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PenSoft produces several versions of its Payroll Plus, including the Accounting Edition reviewed here. Other versions of the software are geared toward particular vertical markets, including hospitality, distribution, healthcare and manufacturing. The Accounting Edition supports multiple companies and includes invoicing, enhanced reporting, human resources, data entry, calculation and checkwriting functionality. Pricing for the program is based on the total number of employees supported, starting at \$1,629 for one to 50 employees. The needs of the prototype firm described in the introduction to this review section (page 20) would bring pricing to about \$1,989, supporting 251 to 500 employees. The company offers reduced renewal pricing.

“The program is really easy to use, but has good tools to help us manage payroll for our clients,” said Tom Towey who with his wife Polly, a CPA, owns the firm of CPA Services Pro ([www.CPAServicesPro.com](http://www.CPAServicesPro.com)) in Glenwood Springs, Colorado. “The low cost originally attracted us to the program, but its ease-of-use and comprehensiveness is what will keep us using Pensoft.” The Toweys’ practice specializes in business consulting and personal financial planning, as well as a full range of services including tax and accounting services, tax planning, payroll processing and bookkeeping.

### **LEARNING CURVE – 5 Stars**

Payroll Plus opens to a crisp, functional interface that opens records for the last company in which the user worked. Searchable company and employee selection lists can be easily accessed from buttons across the top of the screen that also include options for accessing payroll processing functions, managing tax and deduction deposits, check processing, reports and other features.

Data-entry screens are also very well designed, providing subwindows that offer

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Payroll processing is very easy, requiring only a few steps for routine processing: Select the employees to pay from the Payroll window; review their payroll data if desired; then print or select Direct Deposit from the Checks window. All screens are intuitive, and users should not require significant training to understand the basics of the program.

#### **FEATURES & SERVICES – 4.5 Stars**

As noted earlier, Payroll Plus Accounting Edition includes an invoicing utility as well as other features specifically designed for accountants handling payroll accounts for multiple companies. The system supports federal and all U.S. states and territories, and allows more than 250 deduction and tax types. Time off can be accrued by period, hours worked or percent of income, with the ability to control annual carryovers and maximum balances. Users can clone previous payroll data or set up defaults, allowing most routine payroll processing tasks to be completed easily, with automatic entry of most data.

The system supports shift differentials, taxable and non-taxable third-party sick pay, and tips reporting. Updated tax tables are included in the annual subscription. The program also supports job cost tracking, accrual tracking and reporting, as well as providing the option to prepare after-the-fact payroll. For non-banked employees, the system offers an alternative that works with direct deposit to provide the employee with a debit card loaded with their pay for each period.

PenSoft also offers an optional web-based time entry program that client companies can use to enter employee time and payroll data. When the information is complete, the professional managing payroll for that client is notified that the data is ready to download, which then allows the data to automatically create the necessary payroll.

Direct deposit is available as an add-on. Payroll Plus can be used to track and process

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940, 940EZ, 941, 943, 945, Schedule H, W-2 and 1099, as well as generic SUTAs for all states and some state-specific reports. MICR check printing is supported, but logos cannot be added to checks or reports. The program also does not allow saving reports to \*.PDF or word processing formats.

### **INTEGRATION/IMPORT & EXPORT – 4 Stars**

Payroll Plus can export GL data to many small business accounting packages and to ASCII files, and can import time and attendance information from XML-formatted documents.

### **TRAINING & SUPPORT – 4.5 Stars**

Unlimited technical support is included in the cost of the software, as are tax table updates, which are provided to users electronically. The built-in help system provides traditional assistance features, with index and search capabilities, but no right-click options. Classroom training seminars are available at the company's headquarters in Virginia.

### **SUMMARY**

Payroll Plus is a very easy-to-use system that provides an in-depth feature set, including departmentalized payroll, bank reconciliation, billing, HR options, benefits tracking, and good customizable reporting features. The inclusion of tax updates and support in their pricing is commendable, and certainly beats systems that nickel and dime users for everything.

### **2005 Overall Rating – 4.5 Stars**

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