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functionality. Available in four versions, small users can start with the Basic version that offers Time and Expense entry and move forward to a more robust version that contains ...

Mary Girsch-Bock • Apr. 23, 2016

From the 2016 Reviews of Practice Management Systems.

Best Fit: Empire Suite is a cloud-based product that is well suited to firms looking for Practice Management capability, along with CRM, Project Management, Resource Management and Financial Management capabilities.

Strengths

- Scalable product that is well suited to firms of all sizes
- Product offers excellent integration with Microsoft Office and other applications
- The Mobile app allows users to access the product from any iOS or Android device
- Cloud access offers easy anytime accessibility from any location

Potential Limitations

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schedule tasks based on a variety of parameters, updates to Empire TIME OFF, and more automation features to the Empire CALENDAR function makes the product even more attractive to accounting firms.

Basic System Functions – 5 Stars

Offered as a SaaS product, Empire Suite offers a fully scalable set of tools for accounting firms of any size. The Home screen offers each system user the ability to create an intuitive interface that suits their needs. My Profile allows users to create a comprehensive profile, if desired, and the Time Off section keeps track of sick time, PTO, and other user defined options. The Receipt Gallery contains a list of all receipts, which the user can email directly to the Receipt Gallery, and the Awaiting Approval displays any reports that are awaiting approval from various sources. Timesheet information is also found on the Home page, and both Project Time and Employee Time trends are displayed.

Time Sheet entry is straightforward, with all client or project detail listed, along with tabs for every day of the week, where time can be entered. Users can choose from Regular Time, Overtime, and Non-Billable Time, and have the option to add new clients or projects directly from the Timesheet entry screen. Users can access the menu bar at the top of the screen to navigate to other system modules such as Project, Profile, Reports, Administration, and Time Off. In the latest release, Administrative functions are grouped in a more logical structure for a more user friendly interface. Data entry screens in Empire Suite are intuitive and easily navigated, with tabs and lookup fields throughout.

Time Management Capabilities – 5 Stars

Tracking time to a particular client or project is easy. All clients and projects are listed, so users can choose which ones to add time information to. Users can quickly

add additional projects or clients by clicking on the 'add row' option directly above

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automatically updated in Empire Suite. Empire MOBILE can be quickly downloaded to any Apple iOS or Android device and along with remote time entry capability, also offers additional features such as automatically calculating distances for easy mileage tracking, and automatic download of credit card charges. Managers can also easily approve employee time and expense sheets using the mobile time entry time function. Users can also opt to enter time without a connection, with data synchronized on demand or automatically, as desired.

Invoicing Capabilities – 5 Stars

The Project Dashboard offers users access to billing and billing activity functions. The vertical menu to the left of the screen offers quick access to all billing and related functions such as Activities, Project Tasks, Billing, Billing Activities, Financial Summary, Split Billing, Reverse, Billing, and Define Rates. Users can also view billing details, and preview invoices prior to generating. The product also allows users to easily brand invoices with a firm logo for a professional appearance. For firms that require more custom invoicing options, Empire Suite's Enterprise solution offers integration with third party applications and tools such as SAP Oracle, Microsoft Dynamics GP, and QuickBooks.

Management Capabilities – 5 Stars

The use of dashboards in Empire Suite provides firm partners and managers with an excellent array of tools at their disposal. Dashboard capability has also been enhanced in the latest product release, with better tools available for project managers to more easily compare schedules, actuals, and budgets from a single view. Project Management capability ensures vital communication between employees and project managers, and the Estimate to Complete function provides managers with up to day information on project budgets. Managers can also assign tasks to employees, with notification provided to the employee, along with estimated hours

for the project and the tentative due date. Project progress can be proactively

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printed by client or project. The CRM function allows users to easily import contacts from other applications, attach documents to all activities, monitor all activities, and send email alerts.

Integration/Import/Export – 5 Stars

Empire Suite offer integration with a variety of systems including SAP, Microsoft Dynamics GP, Agresso, Epicor, and QuickBooks. Mentioned earlier, the product offers easy integration with Microsoft Office through Empire CALENDAR, which allows users to record time and expenses in Outlook. Integration with Microsoft Project is offered through Empire PROJECT INTEGRATION, creating synchronization between Empire SUITE, Empire CALENDAR, and Microsoft Project and Project Server so employees will always have the most accurate, up to date information at their fingertips. Employees and contacts from CCH Axcess can also be imported directly into Empire Suite.

Help/Support/Training – 5 Stars

New users will have access to the Getting Started feature in Empire Suite, which provides uses with some initial guidance when setting up the system. The Help Knowledgebase offers users Help guides for Empire TIME, Empire RESOURCE, and Empire PROJECT. The web page also hosts a variety of videos including CCH Axcess Integration, Create a Project, Add/Modify Timesheet Row, and others. Firm employees can quickly access support personnel from the dashboard, via email, or by phone.

Summary and Pricing

Empire Suite is designed for firms of any size, and offers four distinct versions of the product. Basic includes only Time and Expense Entry functionality. The Basic subscription is $10.00 per user per month. The Pro user also offers Project Billing,

and is $18.00 per user per month. The Business version is $21.00 per user per month

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