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## Management Systems

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As more people are creating more service-related businesses, the software industry has been scrambling to keep up with the growth. And small service businesses (equipment rentals, HVAC and home builders) continue to see growth.

This growth has produced more demand for software that suits the needs of these specialized business types. As a result, software vendors continue to add more features and functions to their core products in order to appeal to both the traditional builder and the contracting trade.

Each industry requires its own set of functionality. Traditional construction companies need a strong job cost module, and service and repair companies need a solid service and dispatch module, with perhaps an equipment management module, as well. This is a major reason why most of the construction software products reviewed in this issue will not suit all construction-related businesses.

One of the other reasons is strictly monetary. The more robust products tend to be more expensive, and the entry-level products will easily fit the budget restraints of the smallest company. Regular readers of *The CPA Technology Advisor* will know that 2010 brought in a new way of looking at and reviewing software products. The result of this new review method makes the product ratings easier to understand. So a 5-star product will contain just about every feature available for that product type, as outlined in our review criteria on this page. However, that also might mean that a product that earns a 4-star rating could easily be the better product for a particular business than the higher-rated 5-star product based on needed functionality.

For example, a small builder may need a strong job cost module, but if he doesn't

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after seeing it perform.

Please remember that it's only the user's opinion of the software that really matters. The products reviewed here are all excellent in their own way and at least one is likely to be a perfect fit for your small construction industry clients. n

Technology

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