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the construction accounting software market. New features introduced in this release include a new database engine (Advantage Database) to support enterprise-level users. Version 7 (now called Small Business Edition) is still available for single-user and small network installations with only a few users. Version 8 is called 'Enterprise Edition' to distinguish it from Version 7, which uses the Borland Database Engine. The user interface for both systems is the same, so if a company starts with the Small Business Edition and outgrows it, the data will port to the Enterprise Edition with no retraining or data loss. The Small Business Edition with the five core program modules and a single-user license starts at \$4,750. The same configuration for The Enterprise Edition starts at \$6,300.

Learning Curve ' 5 Stars

From the first login, you'll appreciate the clean layout and program organization, which gets you up to speed quickly. The desktop offers a standard drop-down menu system, with one item for each module, and two floating toolbars (Master Files and Input Forms) that can be moved or docked anywhere on the screen. Data-entry screens are simple and well designed. Generally, each screen has a picklist on the left side of applicable items, such as jobs, employees, vendors and so forth. Selecting an item from the picklist displays the detailed information for that record on the right side of the data-entry screen. The detailed information section uses multiple tabs to display all the various fields for that record. Buttons across the top allow for adding, editing or deleting records.

Modules & Functionality ' 5 Stars

AccuBuild offers Payroll, Job Cost, AP, AR, GL, Client Information, Purchase Order, Inventory, and Equipment Cost/Tool Tracking modules. In order to allow businesses the flexibility of purchasing only the features and modules needed, AccuBuild offers

its product at various levels to suit the needs of the business. All packages are upward

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open, closed or all jobs. Simply highlighting the desired job displays the information for that job. The data-entry tabs include job info, billing info, payroll controls, detail items, contract status and job history. Each job can be designated with an eight-character alphanumeric job number. Six billing formats are available, including AIA Format, Standard, Subcontractor, Residential and Unit Billing.

Phases (cost categories) are defined using the Phase Master input screen. Each phase defined can be assigned a number, description and associated GL expense account. You can also designate the phase type as job cost (expense), billing (income) or both. The Job Cost 'Committed Cost report is an important report for job cost managers. Numerous levels of detail can be selected, either by job, phase, vendor or even full detail. For each item, a columnar breakdown shows total estimated cost, committed costs to date, committed costs to complete, and project costs in excess of estimate. Another nice report is the Job Cost Capsheet Report, which displays job costs by phase with estimated, year-to-date and job-to-date totals. Several other cost reports are provided as well.

Import/Export/Integration ' 5 Stars

AccuBuild utilizes an open database concept, with direct access to the underlying data tables through a built-in browser for data queries, export to ASCII or spreadsheet format files, and even editing if absolutely necessary. In addition, several specific imports are supported, including Job Estimates and Time Card information.

Support & Training ' 5 Stars

Technical support is available Monday through Friday during normal business hours. In addition to telephone support, questions can be sent via fax or e-mail. A technical support page is also maintained on the company web site for support documents and program update history. AccuBuild has also established an IT

department for advanced services, such as firewall and virus protection, terminal

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specification and so forth. Once the input data is defined, a layout editor is used to define the placement of fields on the page. Although this tool will take a little time to learn, it is a powerful tool that lets you analyze and report on your data in any way you need. Optionally, you can separately purchase the full Crystal Reports software for unlimited custom report creation.

Relative Value ‘ 5 Stars

AccuBuild has certainly brought this product forward into a competitive spot, with its open database access and clean user interface, as well as a competitive pricing schedule. Navigation within the program is quick, and hardware requirements are reasonable, reflecting a program that has had a good deal of thoughtful design and engineering. It is a system that can handle small and mid-size builders, subcontractors, and general contractors doing commercial, industrial and residential construction.

2005 Overall Rating: 5

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