CPA
Practice Advisor

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PowerPayroll is an online payroll processing system from PayMaxx that supports all 50 states and offers options for tax compliance to all payroll tax entities. The system is primarily geared toward use by small business management, but PayMaxx does offer an accountant-focused interface for those professionals that offer PowerPayroll to their clients as a service of their firm. As an online payroll system, data entry and reporting tools can be accessed from virtually any location with an Internet connection, whether by the accountant or the business client's management.

While pricing discounts are available to accountants, non-discounted costs are as follows: The base cost of PowerPayroll for a weekly, biweekly or semi-monthly payroll is $12 per payroll, plus $1 per check/deposit, plus $6 per payroll for Direct Deposit capabilities. Additional options include the following: federal/state filing for $10; an employee online self-service module for $3 per payroll; $2 per payroll for accrual management; $2 per payroll for GL support; $3 per payroll for advanced reporting; $2.50 per employee for W-2 processing; $35 for 1099 filing. Depending upon specific options selected, monthly wholesale costs to our prototype firm (as described in the introduction to this review section on page 20) could range from about $3,000 to $3,500.

LEARNING CURVE – 5 Stars

PowerPayroll is accessed through a web browser. As a professional representing multiple client companies, an accountant first accesses a client list. Once within a particular client's payroll files, the main menu screen provides the user with a text-based list of primary system areas, including Employees, Payroll, General Ledger, Reports, Company Info, PayView, Customer Corner, and Employee Self Service. Within the Employees section, a sortable Master Employee List allows the addition or modification of employee demographic and work information. The Employee section includes a Job Rate table that allows definition of employees as either hourly

or salaried and up to three rates for that employee. After selection of either one,

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one screen and allows data entry for hours, sick time and vacation. Default times can be set to show for hours or other information. When entering time for sick leave or vacation, the system alerts the user if the result will be a negative balance in either of those accruals.

FEATURES & SERVICES – 4.5 Stars

The system can support an unlimited number of users, with individualized security settings enabling the administrator or professional accountant to limit certain users to only specific areas, such as data entry for a department or geographic office, but with no access to other areas. As an additional security measure, the administrator can set paycheck and payroll limits to help protect against keying errors and fraud. PowerPayroll supports an unlimited number of clients, client employees and departments. For employees, the system can also handle unlimited pay types and deductions with the ability to personally define calculation methods and taxability. Payrolls need to be entered at least two days prior to the expected payday, and the system has a payroll reminder system that e-mails appropriate data entry staff of various tasks that need to be completed. Direct Deposits require a 10-day pre-note period.

The system's Employee Self-Service function allows client employees to log in to change personal information or access previous pay stubs and other data, with the administrator able to specifically note the areas to which employees are permitted to make changes. The PayView module provides check stub details, summary YTD information, and W-2s for any employee. Customer Corner gives access to various forms as well as tax calculators for gross pay, net pay and W-4 estimations. As an optional service, PayMaxx offers tax filing for all jurisdictions within the United States, with the system automatically determining appropriate jurisdictions based on company location and employee residence.

REPORTING CAPABILITIES – 3.5 Stars

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traditionally delivered via next day mail. However, Power
Payroll enables authorized users to print checks locally, if needed. The system allows a one-line custom message to be included on each paycheck, if desired.

INTEGRATION/IMPORT & EXPORT – 4.5 Stars

PowerPayroll includes a GL application that puts out a GL file that can debit and credit appropriate accounts in QuickBooks and Intacct. The system can also export to *.CSV and ASCII files. Timeclock data can also be imported.

TRAINING & SUPPORT – 5 Stars

PayMaxx offers free online training to all customers, and unlimited technical support is included in the pricing. As an online program, all tax table updates are maintained by PayMaxx, which can also provide complete compliance, if desired.

SUMMARY

Although PowerPayroll may be a little light on its reporting capabilities, it offers a very user friendly application with multiple methods of data entry that eases payroll tasks, whether such data is entered by the business client or by the professional accountant. The web-based nature of the program makes it easy to set up and get going with immediately, and easy to add clients to, regardless of the client service model used by the professional.

2005 Overall Rating – 4.5 Stars

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