality of Sage MIP Fund Accounting Version 10.2. They include: Users can more easily send email messages directly from within Sage MIP Fund Accounting, with fewer configuration restrictions; Email employees with email addresses that are stored in Sage MIP Fund Accounting directly from within the Payroll module with hyper-linked "click to mail" capability; and, expanded import capabilities streamline data processing and reduce errors created by large amounts of manually entered data.

In this new era of acute accountability and tracing effectiveness, particularly with foundation funders, analytics are going to be vital. In many verticals, organizations are finding their need to manage to non-financial performance targets and analyze program effectiveness is a cost of doing business, not a luxury, said JMT's Thornton.

"Some of this is driven by funders (both government and private sector donors) that are asking for greater and greater documentation of the effectiveness of their funding dollars. But, development departments have also begun seeing that verifiable positive outcomes can help organizations more effectively raise funds to support those same programs," he said. *NPT*