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"Review of Time & Billing Programs"
by Isaac M. O'Bannon
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Developed specifically for accountants by accountants, ImagineTime provides an integrated time-based billing system with practice management functions that support multiple billing methods; project-based time tracking and management; due-date monitoring; and a variety of budgeting, forecasting and analysis capabilities. The core time and billing system, which offers multiple data-entry options, starts at $295 for a single-user license. The company also offers various modules including more advanced contact management, staff scheduling/calendaring, remote data entry, due-date monitoring, PDA integration, and a calendar/contact management function.

EASE OF USE/NAVIGATION FEATURES: ★★★★⯪ (4.5)
ImagineTime opens to a text-based menu screen that provides quick access to each of the primary sections of the time management software system, with directories for Data Entry tasks, daily/monthly Reporting, Utilities and Management Reports. When working within specific task tracker windows, ImagineTime offers users four viewing options, including one with a customizable sidebar menu on the left that allows access to most frequently accessed tasks. Alternately, an icon-based menu at the top of the screen can be employed. The primary work area of this time, billing and scheduling software is beautiful, offering tabbed access to sub-tasks within a function (such as moving between expenses, chargeable items and other options within the time and expense entry screen). The system's client list is well organized with search capabilities, and client data screens provide a good summary of data, including billed and outstanding amounts, WIPs, allowances for unbilled WIPs, along with invoicing defaults and staff assigned to the client.

The program allows data entry to be performed through timesheets after-the-fact, directly from the calendar, with a PDA or utilizing the system's timer functions, which automatically complete some of the data entry. Timesheets and other data-entry screens are very intuitive, making it easy to understand the process of selecting clients, projects, tasks, billable items and other options, and automatically assigning staff rates according to default settings created by management. Only authorized users can access managerial reporting and rate information, which helps ensure system security.

"ImagineTime has been a great software change for our business," says Barb Gacic, office manager for Sager, Haines & Co. LLP (www.SagerHaines.com), a full-service accounting firm in St. Charles, Ill. "The program is user friendly with a minimal learning curve and offers ease in inputting time as well as researching various information as needed for both employee and client time and billing. The reports generated are also easy to access and provide information in a concise, easy to access format."

MANAGEMENT FUNCTIONS: ★★★★★ (5.0)
This timeslips software allows multiple rates per staff member, as well as client-specific billing rates and rules. In addition to supporting any number of clients, staff, tasks and expense items, the program can be used to manage more than one professional firm. The system maintains full

histories of client billing and staff time performance data, along with the ability to easily access past invoices. ImagineTime includes strong analysis functions including staff and client performance reports, as well as very impressive integrated calendaring and due-date monitoring, which can be essential in keeping up with period tasks or client goals. The calendaring/contact management system provides side-by-side views of staff calendars, with the ability to convert calendar activities into timesheets. ImagineTime also offers a Tax Ticker system that can keep tax-oriented professionals on top of pending deadlines. Recent additions to the system include enhanced engagement budgeting and reporting and an e-mail "blaster" function for the contact management system. As well, a new final bill procedure allows a series of progress bills to be cleared against time with the engagement time history and profitability summarized on the final bill.

BILLING & REPORTING: ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ (5.0)
ImagineTime's managerial reports are outstanding, providing excellent insight into data, which in turn can help monitor productivity at the client, staff or project level, as well as numerous other capabilities. The system includes an impressive array of customizable reports, and authorized users can run reports for any time period, regardless of closing periods. The program's invoicing functions provide good options for billing formats, including detail, comprehensive, narrative and summary, which lets users select the format they or their clients desire. Word processing functions are handled through MS Word, while reports can be edited in MS Access or Excel, depending upon the report.

INTEGRATION: ★ ★ ★ ★ ⯪ (4.5)
The system integrates with QuickBooks for transferring GL, AR and AP data. It utilizes Word, Access and Excel for various reporting functions, which allows users to easily save documents in these formats as well as the ability to format or customize invoices, including the addition of logos, letterhead or other visual elements. ImagineTime's contact management and calendaring system integrates with Outlook, as do the reminders and e-mail functions. The company offers a PDA interface application for remote data entry.

USER SUPPORT & HELP: ★ ★ ★ ★ ⯪ (4.5)
ImagineTime's Help system is fairly traditional, with an index-based system and some content-specific assistance, in addition to newly added interactive tutorials that are now built into the system's main menu. An online Help center offers do-it-yourself guidance with such features as FAQs, system updates and tutorials.

2006 OVERALL RATING: 4½