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*From the Sept. 2007 Review of Payroll
Systems*

Through its Sage Payroll Services business, Sage Software offers outsourced payroll processing, compliance services and integration with the technology vendor's professional accounting systems. Primary processing functions are managed through the Full-Service Payroll option, which provides web-based access to employee data entry, reporting and management features. Geared toward direct use by small and medium-sized businesses, Sage Payroll Services can also be used by accountants who manage payroll processing for multiple clients. Check printing can be handled either by Sage or performed in-house as needed. The system can support any number of companies, departments, employees, deductions, and standard or user-defined pay types, rates and frequencies. Accruals management and benefit tracking functions are also included. Sage Payroll Services directly handles employment reporting and forms filing to all federal, state and local jurisdictions, along with payment of tax liabilities and third-party funds. Multi-state employees are easily handled through the system, and multiple direct deposit accounts per employee are also included.

Pricing for the system is based on the number of employee paychecks processed, at about \$1.65 per transaction. For a business with 15 employees paid twice monthly, the monthly cost would be approximately \$50. Of note, Sage Software is a Platinum sponsor for the 12th annual National Payroll Week 2007, which will be September 3-7.

EASE-OF-USE/DATA ENTRY – 5 Stars

The Sage Payroll Services interface opens within the user's browser window

with a screen design providing panels for various system functions, including

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Sage Software staff members can also guide users through initial setup processes, from logging into the secure system to company and employee data and time-entry tasks. For manual entry of basic employee and company demographic data, the Payroll Services entry screens provide tabbed access to categorized information areas, with client/employee selection screens offering search, filter and sort functions, and many data fields offering lookup and selection capabilities.

When entering payroll data, easy-to-follow processes guide the user through selection of payroll run type, data, groups and manual time entry or import from time management systems. Newly added integration with Sage TimeSheet also provides automated time data entry into the payroll system. Manual data is entered on individual employee timesheets, and salaried staff data is automatically populated. The system then performs calculations of taxes, withholding and benefits in real-time. Drilldown access to calculations and data-entry fields simplifies the reviewing and editing process. Full reporting is available as soon as payrolls are run. The interface keeps the user support number on-screen, which will be useful for new users.

FEATURES – 4 Stars

Because Sage Payroll Services is offered as an online system, users can access payroll data from any location and can make data entry or run payrolls as needed. Users can also download full payroll data, allowing for enhanced reporting or secure data storage. Whether using the fully outsourced processing and compliance version or keeping check printing in-house, the program supports all state and federal taxes, unlimited customizable voluntary and involuntary deductions, union dues, child support, deferred savings, flexible spending accounts and other items, with tracking of vested amounts and employer/employee contributions. Real-time gross-to-net calculations are easily accessible. Sage Payroll Services also provides for departmental/job payroll management and can support multiple

subsidiary units within a company. Advanced workers' compensation tracking

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with employees able to have their pay directed to any number of accounts or split between check and direct deposit.

REPORTING CAPABILITIES – 4.5 Stars

Even though the processing is outsourced, payroll reporting options are available immediately after processing a run, with the ability to print or save reports locally. Standard reports include payroll summaries, employee earnings, deductions, period reports, quarterlies and year-end options, benefits, third-party sick pay, and more. The vendor offers electronic archiving, and users can download complete data from which they can build customized reports. Reports can be output to PDF and Excel formats.

INTEGRATION/IMPORT & EXPORT – 5 Stars

Sage Payroll Services can directly integrate with Sage Software's accounting, human resources and timesheet applications, including Sage BusinessWorks Accounting,

Peachtree by Sage, Sage MAS 90/200 ERP, Sage Accpac ERP, Sage Abra HRMS and Sage TimeSheet, providing direct posting of payroll and tax/third-party payments to these systems' GLs. The system can also import and export data in spreadsheet formats, allowing import/export functionality with third-party accounting applications.

RELATIVE VALUE – 4.5 Stars

For businesses or accountants who wish to outsource part of the payroll process while retaining ownership of data (and the client relationship), Sage Payroll Services combines excellent ease-of-use and program features with strong reporting options through variable levels of outsourcing. The Sage Compliance Services option can be a welcome relief to businesses with more complex and multiple geographic employees. Sage Payroll Services includes excellent customer support

that is included in the product price, from initial setup assistance through

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