



## Supplementing the Numbers

Notes, files,  
and categories

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## Goals

- Know how supplemental data can work for you
- Understand what each option is useful for
- Learn how to set up notes, files, and categories



## Topics



- Why all this extra data?
- Notes
- Files
- Categories

What are these?

### What is supplemental data?

- **Notes**

- Written information to or from the budgetholder
- Multiple kinds of notes at different levels available
  - ... From the budgetholder
  - ... From the administrator
  - ... From XLerant

- **Files**

- Documents to or from the budgetholder that explain, enhance, or support a budget

- **Categories**

- Administrator-defined list of topics
- Used by budgetholder to ‘tag’ accounts that are related to each other

## Benefits

### What are the benefits of supplementing budgets with notes, files, and categories?

- **Better understanding**

- Your budgetholders are closer to the conditions on the ground.
- Knowing *why* they made their decisions makes the budget more informative

- **Less follow-up**

- If your budgetholders have already given their explanations, then you don't need to
- Roll-up unit budgetholders don't need to ask the base unit budgetholders for details

- **Better budgets**

- Your budgetholders can better follow the budget process if you provide extra guidance within the system

## Notes overview

### What kinds of notes are available?

#### Note Types

- User-entered
  - Account notes
  - Budget-level notes
  - Budget-level user notes
  - Context-specific notes
- Administrator-entered
  - Account instructions
  - Administrator notes
- System messages
  - System notes

6

We'll start by going over the different kinds of notes available in BudgetPak. There are three broad kinds of notes: notes that your budgetholders can enter or read, notes that the administrator enters for the budgetholders to see, and notes that XLerant provides. We'll go over each of these in turn.

**Note types:**

- User-entered
  - **Account**
    - Budget-level
    - Budget-level user
    - Context-specific
- Administrator-entered
  - Account instructions
  - Administrator notes
- System messages

## Using Notes

### Explain a single annual number

- Most precise information
- You can make these mandatory on an account-by-account basis

The screenshot shows a software interface for 'Update Website Design'. At the top, it says 'Line item 1 of 4' through 'Line item 4 of 4'. Below that, 'Step 1' is labeled. A 'Consulting Fees' line item is shown with a budget amount of '\$35,000'. To the right, there's a note section titled 'Step 2 (optional)' with a note about an 'External Design Consultant'. At the bottom, there's a 'Category' section.

7

We call accounts ‘line items’ on the user side, but on the administrator side, we call them accounts, such as the Configure Accounts page. Account notes are the most precise, targeted data the user can enter, explaining exactly what their thought process was for a given annual number. If you want to ensure that users *must* justify some particular account, you can mark the account note as ‘mandatory’ on the Configure Accounts page. If you do, then users will not be able to sign off on their budget until they’ve entered a note to explain that account. In this example, an ActionPak named ‘Update Website Design’ is noting that an external design consultant will be required, hence having a ‘Consulting fees’ item. Since all of the accounts in a given ActionPak were selected by a user, it’s often helpful to have the user explaining why they needed to include that account.

#### Note types:

- User-entered
  - Account
  - **Budget-level**
  - Budget-level user
  - Context-specific
- Administrator-entered
  - Account instructions
  - Administrator notes
- System messages

## Using Notes

### Budget process and high-level information

- Info that affects multiple line items
- Info about signing off, approving, etc
- Can be entered by admins ahead of time

8

These notes are for a single version and unit at a time. For example, a user in the IT Support unit might want to make an overall note that they anticipate a large number of major projects, and so will have many line items that are above the baseline percent increase. Conversely, an administrator might enter a note into the unit before the budget process begins, directing the user to keep their overall total flat, but allowing them to reallocate funds within their unit if needed.

## Budget Notes

### Budget process and high-level information: rolling up

Unit code	Description
Stamford University	<b>Stamford University</b>
ADM	Administration
-10-100	President's Office
-10-200	Marketing
-10-900	Finance & Controller
OPS	<b>Operations</b>
-10-500	Facilities & Grounds
-40-400	IT Support
ACA	<b>Academic Affairs</b>
A&S	<b>College of Arts &amp; Sciences</b>
-10-700	Psychology
-20-800	Endowed Chair - Arts
BUS	<b>College Of Business</b>
-10-1002	Entrepreneurship
-20-1010	Endowed Chair Business
-30-1001	International Business-Japan Campus
RSL	<b>Residential &amp; Student Life</b>
-40-300	Student Affairs
-40-600	Intramurals & Club Sports

- In a rollup unit, the notes from any unit below can be seen
- Each note shows who entered it, when, and what unit it was entered in
- Company unit gets perspective on the budget process as a whole

9

### Rolling up:

In a rollup unit, you automatically get to see any notes that were entered at a lower level. That way, rollup unit budgetholders can see all of the decisions that went into the lower-level budgets. They can also see how the process went; if people entered notes when they signed off, approved, or revoked either of those, then the higher-level budgetholder can tell whether everything went cleanly or if there was a lot of back and forth. When you look at the company unit, this can give you a lot of company-wide perspective on thought processes and the budget process as a whole.

## Budget Notes

### Budget process and high-level information: rolling down

Company:	Stamford University	19 units configured (12 base, 7 rollup)
Unit code	Description	
Stamford University	<b>Stamford University</b>	
ADM	<b>Administration</b>	
10-100	President's Office	
10-200	Marketing	
10-900	Finance & Controller	
OPS	<b>Operations</b>	
10-500	Facilities & Grounds	
40-400	IT Support	
ACA	<b>Academic Affairs</b>	
A&S	<b>College of Arts &amp; Sciences</b>	
10-700	Psychology	
20-800	Endowed Chair - Arts	
BUS	<b>College Of Business</b>	
10-1002	Entrepreneurship	
20-1010	Endowed Chair Business	
30-1001	International Business-Japan Campus	
RSL	<b>Residential &amp; Student Life</b>	
40-300	Student Affairs	
	Intramurals & Club Sports	

- Notes entered into a rollup unit can be rolled down to show them in child units
  - Allows rollup unit budgetholders to provide localized feedback about the budget process, either before or after the approval process starts
  - Admin-entered notes can do this too

10

### Rolling down:

Notes entered into a rollup unit can optionally be rolled down to show them in child units. That way, budgetholders in higher-level units can give feedback to the users whose budgets make up that higher-level budget. For example, “Everyone needs to reduce consulting costs by 5% this year” or “Remember to factor in the special seminars this fall.” This can happen before or after the approval process starts.

System administrators can also enter notes, which can roll down too. This can be very useful for pre-emptively adding notes to inform users about department-specific decisions that might not apply to the entire organization.

**Note types:**

- User-entered
  - Account
  - Budget-level
  - **Budget-level user**
  - Context-specific
- Administrator-entered
  - Account instructions
  - Administrator notes
- System messages

## Using Notes

### Budget-level user-entered notes to self

- Not centrally controlled
- Not part of reporting
- High-level reminders by the budgetholder

Select a version

Here are the different versions you can view and work with for unit 'IT Support':

Save descriptions

Version code	Version	Note	Your description	Status	Signed off	Date modified	Modified by	Your comments	
FY2017-B-3	2017 Draft 1		2017 Draft 1	<input checked="" type="radio"/>		3/31/2017 2:18 PM	Smith		<a href="#">Edit</a> <a href="#">View</a> <a href="#">Erase</a> <a href="#">Copy</a> <a href="#">History</a>
FY2017-B-5	2017 Draft 2		2017 Draft 2	<input type="radio"/>				Skipped this one.	<a href="#">Edit</a> <a href="#">View</a> <a href="#">Erase</a> <a href="#">Copy</a> <a href="#">History</a>
FY2017-B-11	2017 Draft 3		2017 Draft 3	<input type="radio"/>					<a href="#">Edit</a> <a href="#">View</a> <a href="#">Erase</a> <a href="#">Copy</a> <a href="#">History</a>
FY2017-B-6	2017 Final Budget		2017 Budget Submission	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	1/5/2017 3:18 PM	Administrator		<a href="#">Edit</a> <a href="#">View</a> <a href="#">Erase</a> <a href="#">Copy</a> <a href="#">History</a>
FY2017-D-15	2017 Budget - Growth P...		2017 Budget - Growth Plan	<input type="radio"/>					<a href="#">Edit</a> <a href="#">View</a> <a href="#">Erase</a> <a href="#">Copy</a> <a href="#">History</a>
FY2017-D-16	2017 Budget - Conserv...		2017 Budget - Conservative	<input type="radio"/>					<a href="#">Edit</a> <a href="#">View</a> <a href="#">Erase</a> <a href="#">Copy</a> <a href="#">History</a>
FY2017-F-9	2017 Q1 Forecast	AD	2017 Q1 Forecast	<input type="radio"/>					<a href="#">Edit</a> <a href="#">View</a> <a href="#">Erase</a> <a href="#">Copy</a> <a href="#">History</a>
FY2017-OF-21	2017 Q1 Detailed Forec...		Q1 Detailed Forecast	<input type="radio"/>					<a href="#">Edit</a> <a href="#">View</a> <a href="#">Erase</a> <a href="#">Copy</a> <a href="#">History</a>
FY2017-PRE	2017 Prepo Data	AD	2017 Prepo Data	<input type="radio"/>				(No data available)	<a href="#">Edit</a> <a href="#">View</a> <a href="#">Erase</a> <a href="#">Copy</a> <a href="#">History</a>
FY2015-R-10	2017 Actuals	AD	2017 Actuals	<input type="radio"/>					<a href="#">Edit</a> <a href="#">View</a> <a href="#">Erase</a> <a href="#">Copy</a> <a href="#">History</a>
FY2015-B-8	2017 Target Budget	B	2017 Baseline Budget	<input type="radio"/>					<a href="#">Edit</a> <a href="#">View</a> <a href="#">Erase</a> <a href="#">Copy</a> <a href="#">History</a>
FY2016-B-20	2016 Final Budget		2016 Signoff Budget	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				<a href="#">Edit</a> <a href="#">View</a> <a href="#">Erase</a> <a href="#">Copy</a> <a href="#">History</a>
FY2014-R-7	2016 Forecast	AD	2016 Forecast	<input type="radio"/>					<a href="#">Edit</a> <a href="#">View</a> <a href="#">Erase</a> <a href="#">Copy</a> <a href="#">History</a>
FY2014-R-12	2016 Actuals	AD	2016 Actuals	<input type="radio"/>					<a href="#">Edit</a> <a href="#">View</a> <a href="#">Erase</a> <a href="#">Copy</a> <a href="#">History</a>

11

Version-level notes are useful for users who wants to add reminders about the budget process itself, such as 'need to revise this' or 'This came out too high.' These don't appear on reports or in the configuration pages.

**Note types:**

- User-entered
  - Account
  - Budget-level
  - Budget-level user
  - **Context-specific**
- Administrator-entered
  - Account instructions
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- System messages

## Using Notes

### Context-specific information

- Employee notes
  - Such as ‘Bob is retiring’ or ‘Alice earned a Tier II bonus’
- Driver notes
  - Such as ‘We expect extra travel this year’
- Asset notes

Current employees				
Permanent departure				
Name	Hire date	Departure date	Current salary / annual wages	Est. impact on budget
Gurk, Steven	10/4/2009		\$179,538	
Halverson, Hepbahn	1/8/2009		\$10,568	
London, William	4/6/1990		\$186,648	
Neeson, Liam	1/8/2009		N/A - 150,000	
Replacement, Matt's	4/1/2009		\$102	
Seaburn, William	4/7/1989		\$168,000	
Tangers, Steven	5/6/2003		\$190,400	
Blake, William	4/6/1987		\$20,680	
Joe, Schmo	1/1/1956		N/A - 34,800	
Laurel, William	9/15/2009		\$19,500	
Whistestag, Stanley	3/6/1991	12/15/2011	\$20,680	(\$1,387) Stanley is retiring.
Humpednick, Phibert	1/17/2009		\$33,261,520	
			\$34,242,434	(\$1,387)

### Shopping list

For each item you added, designate the quantity and the date it will be placed into service.

Import assets

Recalc

Asset class	Asset	Terms	Base cost	Quantity	Date placed in service	Note about this asset	Impact on budget	Delete from shopping list
Projectors	1024x768 LCD Projector	3 Year	\$7,000	1	1/1/2009	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The old one is due for replacement	\$2,333	<input type="button" value="Delete"/>
Laptops	Developer laptop	5 Year	\$3,000	1	1/1/2009	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Jack's laptop is failing	\$600	<input type="button" value="Delete"/>
Laptops	Multimedia laptop	3 Year	\$2,500	1	7/1/2009	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Expected regular turnover	\$417	<input type="button" value="Delete"/>
Laptops	Multimedia laptop	3 Year	\$2,500	1	1/1/2009	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Media center added more space	\$833	<input type="button" value="Delete"/>
Laptops	Standard laptop	3 Year	\$2,000	1	1/1/2009	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Media center added more space	\$667	<input type="button" value="Delete"/>
PCs	PC with monitor	3 Year	\$2,000	1	1/1/2009	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Media center added more space	\$667	<input type="button" value="Delete"/>
PCs	PC with monitor	3 Year	\$2,000	1	7/1/2009	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Expected regular turnover	\$333	<input type="button" value="Delete"/>
							\$5,850	

12

Administrators can add instructions to accounts, such as ‘all expenses for this account must be justified’ or ‘always use driver-times-rate for this account.’ These instructions will cause a warning icon to appear on the budget section for the user, which they can hover over to read the instructions.

You can add notes to specific employees to explain details like why a new hire was needed, why someone is departing, or why their salary is outside of their salary grade. This can also be particularly useful to explain outliers, such as unusual raises or instances of parental leave.

Another place where you can enter notes is in the drivers. The administrator can mark a driver as being editable in a given unit for a given driver set. If the user then chooses to edit the value of that driver, it can be very helpful to know why. For example, if you have a ‘number of advertising campaigns’ driver that defaults to 0, it could be important to know that the IT Department expects to run an internal campaign warning everyone about the dangers of phishing.

You can also enter notes about asset requests, such as explaining the timing of a purchase or why they were required.

**Note types:**

- User-entered
  - Account
  - Budget-level
  - Budget-level user
  - Context-specific
- Administrator-entered
  - **Account instructions**
  - Administrator notes
- System messages

## Using Notes

### Details on an account for all units such as...

- Preferred budget method (annual, % incr, etc)
- Exceptions to general defaults
- Further explanations

The screenshot shows a budget configuration interface for an account named 'Consulting'. Step 1 (left) allows selecting a budget method from a dropdown: 'By annual amount', 'By percent increase' (selected), 'By per head', 'By line item detail', 'By driver x rate', or 'By rows and columns'. It also shows the current annual amount (\$1,611,360) and a note field with a red border containing instructions about line item detail. Step 2 (optional) (right) is a note input field with a red border, asking if a note should be made about the line item, with a character limit of 8000. Buttons for 'Edit' and 'Import notes from prior budgets' are at the bottom.

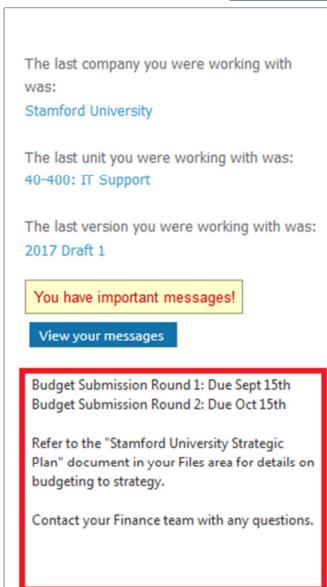
13

You can attach instructions to specific accounts via the Configure Accounts page. These instructions will be displayed when a user goes into a specific section to do their budgeting. This will apply across all versions and all units that use that account. For example, you might have a 'consulting' account, and want to make sure that your users explicitly tell you which consultants they plan to retain, and how much each one will be paid. You can include an account instruction telling them to use the budget method 'by line item detail' and to include all of that information when they do. Your users can't modify this information.

**Note types:**

- User-entered
  - Account
  - Budget-level
  - Budget-level user
  - Context-specific
- Administrator-entered
  - Account instructions
  - **Administrator notes**
- System messages

## Using Notes



### Organization-wide information such as...

- Important dates in the budget process
- Process reminders (Zero-based, or %)
- Who to contact

14

BudgetPak administrators can set system-wide notes to appear on the home screen, the first thing users see after logging in. You can set this text on the 'Configure notes and files' page, under the 'Notes' tab. This can be a long message, but we recommend not making users scroll through too much. Keep it to the most important details – usually the key dates in the budget process, any system-wide information about the process to use, and who to contact with any problems.

## Using Notes

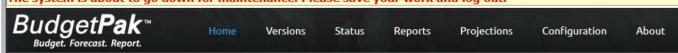
**Note types:**

- User-entered
  - Account
  - Budget-level
  - Budget-level user
  - Context-specific
- Administrator-entered
  - Account instructions
  - Administrator notes
- System messages

**Information from XLerant**

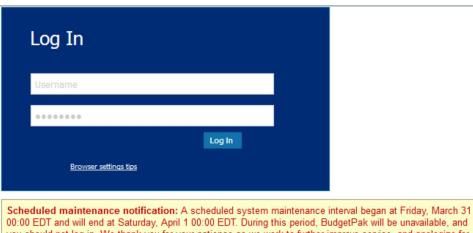
- Maintenance warnings
- Sysadmin warnings (new) – real-time information visible from any page in BudgetPak

The system is about to go down for maintenance. Please save your work and log out.



BudgetPak™  
Budget. Forecast. Report.

Home Versions Status Reports Projections Configuration About



**Log In**

Username

password

**Log In**

[Browser settings tips](#)

Scheduled maintenance notification: A scheduled system maintenance interval began at Friday, March 24 00:00 EDT and will end at Saturday, April 1 00:00 EDT. During this period, BudgetPak will be unavailable, and you should not log in. We thank you for your patience as we work to further improve service, and apologize for any inconvenience this may cause.

15

Unlike the other note types, system notes are entered by XLerant. The most common of these are the maintenance warnings that appear on the login screen to indicate when the system will be undergoing maintenance or other special events. If anyone was budgeting on April first this year – and we’re sorry you were working over the weekend if you were – then you may have noticed our annual joke warning.

Beginning with our next release, we’ll also have a new ‘sysadmin warning,’ which will appear across the top of the screen. This will be so that XLerant’s system administrators have a way to deliver messages in real time to users who are currently in the system. For example, if we’re about to update BudgetPak and someone is still in the system despite the maintenance warnings, we can use the sysadmin warnings to let them know that the system is about to be restarted.

## Files

### Including files in your budget

- Save any type of file inside BudgetPak alongside the budget it relates to
- Finance provides guidance and information to budgetholders
- Budgetholders provide explanation and support for their budgets

The screenshot shows the 'Files' section of the BudgetPak interface. At the top, there's a message: 'Here you may upload or download files from your budget. Depending on your user-privileges, you may manage only your files or all user created files.' Below this, it says 'File storage space used: 3.20 MB out of 40 MB (8 % full)'. There are two tabs: 'Admin files' (selected) and 'User files'. A blue 'Upload' button is visible. The main area is a table with columns: 'Filename (click to download)', 'File size', 'Unit', 'User', 'Rolldown to child units', 'Has mappings', and 'Mappings'. Three files are listed:

Filename (click to download)	File size	Unit	User	Rolldown to child units	Has mappings	Mappings
photo.JPG	1.7 MB	700 : Executive	Smith, James (Smith)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<button>Mappings</button> <button>Delete</button>
ver.txt	0 MB	700 : Executive	Smith, James (Smith)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<button>Mappings</button> <button>Delete</button>
Important instructions about our budget process.txt	0 MB	700 : Executive	Smith, James (Smith)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<button>Mappings</button> <button>Delete</button>

16

Moving on to files now, which is another important way to communicate data within BudgetPak above and beyond the raw numbers. You can upload files into BudgetPak, either as an administrator loading files to provide information or guidance to your users, or as a user providing a file that helps highlight some element of their budget. The 'Files' menu is available from within any budget, on the Budget Navigation Toolbar. There's no restriction on what kinds of files you want to upload; you can put up text files, PDFs, images, or anything else that makes your budget process more effective.

You can also map a given file to a specific accounts, to indicate exactly what data is being informed by the file.

### Example uses for files

- Supplemental information
  - E.g. Travel documentation
- Guidance from Finance
  - E.g. Strategic objectives
- Account details
  - E.g. Directions on budget methods
- Reduces “Versionitis”
  - E.g. Tether a model at a specific point in time to the budget it informs

17

Let users provide supplemental information of any type, including images. For example, if there's a 'User conference' ActionPak, then a user might want to upload documentation listing their travel itinerary and known costs to provide additional justification for that account.

Provide direction across units. For example, an administrator could upload a 'Budget guidelines 2017' document that includes dates, contact information, and instructions on which budget method to use.

Associate files with specific line items. In the 'User conference' example, the user could attach their itinerary directly to that ActionPak, making it clear which accounts are affected by those documents and making it easy for a reviewer in that account to identify the supplemental information that's relevant.

Upload external models to store them with the budgets they affect. A document that gathers together data from multiple sources to provide a final number for some account might be loaded into BudgetPak so that the mathematical reason for that number gets preserved, instead of being left in some network drive somewhere, subject to possibly being altered later and losing the connection between the model's output and the number in BudgetPak.

## Differences in using files

### Differences between admin-supplied files and budgetholder-supplied files

Admin-supplied files

- Upload files in advance
- Assign files to units
- Roll down as desired

User-supplied files

- Upload files while budgeting
- Part of their own budget
- Automatically rolls up
- Can roll down

## Considerations when using files

### Factors to bear in mind

- You have 50 gigs of storage space for *all* of your organization's files across the entire system
- Any user in a given unit can see any file associated with that unit, so don't upload confidential information

## What are categories?

### Understanding categories

- Admin-defined groupings
- Budgetholder-defined associations
- Tag individual accounts with zero or more categories
- Can tag different accounts in different units or versions

Category code	Category description
Strategic Initiative : 1	Create a diverse environment that encourages both student and faculty success
Strategic Initiative : 2	Promotes the university's distinctive identity to enhance institutional and program recognition at the national level
Strategic Initiative : 3	Build, operate, and maintain a safe, sustainable and accessible physical and technological infrastructure that supports high-caliber learning
Strategic Initiative : 4	Achieve a sustainable financial model that allows the university to realize its' vision while maintaining quality and affordability for the students it serves
Growth	Growth Plan
Transform	Transformation Plan

20

Another useful tool for making your budget more informative is the use of categories. In BudgetPak, categories are pre-defined tags that your users can apply within a budget at the individual account level. On the Configuration side, you create the categories; your users can then select any categories that apply to a given account. You can define as many categories as you want, and your users can associate as many categories with an account as they want.

Categories

**Step 2 (optional)**

Would you like to make a note about this line item? If so, enter your note here. It will be printed on some reports. You may enter up to 8000 characters.

[Edit](#) [Import notes from prior budgets](#)

**Category**

Category code	Category description
Strategic Initiative : 1	Create a diverse environment that encourages both student and faculty success
Strategic Initiative : 3	Build, operate, and maintain a safe, sustainable and accessible physical and technological infrastructure that

[Select](#)

**Line item usage**

1 other ActionPak also uses this line item.

ActionPak	Amount
1 Update Website Design	\$0

Total from other areas: \$0

Total from here: \$1,500,000

Total for this line item: \$1,500,000

### Using categories

**Benefits of categories**

- Let finance see what line items are associated with strategic initiatives
- Let budgetholders associate line items with concepts on a unit-by-unit basis
- Consolidate account data by category within a budget

For example, it might be important to identify which items are paid for by government grants, charitable donations, or by your organization's normal funding process. You can create these as categories – and you can make new categories for every fiscal year, if your categories change. Then in the budget section, your users can associate specific accounts with categories. They can mark more than one category if multiple items apply.

Your users also get the option to assign these categories on a budget-by-budget basis. If the IT department funds salaries from the general fund, but the Community Outreach department funds salaries from charitable donations, your users can indicate that instead of having it be associated with the account in all cases.

By using categories, you can consolidate information across multiple units in a way that the regular account structure and even ActionPaks might not allow. Category data can be retrieved via myXL, or, starting in our next release, you can run the category consolidating report to get your category information across multiple units in one shot.

Using categories lets you have designed flexibility, where you can provide a limited list of options for associations, but let your users provide input within that framework. Account notes are sometimes too flexible, when you want to group your account data into specific 'buckets.'

