preferences such as forms-based entry versus interview sheets or other specific features, the needs of a professional are obviously steered a great deal by the nature of his or her clients.

Dec. 01, 2008

From the June/July 2006 Issue

It seems that every tax and accounting professional is looking for something a little different from their tax preparation package. While this has a lot to do with personal preferences such as forms-based entry versus interview sheets or other specific features, the needs of a professional are obviously steered a great deal by the nature of his or her clients. A year-round accounting practice with complex, multi-subsidiary, multi-jurisdictional corporate and partnership clients, in addition to small business write-ups and then end-of-year tax prep for these entities and for their individual clients needs a very capable system that includes at least the option for all states, with compliance capabilities for every primary form under the sun, including 1040, 1065, 1120, 1120S, 1041, 706, 709, 990 and 5500, along with extensive networking capabilities, practice management systems and integrated research functions. The programs on the market that offer compliance for all of these, along with a few other requirements, were reviewed in our April/May issue as Tax Preparation Suites.

But many tax professionals, whether they run a full-service, year-round accounting practice or a seasonal 1040-only shop (or somewhere in between), find that their client base doesn't warrant having such a comprehensive system. If they process mostly 1040s for one state, but also a handful of 1065s or 1120S forms, do they really need to pay for a package that also includes all of the other entities and all states, whether or not there's an integrated billing package in it or not? In short, more power is great if you use it. If you don't,

the 5500), while others specialize in only one or two areas of compliance, such as a company that only makes a 5500 compliance program (match these together and voila!). Yet another system reviewed here doesn't provide compliance at all, but rather offers a third-party analytical tool to help prevent IRS flags and streamline workflow processes.

The programs reviewed here were scored in the following areas: **Learning Curve** addresses the ease with which new users are likely to grow comfortable and proficient with the program. **Use/Workflow & Productivity Tools** involves the intuitiveness of the user interface (how well a user can get around) and the way work is handled from start (interview) to finish (receipt of return). This includes tools that help professionals keep track of client and IRS status for returns, as well as additional tools such as integrated calculators and cross-form linking that streamline the entire process.

The **Integration/Import & Export** section assesses the program's capability to use data between modules, how it exchanges data with software from other vendors, and how the program retrieves existing data from the previous year. **Support/Training & Help System** looks at training options and how the vendor has incorporated assistance features into its program, the quality of its support documentation and the extent of its online Help component, whether it be simple FAQs, online user communities or more advanced systems.

And finally, **Relative Value** offers a subjective gauge of the dollar-to-value ratio of the software. While it is often said that, "You get what you pay for," the most expensive option does not necessarily guarantee the best value, nor is the product with the lowest sticker price always the greater bargain. On this line, we will look at the value of the features

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BNA Software — 706 Preparer & 709 Preparer

In addition to its well-known line of tax research products and tax planning programs, BNA Software offers applications for estate and gift tax compliance.

Read Full Review

Drake Software — Drake Software

Drake Software is offered as an all-inclusive system, combining federal and state individual compliance modules with those for 1120, 1120S, 1065, 1041, 990, 706 and 709, as well as all states and taxing municipalities.

Read Full Review

H.C. Sharp Software — 1040 Review

The 1040 Review program from H.C. Sharp Software is in a category of its own, which is one of the reasons this review section is called "Specialty Tax Compliance and 1040 Enhancer Products."

Read Full Review

Intuit — ProSeries

Intuit's ProSeries line of professional tax

in this review section lack a form 5500 module (Annual Return/Report of Employee Benefit Plan), this is where Fort William LLC steps in.
Read Full Review

Orrtax Software — IntelliTax

The IntelliTax preparation system from Orrtax Software provides support for 1040, 1041, 1120, 1120S and 1065 returns via two base modules, the IntelliTax for Windows program and IntelliTax for Business.
Read Full Review

RCS — TaxSlayer Pro

TaxSlayer Pro offers an all-in-one package for professional tax compliance, with the ability to process individual federal and state, as well as fiduciary, partnership, C and S corporations and nonprofits.
Read Full Review

TAX$IMPLE — Tax$imple

TAX$IMPLE offers a collection of tax modules for 1040, 1041, 1120, 1120S, 1065, 706, 709 and 990 federal compliance, along with all 1040 states, most corporate and partnership states, and many municipalities.
Read Full Review

Review of Specialty Tax Preparation Software 2006 — Executive Summary

The programs in this review offer compliance for

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