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Estate Planning Systems

EISI offers two professional financial planning systems, the NaviPlan program reviewed here, and the Profiles system, which the company acquired about two years ago. NaviPlan, which is available in Standard and Extended versions as either a traditional stand-alone desktop program or in a web-based format, is a professional cashflow-based planning system geared toward managing all aspects of high net worth clients with complex personal and business financial structures. It is also offered in versions for the United States or Canada.

The program's comprehensive feature set supports multiple scenarios and cases, has Monte Carlo analysis functions, tracks federal and state taxation, includes stock option modeling and insurance analysis, and provides multiple options for asset allocation, including optional asset allocation and Mean Variance Optimizer (MVO) modules from Ibbotson Associates. A single-user license of the NaviPlan Standard costs \$799, while NaviPlan Extended is priced at \$1,299. Pricing for NaviPlan Central (ASP platform), which includes business and compliance tools for firms in addition to planning tools for advisors, is \$998 for NaviPlan Standard and \$1,498 for NaviPlan Extended. The Ibbotson asset add-on is \$125 and the MVO add-on is \$100 for the web-based or stand-alone desktop versions.

Ease of Use/Basic Functionality — 5 Stars

The primary interface for NaviPlan Extended has a very browser-like feel, even when using the stand-alone desktop version. The screen provides text-based links at the top for basic program functions, such as Help, Save, Print, Undo, Support and Signing Out. A vertical navigation menu on the left offers links to client selection, preferences and financial assessment functions. The remainder of the screen provides the work area, which provides tabbed access to intuitive

buttons, checkboxes, spreadsheets and other data-entry and presentation views,

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for retirement, education and other life events, it also provides for tracking of dependent information. NaviPlan also provides beneficiary management for both dependents and non-family.

The system allows the professional user to categorize client plans as one of three types: Financial Assessment, Financial Objective Analysis (Level 1); and Comprehensive Analysis (Level 2). Setting a client engagement as one of these types enables the system to streamline functions to meet the general purpose of the engagement. For instance, in the Financial Assessment mode, the system allows the user to identify the goals (retirement, insurance, education, estate analysis, major purchase) and then provides tabbed access to a one-page financial summary and detailed views of each of the goals selected. Client data can be directly entered onto these screens, with calculations automatically performed and the resulting values updated in real-time. The data fields also enable drilldown access to more detailed data.

The program automatically takes into account phase-ins/phase-outs of tax changes, as well as inflation indexing. It also provides functions like the How Am I Doing and What Are My Options tools that can aid the professional and client in diagnosing and remedying shortfalls in meeting planning goals. NaviPlan can import client financial data from multiple fund and clearing sources through a utility provided by Albridge Solutions.

Calculations — 5 Stars

As a full financial planning system, NaviPlan Extended offers small business, partnership, and S- and C-Corp planning in addition to its wealth of individual financial management functions. As previously noted, the program includes built-in support for estate taxes at the federal level and for all states, and also includes extensive goal planning and management capabilities, net worth assessment,

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allow viewing of multiple plans simultaneously and can include presentation options such as “straight numbers,” text-based output and graphical elements such as charts and graphs that can help effectively communicate a client plan. Additionally, the program can generate cash flow reports, flow charts, comparisons, and detailed and summary gross estate and estate liabilities reports. Plans and reports can be saved to Word, Excel, PDF and other formats.

Help, Support & Training Options — 5 Stars

The assistive features built into NaviPlan include a traditional Help function, along with a Planning Assistant, right-click options, and the How Am I Doing and What Are My Options functions. The company's support website also provides a large library of task-focused video tutorials, PDF study guides, user support forums, a knowledgebase, technical support and training options. Technical support is included in system pricing. The EISI Academy, a training strategy created in partnership with Greene Consulting, is also offered as a resource for building financial planning expertise.

Relative Value — 4.5 Stars

NaviPlan Extended is an exceptionally comprehensive, yet easy-to-use financial and estate planning system designed to service high and very high net worth clients with complex financial bases. The program offers a full set of goal planning features, modeling tools and asset allocation functions that further juice up the program's capabilities and make it ideal for firms with considerable “A” clients.

2008 Overall Rating:

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