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### *2008 Review of Professional Payroll Systems*

The Payroll CS system from Thomson Reuters, formerly Thomson Tax & Accounting, is a professional payroll management suite designed for accountants and other providers of financial services to small businesses. The program supports all states, provides multi-account direct deposit of employee payroll and electronic third-party payment capabilities, and can be used to electronically file state and federal reports. Payroll CS options also include various online tools, including client-side data entry and collaboration functions.

As a part of the larger CS Professional Suite line of accounting programs, Payroll CS integrates with options for client write-up, trial balance, engagement management, tax compliance and paperless practice management. Pricing for Payroll

CS includes all tax table updates and starts around \$1,500 for a system designed for providing payroll services for up to 20 client businesses. Alternately, firms wishing to refer their client payroll processing can opt for Thomson Reuters' myPay Solutions service bureau offering.

#### **DATA ENTRY & KEY FEATURES – 5 Stars**

Geared toward accountants providing a broad array of services to clients, Payroll CS opens within the CS Professional Suite Accounting interface's Home Page, which provides access to a master client selection screen along with quick links to firm tasks, forms, e-filing information and other program modules. Client selection options provide limited search and filter capabilities. Within the Payroll CS area of the accounting suite, a split-screen window provides intuitive icons for specific tasks, such as manually entering payroll data, printing checks, running reports, maintaining employee and vendor data, and generating transmittal letters.

When working with client files or creating new clients or adding employees,

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and several smart entry fields provide lists for selecting common information.

Payroll CS can handle virtually any number of voluntary and involuntary pre- and post-tax deductions and offers payment functions for remitting withheld funds. These can include 401(k)s, union dues, cafeteria plans, child support, garnishments, insurance and others. Additional user-oriented tools include a gross-up calculator and ticklers for reminding users of specific tasks or due dates.

Among its web-enabled features, firms using Payroll CS can take advantage of remote client data entry, which reduces the time spent on routine tasks. Also available is the Remote Payroll Check Printing option, which works through Thomson Reuters' NetClient CS portals, a secure online collaboration tool that allows the firm to provide all of the back office payroll processing and electronically provide employers with print-ready checks and pay statements that can be prepared in-house by the client. The optional Web Employee function extends this convenience to client employees, allowing them to securely access historical pay statements and W-2s, as well as submit updated personal information and W-4s.

#### **REPORTING CAPABILITIES – 5 Stars**

Pricing includes an unlimited number of payroll runs and paychecks to be run in any period. Web-based features continue into the reporting arena, with electronic filing for forms 940, 941 and 944 and the equivalents for many states, as well as electronic remittance of federal and state payroll tax funds and third-party liabilities resulting from voluntary and involuntary deductions. Print-based form preparation options include the above forms, plus W-2s, W-3s, 1099s, 943 and 945. Managerial reporting output includes nearly 50 customizable reports that include check register and payroll journal, withholding, departmental

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GL account balances and journal entries. With the ability to print/save to PDF format, Payroll CS is enhanced by the vendor's FileCabinet CS, which provides for paperless storage and management of client files.

### **RELATIVE VALUE – 4.5 Stars**

The greatest benefits of Payroll CS come through its integration with the CS Professional Suite Accounting products, but even as a stand-alone program, professional

firms can achieve considerable time-savings and automation, while providing top-end features to their clients through employer and employee web access functions.

Thomson Reuters offers technical support via subscription options, while payroll tax and program updates are included in the program cost and its annual renewal fees.

### **2008 Overall Rating: 5 Stars**

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