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## PRACTICE MANAGEMENT

# 2012 Review of Broadway Billing Systems — Bill4Time

Isaac M. O'Bannon • Aug. 29, 2012

**Broadway Billing Systems — Bill4Time**

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[www.Bill4Time.com](http://www.Bill4Time.com)

From the [September 2012 review](#) of time and billing systems.

**Best Fit:** Professional accounting practices seeking a cloud-based solution for time and expense tracking and billing.

## Strengths

- Integration with QuickBooks
- Group calendaring with Outlook and Google synch
- and project management
- Mobile apps for Apple, Android & Blackberry devices
- Online payment acceptance
- Rates can be set client, project, activities or time entries

## Potential Limitations

- Import of client data requires technical support
- No accruals management, but PTO and misc time can be tracked

Bill4Time offers a totally web-based system for time and expense tracking and invoicing, and also offers built-in accounts receivables management, broad reporting and a variety of apps and widgets that simplify data entry tasks. Project management functions enable budgeting and tracking of due dates, with project-level billing that supports multiple simultaneous engagements. Bill4Time offers a version specific to accounting practices, providing WIP and account aging reporting, as well as trust accounting options.

### **Basic System Functions: 4.5 Stars**

Bill4Time is accessed via a web browser, mobile device or downloadable desktop application, with initial setup functions guiding users through creation of clients, staffs, user roles, billing rates, and project and task definitions. When up and running, the system opens to the main dashboard, which shows an overview of the most recent time entries and projects that the user has worked on, as well as a graphical display of weekly billable hours, a schedule reminder and buttons for adding new time or expense entries. The top of the screen offers tabbed links to other program areas, including clients, projects, time/expenses, scheduling, invoicing, reporting and accounting functions.

Work screens are well-designed, with selection lists for choosing projects, staff, work codes and other settings, and the client selection screen offers a sortable, searchable summary of basic client data, their account balances and the staff member in charge of that client. The program is available in three tiers, with increasing support for the number of clients, projects and users, with the pro version supporting any number of each, and thus enabling firms to scale up as needed.

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

Bill4Time offers multiple methods of time data entry, including running timers, entering time on summary or detailed sheets, using a desktop widget or via the mobile apps. Users can record billable and non-billable time, and includes tracking options for firm consultants and contractors. Users can also quickly convert appointments from the calendar into time entries. Professionals in areas that have sales taxes on labor can assign and track those taxes automatically.

Project management functions enable the creation of budgets at either the client level, per project, or both, with real-time tracking showing progress against those budgets and optional alerts that can notify users of expired budgets or client credit limits. Project-level billing features are available when invoicing a client for whom

there are multiple engagements, with each project detailed separately but on the same invoice. Digitized documents such as contracts can be attached to project files.

In addition to basic client information, the system allows setting of default billing rates at the client, project or staff levels, as well as additional options for client-specific invoice customization, credit limit management and other functions. A separate contact management feature allows having multiple contacts at clients, prospects and vendors.

Bill4Time staff roles offers access right management that can be used as an approvals process, with the lead on a client account having the ability to approve time entries from other staff, as well as performing any necessary markups or markdowns or other adjustments. The system can be used to track non-billable tasks, such as training and firm development tasks, as well as vacation, sick leave or other PTO, but it does not offer true accruals management capabilities. It does offer tracking of basic HR employment data.

### **Invoicing Functions: 4.25 Stars**

Bill4Time includes expense tracking features that allow applying expenses against specific client projects, adding percentage-based markups, and the ability to attach digital documents such as receipts to the transaction. These can then be included with invoicing. The program also can track related travel time.

As noted previously, budgets and credit limits can be set at the client or project level, and reporting options allow comparisons of budget to actual, WIP summaries and other options. The system's accounting module includes accounts receivable management, with additional WIP reporting, plus dashboards and tools for managing collections, payments and account activity. It does not offer purchase order management functions.

Client invoices can be customized to include firm logos, whether printed or produced digitally and emailed directly from the system. Users can also customize the level of details, account histories, billing rates and other information that is included on the invoices.

### **Management Features: 4.5 Stars**

Bill4Time provides summaries of key business indicators in each of the core program areas, including the initial dashboard screen, that help users stay on top of pending time entries, projects, billable hours and other information.

The system's reports library includes detail and summary activity, balance and payment reports, as well as WIP summaries, AR aging, collections, write-ups and write-downs, and trust and tax reports. Reporting can also be focused on users, clients and projects, expenses, client histories, budgets, and user productivity and efficiency.

Bill4Time is hosted on secure audited servers, and user rights access offers five general roles: limited user for basic time and expense entry, standard user for most general functions, financial user for those who may not be billing but are managing invoicing or accounting functions, office admin for those overseeing time entries and billing for multiple clients, and system admin, for those managing the program. In addition to setting the general user roles, access can be granted or limited to specific tasks and functions.

### **Integration & Data Management: 4.75 Stars**

All reports and invoices can be printed on plain or letterhead paper, saved as PDFs, or exported to Excel for further customization. The program can integrate with QuickBooks and QuickBooks Online to transfer labor, expense, payment and adjustment transactions and entries. The built-in scheduling system can integrate with Outlook and Google Calendar. Existing client data can be imported from CSV or Excel format, but requires the assistance of technical support staff.

Firms can accept online payments from clients via an integrated PayPal tool that can include a link on digital invoices. There is a percentage-based transaction fee levied by PayPal associated with online payments, but no additional charges by Bill4Time for the integration.

### **Help/Support: 4.75 Stars**

Many of the data fields in Bill4Time include descriptions and right-click menu options, and additional assistance features are available from the help link at the top of each page.

This takes the user to the company's online support center, which offers a knowledgebase, video tutorials, user manuals, webinars, how-to articles and links to the company's Facebook and Twitter pages. Since the program is web-based, all program updates and enhancements are automatically maintained by the company.

Live technical support is included in system pricing, including email support, a ticket-response system and by phone.

## Summary & Pricing

Bill4Time offers an intuitive and easy to learn interface, with the web-based time and billing system providing comprehensive tools for managing time and expense data, projects and clients. Its integration with QuickBooks will be helpful to many firms, as well as the ability to accept payments through PayPal. The company offers a basic version for free, with support for only one user, three clients and five projects. The Lite version, at \$19.99 per month for the first user and \$9.99 for additional users, supports up to 20 clients and 30 projects. The Pro version can support any number of clients and projects, with a price of \$39.99 per month for the first user and \$19.99 for additional users (currently discounted to \$9.99 per month for additional users).

## 2012 Overall Rating: 4.5 Stars

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