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Isaac M. O'Bannon • Jul. 01, 2009

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The *eTEK* for Microsoft Office system is a business management and bookkeeping system designed for mid-sized and growing entities, providing integrated modules for GL, AP, AR, inventory, payroll, purchasing, sales, budgeting, and job costing and estimating. The program utilizes the Microsoft Access database (hence the latter part of the program name) using either Windows XP or Vista, and is also available in a version that supports older Office systems and larger database environments (such as MS SQL). An optional supply chain management suite is also offered, with total system pricing for five users and all modules costing about \$13,000. A base system with only GL, AP and AR is also offered. The *eTEK* system is also available as a SaaS, remotely hosted program through Application Solution Providers, Inc.

(www.hostedenvironments.net).

LEARNING CURVE/EASE OF USE:

During installation, the system includes a sample company file for becoming familiar with the program. *eTEK* opens into a Microsoft Office environment complete with Office toolbars and icons, along with program-specific tools and tabbed screens for key system modules and submodules, including management AP, AR, the GL, payroll, cash management, job costing, sales, purchasing and inventory. Each of these tabs provides access to additional tasks via drop-down selection lists for items such as entering transactions, paying invoices, printing checks, reporting or creating templates. Many of the interface's components can be customized to user needs, including menus and the program's home screen, which allows users to quickly access frequently used functions.

Transaction and data-entry screens are very well designed, maintaining a Microsoft Office look and feel at all times and providing right-click assistance options,

selection lists, drilldown capabilities and quick access to related areas via tabs, links

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create specialized assemblies, purchasing and work orders. The program can track and manage WIP/progress and contract billing, with support for AIA billing and automatic integration of change orders. Users can create an unlimited range of jobs, sub-phases and underlying tasks, with full tracking of revenue and expenses for overhead labor and equipment at all levels. *eTEK* allows fully customizable job cost numbering, with four segments and nine digits.

The job costing module also allows estimates to be created at any level required, in addition to creation of estimate-to-complete reports for examining productivity and profit. Users can manage equipment costs and non-payroll labor, with these expenses applied to client jobs, while the program maintains a comprehensive job cost master file that allows users to quickly drilldown to any level of detail. This includes transactions behind all revenues and costs, equipment and labor, and tracking and management of change orders for customers and subcontractors. Additionally, retainage can be withheld on receivables invoices, and multiple job cost and GL accounts can be billed simultaneously.

eTEK's payroll module supports all states and offers direct deposit, with the ability to manage any number of employees with unlimited earnings and deduction types, multiple pay rates per employee, job costing codes, workers' comp wage groups and classes.

REPORTING:

eTEK includes a broad collection of reports, along with a wizard that helps users maximize their use of the more than 200 output options that include financial, payroll (including wage reporting), distribution and job costing-focused reports, which can be easily customized using the systems integration with Excel and Word. Reports can also be output to various other formats, including PDF and HTML, and emailed from within the program.

IMPORT/EXPORT/INTEGRATION:

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The company's support website provides additional tutorial videos, a self-guided tour, tips on creating reports, FAQs, and training and support package information. Initial licenses include 20 hours of web-based training.

RELATIVE VALUE:

With strong job costing, supply chain management and inventory management capabilities, *eTEK* Accounting for Microsoft Office is well-suited to mid-sized construction and manufacturing entities with the need for AIA-compliant reporting and detailed expense tracking. The program offers great scalability, allowing smaller concerns to get started in the system, while providing support for upward growth into dozens or more concurrent system users. The remotely hosted SaaS model (offered through Application Solution Providers, Inc.) is also a good option for construction managers more likely to be mobile than in the office.

2009 OVERALL RATING:

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