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From the April 2009 Review *of Professional Tax Compliance Systems & Tax Specialty Products*

Designed for accounting and tax practices of all sizes, ProSystem *fx* Tax provides a comprehensive compliance system for professionals, with support for all entities at the federal, state and local levels. The tax package can be run as a stand-alone or as part of the ProSystem *fx* Office suite of professional accounting and practice management applications. Through tight integration with the research, write-up, trial balance, planning, document management and engagement applications in the Office suite, ProSystem *fx* Tax provides a thoroughly comprehensive client management solution.

Remote access to the entire Office suite, including the tax system, is available via the Global *fx* solution. The tax compliance system is priced modularly, with firms able to select and pay for the precise entity types and jurisdictions they need. The cost for all entity types and all states is about $10,000, although most firms find pricing considerably lower based on their client's compliance requirements. CCH also offers the TaxWise and ATX brands through its Small Firm Services division.

General Operations/Ease-of-Use – 4.5 Stars
ProSystem *fx* Tax sports a customizable interface that can be tailored to user needs, as well as to assigned roles, enabling administrators to restrict user access to only specific returns. The primary navigation screens within ProSystem *fx* Tax offer a traditional work environment, with pull-down task selection menus across the top, along with icons for specific functions. The icon bar varies depending on the module and activity being performed by the user. Additionally, the interface provides a forms navigation panel on the left when within a client return. The system's master client

selection screen provides a search option, as well as filtering and sorting by entity

Data can also be imported from several file types, speeding the entry process. The Worksheet Import Wizard, for instance, simplifies the task of finding a specific file, allowing users to choose from template mapping options, and select specific cells and rows to be imported. The tax program also employs several "smart entry" features, which automatically build lists of commonly entered items like city, employer, EIN and ZIP codes. For e-filed returns, the system provides an Electronic Filing Status System, a home base of sorts for tracking and managing the e-file process, including checking status and acknowledgements.

Workflow & Productivity Tools – 5 Stars

ProSystem *fx* Tax is a high-end system geared toward practices with potentially complex client taxation issues. As such, the system is oriented around a multi-person preparation and review environment, providing extensive diagnostic tools test for omissions and inconsistencies, then giving narrative commentary on the findings in a report that enables the user to quickly jump back to that line in the client return. The system's review functions include color-coded tick marks, lists, field and global notes, and notice of overrides and estimates. As one of the leading tax research providers, CCH also offers integration between its content and the tax compliance system, including advance automatic notification regarding clients who may be affected by new legislation. The system also maintains a full-time audit trail.

Other advanced productivity tools include integration with ProSystem *fx* Scan, a utility that lets professionals scan in client source documents, then provides an organized electronic client binder as a bookmarked PDF. CCH also recently debuted its AutoFlow Technology, which can extract client data from scanned in forms, guide users through a verification process, and then import the information directly into the client return. As noted in most reviews of ProSystem *fx* Tax, one of the key productivity-enhancing features of the system is its integration with the other

programs in the ProSystem *fx* Office suite, helping save considerable time during

functions. Within the tax program, data is shared as needed, such as between parent/child returns and pass-through K-1s, while calculations are automatic and transferred to related forms. The system can import data from various formats, including Excel and other spreadsheets, and allows return generation into PDF format.

Support/Training& Help System – 4.5 Stars

Help and assistive functions are available throughout ProSystem *fx* Tax, including right-click menus and instructions. Technical support is included with pricing, along with access to CCH's online support center. The vendor also offers live and web-based training, and hosts an annual user conference, which this year will be held in Washington, D.C.

Relative Value – 5 Stars

ProSystem *fx* Tax is a powerful professional tax compliance system, providing comprehensive processing capabilities and extensive diagnostic tools. Its integration with tax research and other professional accounting and practice systems offered by CCH make it exceptionally adept at handling complex client bases. The system is suited for small, mid-sized and larger practices with defined workflow processes.

2009 OVERALL RATING:

Technology

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