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Randy Johnston • Nov. 01, 2009

From the Nov. 2009 Issue

We all know Not-for-Profit (NFP) organizations that are doing exceptional work. Whether you are directly employed by an NFP, do charitable work for an organization or are involved in pro bono work, many accountants help NFP organizations accomplish their missions. With your accounting skills, and armed with the knowledge of better software for these organizations, you can affect great change.

WHAT IS NEEDED?

According to SBA data, of the six million businesses in the United States, about 10 percent are NFPs. These businesses may have very small operating budgets to very large ones. The level of accounting software needed will vary by size and complexity. Some NFP organizations need fund accounting where others can be quite well served with regular accounting software. FASB 117 and GASB compliance, and special re-ports for boards, web presence, volunteer activity, gift-ing, donors and special events may be some of the requirements.

If your NFP has fundraising activities, this can add an additional level of complexity to your software needs. First, you should decide if you want your fundraising software to interface to your accounting software. Next, if you have development officers, you should assess with them how much information they need and how easily accessible it should be. Some systems enable web access or hand-held access in addition to the donation history. Incorporation of outside research for identifying suspects may be a factor, as well.

Your software system may need to interface with both constituents and donors

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needs before considering products is mandatory.

WHAT IS AVAILABLE?

The number of good NFP software suppliers in the U.S. market is relatively small. A good working list can be found at:

www.accountingsoftwareworld.com/industry_solutions/not_for_profit.

Key publishers with products to consider include those listed below, as well as Cougar Mountain Software, FUND E-Z and GMS. See the [2009](#)

[Not-for-Profit product review](#).

AccuFund (accufund.com)

— This product was developed by many of the people originally involved in the American Fundware product. They have created a product based on their experience, and have used current technologies to build it. This product is available in a hosted version.

Blackbaud (blackbaud.com)

— One of the long-term players, this publicly held company has specialized in fundraising, focusing on schools and foundations. They have offerings in a number of NFP verticals.

CYMA NFP (cyma.com)

— This entry-level product has after-the-fact payroll, write-up and recurring entries with splits to complement their NFP fund accounting.

Peachtree Accounting for Nonprofits (peachtree.com)

— Sage Peachtree Premium Accounting for Nonprofits 2010 does more than just manage the financial side of nonprofit businesses. It can track expenses,

supplies and labor costs against grants and other funding sources, manage

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of accounts that ease setup and tracking for outstanding member and pledge fees.

QuickBooks Nonprofit (quickbooks.intuit.com)

— Intuit offers Nonprofit Editions for QuickBooks Premier and QuickBooks Enterprise Solutions, with customized reports and tools for the NFP industry.

Sage MIP Fund Accounting (sagenonprofit.com)

— For more than 25 years, this fund accounting solution has targeted nonprofit organizations and governments. Sage MIP Fund Accounting is flexible, complies with FASB and GASB requirements, and provides individual fund tracking and reporting software. Sage has a broad number of offerings for integrated fundraising and web presence, as well.

Serenic Navigator (serenic.com) — This certified extension to the

Dynamics

NAV software brings customizable fund accounting to the Microsoft accounting family of software.

TRAVERSE NFP (osas.com)

— Open Systems TRAVERSE is a customizable solution that can improve financial management practices and reporting. The system has FASB 117-compliant reporting, cross fiscal year reporting on all financial reports, and can create

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money for installation, and you will need to plan on more remote support.

As you step through the process of selecting a viable replacement system, remember that cheaper or more expensive does not necessarily equal better. Look for a good philosophical and practical fit for your clients' NFP organizations.

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