www.etek.net

The *eTEK* line of business accounting applications has long specialized in meeting the needs of the construction and contractor spaces, but the vendor also offers full module suites that can be used to manage most industry types. The company offers several versions of its core accounting system based on the database resources being used by the business, including installed and hosted SaaS versions of *eTEK* for Microsoft Office and *eTEK* for SQL Server. The company also offers point-of-sale, project management and electronic payment solutions. The SaaS version of *eTEK* for Microsoft Office is reviewed here.

Basic System Functions

When used as a web-based solution, *eTEK* for Microsoft Office partners with Application Solution Providers, Inc. (www.aspdd.com) to provide a Citrix-based remote operating environment for the accounting system and for other programs. After login, the system opens into a workspace that almost perfectly replicates the work areas found in the 2007 line of Microsoft Office programs, with a ribbon bar across the top and direct integration with Microsoft programs.

Like Word or Excel, the key function areas are grouped into panels and subcategories on this ribbon. Key program module areas include the GL, AP, AR, payroll, cash management, job costing, sales, purchasing, inventory, system utilities and Help. When one of these areas is selected, the ribbon bar changes to show tasks specific to that area. When in AR, for example, subcategories include working with customer invoices, posting customer payments, reviewing records, reporting options and customer management. The Microsoft look and feel of *eTEK* should make most users quickly feel at home with the program. The company will be debuting a version of *eTEK* for Office 2010 when Microsoft officially releases the final version.

During initial implementation of the program, *eTEK* provides wizards and other

technical support and training is included with all program licenses. 4

Core Accounting Capabilities

The core accounting set within 4.5for Microsoft Office includes a fully auditable and compliant GL, along with AP, AR, financial reporting, payroll, job costing, inventory, purchasing and sales management. Throughout all of these fully integrated modules, *eTEK* offers excellent search functionality with the ability to quickly search across all areas, including transaction details, accounts, divisions and departments. Sales tax tables must be managed manually.

The program is designed to support multiple locations, as well as multiple companies and entities with divisions and separate reporting requirements. The program's inventory and supply chain management are also geared toward businesses with multiple warehouse locations. The system does not offer direct support for multiple currencies. 4.5

Day-To-Day Operations

Sales and customer management functions are very well organized, with the Sales menu providing quick access to functions such as entering or editing orders, processing tasks, managing customer rules and relationships, and using reporting tools.

Likewise, inventory management capabilities support kits and other complex items, including variable units of measure, multiple warehousing locations and groups, and other details. Purchasing processes are streamlined and include simplified management of payables and purchase orders. Customer and vendor selection lists are not presented in a spreadsheet format, but as a pull-down selection screen with

no summary data, which I found a little less than ideal, but the overall utility of the

Although *eTEK* for Microsoft Office doesn't provide specific dashboard views, each of its primary module selection menus gives very quick access to reporting and summary data that almost provides the same usefulness as at-a-glance dashboards. The system is very report-centric, with module- and task-specific options available from every screen, along with comprehensive financials generation.

The program's invoicing features, generally accessed through the sales and AR centers, provide good customer tracking and aging management, along with features for contract billing, AIA-compliance and automation of recurring invoices. User-based security processes allow management to restrict areas of the program to specific staff members based on role. A full-time audit trail tracks all changes and user information. *eTEK* also includes a full payroll and employee benefits management system, with integrated direct deposit and extensive customization options. 4

E-Features

eTEK includes the ability to email client invoices from within the program, as well as credit card processing for client payments. Except for the built-in direct deposit Payroll capability, it does not directly integrate with electronic banking functions at this time. It is not truly a web-based system; rather, it is a traditionally installed program that businesses can use in the Software-as-a-Service delivery model. This means you won't find ecommerce, mobile apps or online portal options, but users are able to take advantage of some of the mobility benefits, like accessing from virtually anywhere with an Internet connection as well as the benefit of not having to manage and update the software. *eTEK* provides ecommerce capabilities on a custom basis for individual clients and is an authorized VeriFone integrator.

3.5

Integration/Import/Export

The hosted version of *eTEK* for Microsoft Office is a really good fit for construction businesses and contractors who have frequent remote management functions, such as in cases where the owner is also the foreman and needs to get out on the site, but also needs to manage the business from a laptop. The system has excellent inventory and sales management capabilities, so it would also be a good match for multi-location retailers. Pricing is based on the modules and number of seats needed, with the core accounting suite costing $110 per month per user; which includes a license to the full suite of Microsoft Office applications in a web-hosted environment. The payroll module costs an additional $65 per month for each user needing access. There are no implementation costs. I'd like to see the company add more online support options, but they do include free live technical support, which is a plus. It includes instant GoToMeeting interactive web sessions with *eTEK* support.

2010 Overall Rating 4.25

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