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Client Write-Up Systems

Accounting Relief is the only fully web-based system in this review section and approaches the accountant-client relationship in a different manner. The professional accounting program offers the traditional full complement of write-up and trial balance functions, including full GL and journal functionality, reconciliation, financial reporting and analysis, and checkwriting.

What makes it different is that it also includes a bookkeeping module that clients use from their end. This means that data doesn't have to be transferred or synched because both client and accountant are working with the same data, and the professional can control the functions that clients can perform. The system can also import from QuickBooks and Excel files.

AccountantsWorld also offers live and after-the-fact payroll, sales tax compliance, practice and document management systems, website development tools, and systems for financial planning and 401(k) administration. Pricing for Accounting Relief is \$995 per year or \$99 per month, which gives firm's multi-user access to the full system, along with bookkeeping modules for any number of clients. Firms can alternatively pay \$99 per year per client.

LEARNING CURVE & EASE OF USE – 5 Stars

Accounting Relief is designed so that practitioners can access it via a secure link on their firm's website, which opens the Accountant's Office Online home-page, a site that gives the user access to accounting programs, practice management tools and other available modules for which they have authorization

to access. Accounting Relief sports a recently enhanced interface that starts

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selection lists and specific modules, such as Bank-ing, Trial Balance, Utilities, Reports and Financials. Initial setup of client companies is simple, with guides and template charts of accounts speeding the process. Data-entry screens are intuitive, with transaction screens providing selection lists and multiple view options that allow the user to quickly post disbursements and receipts, make correcting entries, and perform other tasks.

As previously noted, one of the key benefits of Accounting Relief is that it includes an integrated client bookkeeping system. This web-based system acts as their small business accounting program, but it's actually a module of the professional system. The accountant can determine specific functions that client users can access, such as posting transactions, making journal entries, accessing the chart of accounts, checkwriting, managing receivables and payables, accessing reporting functions, etc.

Since each client has different capabilities and needs, the client bookkeeping system can be customized for each one, allowing the accountant to stay in total control of the accounting data, which helps maintain its accuracy and integrity. And since both sides are working on the same data, when it's time for the accountant to perform write-up tasks or the client needs assistance, the work can be done in real-time and without the need to transfer data. Accounting Relief offers automated bank and credit card reconciliation functions, and a new communication tool offers instant messaging between the accountant and the clients from within the accounting package.

REPORTING & FINANCIAL STATEMENTS – 5 Stars

Accounting Relief's report-ing capabilities are easily accessible either from the Activity Center or from the Reports and Financials screens, providing full drilldown access to transactions and offering good customization options.

Traditional financials include single period or comparative balance sheets and

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"I have a small firm in Maryland with a staff of one to five. Accounting Relief was the first product I viewed that seemed to have a completely comprehensive approach to the accounting process, including all the financial reporting. They go above and beyond, including the letters available to generate for the client with compilation of the schedule deadlines. The program helps me showcase what I can do online. I can attach a little marketing piece to this product and use it to show my ability to meet the clients' needs. It has allowed me to substantially cut down the human resources time for me to put the data into the system because the clients enter much of it themselves, which saves me a lot of labor hours and dollars. Because of the cost savings to the practitioner, Accounting Relief allows you to be more competitive in the market. But as you research the options, my recommendation is that you use what will make you most marketable and most competitive in your area. And if you choose this product, consider the vendor's payroll product, as well, because the two

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When reconciliation tasks, adjustments or period ends are processed, live data is accessible to the accountant at any time without having to transfer it. Accounting Relief can also import from QuickBooks, Excel, RTF and ASCII formats, and it offers export into most tax compliance programs.

SUPPORT, TRAINING & HELP – 4.5 Stars

Accounting Relief offers a traditional Help utility and links to technical assistance tutorials and other options, while the AccountantsWorld online support center provides access to various training videos, webinars, tips and articles. Tech support is included in program pricing. The web-based program is automatically maintained and updated by Accountants-World staff.

RELATIVE VALUE – 5 Stars

For firms that can transition some or all of its small business clients to the client bookkeeping system in Accounting Relief, the program is exceptionally beneficial since it can greatly reduce client errors, speed up many write-up processes and put control of the accounting relationship back in the professional's hands. The system can also import from most small business accounting programs. The web-based nature of the system is also useful since it enables the professional to securely access client and firm data remotely.

2008 Overall Rating:

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