

TODAY'S HOTTEST

The Hottest Companies of 2003



Best Software

Irvine, Calif.

www.bestsoftware.com

Competition is fast and furious for companies selling accounting and customer-relationship management (CRM) software to small businesses. Success in this market may hinge on which solution providers can help manufacturers grow to the midmarket without having to abandon their existing investments in business software.

Scalability is one of the major strengths of Best Software, which is a subsidiary of The Sage Group plc, Newcastle, U.K. In a space also populated by some of the big enterprise giants, Best Software continues to hold its own with more than a dozen products designed to help companies manage growth as they move up the industry ladder.

The company has made it clear it plans to grow through acquisition, and this strategy has helped it boost annual revenue from \$600 million to \$800 million in the last two years. It made three notable acquisitions in 2002, including workflow specialist BatchMaster in February and CPA Software in September.

Best Software is instituting a new corporate structure, a process that includes streamlining six divisions into two comprising multiple business units. The company says the reorganization will improve its ability to present one face to their customers.

Best's aggressive restructuring signifies the ferocity of competition in the small-business software arena. The effort is definitely well served; after all, when two major competitors are household names, innovating with leading-edge technology and nimble business is absolutely essential.

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