

AdvancePro by AdvanceWare Solutions

Overall Rating **9.0**

Product Name

AdvancePro by
AdvanceWare Solutions

Reviewed By

Inga Arendt
larendt@WIPFLI.com

Date Reviewed

September 26, 2005

Summary

AdvancePro is great for businesses in the distribution, e-commerce, mail order, promotions, retail, and wholesale industries. It is a very deep application that is reasonably priced, provides many features needed by the above industries, and still keeps the whole process easy to understand and use.

Strengths

There are many strengths of this product including: unlimited pricing options and promotions, volume discounts for both customer and vendor orders, multiple warehouses and picking locations, product variations, advanced units of measurement options that allow product to be purchased in specified units of measure and sold in any number of other units of measure, jobs assignment and management, catch weights, customer-specific pricing, product catalogs, multiple SKUs, customer SKUs, drop shipments, multiple billing and shipping addresses for customers and vendors, integration with QuickBooks, and the availability of the business-to-customer and business-to-business web services that make it easy to link the inventory software to websites. There are also additional modules available for purchase with useful features such as lot/serial number tracking, bar codes, freight calculator, UPS WorldShip, XML import tool, pallets/bills of lading, multiple currencies, and multiple companies.

Limitations

The product only allows inventory to be kept on the average cost method and it is also missing some key components that would make this product ideal for many manufacturers.

Wish List

It would be useful to expand on the available reports within the software to include accounts receivable reports, sales tax, and commission-calculated reports and to provide additional report customization features. It would also be helpful to allow the printing of bar codes to put on inventory as it is received. (Please note that the above recommendations are already being addressed by the developer and will be released sometime in the near future). Finally, a sample company to allow practice work and screen specific help would also be useful.

Product Ratings	Rating	Ratings Definitions
<p>Setup and Installation: The installation and set-up of the product is very straightforward and easy. The initial setup wizard is very short, easy to complete, and all options can be accessed and changed at a later time if needed. Additional set-up is needed beyond the initial set-up wizard, but is not difficult to find. The ability to import from QuickBooks and/or Excel is a very helpful and time-saving feature for customers converting from QuickBooks inventory or another package. The importing process is also very easy to understand and do.</p>	9.5	<p>10.0 (Perfect): This is a very rare score is reserved for a product that is as perfect as it could be.</p> <p>9.0 to 9.9 (Spectacular): A product that receives a rating in this range succeeds at meeting all of its intended users' needs and has no major drawbacks.</p> <p>8.0 to 8.9 (Excellent): A product that receives a rating in this range is superior in so many ways that its few drawbacks do not have much negative impact.</p>
<p>Interface: The interface is very user friendly and straightforward. The product uses workspaces that are similar to the navigators within QuickBooks which makes it real easy for QuickBooks users to be comfortable moving around in the product.</p>	9.0	<p>7.0 to 7.9 (Very good): While the strengths of a product scoring in this range certainly outweigh its weaknesses, it has some minor faults that users should be aware of.</p>
<p>Features: All of the features within the product are extremely useful and provide great flexibility for both the sales and purchasing sides of distribution-based businesses. These features are listed in the above section regarding the strengths of the product.</p>	9.0	<p>6.0 to 6.9 (Good): This range represents a product that is above average. Its strengths outweigh its weaknesses, making it good for most uses but not a standout.</p>
<p>Follow-through on Claims The product does follow-through on the claims it makes in its packaging with the exception of marketing to the manufacturing industry. The product does contain item kits which allow the grouping of individual products which provides a light bill of materials feature that may work for some manufacturers. However, the product does lack many of the features needed by most manufacturers such as being able to build product, track raw materials, work-in-process, and finished goods, assign labor and overhead costs, and record and track shrinkage.</p>	8.5	<p>5.0 to 5.9 (Average): A product that scores in this range is functional but unremarkable.</p> <p>4.0 to 4.9 (Mediocre): Products in this range are below average. They fall in the middle of the pack for most features, but suffer from a few additional major flaws.</p>
<p>Ease of Use/Service and Support The product is easy to use and does a good job of following the flow of transactions in a product-based business. Free support is available from the help index, the manual, and customers are allowed a certain number of free support tickets based upon the number of users as well as a free two hour training session that is included free with the purchase of the product. Paid support is available as well in the form of pay-per-support ticket or the purchase of support packages. The support packages offer a quicker ticket response time and other benefits such as additional training time. For all customers, there is a personalized internet support section that allows them to track, update, and close their support incidents which is very convenient.</p>	9.0	<p>3.0 to 3.9 (Poor): A customer should probably not consider purchasing a product in this range or lower. There may be one or two specialized circumstances, however, that could justify the purchase of this product for a very low price for a specific demand.</p>



Data Security

AdvancePro does provide for separate user ids and passwords for each user. There is no requirement to use a mixture of lower-case and upper-case letters and at least one number or to periodically change passwords however the user id and password are case-sensitive, so that does help. The product also offers a very thorough roles and permissions feature which provides the ability to grant or restrict access down to individual tasks and reports within each section of the program. In addition, there is a Paper Trail report that automatically logs all of the activities of every user.

8.5

Privacy

The stated privacy policy was found at the bottom of the website for AdvancePro (www.advanceware.net).

10.0

Integration with QuickBooks

The integration with QuickBooks works fairly smoothly as long as the initial set-up is done properly. If the category feature of the product is used, income and expenses can even be assigned to separate accounts within QuickBooks allowing for more detailed and informative financial statements. The exporting process itself takes one click and automatically creates an export log report which is very helpful. The integration saves double-entry of transactions in both AdvancePro and QuickBooks. The only negative aspect was AdvancePro's set-up and use of a Tax Paid on Bills expense account for the sales tax paid on vendor purchases which should be included in the cost of what was purchased and not expensed separately. However, the balance in this account can be moved via journal entry.

8.5