

Tip 4 – Keeping Your BusinessWorks up to date with a support plan saves you time and money

When you invested in BusinessWorks accounting software, you made a significant decision. You selected a powerful and convenient accounting solution that expands as your business grows.

Maintaining your support plan saves you money by:

- Keeping your BusinessWorks current with all the latest features.
- Avoiding the dreaded “Reactivation Fees”.
- Providing 24/7 online support options for quick answers to your questions.
- Options for phone support, and technicians connecting to your system remotely.

More on these main points later, but first...

Did you realize that the software you run your business with cost millions of dollars to produce? Think about having a staff of 5 to 10 programmers on your payroll for the last 10 years (BW is 20+ years old, so we'll ignore the first 10.) A programmer costs 50k to 80k per year to employ with benefits.

So let's look at the math. 5 programmers times 60k per year times 10 years = 6 million dollars. So your BusinessWorks software costs at least that, and you can keep it current for \$599.00 per year! Does that sound like a bargain to you? Does that make you feel better about your investment in BusinessWorks? I use BusinessWorks and I sure appreciate running my business with a useful program for an affordable cost! Plus, for only a few hundred bucks a year, (about \$50 per month) I get all the upgrades that include timesaving features, just like you. Sure is better than having to have a team of programmers on staff maintaining my accounting software, right?

You and I get these advantages because BusinessWorks can spread the development cost over tens of thousands of users, all paying an annual fee of \$599 for a subscription plan, or \$899 for a Silver plan (which provides 10 call cases) or \$1199 for a Gold plan (which offers UNLIMITED call cases – truly one of the best bargains of all accounting software support plans!)

So how does a support plan save you money?

Keeping your software current includes an annual upgrade which adds features that make the software better. For example, one feature that was added in v7 was the ability to use enhanced tax reporting and e-filing. Now all those payroll forms you had to fill out by hand can be filled out online and printed and/or e-filed, resulting in saving time. SAVING TIME = SAVING MONEY.

What about the “Dreaded Reactivation Fee”? This is a little understood, and never fully explained “GOTCH YA” a big software company can impose. Your plan has an annual expiration date, for example March 15. If you renew your plan prior to, or up to March 15, no problem. You pay only the plan fee, like \$599. But if you are 1 day late to 6 months late, then you must pay the \$599 plus a \$75 reactivation

fee. For a Silver or Gold plan, the reactivation fee is \$150. (This is explained legally in the Lapsed Policy verbiage provided by Sage included at the end of this tip.)

Why do they charge a reactivation fee? Because you still get the feature improvements made when your plan lapsed, and now you are charged for them. If your plan lapses from 6 months to 18 months, the reactivation fee increases to \$674 for a subscription plan, and \$749 for a Silver or Gold plan. In Sage's words, the reactivation fee "is based on the plan that expired and entitles customer to all missed updates and upgrades. This price is added to the cost of the plan the customer wishes to purchase."

After 18 months, the reactivation fee is \$1273 for a subscription plan (plus the \$599 for the plan for a total of \$1872) and \$1348 for a Silver or Gold plan (plus the \$899 or \$1199 cost of the plan). This covers all the upgrades and features BusinessWorks added over the past 18+ months, since your plan lapsed.

A better strategy is to budget annually \$599 to keep your software current. If you run into a big problem, you can upgrade your subscription plan to a silver plan for \$300. With a silver plan, BusinessWorks technicians can actually connect to your system (provided you have an internet connection) and can fix most any issue. The worst-case scenario is that your data has become so bad, that BusinessWorks technicians will ask you to electronically send them a backup of your data and they can untangle it using their special tools.

The good news... I have never seen a BusinessWorks customer lose their data, as long as they backup their data with the built in BusinessWorks backup tool.

The last point to make on service plans is the great on-line knowledge base you can use as part of your support plan. BusinessWorks technicians document all the questions that are called in, and put the answers on the on-line knowledge base. So when I have a question, the first place I can look is at the on-line knowledge base with a key word search. Between the great built in BusinessWorks help, and the online knowledge base, 95% of my questions get answered.

I only have to call tech support on rare instances, which saves both my customers and I a lot of time.

Now let's look at the support options as BusinessWorks explains them, to help your business run more smoothly.

The basic plan is called a **Subscription plan**, and costs \$599 per year. That plan includes:

- Free upgrades to your current modules as they are released. These upgrades offer significant new functionality so you always have the most current version of Sage BusinessWorks.
- Maintenance releases from our development team. Take advantage of product updates, fixes and minor enhancements that help maintain the reliability and performance of your software. These service packs are available via download.
- Unlimited access to Sage Software Online, our award-winning online support service. Sage Software Online contains the very same knowledgebase that our internal software analysts use. The system provides 24-hour-a-day access to solutions for thousands of common and not-so-common technical questions. In addition, Sage Software Online helps prevent software difficulties before they happen by providing the latest product and technical bulletins, installation tips, troubleshooting hints and product release information.
- SageTalk discussion forums. These online discussion groups join customers with Sage support staff, as well as other Sage BusinessWorks users. You can get positive ideas and tips on how to make better use of your Sage software.
- Proactive e-mail notifications. Through our e-mail service, you'll receive technical bulletins, program updates and product fixes that will help maintain the reliability and efficiency of your software. Please make sure you register with your e-mail address.
- Access to SiteCreator. The Sage SiteCreator was built to help you publish a high-quality, profitable Web site quickly and without learning HTML language. We will also provide free hosting of your SiteCreator developed site.
- Procedure checklist and frequently asked questions for year-end processing will ensure a smooth year end process.
- Tax table updates. Make sure your tax tables and payroll calculations are always up to date (Payroll module only).

This plan does not include access to Sage's technical support staff via e-mail, phone or fax.

Silver Support Plan - \$899 per year or less than \$75 per month

The Silver Plan provides base-level phone support. We recommend the Silver Plan for existing customers who have some experience working with Sage BusinessWorks, who place moderate demands on their accounting system, and who desire backup when their consultant is unavailable. An active Subscription Plan is included with this phone support plan, in addition the Silver Plan provides you with:

- Expert telephone, e-mail and fax assistance for 10 cases per year.
- Toll-free telephone service with a guaranteed one-business-day response time.

Gold Support Plan - \$1199 per year or less than \$100 month FOR UNLIMITED SUPPORT CALLS. This is a great value!!

By upgrading to the Gold Plan, you will be equipped with the premier support solution. In addition to having unlimited access to Sage Software Online and all the other Subscription Plan benefits, you'll enjoy friendly, personalized phone support from experts who understand Sage BusinessWorks inside and out. These experts have up-to-the minute, intimate knowledge of all the products and issues, so they can give you the security of knowing there's someone there to focus on your technical questions — while you focus on growing your business. We recommend the Gold Plan for customers who place heavy demands on their accounting systems. An active Subscription Plan is included with this phone support plan. In addition the Gold Plan provides you with:

- Expert telephone, e-mail and fax assistance for an unlimited number of cases.
- Exclusive priority toll-free telephone service with a guaranteed one-hour response time.
- 15% discount on Sage BusinessWorks training at Sage corporate headquarters and participating authorized training centers.

Lapsed Policies

Any plan that is not renewed before the expiration date is considered lapsed and is subject to lapsed plan pricing. If you wish to renew a lapsed plan, you must pay for the "expired" period plus a \$75.00 late fee for Subscription Plans and a \$150 late fee for Silver and Gold Plans, if renewed within 6 months of the expiration date of the previous plan. This allows you to pay for enhancements and improvements made to the software during the period in which you were not on a plan. After a plan has lapsed for 6 months or more, additional fees apply. The anniversary date will remain the same, and renewals are always charged in full-year increments.