

Peachtree[®]
FOR
DUMMIES[®]
2ND EDITION

By Elaine Marmel and Diane Koers



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FOR
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Diane and her husband enjoy spending their free time traveling and playing with her grandsons and her Yorkshire Terriers.

Dedications

Elaine's dedication: To my brother . . . he knows why.

Diane's dedication: To Jan and Chris: Thanks for letting me think of myself as the "third" sister.

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Introduction

You're not a dummy, even if you think you are. But accounting by itself can be a challenge — and then, when you add the computer part to it . . . well, the whole thing can seem so overwhelming that you avoid it. (What? Never crossed your mind?)

Okay, if you're looking at this book, you've probably decided that you've "avoided" it long enough, and now you're going to do it — bite the bullet and computerize your accounting. We want to help you get the job done as quickly as possible with the least amount of pain. You've got other things to do, after all.

About This Book

Accounting isn't exactly a fun subject — unless, of course, you're an accountant . . . and even then it might not really be all that much fun. You might think that going to the dentist is more fun than playing with accounting software. We help you get past the ugly part so that you can start enjoying the benefits quickly.

What benefits? Well, computerizing your accounting can save you time and effort — and can actually be easier than doing it by hand and cheaper than paying somebody else to do it. Oh, we don't mean that you don't need your accountant, because you do. But you can save money by doing daily stuff for yourself — and paying your accountant for advice on making your business more profitable.

Peachtree For Dummies, 2nd Edition, shows you how to set up your company in Peachtree and then use Peachtree to pay bills, invoice customers, pay employees, produce reports about your financial picture, and more. But it's also a real-life-situation kind of book. We show you how to work in Peachtree by using everyday, real-life situations as examples. You know, the stuff you run into in the so-called real world that you need to figure out how to handle.

What You Can Safely Ignore

Throughout the book, we include Accounting Stuff tips — you can probably ignore those unless you're interested in that kind of stuff.

Oh, and the gray boxes that you see throughout the book? Those are called sidebars, and they contain extra information that you really don't *have* to know but that we thought you might find useful and interesting. So feel free to skip the sidebars as well.

Foolish Assumptions

We'll be honest — we had to assume some things about you to write this book. So, here's what we assume about you:

- ✔ You already know a little something about the day-to-day stuff that you need to do financially to run your business — you know, write checks, bill customers, pay employees, and so on. We *don't* assume that you know how to do all that on a computer.
- ✔ You have a personal computer (that you know how to turn on) with Microsoft Windows 98, Windows XP, or Windows 2000. We wrote this book by using Windows XP.
- ✔ You bought Peachtree and installed it on your computer.

The Flavors of Peachtree

Peachtree comes in four versions: Peachtree First Accounting, Peachtree Accounting, Peachtree Complete Accounting, and Peachtree Premium Accounting. (Peachtree Premium is available in industry-specific versions such as manufacturing, distribution, and accounting.) In this book, we cover Peachtree Premium Accounting.

Peachtree Premium Accounting contains everything that you find in the other three products plus a few additional features, such as the capability to store three years' worth of budget information instead of the two years available in the other Peachtree products. Peachtree Premium and Peachtree Complete include a time and billing feature that you don't find in Peachtree First Accounting or Peachtree Accounting, and Peachtree Premium and Peachtree Complete are networkable as long as you make sure that you get the multiuser version. Peachtree Premium and Peachtree Complete contain a job *costing* feature, but you find only a job *tracking* feature in Peachtree First Accounting and Peachtree Accounting. (If you don't know the difference between job costing and job tracking, you probably don't need either one.) And you can customize reports and forms in Peachtree Premium Accounting, Peachtree Complete Accounting, and Peachtree Accounting, but not Peachtree First Accounting.

Throughout the book, when we cover a feature that you find in Premium but not in the other flavors, we include notes to let you know. And, throughout the book, when we refer to the product as *Peachtree*, we mean Peachtree Premium — if we want to talk about one of the other flavors, we give you the full product name.

How This Book Is Organized

Every great book needs a plan. We divided this book into four parts, each made up of two to eight chapters so that you can easily find the information that you need.

Part I: Getting Started

If you're new to Peachtree, you probably want to read this part. We explain how to get around in Peachtree, how to create a company in Peachtree, how to make an effective chart of accounts, and how to set up default information that saves you lots of time later.

Part II: The Daily Drudge

In this section, we cover the stuff that you do on a regular basis:

- ✓ Buy and pay for goods to sell to your customers (yep, we cover inventory, too)
- ✓ Bill the customers and collect your money (or you won't be *able* to pay the employees)
- ✓ Pay the employees (or they won't work!)

Stuff like that. We also cover paying for services that keep your business running, and we cover a couple of more esoteric topics, such as billing customers for time that you spend working and tracking project costs.

Part III: The Fancy Stuff

In this section, we cover a variety of topics — most that you *don't* do every day. First, we show you how to customize forms and produce and modify reports — after all, you put information *into* Peachtree, so you should be able

to get it out and see the effects of your business habits. Then we cover reconciling the bank statement and the stuff that you do monthly, quarterly, or annually. We also show you how to easily keep your accounting information safe — a *very* important chapter. Why? Because you spend so much time putting stuff into Peachtree that it would be criminal to lose it just because your hard drive crashes or your office is robbed.

Part IV: The Part of Tens

If you've ever read a *For Dummies* book before, you've seen the Part of Tens. This part contains a collection of ten-something lists. Our Part of Tens includes the following:

- ✔ Ten common error messages that you might see — and what they mean
- ✔ Ten things that you can get from the Web — not just Peachtree stuff like support and additional information, but fun stuff, too, just in case you've had a bad day and need a laugh

The Peachtree For Dummies Web Site

This book's Web site, www.dummies.com/go/peachtreefd, features useful information that's not necessarily mainstream knowledge. You can find the following Bonus Chapters:

- ✔ Bonus Chapter 1, in which you find out how to tailor Peachtree to support the way that you work.
- ✔ Bonus Chapter 2, in which we discuss how to use the Peachtree money management tools to analyze your business and help you manage cash, receivables, and payables.
- ✔ Bonus Chapter 3, in which we describe how to use Peachtree in a network environment.
- ✔ Bonus Chapter 4, in which we list as many companion products for Peachtree as we can find. These products can enhance the way that you work in Peachtree.
- ✔ Bonus Chapter 5, in which we discuss who to blame for the whole debit/credit thing and explain how debits and credits work.

Icons Used in This Book



Throughout the book, you notice symbols in the margin. These symbols, or *icons*, mark important points.

This bull's eye appears next to shortcuts and tips that make your work easier.



When you see this icon, something could go wrong, so make sure that you read the paragraph anyway. This icon warns you of common mistakes and ways to avoid them.



This icon marks any point that you want to be sure to remember. You might want to reread paragraphs that are marked with this icon.



This icon identifies information related to accounting in general — not just Peachtree. You can skip this stuff if you don't care about accounting.

Where to Go from Here

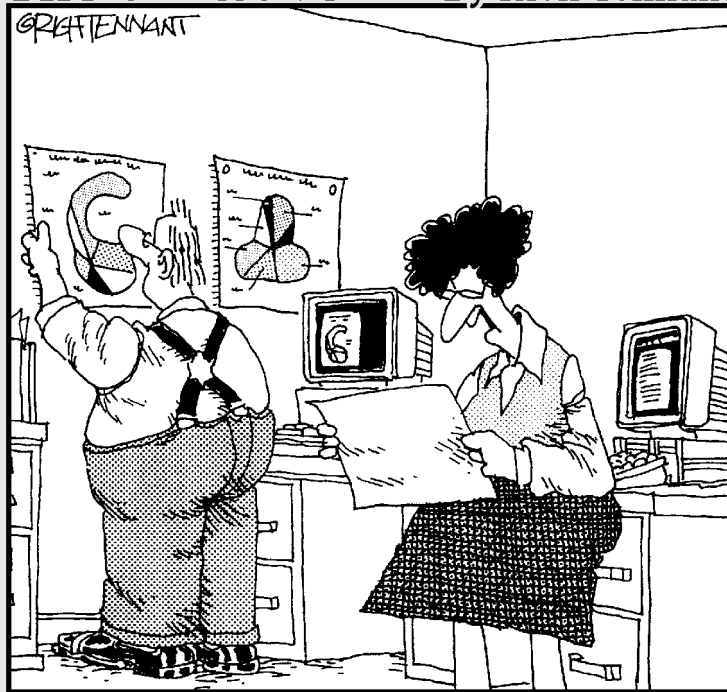
Just getting started with Peachtree? Turn the page. Do you have a specific topic of interest? Use the index or the Table of Contents to find the topic and turn to that page.

Part I

Getting Started

The 5th Wave

By Rich Tennant



"WELL, SHOOT! THIS EGGPLANT CHART IS JUST AS CONFUSING AS THE BUTTERNUT SQUASH CHART AND THE GOURD CHART. CAN'T YOU JUST MAKE A PIE CHART LIKE EVERYONE ELSE?"

In this part . . .

Every project has a beginning point. If you are just getting acquainted with Peachtree, this part is the place to start. In this part, you find out how to navigate through the Peachtree screens and how to set up your existing company records in Peachtree.

Chapter 1

Mastering Peachtree Basics

In This Chapter

- ▶ Starting Peachtree
 - ▶ Navigating the Peachtree screen
 - ▶ Getting help
-

If you have been keeping your financial records using manual methods, you know how time consuming it can be. Plus, keeping books manually provides too many opportunities for human error. Using Peachtree saves you both time and money; in addition, you can know at any moment in time your complete financial status. We know you're eager to get started. Operating a business is a nonstop process, but to computerize your accounting, you have to put first things first.

To work effectively, take some time to get comfortable with some of the features unique to Peachtree. In this chapter, you find out how to navigate in the software as well as open and close companies as needed. We also show you where you can turn for additional assistance. If you're ready, dig in.

Starting the Program

You have a choice: You can start Peachtree the easy way or the hard way. We prefer the easy way. When you installed Peachtree, with your permission, it placed a Peachtree icon on your Windows desktop. Assuming (we know, we're not supposed to assume) that you haven't thrown that icon into the Recycle Bin, you can simply double-click the Peachtree icon (the one with the peachy little peach on it), and the program starts.



To make sure that Peachtree always starts in a full-sized (maximized) window, right-click the Peachtree icon and click Properties. In the resulting dialog box, click the drop-down arrow in the Run box, select Maximized, and then click OK to accept the changes.

If you did throw the icon away or you have so many icons on your desktop that you can't see it, okay, you can start Peachtree the hard way. Choose Start→All Programs→Peachtree Premium Accounting 2005→Peachtree Premium Accounting 2005— for a total of four mouse clicks.

Choosing opening options

After you start Peachtree, what do you do with it? The Peachtree Start Screen appears as shown in Figure 1-1, beckoning you to do one of several things. You can select any of the following options or click the Close button to close the window:

- ✔ **Open an existing company:** Use this option to open a company already existing in Peachtree.
- ✔ **Create a new company:** Select this option to set up your business with the Peachtree Setup Wizard. (Chapter 2 covers this wizard.)
- ✔ **Explore a sample company:** Use this option to explore one of several fictitious companies. One company, Bellwether Garden Supply, is a retail and service company that uses most of the features of Peachtree, including inventory and job costing. Depending on the Peachtree edition you are using, you may have additional sample companies to investigate. You explore one of these in the steps in the following section.
- ✔ **Take a Guided Tour of Peachtree:** Wander down this path when you've got some extra time and try to spot some of the things that you see in this book.
- ✔ **Convert from a QuickBooks or One-Write Plus Company:** If you have finally come to your senses and want to transfer to Peachtree from *that other software*, click this choice. Peachtree helps to make the conversion pretty painless.

Exploring a sample company

You can best explore Peachtree's features by opening the Bellwether Garden Supply sample company and finding out how to move around in Peachtree. To open a sample company, follow these steps:

1. Click Explore a Sample Company.

If you're using Peachtree First Accounting or Peachtree Accounting, Bellwether Garden Supply immediately opens.

If you're using Peachtree Complete Accounting or Peachtree Premium Accounting, the Explore a Sample Company dialog box opens.

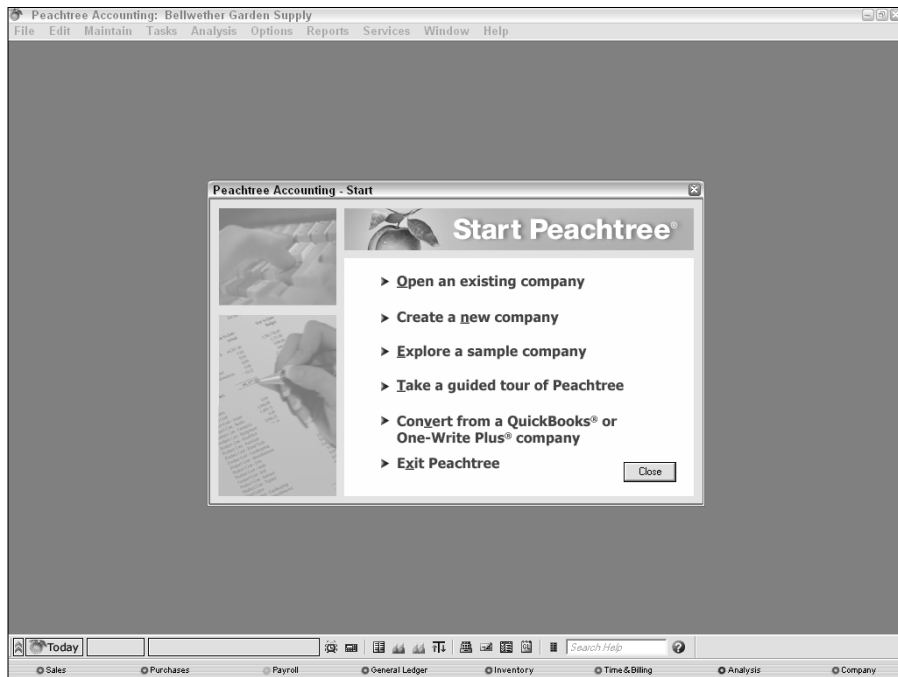


Figure 1-1:
Make a
selection
from the
Start
Screen.

2. Click the radio button next to the sample company that you want to explore.

For this example, click Bellwether Garden Supply.

3. Click OK.

As with other Windows programs, the name of the currently open company appears at the top of the window in the Peachtree title bar.

Getting around town

When you first open a sample company, the Peachtree Today window appears. (See Bonus Chapter 2 on this book's Web site for more information about the Peachtree Today window.) For now, click the Close box to close the Peachtree Today window.

Although the main menu window of Peachtree looks pretty plain, don't skip too lightly through it. The window actually displays several pieces of information. At the bottom of the screen, the Windows-style status bar (see Figure 1-2) displays information about the field, window, or menu choice that you happen to be using, as well as the current date, a toolbar, and the current accounting period. We think that the toolbar Calculator tool is especially helpful!



Hover your mouse over each tool on the main application toolbar to see a Tool Tip description of its function.

Figure 1-2:
The current accounting period appears on the status bar.



Choosing menu commands

The pull-down menus should be a familiar sight from your other Windows programs. Even though the other menu choices are important, you're likely to spend the majority of your time in Peachtree using the following three main menu choices:

- ✓ **Maintain:** This menu offers choices for working with data records. For example, you can store vendor, customer, inventory, and employee information, including names, addresses, and phone numbers.

A *record* is all the information about one person, product, event, and so on. Every record in a database contains the same fields. A *field* is one item of information in a record, such as an ID, name, or transaction number. To explore the parts of the information that you store in Peachtree, see the “Exploring fields and records” section, later in this chapter.

- ✓ **Tasks:** This menu is where you do your normal day-to-day work. You can bill your customers, buy materials, and pay your workers by using the Tasks menu.
- ✓ **Reports:** This menu is where it all comes together and where you can see the results of all your hard work.



Opening a Company

Maybe you need to keep numbers for more than one business. Peachtree enables you to account for the financial information of more than one company. Although you can open only one company at a time, you can switch back and forth between companies very easily.