

Best Software, Inc. — Abra Payroll

800-424-9392
www.bestsoftware.com

If you need an introduction to who Best Software is, I recommend that you invest some of your professional development time towards learning more about the marketplace for accounting and business

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software

software applications for the SMB (small and mid-size business) market. Over the last five years or so, Best Software (among others) has been acquiring many successful business software vendors and consolidating the industry to an unprecedented level.

The main point is that the company has a remarkable history of growth and is a clear leader in the industry. You can take comfort in the vendor's stability. On the other hand, dealing with an organization of this size can be challenging. Fortunately, the Best Software products are sold through the VAR (value-added reseller) channel, so you can have the best of both worlds; a local relationship for sales and service, with an international organization in the background to provide the necessary resources and support.

EASE OF USE/DATA ENTRY

If you are comfortable working in Windows applications, you will find Abra a real pleasure to work with. The screens are well organized with a good balance between providing the right amount of information on a screen without intimidating you with too much data. You have three options for selecting a task: traditional pull-down text menus, 'Activity Centers' that organize tasks by common functions and a quick-launch graphical toolbar for frequently used actions. The system has a quick setup user interview process to define specific reporting needs for a company.

You will find the system easy to use and to enter data into. The only caveat is that the system is very comprehensive in features and functions, and you may quickly discover that the system has more capability than you want or need. ★★★★★

CUSTOMIZATION/ SCALABILITY/SECURITY

I think it is appropriate to give Abra the highest rating possible in this category. It is designed to handle the entire payroll and human resource reporting needs of a large organization. You have the ability to create customized data-entry screens with your own user-defined fields; you can arrange the appearance of data on the screens. The system can be scaled up to a very high level of transaction processing. You have the ability to establish access security at the company, group and individual

level. You can also control security at the individual field level, if so desired. You can also control access at the reporting level. The bottom line is that you have as much customization capability and security control as you could expect to find in this type of package. ★★★★★

FLEXIBILITY

For the same reasons identified previously, you have a considerable level of flexibility in both the data-entry functionality and the reporting. The list of features and functions is pretty extensive, but some of the more notable items include the ability to process a "trial" payroll; the ability to create ACH transactions to file federal tax deposits electronically; the ability to print to several different types of check stock, including MICR encoding; automatic time sheet entry and more. ★★★★★

REPORTING & CHECK PRINTING

The Abra system has extensive reporting capability with over 100 pre-formatted payroll reports. You have multiple options for printing reports including batch printing, print preview, and a print to disk option to distribute report files. The Abra system is compatible with, and comes bundled with, the Crystal Reports software, which is a powerful report-writing tool. As well, the system offers a useful Organizer and Scheduler function that lets you set up a calendar of payroll events and

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tasks to keep you on track and alerted to tasks and deadlines. ★★★★★

INTEGRATION/IMPORT/EXPORT

Within the Abra payroll and HR family of products, you have integration with applications that can cover the entire employment life cycle including HR, Recruiting Solution, Attendance, Train, OrgPlus, Alerts and more. A new OSHA 300 Incident Log application was recently released, and integration support for posting to the GL in MAS 90 and MAS 200 accounting packages has been added. ★★★★★

SUPPORT & UPDATES

The Abra SupportPlus service features toll-free technical support from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. (EST), including access to Certified Payroll Professionals (CPP).

Online access is available 24x7. This service includes downloadable updates and discussion forums with other system users. The Abra Solution Center provides access to a knowledgebase of technical issues and resources. Fax and e-mail support is also available. New releases of enhancements and technical updates are delivered to you automatically. Tax updates are delivered quarterly.

Abra provides a complete offering of professional services including installation and implementation support, data conversion, Crystal Report writing, software upgrade installations and user training. ★★★★★

RELATIVE VALUE

As you might expect, this software is not cheap. The pricing depends upon the number of users, the scope

of applications and support services. Licensing is on a per-company basis, and license fees start at \$1,755 for a 75-employee payroll limit and \$3,730 for a 150-employee payroll limit. This is clearly a case where the ROI is likely to be very high, but the purchase price may be a barrier for a smaller company. ★★★★★

SUMMARY

The breadth and depth of the Abra Payroll program and the related suite of products clearly makes it deserving of the highest ratings across all of the attributes evaluated. You can be confident that this solution will be able to meet your payroll system requirements. ■

2004 OVERALL RATING

★★★★★

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