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(Single User, Network and Client/Server) to address the job cost accounting needs of a wide range of construction businesses. It offers a basic set of modules that covers the most common needs in a package that's easy to use. The company introduced various general enhancements to nearly every module this past year, as well as a number of reports. The Single User edition costs \$3,800; the two-user Network edition costs \$4,200; and the two-user Client Server edition costs \$5,200. Pricing includes all training and first-year support. Additional concurrent users are quoted based on package. As well, the Purchase Orders and Equipment Cost modules cost \$900 each.

Learning Curve ' 5 Stars

Installation of the Contractor V package is a simple, wizard-based process that installs all modules from a single CD. The system and drive space requirements are modest, which is reflective of a program that has not been bloated by unnecessary features. The minimum requirements speak for this program's efficient design that is sure to run comfortably on practically any Windows machine in use today. The main program work area provides a standard Windows drop-down menu system organized by module, and a vertical toolbar docked on the left side of the screen. This provides one-click access to the most common program functions.

Primary data-entry functions, such as customer, vendor and job listing all start with a record-based list and search screen. The lists can be sorted by various predefined criteria. Double-clicking the desired list item opens the clean, organized data-entry detail screen for that item. Detail screens are organized into multiple tabs, with pop-up picklists when the data for a field is derived from another related table. The system uses a batch data-entry process where you enter, proof, edit, backup and finally post the data. This differs somewhat from other 'real-time' data-entry systems that immediately post each individual transaction or record as it is entered.

Modules & Functionality ‘ 4 Stars

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you define how your job cost codes produce totals and subtotals by specifying a first-level and second-level subtotal digit position. Other options in the job cost module include material percent variance, tracking of installed material units, estimated completion cost calculation, and the job numbering scheme. The job number may consist of one to six digits.

The job-entry screen is where job information, budgets, cost codes, change orders, buyouts, billing phases, and subcontracts are maintained and tracked for each job. You can add new jobs manually, or you can duplicate an existing similar job. Template jobs can also be set up for duplicating various types of jobs. A separate field report entry screen lets you enter information about the job's progress, such as percent completed by billing code, and quantity-to-date information for items such as labor and materials. This information is used by the system to estimate job completion costs.

The equipment costing module allows you to track actual costs on each piece of equipment, as well as apply equipment costs to specific jobs. Rental income can be tracked separately from the pseudo-income that might be billed to internal jobs. Costs entered through the AP and GL systems are automatically accumulated and transferred to specific items in the equipment database.

Import/Export/Integration ‘ 4 Stars

Estimate records can be imported into the job cost module as long as they follow a specified *.CSV format. Timesheet information can also be imported from the InfiniTime and ADP time clock management system. Other import capabilities are planned for future versions. Exports are provided for a number of key data items, such as vendors, customers, employees and jobs.

Support & Training ‘ 4 Stars

Toll-free technical support is provided through purchase and maintenance contracts.

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can automatically generate text file output that can then be imported into Excel for additional analysis. By separately purchasing Crystal Reports and using the database schema provided, you can create any number of customized reports.

Relative Value ‘ 4 Stars

Contractor V is a clean, medium-duty package that will meet the basic needs of contractors in general, government and municipal, insurance repair, electrical, residential, and other construction specialties. The program does not offer the depth of functionality and flexibility seen in some of the other packages, but it is still worth considering. A 30-day trial version demo package is available.

2005 Overall Rating: 4

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