

"Software Review: Time and Billing: When the going gets tough the tough get smarter"

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ImagineTime somewhat straddles the line between time and billing and true practice management. A modular system with time and billing as the core module, it's easy to build a full-blown PM system by adding the optional Due Date Monitor and Tax Tracker, and the Contact Calendar and Outlook Sync for CRM. PDA Time Entry is available as an add-on, as are QuickBooks Import, Lacerte and UltraTax integration, and credit card processing.

The core single-user time and billing starts at a reasonable \$295, but adding on network support, multi-user support, and one or more of the additional modules can quickly shoot the price skyward. The nice thing about this approach, however, is that you only have to pay for what you need at the present time. And ImagineTime's multi-user pricing is for the number of concurrent users, not the total number of network seats.

The software itself is easy to install and configure. Data entry and other screens are nicely laid out and intuitive to use and navigate, though ImagineTime offers both on-site and over-the-Internet training if you want it. Multiple timer clocks can be used, which is helpful if you often multitask between clients, and if you are using the optional calendar scheduling module, you can turn scheduled appointments into time slips, saving time and making sure that you capture the time spent.

Reports and invoices are unremarkable, but serve their purpose more than adequately. A simple report generator is available for ad hoc reporting.

There are some definite advantages to a system that's designed from the start for accountants, rather than a generic audience. Yes, you can operate quite well with most of the packages in this roundup. But the applications designed specifically for accounting practices, such as ImagineTime, just seem to have a slightly more comfortable feel.