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preparation programs can open the program directly from the desktop or start menu. The main work area of the program opens into a small window that displays each of the planning year scenarios in a spreadsheet format, with rows offering text-based links for entering income, portfolio gains and losses, adjustments, deductions, exemptions and other data. A pull-down list is available for choosing single, MFJ, MFS together, MFS apart, head of household and widower status. Clicking on the rows or the data in the figures in the columns brings up detailed entry screens that automatically calculate data as it is entered. The program displays net tax due or refund at the bottom of the primary work area.

If used with the tax program, clients can be selected from the user-friendly selection lists, but if used as a stand-alone, the system uses the Explorer menu structure for a selection screen, which provides little sort or filter capability. Additional system features are available from the program's pull-down and icon menus, including access to state worksheets, firm and client data, and the data bridge. Tax Planner's customization options are mostly limited to its reporting capabilities, and the system is not networkable, but users can install the program on any number of computers within the same office. 3.75

Core Tax Planning Features

TaxWorks Tax Planner allows creation of up to five years of plans, with data automatically flowing from the tax compliance system into the planning program, and with initial assumptions based on the current or most recent tax year. To create scenarios for each year, users can then simply modify income, deductions, filing status or other information across the years, with the program automatically performing calculations and updating the projections for state and federal regular tax, AMT, Schedule D tax, and other information. The system includes a tool for automatically adjusting future standard deductions, exemptions and FICA limits to account for inflation, and users can edit the rate as desired.

Entire columns of data can be easily copied and pasted or entire years deleted, if

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Reporting options are accessed via the print pull-down menu, which offers print and screen views of all of the system's worksheets. The Copy to Clipboard option in the File menu lets users copy and paste from the spreadsheet-style worksheet screens into Excel, with all columnar data remaining intact. PDF copies of any of the planner worksheets can be created using the PDF Export button on the icon toolbar, with basic customization options that allow users to determine which fields to include or not to, such as SSN, AMT, income, etc. While the TaxWorks package offers bilingual output of client communications, this is not an option in the Planner. The system does not offer direct integration with portals or document storage systems; however, the PDF output does enable paperless document management. 4

Import/Export/Integration

Data can be automatically populated from a client's TaxWorks return, but other import options are not available. Likewise, the system does not directly integrate with research systems, although TaxWorks does offer research services. As previously noted, data can be output into PDF format or copied and pasted into Excel for additional customization. 4

Help/Support

TaxWorks Tax Planner supports all modern versions of Windows. Help features in the program include Welcome, What's New and Getting Started sections, along with tax topic focused references in the Help utility. The company's support website offers FAQs, videos, CPE-eligible training options, downloadable program updates, tips and tricks, and contact information. Unlimited live technical support is included with the program. 4.5

Summary & Pricing

This tax planning system is best suited to users of the TaxWorks preparation system,

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