covers a broad spectrum of related needs, from job cost to project management to service management. Recent enhancements include the Timberline Office Desktop, a customizable workspace that provides access to all applications and modules, a multi-function HTML pane, and a favorites pane. Other modules received numerous productivity enhancements and faster database access using the Pervasive SQL database engine. For a new client, an expected software cost for a suggested base package of Timberline Office for construction accounting would be $7,390. This would include Job Cost, GL, AP, Cash Management, Address Book, Financial Statement Designer, Information Assistant, a one-year subscription to Anytime Learning, and a one-year EssentialCare service plan that includes software updates and unlimited support.

Learning Curve ' 5 Stars

Installation is well organized with a wizard-based process that allows you to install in a client/server, peer-to-peer or stand-alone workstation configuration. The company supplies an authorization code for each licensed module, which is entered during the installation process. Sample data can also be installed for several popular industry types, such as construction, homebuilder and property management.

Upon launching the program, the main window displays the program's drop-down menu, toolbar and the Timberline Office Desktop. The Timberline Office Desktop is the hub of operations, with a pane for organizing a list of 'favorites,' which gives one-click access to the applications and tasks you use most often. Using favorites, you can directly open Timberline Office tasks without opening the associated application. The Catalog pane is an expandable tree structure with folders for each of the installed modules. Expanding any folder displays a list of sub-choices. The right pane can be either a web page, Crystal Report or HTML-based window that is used

for many different things, including help information, or even your own customized

intuitive and organized, helping new users get up to speed quickly, and helping experienced users be as productive as possible.

Modules & Functionality -5 Stars

Since most businesses tend to offer one particular type of service, Timberline Office takes a modularized approach that lets you purchase and install only the components your business needs. Modules fall into several major categories: Accounting, Estimating, Procurement, Production Management, Project Management, Property Management, Service Management, and Reporting & Other Tools. In all, there are nearly 50 modules available, which can be customized into various combinations to fit your company's specialty.

The value of job cost information that can be derived from any system depends on the allowable input variations, as well as the ability to effectively query the data that has been input. Timberline Office offers a very flexible system that maximizes both of these important aspects of the job cost system. Job IDs can be formatted with up to 10 alphanumeric characters and up to three sections. Cost tracking can be done at almost any level desired by using cost code IDs with up to 12 alphanumeric characters and up to four sections. You can use an optional 'extra' costing level to isolate special cost areas, while still maintaining its categorization within the normal job cost structure. Each job also allows up to 250 user-defined data fields for customized information tracking.

A powerful inquiry system lets you view information in many different ways. The job cost module offers almost 30 different query types. Each query can have 'conditions' applied, which shows only the information that meets certain criteria. The query columns can be modified, and the sort order can be specified. These screens also provide drill-down access to the transaction detail level. The Project Management module provides a central point for overall project management. It features tracking

for things like transmittals, RFIs, submittals, contracts, commitments and change

Import/Export/Integration ' 5 Stars

The ODBC (Open Database Connectivity) interface provides highly flexible import and export of data between Timberline Office and other ODBC-compliant programs. Examples of using ODBC to exchange information include the ability to mail merge a Word document with vendor information or transferring estimate data to Excel for graphical analysis. While this requires some advanced skills to set up such data transfers, this highly flexible tool provides full access to Timberline Office's underlying database tables.

Support & Training ' 5 Stars

The company provides numerous support options and training forums. Support service plans provide different levels, depending on the customer's requirements. The BasicCare plan provides access to Timberline Office's online Technical Knowledgebase, software updates, and other software notices and alerts. EssentialCare provides unlimited toll-free telephone, fax and e-mail support. The PremierCare plan provides the company with a designated account manager to personally manage any support needs. Training is provided via authorized training centers throughout North America or via the web. Web-based alternatives include 'Anytime Learning' options, which are recorded instructor-led sessions that cover a variety of basic topics useful for new employees or for reinforcing skills of experienced staff.

Reporting ' 5 Stars

All modules provide a wide variety of reports that can be previewed or printed, each with a good number of options for filtering or sorting. Using the optional Report Designer module, you can even modify the built-in reports as well as define your own

customized reports. Additionally, you can separately purchase Crystal Reports 9 and

overview of the software's capabilities.

2005 Overall Rating: 5

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