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selection of modules to address nearly any construction specialty, including HVAC/Mechanical, Electrical, Heavy Highway, Materials, General Contractors and Subcontractors. Other optional add-ons and third-party tools are also available for a tailored business management solution. Version 6.1 continues the company's commitment to product improvement with enhancements to the Project Documents and Order Processing modules. Maxwell Management Suite costs $7,000 and up, increasing as functionality is added.

Learning Curve ' 4 Stars

The main product is supplied on a single CD, which is installed at the central server location. For multi-user configurations, workstation setups are then performed at the individual workstations. If any updates are to be applied, they are supplied on a separate CD, and the update procedure is also performed at the server location, with another round of workstation setups. The installation process is fairly well documented and easy to follow. The product is based on the ProvideX programming framework and database, which has a somewhat confusing activation system that involves numerous codes that must be entered during the process. Maxwell Management Suite supports Windows 2000 Server/Professional, Windows XP Professional and Windows Server 2003.

The program's menu system is a tree-style Explorer window with items for each installed module. Expanding each item displays a sub-tree of processing and maintenance items for that module. The right side of the main window displays the detailed choices that lead to data-entry screens, reports, inquiry screens and other processing activities.Data-entry screens are easy to use and utilize a multi-tab layout to make information easy to find and quick to access. Key fields have a '?' button beside them, which opens up a separate lookup window of applicable items that also

has search capabilities. Standard record navigation buttons allow you to easily

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technicians, e-Portal for service companies, Price Service Link, EstiLINK, DataLINK Plus, DataLINK Payroll Import, Work Order Messaging (web-based solutions), and Primavera I/F. Modules can be combined in various ways to tailor the system to the company's specific needs and industry.

The job cost module features a flexible system that makes the entry and updating functions optional, but using them will make the job costing information more meaningful and manageable. Once the job is set up, information is fed into the job cost module via the other accounting modules, such as AP and payroll. During job initialization, you can create or copy task codes that define specific tasks to be performed on a job. Each task code can be designated with one of five codes that determine the method used to calculate the percentage completed for that task code. These methods are units complete, percent complete, actual to estimated hours, actual to estimated dollars, and cost category. The unit of measure and estimate information can also be specified.

One of the most powerful aspects of Maxwell Management Suite is the Business Center, a multi-level inquiry system that uses customized formats to select and arrange data. It is currently available in the AP, AR, GL, Job Cost, Payroll, Service Management Equipment Cost and Sub-contract Control modules. A spreadsheet-style screen provides the initial summary data view, and a toolbar lets you navigate to different detail levels, filter and sort records, and maintain the query layout. Numerous queries are predefined, but these can be modified to suit individual needs.

Import/Export/Integration ' 5 Stars

DataLINK Plus provides a set of import and export utilities to bring information from other systems into selected Maxwell modules from ASCII files. It also extracts information from Maxwell files or reports for use in other software packages outside the Maxwell system. This module provides access to the program's data dictionary,

which is well documented and adds powerful capabilities to the Maxwell suite for a

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data such as reports and nearly any other type of file.

Support & Training ' 5 Stars

Maxwell offers customer support services directly through its staff of support professionals or through its qualified dealer partners. Support is available via e-mail, phone or fax during normal weekly business hours. Conversion and consulting services are available on a contract basis with the company. Training options include onsite training, classroom training at Maxwell or at a dealer partner location, or online web-based training. All training is done by Maxwell certified trainers.

Reporting ' 5 Stars

Each module provides numerous reports that can be previewed, printed or saved in *.PDF format. Each report provides a variety of filtering and detail options. With the ODBC database connectivity option, you can use a variety of third-party report writers to create an infinite variety of customized forms and reports.

Relative Value ' 5 Stars

The Maxwell Management Suite provides a powerful set of modules that addresses a wide range of accounting and management needs for many types of businesses in the construction industry. The entire system is a well-planned, high-volume transaction-processing machine that can get the job done for nearly any size business.

2005 Overall Rating: 5

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