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REVIEWS

2013 Review of CenterPoint Accounting

Brian Tankersley • Feb. 27, 2013

CenterPoint Accounting

(800) 732-9464

www.redwingsoftware.com

CenterPoint Accounting is one of two accounting software product lines offered by publisher Red Wing Software. Both product lines (CenterPoint and TurningPoint) are sold and implemented by value added resellers or sold directly, and are targeted at the high end of the small business space or the lower end of the mid-market space. The product reviewed, CenterPoint Accounting Software Version 4.30, is available in industry-customized versions for general for-profit businesses, fund accounting, and agricultural producers. (This review will focus only on the features available in the general for-profit business edition.)

The Company also offers the optional CenterPoint Payroll application, which fully integrates with the accounting system, as well another for-profit business accounting solution called TurningPoint. Integration with third party payroll systems is also offered.

Basic System Function: 4 Stars

CenterPoint Accounting was easy to download and install to our test instance of Windows 7 Pro, and ran well on our test configuration of a single core 1.7 GHz processor and 2 GB of RAM. The application is more like a typical debit/credit

oriented mid-range application, and users would probably need some accounting knowledge to use this system effectively.

The product version we reviewed only contained a single chart of accounts for general businesses, and did not have other customizations which might be required for an organization in a specialized business like retail, construction, or not-for-profit. CenterPoint is available for the Windows operating system only, and the publisher's website does not list any third party hosts, and the product is not available on any mobile platforms at this time.

Core Accounting Capabilities: 3 Stars

CenterPoint Accounting provides a strong general ledger function, and supports account numbers from 4-22 characters in length, and account masks can be defined for long GL code validation. The application has a strong debit/credit orientation, and is built on a SQL database foundation. The software supports quotes (estimates), sales orders, purchase orders, and allows users to age receivables and payables to manage cash flow. CenterPoint will handle multi-rate sales tax calculations, and also allow items to be categorized into special groups for tax purposes (e.g. food, medicine, and other special categories). Customers can be flagged as tax exempt, and the software provides reports which can be used to prepare periodic sales tax returns.

As mentioned earlier, the optional CenterPoint Payroll system can be integrated into the program for \$795.

An audit trail is maintained of all records which are modified, marked as void, or deleted from the database. A full audit trail report and various transaction search functions can help identify and flag voided and deleted transactions. The application does not have a simple way to show the changes made to a transaction.

The application is one of the few programs included in this review which will consolidate and report on the data from multiple companies. CenterPoint does not support multiple currencies, remote data entry, or multiple languages. The program will allow an unlimited number of simultaneous users, however, the software performs best when it is hosting ten users or less, depending upon what version of SQL Server is being used.

Day to Day Operations: 3 Stars

CenterPoint does not offer integrations with point of sale applications, freight companies like UPS and FedEx, or web stores/shopping carts. The application will

allow users to add extra fields to track data on customers, vendors, and employees, but there are no third party applications which integrate with the data stored in CenterPoint's database.

Users have the choice of valuing inventory using the FIFO, LIFO, or Weighted Average Cost methods. The application supports multiple locations, and will calculate the cost buildup associated with manufacturing and value the related inventory. We were unable to verify these capabilities, as the demo software we received did not include inventory functionality.

The software works with numerous merchant services accounts, and can import transactions from downloaded bank files, but does not integrate with e-Marketing or CRM applications. The Company does not authorize or support running the product in a hosted environment.

Management Features: 4 Stars

Although CenterPoint Accounting does not include a dashboard which shows key performance indicators, the product has a wide range of included reports (shown in Figure 3 below). Reports are arranged hierarchically in a tree structure, and users can flag reports as "favorites" for inclusion on a special tab. Reports modifications can also be customized and saved for future use. CenterPoint also offers ODBC connectivity to the SQL database, and third-party report writers can be used to extract, summarize, and report data as needed.

Username and passwords are disabled by default in the application, and must be manually activated to be used on this application. The application appears to have the beginnings of role-based security (e.g. support for adding users and assigning them to security groups, but the application does not include any templates to help novices configure different security rights for users or groups or users.

Integration and Import/Export: 3 Stars

The product has the capability to import and export transactions as needed using a series of relatively simple tools where data fields are mapped to a column of values, and then imported into the application. Technical support will assist users in configuring these uploads and downloads, but users must still execute the commands manually.

Help & Support: 5 Stars

The software includes a very large searchable help file, as well as a number of guides which are available to paid support customers. A screen sharing and secure data transmission tool are built into the application to simplify working with support. Although the company has a reseller/partner program, they do not have a separate program for accountants who would like to use or recommend the application without selling the product. The Company offers U.S. based telephone, e-mail, and web-based support for customers with an active support and maintenance contract. Red Wing has a number of partners around the country who can serve as a resource for users who are trying to implement features within the product or create custom reports. Red Wing also offers customized setup and training services directly to the customer.

Summary & Pricing

The base application starts at \$1,495, and additional modules like direct deposit, payroll, check printing, multi-location inventory (and others) are between \$295 and \$795. Additional user licenses are \$295 each. Red Wing does not have a formal accountants program, but the Company's partner program allows members to sell, consult and support the Company's software.

2013 Overall Rating: 3.75 Stars

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