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[www.abaksoftware.com](http://www.abaksoftware.com)

## **Best Fit**

Professional services firms of any size, including the accounting, legal, engineering and consulting professions, who either use time-based billing or track time for productivity management.

## **Strengths**

- Three-level approval system for time & expenses
- Web-based interface time and expense entry
- Broad integration capabilities
- Automated alerts
- Mobile app

## **Potential Limitations**

- Lacks full accounts receivable module
- Navigation in built-in help resources could be more intuitive.

Now in version 7.5 and on the market for more than 15 years, the Abak system is available as an installed application or can be hosted by Abak and used as a web-based system. The company also offers a web-based time and expense sheet entry and reporting utility. As a whole, Abak provides comprehensive professional time and billing program, with utilities for project cost management, WIPs, timesheet and expense approvals, client invoicing and vendor management.

Since last year's review, the company has added integration with Microsoft Outlook for project assignments and datebook entries, the ability to email multiple invoices

to a client within a single email, extended project and vendor management features

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The program's main work area offers navigation menus on the left side of the screen for accessing the core function areas, including timesheet and expense data entry, managing clients and vendors, as well as project tracking tools. Pull-down navigation menus are also available at the top of the screen for key functions, and users can customize many of the interface components and data fields.

Within specific work areas, such as timesheet and expense account entries, the left side navigation offers quick access to specific functions, such as using detailed or fast-entry summary sheets for time and expenses, as well as a link to the user's appointment management system. Expandable menus for other core program areas, including management, reporting, projects and other items are below the task menu. Timesheet detail entry screens are intuitive and include selection lists for clients, projects, assignments and a calendar can be used for entering dates. Firms can create custom data fields.

The system is designed to support any number of clients, projects and expense codes, as well as any number of users from five up, and since pricing is on a per-user, per-year basis, users can be added as necessary, allowing for simple scalability.

### **Time Management Capabilities: 4.5 Stars**

As previously mentioned, Abak offers detailed and summary timesheet entry screens, allowing users and firms to enter as much detail as necessary, and with the option add custom fields for data management. Staff can record billable or non-billable time by project, client and task, with the ability to set varying billing rates per staff member and task. Abak also offers automation options for project billing, and markups and downs can be managed at the project and expense levels. A built-in timer can also be used, with accrued time applied directly to timesheets.

Management users have access to timesheet views for multiple staff at the same time,

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With Abak Web, an standard web-based add-on the comes with the program, users can remotely submit time and expense data and view reports, with the data synched back into the main Abak program.

### **Invoicing Functions: 4 Stars**

Invoicing processes in Abak include the ability to bill by fixed rate, time, project or project phase, with options for recurring, automatic and scheduled billing, as well as a multi-step invoice approval process. The program offers features for automatically performing rollovers and applying transaction credits, and invoice templates can be customized to firm needs.

Expense tracking is available also in a detail or summary mode, with the ability to add flat or percentage-based surcharges. Expenses are trackable by staff member, client, project and task, with options for applying two tax rates if necessary. The system does not include accounts receivable, but it does integrate with third party accounting systems.

Invoice templates can be customized to firm standards, with the ability to include notes and non-charged time on statements. Invoices can be emailed directly from within the program, and Abak has added the ability to send multiple invoices to a client with a single email.

### **Management Features: 4.25 Stars**

Abak offers graphical reporting and customizable data fields, but would be improved by the addition of true dashboard screens with executive summaries of key business indicators, including YTD and period comparisons and other data. Other reporting options are quite strong, with dozens of report templates that offer Crystal Reports

customization options and report categories that enable management of project

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For GL and HR functions, Abak integrates with QuickBooks, Sage 500 (Xcelsius), XRI, Sage Simply Accounting, Advantage and Acomba, while payroll integration is available for services from ADP, QuickBooks and Sage.

Additional integration features include built-in email, project management and calendaring compatibility with Outlook, project management integration with Microsoft project, and simple import and export of data from Excel, Word, CSV, XML and text formats. As noted previously, Abak includes remote data entry features, as well as a mobile app.

### **Help/Support: 4 Stars**

The system's help utility includes field-specific guidance and Abak has improved accessibility to documentation from within the help system, as well as in the web version. Live technical support and downloadable program updates are included with annual program renewals. The support website includes FAQs and several tutorial videos, and the company hosts a blog that includes product news and tips. Optional advanced training options are available as live, interactive webcasts for an additional fee.

### **Summary & Pricing**

Abak's strongest features are in its time and expense data entry and reporting, as well as project management capabilities. Although the system lacks a true accounts receivable module, it offers ample customization of invoices and can integrate with most common small business accounting programs. The option to use Abak as a hosted solution makes it a good option for firms wanting to avoid the management of IT resources. Pricing for a five-user system starts at about \$840 per year. Additional fees may be required based on integration needs and advanced training.

## 2012 Overall Rating: 4.25 Stars

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