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Brian Tankersley • Sep. 03, 2010



Column: The Peachtree Perspective

From the September 2010 Issue

With the end of the year approaching, many accountants and clients are starting to consider other options for payroll calculation and preparation for 2011, as well as how they will retool their practice in 2011 to deal with the stagnant economic

conditions in the housing sector. My column this month focuses on two topics —

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review completely do-it-yourself payroll products. There are many such programs on the market, including some designed specifically for those who wish to prepare their own payroll using Peachtree's payroll functions.

Sage offers three levels of payroll service, along with a do-it-yourself option for sophisticated users (see www.peachtree.com/productsServices/payrollSolutions for a detailed comparison of Sage offerings). Sage's three service offerings are called Simple Payroll, Select Payroll and Managed Payroll, and each meets the needs of different end users. The offerings have also been designed to allow data entered for other purposes (e.g. time reporting data for project billing) to be captured and used for payroll preparation, job cost reporting and other functions wherever possible.

Sage Peachtree Simple Payroll is designed for companies who would like to keep payroll in-house, and who would prefer to prepare payroll from within Peachtree. Subscribers receive automatic online payroll tax table updates, printable payroll tax forms, and access to a human resources center that offers general guidance on issues like personnel policies, procedures and other regulatory compliance issues.

Sage Peachtree Select Payroll includes all of the features of Simple Payroll and adds electronic filing of payroll tax returns in all 50 states and the District of Columbia, along with support for state new hire reporting forms. Select Payroll customers can also choose to have Sage print, seal and mail W-2 forms for a small per-form charge.

Sage Peachtree Managed Payroll powered by CompuPay is a web-based payroll option for users who would like to outsource payroll calculation and tax filings. Data can be entered directly into Peachtree, and employees can be paid using direct deposit or by check. Complete tax filing services are included, and all federal, state and local tax filings are guaranteed by Sage to be penalty free. Telephone- and fax-based payroll options are also available through this program, as well as a host of other optional features, including HR reporting, employee and manager self-service

options, a full report writer, labor distribution to the general ledger, and support for

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calculations and high accounting sophistication may find this option attractive, as it allows the company to use the integration of other applications with the built-in payroll module in Peachtree (e.g. Job Costing, General Ledger). While intended for experts only, this feature gives sophisticated users another option for self-prepared payroll in very small businesses with numerous entities, where the cost of a payroll subscription for each EIN could be significant.

In addition to the Peachtree payroll plans provided by Sage, Peachtree is supported by most major payroll services. These additional providers may be used for special payroll needs like union contract payroll calculations, employees who have work sites in multiple states, government compliance reporting needs, and pre-packaged integration with vertical industry applications. Although most of these specialized services are available through the Sage Peachtree Managed Payroll option, this flexibility allows Peachtree users to use payroll services from almost anyone seamlessly.

WHAT IS THE SAGE ACCOUNTANTS NETWORK?

Professional accountants who support multiple clients will want to consider membership in the Sage Accountants Network (SAN). The annual renewal price for SAN Membership is priced at just \$319 per year, and includes the following:

- A five-user internal use license of Peachtree Quantum Accountants Edition 2011 (which will read/write/edit files from of any version of Peachtree 2011),
- A one-year subscription to Sage Peachtree Simple Payroll, unlimited access to Sage's U.S.-based technical support team,
- Complimentary software upgrades to new versions released during your membership,
- Listing on the Sage website's "Find an Accountant" page,

- Access to training materials and certification resources for you through Sage

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membership offers for CPATA readers.

SAN excels in the depth of support provided and the breadth of products that can be accessed through the program. In addition to traditional technical support, SAN also assigns each new member to an “Accountant Advocate,” and has a team of support representatives dedicated to SAN to assist members with any issue within Sage. Accountant Advocates are real accounting professionals who are specially trained to assist SAN members with the specialized needs of public accountants, bookkeepers and tax preparers. The Advocates have experience closing books, preparing financial statements, filing payroll tax returns and meeting the needs of demanding clients. This new role represents a significant commitment from Sage to making sure that its products meet the needs of the accounting profession.

SAN also offers a wide range of add-on memberships for firms who would like to have access to other discounted Sage applications, including Sage MAS 90, Sage Master Builder, Sage MIP Fund Accounting, Sage ACCPAC ERP, Sage Abra HRMS, Sage Timberline Office, Sage TimeSlips, and many other applications. While many of these products are sold through Sage Partners for thousands of dollars, most can be licensed for internal use by SAN member firms for \$500 or less per year, including support, maintenance, upgrades and access to training. SAN also offers opportunities for members to refer and receive referrals from value-added resellers in Sage's international partner network.

Benefits • Payroll

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