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In mid-2007, Dexter + Chaney changed the name of its premier construction software (Forefront) to Spectrum in order to better represent the direction the product has taken in recent years. Designed for all types of construction businesses, including general construction, material management, electrical and highway management, Spectrum includes several new features alongside its new name designed to increase system functionality even more.

Learning Curve/ Ease of Use — 5 Stars
Spectrum's Menu System contains a drop-down menu at the top of the screen and a list of module categories to the left. Clicking on a module category will then display a list of modules found within that particular category. Function tabs are found directly above the expanded module list and include installation, security, utilities, updates, upgrades and year-end. If using multiple companies, users can toggle between without logging out of each company. Customized headers can be added to the navigation pane to provide quick access to frequently used functions. Links can also be added to various system files for one-click access. Navigating the data-entry screens is easy. All module entry screens contain drop-down list boxes and numerous tabs for easier data entry. The new Document Imaging Search function allows for searching and accessing necessary files. Spectrum's Job Cost module allows the choice of four different job pricing methods: Unit Cost, Cost Plus, Time & Material or Fixed Bid. Job phases can be created for each job, and estimated costs can be tracked as each phase is completed to ensure that job progress is satisfactory and on budget. Phase field codes are user-definable, and can be up to 12 alphanumeric characters. An excellent equipment module allows for tracking equipment usage, recording

depreciation and monitoring employee equipment usage. Spectrum makes extensive

Preventive Maintenance, Project Management, Purchase Order, Query & Dashboards (NEW!), Sales Analysis, Scale Interface, Service Contracts, Small Tools, Spectrum Mobile module (NEW!), Time+Billing Materials, and Work Order. The Query & Dashboards module allows users to view scheduling, project and cost information, choosing the level of detail desired. The Dashboards function provides a customized view of vital data. Specialized dashboards are included with Spectrum and are geared toward executive, financial and operations personnel. The newly released Spectrum Mobile module allows users to utilize portable devices or laptops to enter and save vital information, and then later transmit that same data (such as field reports, completed work orders or payroll information) to the home office in a timely manner.

Productivity Tools — 5 Stars
The Document Imaging module allows for scanning and attaching documents to corresponding
files. Invoices, work orders or estimates can also be submitted electronically, which can help to reduce stacks of paperwork and eliminate lost documents. The Project Management module allows for the monitoring of all projects from beginning
to completion. It allows users to check the progress on contracts, record and track project changes, and enter contractor and subcontractor information into the directory. The Resource Scheduling module allows for scheduling both employees
and work equipment more efficiently. The Service Contracts module allows users to maintain the billing and scheduling for all service contracts being administered. Warranty details can also be tracked, including expiration dates. It allows users to check the profitability of current contracts now and enables adjustment of data at renewal time. The Task Management feature allows users to organize tasks, attach relevant files to data, set the task priority level and add the

percentage of the project that has been completed. The Work Order module provides

third-party estimating programs. Spectrum also offers the Scale Interface module, which provides a bridge for accessing scale software applications.

Reporting — 5 Stars
Spectrum contains excellent reporting capabilities, including easy integration with Crystal Reports. All reports can be displayed on screen, printed, or saved in PDF, ODBC or HTML format. Reports can also be exported to various applications as well as faxed or e-mailed directly from the print screen.

Support & Training — 4 Stars
Product support is available via telephone or fax during regular business hours. Spectrum also provides all users with access to the Spectrum Knowledgebase and product user forums. An excellent Help function is found throughout Spectrum and provides context-sensitive Help. The online Help function provides more extensive solutions to problems, and product manuals can assist new users with product setup and navigation.

Relative Value — 5 Stars
Spectrum is a sophisticated program designed for large construction-related companies. No matter the sub-specialty (homebuilding, electrical, equipment, etc.), Spectrum has a series of modules designed to work with a business. Ranging in price from about $50,000 for an eight- to 12-user system, Spectrum offers an extensive list of modules, excellent scalability and integration capabilities, and an easy navigational interface that belies the strength of the program.

2008 Overall Rating: 5 Stars

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