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Cougar Mountain Software (CMS) offers several programs for business and nonprofit accounting and point-of-sale, including the CMS Professional 2011 Payroll system, a comprehensive live payroll and compliance management program designed for in-house use by small and mid-sized businesses and organizations. The program is designed to work as a fully integrated application between GL and payroll, as well as with AP for vendor payment management and reporting, and Bank Reconciliation, allowing users to deposit payroll checks via direct deposit. Although the system can be used to manage multiple business payrolls and can run as a stand-alone program, it is designed primarily to be used as an integrated module that completes a full accounting program for a single business. So for this review, it fits into the “Direct Client/Business Use” category as a system that an accounting practice would be more likely to recommend to a business client that has a qualified bookkeeper in-house to manage its own payroll functions.

BASIC SYSTEM FUNCTIONS

The CMS Professional 2011 Payroll interface sits within the primary CMS Professional 2011 Accounting home screen, with icons for accessing other system modules and pull-down menus for core payroll functions, including employee management, payroll data entry, reporting, period closes and other options. A payroll selection list provides quick access to business or departmental areas, with employee and vendor/contractor lists available, as well. Data-entry screens use

tabbed views for categorized areas, and simplified multi-employee spreadsheet views

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with the ability to handle any number of employees in varying pay groups, types and frequencies.

Employees can have unlimited deduction and earnings types, including advance EIC and support for tipped, union, part-time, salaried, hourly and piece workers. It also tracks benefit-based deductions and company contributions, as well as unemployment and workers' comp. CMS Professional 2011 Payroll includes tax tables and support for managing payrolls for employees in all 50 states and local taxing jurisdictions, as well as tools for managing income distribution for employees with multiple state income reporting requirements. Direct deposit can be managed using either NPC or NACHA, with the user directly controlling transmission details on the employer level and allowing deposit of employee funds to up to four bank accounts. Data entry can be performed across multiple employees from one employer, but batch functions are not available for data entry or processing payroll runs across multiple businesses.

Benefits management functions include the ability to set custom accruals management settings for paid time off, as well as tracking of any pre-tax benefit deductions, such as cafeteria plans and deferred earning retirement accounts, with utilities for generating payments to third parties. The program also supports pensions, medical savings accounts and dependent care benefit plans. In addition, the user has the ability to set up, apply and calculate employee garnishments within the legal guidelines and law. 4.25

REPORTING & MONITORING

The system includes all federal and state quarterly and annual reports, as well as direct electronic filing built within the program for all businesses and available through a third-party vendor at an additional cost. The program also accommodates the recent changes to the new-hire reporting. While some due date tracking can be

achieved using the payroll overview screens, the program does not offer automated

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INTEGRATION/IMPORT & EXPORT

CMS Professional 2011 Payroll integrates fully with Cougar Mountain Software's business and FUND accounting suite for GL, AR and AP functions, in addition to advanced departmental and job costing reporting options available in those programs. The system can import from spreadsheets and file formats common to most accounting and time clock systems, and can export some report data as a CSV file. Time sheets can be generated as a report, but the program does not offer automated tools for management of sheets or for missing sheets. Reports can be saved to PDF, with the included PDFBlaster Lite, for digital storage as an attachment in the Payroll master records, as well as any other documents such as tax exemption certificates, employee garnishment papers, etc. 4.25

HELP/SUPPORT

CMS Professional 2011 Payroll offers good in-program assistance tools, including right-click and context-sensitive Help and guidance, along with instructions for forms. Program and tax table updates are available for download at the CMS Customer Service Center (CSC). The CSC website also includes video tutorials, a knowledgebase, e-learning tools, articles, tips and tricks, documentation, links to training options, and contact information. E-mail-based support and live assistance requires a support subscription or is available on a per-incident charge basis, with most support calls responded to via callback. 4.5

CLIENT SELF-SERVICE FEATURES

CMS Professional Payroll does not offer any online components for client or employee self-service and therefore received no rating in this section. N/A

SUMMARY & PRICING

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Payroll

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