**Accrual Accounting**

What Does It Mean?

**What Does *Accrual Accounting* Mean?**  
An accounting method that measures the performance and position of a company by recognizing economic events regardless of when cash transactions occur. The general idea is that economic events are recognized by matching revenues to expenses (the matching principle) at the time in which the transaction occurs rather than when payment is made (or received). This method allows the current cash inflows/outflows to be combined with future expected cash inflows/outflows to give a more accurate picture of a company's current financial condition.

Investopedia Says

**Investopedia explains *Accrual Accounting***

Accrual accounting is considered to be the standard accounting practice for most companies, with the exception of very small operations. This method provides a more accurate picture of the company's current condition, but its relative complexity makes it more expensive to implement. This is the opposite of cash accounting, which recognizes transactions only when there is an exchange of cash.

The need for this method arose out of the increasing complexity of business transactions and a desire for more accurate financial information. Selling on credit and projects that provide revenue streams over a long period of time affect the company's financial condition at the point of the transaction. Therefore, it makes sense that such events should also be reflected on the financial statements during the same reporting period that these transactions occur.  
  
For example, when a company sells a TV to a customer who uses a credit card, cash and accrual methods will view the event differently. The revenue generated by the sale of the TV will only be recognized by the cash method when the money is received by the company. If the TV is purchased on credit, this revenue might not be recognized until next month or next year.   
  
Accrual accounting, however, says that the cash method isn't accurate because it is likely, if not certain, that the company will receive the cash at some point in the future because the sale has been made. Therefore, the accrual accounting method instead recognizes the TV sale at the point at which the customer takes ownership of the TV. Even though cash isn't yet in the bank, the sale is booked to an account known in accounting lingo as "accounts receivable," increasing the seller's revenue.