



Sage PFW Pro Status

As you may have heard, Sage announced at Sage Summit 2012 that several Sage products (*Sage PFW*, *Sage Pro*, *Sage MAS500*, *Sage BusinessWorks* & *Sage BusinessVision*) would be classified as “non-core” (meaning no major developments and being primarily in a “maintenance” mode) and would eventually be discontinued.

On January 17, 2013, Sage announced that the “last day of sale” [EOL – end of life] for Sage PFW would be March 31, 2014.

Sage PFW was previously known as “**Platinum for Windows**”, “**BatchMasterPFW**” (and in older DOS versions as “**Platinum Accounting**” and “**BatchMaster**”).

Why:

- Obsolescent or non-supported programming language. Sage PFW uses Microsoft Visual Basic which has been discontinued by Microsoft since 2008. Using more modern programming languages would require a complete re-write of the software from the ground up.
- Sage is moving towards an online (SAAS – software as a service) and subscription based model for some of its products.
- Decreasing customer base (example: there are about 500 paint companies in the USA now, there used to be 3,000 of them 20 years ago according to one of our customers).

What does this mean for you?

Answer: You have paid Sage a license to use PFW perpetually, and as such, you can continue to use Sage PFW for however long you wish.

What should we do?

Answer: There are 3 essential choices for companies to consider, each with its pro’s and con’s. See further discussions below.

Option 1: Do nothing

Pro’s: No out of pocket cost (short-term), use your current version as long as possible (as long as there is no requirements to update or upgrade your computers and operating systems).

Con’s: 1) No upgrade path to most current version of Sage PFW once EOL has occurred.
2) Ability to use PFW is based on operating systems versions. Most older versions of Sage PFW (prior to v5.9) and the DOS version will only run on 32-bit Windows XP (which is no longer available as new licenses and Microsoft is stopping support for WindowsXP in early 2014).



- 3) Can not continue to use older PC's forever, as most companies need to run other software programs as well, and Windows XP will not be supported (example: Microsoft Office 2013 will NOT run on Windows XP).
- 4) Very expensive and disruptive upgrade to a totally different accounting and/or manufacturing software package.
- 5) Unable to purchase additional modules or user licenses. Once EOL has occurred, no add-ons will be available.
- 6) For those on the BatchMaster / Platinum DOS versions: Printer support, for these were based on a) parallel ports (virtually all printers now only use USB or wireless connections and b) can only understand print formatting based on Epson FX/LQ, IBM Proprinter and HP Laserjet II. (Windows printers rely on "drivers" not command strings sent by the application itself).
- 7) Might have to keep buying used equipment (ie: eBay, Craigslist), to keep the old software running. This also raises security issues, as one never knows what is installed on a used PC. The labor cost of refurbishing an old PC (ie: reloading or updating Windows XP, removing old data, ensuring a safe computing, experience, etc will often cost more than simply purchasing a brand-new Windows 7 PC).

Option 2: You like PFW and it works for the company.
Continue the Sage PFW maintenance program until EOL, or
buy the upgrade to the latest version.

- Pro's:
- 1) Will work with all current versions of Windows .
 - 1.1) Approved for Windows 7 Pro 64-bit.
Scheduled to be approved for Windows 8 Pro 64-bit in Spring 2013.
 - 1.2) Approved for Microsoft Server 2008 / 2011.
Scheduled to be approved for Windows Server 2012 in Spring 2013.
 - 2) Be able to purchase additional user licenses and modules until 3/31/14.
(note: date subject to change as of this writing)
 - 3) All present Sage PFW, BatchMaster/Platinum data can easily be upgraded with only minimal downtime (1-2 days at most).
 - 4) Training requirements are minimal.
 - 5) Disruption to company is minimal.

Con's: You might have to eventually switch to another package, but in the short to medium term, there are no more yearly maintenance costs associated with PFW, and the resulting savings can be used elsewhere. Given that there are many companies currently using a variety of non-supported software for 5 – 15+ years means that you could easily estimate being able to use the last available version of Sage PFW for at least 5 – 10 years without any major software expense (much of this is dependent on how long Windows 7 or 8 PC's will be available).



Comments: This is **NOT** akin to “throwing good money after bad”! By upgrading or continuing your maintenance plan until EOL, you are ensuring that you can continue to run Sage PFW for as long as possible at the least amount of cost and disruption to your company.

For companies that continuing to use Sage PFW v5.9, we highly recommend that you keep one or several spare PC’s with Windows 7 Pro on hand; that way in case daily used machines experience failures or corruption, a system can quickly be put into place that you know will work with Sage PFW v5.9. It is relatively inexpensive insurance.

Option 3: Either PFW is not working for you, you need features that are not/will not be available in PFW before EOL or you do not wish to use a program that is not supported by the developer: Switch to a different software package.

- Pro’s:
- 1) You will end up with a developer-supported software package.
 - 2) You will have a system built on the latest programming architecture *(be sure to check with the developer as to which programming tools are used !)*
 - 3) You will have newer or additional features not present in PFW.

- Con’s:
- 1) Nothing is guaranteed. Just as Microsoft shut down the FrX Report Writer that Sage ERP products used, whatever software package you end up with could potentially have the same fate at some point in the future. (note: think of “major” software packages or companies from the 1980’s that are no longer around or just minor players, but that many companies had used extensively in their business, such as: Borland, Ashton Tate, Enable Office Automation, Lotus 1-2-3, dBase, etc).
 - 2) There are NOT many packages where the accounting and process manufacturing portions are integrated (ie: from the same developer). Thus you will more than likely end up with 2 developers and different upgrade/maintenance schedules and the potential that at some point the two packages will not work together any more, or perhaps one of the two developers will stop development or cease to exist.
 - 3) Possibly very expensive (depending on the particular package, modules & user licenses), it could be at least \$25,000 to \$150,000+ in software costs (including Microsoft SQL, new PC’s and Server requirements).
 - 4) Very disruptive. Not easy, not quick.
 - 5) Data migration is mostly manual. There are generally no migration tools available, so data has to be manually converted (import / export and lots of manual manipulation) or even manual data entry to rebuilt certain data. [note: Sage is making available a basic migration tool for PFW AP,AR,GL



and IN modules to a few other select Sage products. But remember, this does NOT convert any Formulas, lab, MSDS or batch history, none of which exist in the Sage 50, 300 or X3 products]. For some packages, data migration services might run anywhere from \$5,000 to \$20,000+.

6) Might require other additional products such as Microsoft SQL, which can be expensive and require additional technical training for your personnel.

7) Retraining of personnel. Training in a new software package (even if it has similar modules to PFW, can easily costs another \$10,000+ to \$25,000+. Since most new systems would be from 2 developers, some users would have to be trained in at least 2 new packages.

8) Custom Crystal or MS-Access reports used with PFW would have to be redone in the new package, possibly with a different Report Writer.

9) Establishing new procedures (due to differences in the way the new software packages(s) handle data flow.

Comments: If the latest version of PFW will absolutely NOT work for your company, then we will work with you to find the best solution. There are several choices available in the marketplace and the solution will be different for everyone, more than can be addressed in a document such as this.

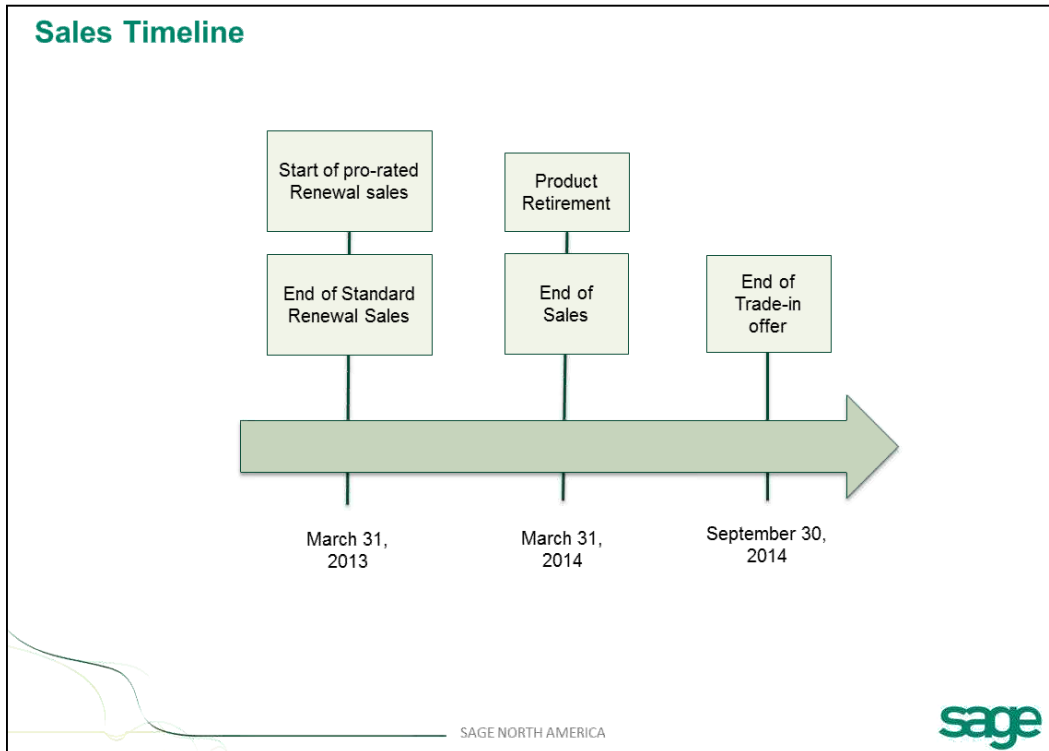
Please contact us as soon as possible so that we can work with you and find the best solution for you, your staff & colleagues and your company going forward.

We are now also an authorized reseller of **Formulator**, thus allowing us to offer you another choice in formulating software!

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact us !



Sage supplied the following information:



Sage Investment Protection Offer Perpetual License

Sage Investment Protection Offer Perpetual License		1/1/2013 – 9/30/2013	10/1/2013 - 9/30/2014
On-Plan Customers	Sage PFW ERP Sage Pro ERP	No License Fees for migrations to Sage 100 ERP or Sage 300 ERP.	\$2,000 per user Trade-in Credit for migrations to Sage 100 ERP or Sage 300 ERP
		\$2,000 per user Trade-in Credit for migrations to Sage ERP X3	
Off-Plan Customers	Sage PFW ERP Sage Pro ERP	\$750 per user Trade-In Credit	\$500 per user Trade-In Credit

SAGE NORTH AMERICA