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CPA Practice Advisor



Payroll Relief is a cloud-based payroll solution specifically designed for accounting

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provided several new enhancements to the solution, the most significant is a new, streamlined user interface. The navigation menu remains similar to the previous release, but each screen is now consistent in font, color and appearance. Also due to the recoding is full compatibility with all modern internet browsers. This now allows users to access Payroll Relief from virtually any device with an internet browser, including mobile devices.

Upon logging in to Payroll Relief, accounting professionals may access all payroll clients from one screen. This prevents the need for a unique user login for each payroll client. Each client also has a specially tailored dashboard detailing due dates, reminders and required forms. The dashboard may also be set to display visual graphs of a variety of payroll related data, such as year-over-year gross pay comparisons.

A new menu navigation section added this year is Firm Administration. Through this section, accounting professionals can manage all aspects of the payroll practice from one dedicated area. Settings may be set in this section and be applied across the entire accounting firm, a group or selection of clients or individual clients. Payroll Relief uses this section to communicate directly with accounting professionals to display announcements and new features.

New for this year is the ability to track and pay contract workers on hourly wages instead of fixed or salary wages. All contract workers may also receive direct deposits through the same process as employees. Also new this year is enhanced support for HSA and other benefits, including automatic payment processing. This allows the accounting professional to control all payroll related cash needs from required tax deposits, to garnishments and 401(k) and health care benefits.

Payroll runs are exception based to ease the data entry process. This allows the accounting professional to process payroll quickly and only address issues, such as

different hours or job costs from previous payrolls. Data entry that is required, is

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filing is now supported through mobile devices.

Reporting & Monitoring: 5 Stars

A new feature recently added is the Payroll Center. Through the Payroll Center, accounting professionals are provided a comprehensive tool for managing client payroll data regardless of which client is currently in view. This new section provides current status and due dates of all payroll clients in the system along with visual clues for upcoming and past due items. The Payroll Center may also be sorted or filtered to meet specific needs. The Payroll Center also provides links to client correspondence and automatic emails generated within the system.

An e-services section is provided and details all the electronic services currently utilized by the payroll client. This includes accounts used to fund electronic deposit payments as well as all direct deposit information for employees. A section for returned and rejected items is provided as well to alert the accounting professional of any issues related to ACH or other deposit items.

Payroll Relief has also introduced a new reminder tool. This tool is a multi-purpose utility that helps setup reminders for a variety of tasks. Each reminder may be assigned to the current client in view, all clients or accounting firm staff. Creation and expiration date fields are provided that tie in to other date sensitive areas within the payroll system. Once a reminder has been addressed, it may be marked as completed and cleared from the reminder list.

A large number of reports are included with the system. Each report may be sorted or filtered to meet end-user needs. Additionally, custom reports may be generated and saved for future use. As reports are generated, all settings associated with each report are maintained based on the user login. This allows a user to use multiple devices to access Payroll Relief and maintain a consistent user experience.

Any report in the system may be assigned to a group and automatically generated

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Payroll Relief. Direct time integration is provided for Swipe Clock and Advantek.

Integration points for QuickBooks and Sage 50 US (formerly Peachtree) is built-in and allows direct export of payroll information. This export data may then be directly imported to these respective solutions.

Excel files may be imported or exported through a new data mapping utility. This utility provides users the ability to customize imports and exports to fit specific spreadsheet requirements for third party software. The utility allows users to create and save customized Excel templates for future client data imports and exports.

Help/Support: 5 Stars

As users navigate through Payroll Relief, help and support options are provided on each screen. The on-screen support is contextual based on which screen is currently in view. This provides the user with assistance only on the items they see on screen and prevents the need to perform complex searches for help. Links are also provided to payroll-related forms and publications and to appropriate federal and state sites based on the current client payroll setup.

Though a web-based solution, Payroll Relief provides live assistance to accounting professionals through telephone and chat functions. Traditional web based assistance include frequently asked questions and a knowledge base are maintained. Short webinars and training videos are also available to users. Other help options include sample reports, engagement letters, worksheets and a variety of other employment related forms.

Updates to Payroll Relief are handled automatically without any user interaction. All federal, state and local tax rates and laws are updated in real time to ensure payroll is processed as accurately as possible.

Client Self-Service Features: 5 Stars

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paystubs as well as their annual W-2. Through this portal employees may also maintain and update contact information and other personal information. Employee rights are tightly controlled within the system to prevent unauthorized access to sensitive company payroll data.

Summary & Pricing

Payroll Relief is a wholly web-based payroll solution designed specifically for accountants. With a simple design and strong client level dashboard reporting, Payroll Relief is a strong offering for accounting professionals looking to add or enhance their payroll service offerings.

Several pricing options are available and range from unlimited payroll processing to per paycheck or per payroll processing. First year pricing for accountants is \$997 and includes unlimited processing of payroll for twelve months. Per paycheck pricing is available as low as \$0.45 per paycheck for large volume users.

Per payroll pricing is available for \$5.95 per payroll run and is based on a 10 paycheck weekly cycle. Additional fees apply depending on the payroll time cycle and number of paychecks in each payroll run.

Best Firm Fit: Accounting professionals looking to create or enhance their payroll service offerings through a web-based solution

Strengths

- Built specifically for accountants in function and pricing
- Accounting firm branding options for web interface and marketing materials
- Ability to process with mobile devices

Potential Limitations

- No management features for HR or benefits

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