management solution in their office. Time and Expense tracking is the backbone of good practice management software, and the products reviewed in this issue make it ...

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Can you imagine recruiting the brightest minds out of college and then placing them in an organization that offers no structure, no organization, nor the tools to help them succeed? Chances are that those stellar employees would eventually find their way to your competitor's doorstep, where they would likely be provided with the ability to reach or exceed their potential; and not spend the majority of their time answering emails, filing contracts, and jotting every moment of their time on a standard timesheet, or worse yet, sticky notes.

Today, even the smallest firms have seen the benefits provided by having a solid practice management solution in their office. Time and Expense tracking is the backbone of good practice management software, and the products reviewed in this issue make it easy for firm employees to track time and their related expenses, and provide firms with the tools to do so. The availability of multiple system timers and

Office Tools – Practice Management WorkSpace

TaxWorkFlow LLC – TaxWorkFlow

Thomson Reuters – Practice CS

Wolters Kluwer – CCH Axcess Practice

Wolters Kluwer – CCH ProSystem fx Practice

WSG Systems – Empire Suite

Xero – Xero Practice Manager

Solid time keeping capability benefits firm managers and partners as well. Instead of wondering how productive 'John' has been in the last few weeks, a quick visit to their practice management software would quickly answer that question, and many more.

While time and expense tracking may be the backbone of Practice Management, related modules like project management, employee management, financial management and CRM capability can make the system that much stronger. These tools allow partners and managers to look at the productivity and efficiency of the entire operation, not just an employee.

In this issue, when reviewing these products, we looked at six different areas. They include:

Basic System Function – In this section, we take a look at the program structure, what are some of the typical functions the product can perform, if it's on premise, SaaS, or cloud-based and how user-friendly system navigation and data entry

the invoices customizable?

Management Features – Management features can be an important asset to firm partners and managers. In this area, we look at the availability of dashboard, employee scheduling, workflow solutions, CRM capability, and reporting capability. Are reports customizable? Can they be exported in a variety of formats? What additional features and functionality are available that can be added to the core product to increase functionality?

Integration and Data Management – Is the product part of a suite of products? Do all of the products integrate for greater product efficiency? We also look at outside integration capability and the ability of the product to integrate with third party applications such as QuickBooks or Microsoft Office. We also look at the availability of mobile apps that allow off-site employees to track their time as effectively as those in the office.

Help/Support/Training – In this area we looked at Help functionality that was found in the product, as well as any additional tools that are helpful to new users, including training videos, product overviews, webinars, and an effective knowledgebase for new product users to utilize. We also looked at various product support options, as well as additional training options.

Whether you're a small firm, employee thousands, or are somewhere in between, the practice management products are designed with the needs of your firm in mind. Many of the products offer free online product demos, which are ideal for trying out a product prior to purchasing.

Firm Management