From the April/May 2008 Review
of Tax Compliance Suites

The TaxWorks professional tax compliance system initially started out nearly 35 years ago when the company acted as a service bureau. With the evolution of technology since then, and with its acquisition by RedGear Technologies in 2007, TaxWorks has grown into a comprehensive collection of tax compliance modules
with support for 1040, 1041, 1065, 1120, 1120S, 706, 709, 990 and 5500, along with all taxing states, D.C. and Puerto Rico. TaxWorks also includes an integrated asset management function, and TaxWorks offers optional add-ons for tax planning, practice management and client organizers. Separately, RedGear's eGLWorks system provides an online client bookkeeping system that doubles as a professional write-up program for the accountant, while the company's ArkWorks document management system provides a paperless office management option that includes security features and an audit trail.

The company also recently debuted a Wage Reporting system. The TaxWorks system is offered in a variety of bundles, starting with the 1040 package, which supports federal individual and one state for as low as $1,295. A package with 1040 and all states costs $1,695, and the top bundle with all individual, business and special entities plus all states costs $2,595. All bundled packages include free unlimited e-filing and can be used by all preparers within the same office at no additional charge. Pay-per-use pricing is also offered.

General Operations/ Ease-of-Use — 4.5 Stars
TaxWorks has a clean and intuitive interface, opening to the client selection screen, which provides a spreadsheet view of all clients automatically divided by return type, with tabs for moving between these return types. The window

displays multiple data columns, including status, e-file status and contact

bottom
left and gives a breakdown of AGI, deductions, exemptions, various credits, tax, and refund or amount due. Additionally, a panel inset into the data-entry interview sheet shows line-specific instructions for the currently selected data field, while buttons allow moving between Advanced, Lite, EZ and Spanish versions of the data-entry sheet. The form replica panel provides a view of the form and drilldown access to data, but all actual data entry is performed on one of the program's four interview modes. The system even displays an e-file return date estimator that shows when a client can expect their refund. Each of the system's panels can be resized as desired. The interview sheets are intuitive and provide drilldown access to supporting worksheets and schedules, along with pull-down selection lists and auto-fill functions for city and state after entering ZIP Code, and users have the ability to attach notes or markups to data fields for review.

Workflow & Productivity Tools — 4.5 Stars
The program automatically performs calculations as data is entered, including for SSI and Medicare withholding, and transfers data as needed between returns and associated schedules and worksheets. TaxWorks has improved greatly with additions to the client selection screen. RedGear has also enhanced many of TaxWorks' other features, including its review processes, which enable markup of clients and status tracking with multiple options, including the following: in progress, incomplete, waiting for information, under review, extended, completed and walked.

Included in the program are paper client organizers and a built-in Scheduler utility that offers day, week, and monthly views of appointments and tasks for all or individual preparers. The Scheduler can be used to send e-mail reminders to clients and to professionals in the firm. An asset management system is also

built into the tax system, offering support for various disposal actions and

tracking all access and changes to client return data. TaxWorks includes analysis and diagnostic functions and reports that are easily accessible using the Audit icon or by running individual reports. All client communication templates, including invoices, organizers, slip sheets, filing instructions and reminder letters, and the interview sheets can be customized using Word and are available in English. Bank loan products are available through Chase and Santa Barbara Bank & Trust's Traditional and ANEW programs, which allow client refund dispersal via check, cash card or direct deposit. These programs can be beneficial even for firms not wishing to offer loans, since they enable the firm to receive payment from return proceeds, rather than relying upon up-front payments or invoicing.

Integration/ Import & Export — 4 Stars
TaxWorks has a great selection of built-in and add-on features, including the Scheduler, Tax Planner, asset management system, and document management and GL systems, all of which offer integration with the tax program. TaxWorks also allows printing of returns, reports and forms into PDF format, and can import data from Excel, QuickBooks and other accounting programs. For client communications, the system interfaces with Outlook, Outlook Express and other SMTP-based e-mail systems.

Support/Training & Help System — 4.5 Stars
With right-click menus available everywhere that offer quick access to Help, and with a calculator, markup functions and a Help panel that automatically displays instructions for the current data field, the system provides excellent assistive features. RedGear also provides TaxWorks users with print user manuals, and the installation CD includes training tutorials and various video How-Tos. The company maintains a good online support center with FAQs, documentation,

tax news, and access to live and web-based training events and materials. TaxWorks

returns, but who also need access to business entity compliance. Such tax offices that offer bank products would be especially well-served by the program, which also offers bilingual client-focused materials.

2008 Overall Rating: 4.5 Stars

Technology

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