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of Professional Tax Preparation Systems

TaxWorks offers a full tax suite for mid-sized and smaller firms, providing comprehensive compliance for all entities for federal, state and municipal compliance reporting. The system is available in several bundles or as separate modules and supports multi-state processing. Several additional features are packaged with the program or are available as add-ons, including fixed asset management, tax planning, practice management and electronic client organizers. The program also has integration with banking products. Pricing for the complete "The Works," TaxWorks' most comprehensive package, starts at \$2,595 and includes all entities, all states, and the tax planner in a network-ready system that can be used by any number of users in the same office at no extra cost. New for 2007, unlimited e-filing for individual, business and state returns is included in the purchase price. The company also offers a pay-per-use system. TaxWorks announced in February that it has been acquired by H&R Block, which will continue to market and develop the program.

Learning Curve — 4 Stars

TaxWorks is a fairly straightforward program, opening immediately to a master screen from which the client list or other functions can be easily accessed. Traditional Windows icons and pull-down menus complement this interface. The client selection screen opens in a subwindow that allows the user to filter or search by entity type and sort by various methods, while options for creating new clients, reviewing, copying and other tasks are available on the side of this window.

After initially setting up basic client demographic and contact information

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between forms and schedules by hosting a forms menu on the side, along with an output view of the form with real-time calculations and a running return summary, which displays live client data such as AGI, tax due and other information. The various panels can be resized to the preference of the user. Each of the data-entry fields that relies upon transferred or calculated data provides links back to supporting documents, and users have the ability to set notes or mark-ups to entry fields. The program also includes a non-editable forms view that provides drilldown access back to the forms.

Use/Workflow & Productivity Tools — 4 Stars

TaxWorks lets users get to client returns quickly, providing a good client selection screen that displays various information on clients that can be sorted by ID, name SSN, status and other options. The program also offers various individual client summary options and simplifies the review process with the various checkmarks

and notes that the system allows users to set to returns. Additionally, user-level security and an audit trail help to ensure the integrity of returns and identify which users have accessed or changed data. Diagnostic reports and error checking of returns also help to ensure the accuracy of forms prior to submission to the IRS, while the online e-filing system allows users to easily check acknowledgements and IRS codes from any location.

The program automatically fills in SSI and Medicare withholding for individual returns, which are overridable, and offers “smart” selection lists for common entries such as employer, EIN and other data. A ZIP Code database is also included that automatically fills in city, state and even county and special taxing districts based on a 5 or 5+4 ZIP. TaxWorks performs all calculations in real-time as the user enters data and transfers it as needed to other parts of a client return.

TaxWorks includes electronic client organizers, and the Client Management module

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exchanges. The TaxWorks TaxPlanner provides a good basic planning tool that allows tax professionals to work with their clients to proactively minimize tax liabilities. It allows up to five simultaneous plans that can be viewed on-screen side-by-side.

Integration/Import & Export — 3.5 Stars

TaxWorks offers printing straight to PDF, which helps with paperless document management and also integrates with most e-mail systems to enable users to send correspondence directly to clients from within the program. The system can import client data from QuickBooks, other accounting systems and Excel files, and data within the program flows to dependent returns and state returns as needed. No integrated research functions are available. The company offers free conversion from most other tax packages.

Support/Training & Help System — 4 Stars

The built-in assistance tools in TaxWorks offer line-specific assistance and instructions from right-click menus, while a traditional Help index and user manual provide additional guidance. The company's online support center includes access to the e-file center for tracking returns, as well as tutorials, a knowledgebase and the reference manual, which is also provided in print. The program also comes with a customer training video CD. The vendor offers live training seminars and classes at annual events located in vacation destinations.

Relative Value — 4.5 Stars

The TaxWorks system is strong enough for most firms of any size and, with the inclusion of unlimited e-filing this year, is priced very competitively. The system is capable of handling complex returns with K-1 data flowing between entities as needed as well as tracking and updating of suspended losses for business entities, but its workflow and review processes make the program more

ideally suited to midsize and smaller tax practices. TaxWorks provides a friendly

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