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## *Systems*

The Abra Payroll program is part of Sage Software's Sage Abra HRMS, a comprehensive human resource management system that includes advanced capabilities for handling corporate payroll, online benefits enrollment, employee education, performance reviews, and online recruiting, in addition to ensuring compliance with various government compliance issues such as EEO regulations, FMLA, OSHA, COBRA and HIPAA. The system offers integration with most mid-market accounting and ERP systems, while broad reporting and analysis tools are also included. The program can be used either in-house by an organization or used by an accounting professional to manage the payroll, HR and benefits of multiple clients. The payroll module includes support for an unlimited number of companies, subsidiaries, departments and employees, with direct deposit included, as well as self-service payroll and HR functions for employees, electronic and mag media filing and payment options, and support for all 50 states (a Canadian version is also available). The payroll system is network-ready, with pricing dependent upon the number of employees. The approximate cost for in-house use by a business with 75 active employees would be \$2,115. Of note, Sage Software is a Platinum sponsor for the 12th annual National Payroll Week 2007, which will be September 3-7.

### **EASE-OF-USE/DATA ENTRY – 4 Stars**

Company selection is performed from the primary Sage Abra HRMS program, which opens into the Activity Center, a console that provides links to the primary functions of the suite, including Human Resources, Payroll, Attendance, Training and System management utilities. A pull-down menu across the top offers access to additional functions. Within Abra Payroll, the system groups tasks into categories

for Actions, Processes, Reports, Rules, Details and Query. The system includes

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lists are provided in a spreadsheet format for simplified sorting and filtering, with the ability to enter or edit time, rate, benefits, labor allocations, withholding and deduction information across several employees from a single screen, after which the system makes all calculations when the payroll is run. A simple gross-up calculator is also available to see results prior to processing. Salaried employees' data is automatically computed and requires only review before processing unless benefits-related data needs to be changed or other edits are necessary.

The program's core HR features are also accessible through the main Activity Center, which results in a comprehensive, yet user-friendly system. Program users would benefit from formal training in order to take advantage of the system's more advanced features and workflow management functions.

### **FEATURES – 5 Stars**

In addition to offering unlimited voluntary and involuntary deductions; unlimited direct deposit accounts; any number of pay types; and support for salaried, tipped, commissioned or piece-work employees, the Abra Payroll module supports any number of companies and employees/payees with the ability to manage up to five organizational levels within each payer company, such as geographic location, departments, cost centers or projects. The system automatically performs all calculations when payrolls are run and routes information into print-ready versions of forms 1099, W-2, W-3 and 1096, as well as preparing ACH files for direct deposit. Sage Abra's deduction capabilities support most traditional items, including workers' comp., 401(k), savings, garnishments, cafeteria plans and union dues, and allow customized addition of any others. The system also provides for management of benefit accruals that are tied to hours, time periods or other methods.

Liability accounts are maintained within the program, are linked back to the

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Scheduler utilities also provide workflow assistance, notifying users and management when payroll tasks need to be completed or if review processes are pending.

One feature that stands out for products at this level is the optional Abra ESS (Employee Self Service) add-on, which provides a secure online portal that allows employees to view and print pay stubs and W-2s, make electronic changes to their W-4s, and review their payroll histories, including pay, withholding, deductions, bonuses, commissions, and voluntary and matching contributions. This can relieve a lot of the headaches that HR departments face, even small ones.

### **REPORTING CAPABILITIES – 5 Stars**

Abra can produce 1099, W-2, W-3, 1096 and 940 forms, and 941 and 943 worksheets, and supports more than 2,000 local, state and federal taxing jurisdictions. Abra Payroll includes Crystal Reports, which enables users to customize over 100 standard reports, including pre-close reports of employee deductions, earnings, taxes, quarterly tax and wage file reports, gross-to-net detail reports, leave status reports and many others. With MICR printing capability, all paychecks and direct deposit advices can be printed to plain stock or preformatted form paper, and all reports can be viewed on-screen prior to printing. Users can run trial payroll runs as often as needed prior to final payroll processing.

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

Since Abra Payroll is part of the robust Sage Abra HRMS suite, it offers complete integration with HR and other modules. It also has the ability to share data with most major accounting packages, not through direct integration but via an ASCII and Excel import and export function. The system can also generate reports into ASCII and Excel.

## RELATIVE VALUE – 4.5 Stars

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and more complete compliance issues. Program and rate updates are included in the annual support cost of the program and are automatically updated by the system.

**2007 Overall Rating: 4.5 Stars**

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