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From the October 2012 [review of professional tax planning systems](#).

**Best Fit:** Professional accounting and tax practices seeking a planning system that integrates

directly with ProSystem *fx* Tax and other programs in the ProSystem *fx* Suite.

### Strengths

- Direct integration with ProSystem *fx* Tax and Engagement
- Ability to prepare up to 30 side-by-side scenarios
- Intuitive spreadsheet-based interface
- Automated calculations

### Potential Limitations

- Limited integration with outside programs
- Reporting output to only PDF format

ProSystem *fx* Planning is a part of CCH's larger suite of professional tax, accounting and practice management systems, of which many systems are available in web-based versions. Planning, however, is an installed program that can be used in conjunction with ProSystem *fx* tax and other products in the suite, or as a stand-alone program.

It includes multi-year projection functions and calculations for AMT, capital gains and phase-ins and phase-outs. It includes tax rates, deductions, exemptions and credits for many states.

## Basic System Functions: 4.5 Stars

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plans and specific fields, and drilling down to worksheets and other functions. Users can tailor the toolbar to include links.

When viewing client plans, cases and years are displayed in columns, while tax information categories are in rows that include income, AGI, deductions, credits and other items. The system automatically performs calculations as data is entered, and transfers totals as appropriate.

ProSystem *fx* Planning can be used by any number of staff in the same firm, and can be used to manage any number of clients. Password security options are available at the client level. Client selection screens are limited in search and filter capabilities, since the system uses the Windows Explorer file structure.

## Core Tax Planning Features: 4.75 Stars

ProSystem *fx* Planning now supports up to ten years of projections (prior year, current and eight forward) for up to 30 tax scenarios or cases, with each of the years and cases presented side-by-side on screen. The program's core capabilities include calculations of regular, AMT and capital gains taxes, as well as under payment penalties, taxes on lump sum distributions and premature distributions from retirement plans, as well as farm income averaging. Recently added is automatic calculation of Medicare and FICA/Tier 1 RRTA tax withholding when wages are entered.

Additional calculations include phase-outs and phase-ins for itemized deductions, personal exemptions and AMT exemptions, taxpayer filing status changes, limitation and carry-forward calculations, and calculation of the deductibility of contributions to IRAs, KEOGHs, and Simple and SEP plans.

Integrated state income tax computations, including state tax rates, deductions, exemptions and credits, are included for AL, AZ, CA, CO, CT, GA, ID, IL, IN, KS, LA,

MD, ME, MI, MN, MO, MS, NC, NE, NJ, NM, NY, OH, OR, SC, UT and WV.

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Portals are not native to the Planning system, but they are available for client collaboration via integration with ProSystem *fx* Portal, Engagement, Document and other CCH programs.

### **Import/Export/Integration: 4 Stars**

ProSystem *fx* Planning integrates directly with ProSystem *fx* Tax and other solutions in the suite, including the SaaS versions. The program also offers some integration with Microsoft Office programs, and users can import data from the web-based portfolio management system, GainsKeeper Pro. Unless using the system in conjunction with other CCH programs, reporting output is limited to PDF format.

### **Help/Support: 4.75 Stars**

Built-in help utilities include right-click menus, field-specific guidance, how-to's, a tutorial and access to the online support site. This site includes additional documentation, a knowledgebase and training options, as well as program updates. Users are also notified of program updates and tax news via e-*fxNews* alerts.

The program is designed for use on Windows operating systems (XP, Vista, 7). Live technical support is included in program pricing.

### **Summary & Pricing**

ProSystem *fx* Planning is a good add-on when integrated with the tax compliance system, but can be used as a stand-alone program, providing automated calculations for complex scenario testing for 1040 clients of any nature. The system costs \$675 for a single user license.

## **2012 Overall Rating: 4.5 Stars**

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