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of Tax Compliance Suites

The TaxSlayer Pro preparation system from Rhodes Computer Services provides a full complement of compliance tools that supports all entities with annual income reporting requirements, including individual, 1120, 1120S, 1065, 1041, 990 and 5500. The system provides all federal and state forms, and offers built-in depreciation, checkwriting, unlimited e-filing and networking capabilities. RCS also offers a tax office marketing system, plus add-on programs for paperless document management and client bookkeeping, and options that enable the practice to provide clients with financial and investment planning, insurance products and mortgage solutions without the professionals requiring additional licensing. Tax-Slayer Pro is offered as an all-inclusive package with all of the above entities, states and other features priced at \$995. The program can be used by all preparers within an office at no additional cost. The company's document management solution, Paper Cut, costs \$149 (minus a current discount of \$100); TaxSlayer Books, the client bookkeeping program with payroll, 1099 and W-2 options, starts at \$99. RCS has been offering tax preparation software, services and bureau options for more than 40 years.

General Operations/ Ease-of-Use — 4.5 Stars

TaxSlayer Pro guides the user through initial setup of firm information, including rate structures that can be based on flat-fee charges depending upon the form or service, or based on hourly billing increments. All of the program's menus, including the primary interface menu, provide both graphical icon-based (point-and-click) options and heads-down numerical key-based selection, allowing users to keep their hands on their keyboard and 10-key as much as possible, instead of the mouse. TaxSlayer Pro opens to a very crisp and uncluttered environment that provides icons across the top of the screen for accessing the Client Status

and Help Centers, a pop-up calculator, the Appointment Scheduler utility and

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interface that is centered around interview-style data-entry sheets, with a numerical text menu on the left that gives access to specific data-entry areas such as income, adjustments, deductions, credits and the client's state returns. An additional Forms menu, also on the left, eases searching and selection of specific forms, while also offering a tab to display completed client forms. A Diagnostic Warnings panel is housed at the bottom of the screen, alerting users to potential errors, missing data or other problems.

Workflow & Productivity Tools — 4 Stars

TaxSlayer Pro maintains very intuitive menu structures and navigation throughout data entry and other functions, helping streamline workflow processes. During data entry, all calculations are automatically processed and distributed throughout the client's return and associated forms and worksheets, and the system offers drilldown access to transferred or calculated information. Notes can be added to client returns but are not field-specific. Basic data information sheets include some smart field features, including a built-in ZIP Code database that fills in the city and state. Preparers can quickly preview a view-only copy of the client return at any time using an icon in the toolbar. Likewise, full IRS form instructions are available from the toolbar, or via a right-click menu that also gives the ability to jump to the appointment function, Message Center, publications menu, reject codes and other areas of the program.

The system has been "beefed up" over the past few years, with the addition of the full-time diagnostics system and reject code lookups, along with an asset depreciation module, multi-state capabilities, the form view option, smart data-entry functions, new Help features, built-in backup functions and the Client Status Center (which provides a tabbed window for viewing client summary data, as well as their state and federal acknowledgements, bank loan products, printed checks related to the client and notes). The Appointment

Scheduler,

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Integration/ Import & Export — 3 Stars

TaxSlayer Pro offers import functions from the company's client bookkeeping solution, TaxSlayer Books, and includes an integrated depreciation system, but data is not shared between the individual and business compliance modules of the program, and import from spreadsheets or Excel is not offered. With the addition of the document management option, returns can be output to PDF format.

Support/Training & Help System — 4 Stars

TaxSlayer comes with a printed user manual and "quick start guide," and the on-board Help utilities keep assistance generally one click away via several right-click menu options and the system's Help utility. TaxSlayer's Online Help Center provides a large collection of tips, How-Do-I's and FAQs, along with articles focused on program use and tax code change. A separate Support Center provides contact points at the company, downloadable program updates, tutorial videos and access to the TaxSlayer Community Message Board. Phone support is included in the price.

Relative Value — 4 Stars

TaxSlayer Pro is a cost-effective system for firms that provide mostly 1040 compliance services, with great bank product and marketing support. The recent addition of the appointment scheduling function, document management and client status center provide for greater workflow management, especially for smaller practices. The program is very easy to learn and can be used by all preparers in the same office at no extra charge, making it a good fit for firms that add temporary preparer staff during tax season.

2008 Overall Rating: 4 Stars

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