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Brian Tankersley • Apr. 21, 2014



Empire Suite by WSG Systems, Corp. is a high-end practice management tool designed for large firms. Empire Suite includes an optional staff scheduling module called Empire Resource, and is one of the stronger automatic scheduling tools in the industry. The application is delivered as software as a service through the company's website, EmpireSuite.com, and is sold on a subscription basis.

Empire Suite is made up of three modules:

- **Empire Time**, the project management, time and billing tool
- **Empire CRM**, the tool for managing the sales cycle and contact information
- **Empire Resource**, the project management and scheduling tool used by large firms around the world.

Users can subscribe a mix of modules to meet the needs of their organization, and the

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only seven staff people. The sweet spot for this product is with larger firms, typically those with 40 or more total professionals, including 20 or more auditors.

Time Management Capabilities

One of the most impressive features in Empire Time is its ability to synchronize data embedded in calendar records from Microsoft Outlook to automatically create a user's time sheet. Staff can enter time and expenses using Microsoft Outlook, the web interface, or the Empire Suite mobile applications for iOS and Android.

Appointments are associated with clients, and the data synchronized to Outlook from Empire Suite is updated every four hours to extract time data entered by partners and staff.

Meeting invitations sent to other firm users through Outlook can be configured to include the client number, service code, and engagement information needed to automatically create the time entry for attending the event.

Users can also utilize multiple timers to track time as they go through the day, and the resulting records are automatically included in the employee's daily time records.

Day to Day Operations

The applications are tightly integrated with each other, and support for advanced features like multiple currencies, e-mail alerts, multiple offices, multiple departments, and complex reporting structures. The management capabilities in the Empire Resource scheduling application are very impressive, and we are confident we could easily write 500 words explaining a small portion of the ways this tool simplifies scheduling for firms with large staffs. The built-in color codes and analytics available to identify periods when staff are underscheduled or overscheduled are amazingly helpful, and once one gets familiar with the look and feel of the application, it is difficult to go back to a less capable tool.

Management Capabilities

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user to perform their role.

Integration/Import/Export

Empire Suite has an out-of-the-box integration with CCH Axcess Practice, which allows jobs and client records in the CCH system to automatically be synced with Empire. WSG Systems reports that most of its Axcess users rely on Empire Resource scheduling module and the tight integration with Microsoft Outlook.

Empire Time can be connected out of the box to QuickBooks, and many of its customers have created integrations to higher end ERP solutions like SAP and Oracle.

In addition to its integrated scheduling capabilities, Empire Suite can be used with Microsoft Project for its project management features. Receipts can be captured with mobile devices and e-mailed to receipts@empiresuite.com, and will be placed into the sending users inbox within Empire Suite.

Help/Support/Training

Help and Support is included with maintenance and technical support contract plans offered by WSG Systems, Corp. Support is live and phone based in New York, USA, and is also available through the company's ticketing system, e-mail, or chat. Some training materials, including a limited number of videos, are available through the Company's website, and custom training solutions are available for an additional fee from WSG Systems.

Pricing

Empire Suite is sold on a subscription basis, with projects and CRM each starting at \$20 per user per month, time and expense starting at \$15 per month, and

scheduling/resource management at \$12 per user per month. Optional add-ons for

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- Empire Suite is one of the only tools in this review which includes both customer relationship management as well as staff scheduling.
- The Empire Resource scheduling module can be used along with CCH Axcess Practice and ProSystem *fx* Practice Management and has good out of the box integration.
- The application is used by firms as small as seven users, and effectively supports firms with thousands of users across multiple offices.
- Tight integration with Microsoft Outlook, with embedded metadata on projects included within appointments and other records in Outlook.
- Empire Suite is available as a Software-as-a-Service cloud system, installed or as a private-cloud.

Potential Limitations

- The staff scheduling module in particular requires a large staff pool to use effectively. The Company reports that most of their staff scheduling users have 20 or more field auditors, and 40 or more total users.

2014 Overall Rating: 5 Stars

Firm Management • Payroll

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