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CCH, a Wolters Kluwer business — ProSystem fx Site Builder

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Dec. 01, 2008

*From
the Dec. 2006 Review of Website Tools for Accountants*

ProSystem *fx* Site Builder provides professional accounting firms with a template-based website and maintenance system that includes a variety of add-on content options geared toward financial services. The system also provides newsletters, tax alerts, secure client portals for exchanging financial documents, and financial calculators and toolkits for financial planning and small business management. The program has an initial setup cost of \$295 and an annual fee of \$895. Specialized content, including the CCH Tax Resource Guide, business owner's toolkit and the financial planning toolkit are available for an additional cost. The company also offers a la carte pricing for additional options, including e-mail accounts, a deluxe graphics package, custom website design, Flash splash pages and domain name registration.

WEBSITE SETUP/MAINTENANCE — 4.5 Stars

The ProSystem *fx* Site Builder interface is intuitive, guiding users through the basic steps involved in creating or editing a website and its content. Through the system, users can customize the overall style and design by selecting from several templates, which provide a crisp and professional appearance with

support for Flash and animated images. The system does not include toolbar-oriented font and style controls, but users are able to use HTML coding to customize text appearance. A basic HTML guide is included, providing hints for creating bold or italic text or changing color or size. Websites start with seven pre-created pages, speeding up the setup process. Pages for firm profile, “about us,” services and other common pages include prewritten text that can be easily edited using the step-by-step process. The addition of Flash animation and firm logos unfortunately requires selection of the optional Deluxe Graphics Package at an additional cost.

AUTOMATED CONTENT — 4.5 Stars

As one of the most reputable sources of financial and tax news resources, it is no surprise that CCH offers one of the most comprehensive content packages available, allowing a firm to include the latest financial and tax-related news on its website automatically. All of the content packages require selection of an optional add-on module. The included eContent package provides an Info Center Page with tax calendars, downloadable forms, publications, tax alerts and updates. The system’s financial tools include a large selection of calculators for estimating tax, loans, business analysis functions, amortization, rent vs. buy, and mortgage comparisons. The newsletter page provides archived access to monthly articles and analysis of tax situations, including tax planning, business valuation, FAQs and compliance issues. Newsletters include the company logo and can be e-mailed to clients, although no automatic e-mail distribution is offered. On the website, the newsletter is in *.PDF format. Another optional content module called the Lifestyles Reading Rack offers several guides for individuals and businesses, covering tax tips, financial planning and other topics. CCH’s eContent is available separately from the website builder for firms that already have an existing website and wish to include the more than 500 pages of tax-specific articles and analysis. The Business Owner’s Toolkit and Financial Planning Toolkit also provide excellent resource material for clients.

VISUAL QUALITY/USER NAVIGATION — 4 Stars

Websites created using ProSystem *fx* Site Builder maintain a professional and attractive design scheme with intuitive menus and navigation, but the availability of only 30 or so design templates results in limited customization options. Websites are primary domains (www.YourFirmname.com), so the branding remains

strictly with the firm, and CCH can assist in obtaining the web address of the firm's choice. By default, all pages created through the system include a CCH brand notice at the bottom, but this is removable. A firm website built using CCH's ProSystem *fx* Site Builder is available at www.bellandcompany.net.

SPECIAL FEATURES/TOOLS — 5 Stars

Site Builder includes a very robust collection of financial calculators (about 100), along with tax and financial planning tools that can benefit clients and draw attention to the firm's additional services. With ProSystem *fx* File Share, the system also includes secure portals for collaboration with clients that allows them to access files and documents that the firm has decided to let them view, through an encrypted interface. Clients can also use the online CCH Tax Notebook, which is a tax organizer that is accessible through the website. The data entered into the tax organizer can be imported directly into ProSystem *fx* Tax. The investment aggregation program GainsKeeper Pro can also be used through a website link. The website can also include a link to CompleteTax Pro, allowing a revenue stream from self-preparers who complete their taxes online through the firm's website.

SITE MARKETING — 4 Stars

Site Builder includes visitor tracking and analysis to help the firm determine the effectiveness of its website, and CCH automatically submits websites to the primary search engines and web directories. All content offered through the system, including newsletters, the Tax Resource Guide and the Lifestyles Reading Rack are branded with the firm's information and logo.

SUPPORT — 4.5 Stars

Technical support, both phone-based and through the online support center, is free. CCH also offers additional professional customization and website design services.

SUMMARY

ProSystem *fx* Site Builder is very easy to use, requiring no prior website experience, but the inclusion of the basic HTML guide is useful for some content formatting. The base pricing includes newsletters, tax alerts and the basic website, which has between eight to 12 web pages. The ability to automatically transfer data from the tax organizer into ProSystem *fx* Tax will prove an outstanding feature for firms using that tax compliance system. The system provides a visitor-friendly environment that offers good information and tools

and is simple to maintain. ProSystem *fx* Site Builder includes the eContent and file sharing tools as part of the basic package. However, some of the other tools and resources, including the tool kits, Reading Rack and Tax Resource Guide are available as add-ons, either individually or in bundled packages that start at an additional \$250.

2006 Overall Rating: 4.5 Stars

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