

"Review of Time and Billing Applications"

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Many of the T&B applications currently available are primarily targeted at lawyers and consultants. ImagineTime, however, was designed by a CPA for accountants. That doesn't mean it can't be used by other professionals, only that it speaks "accountant." You don't need to figure out what the equivalent terminology is for what you call an engagement.

ImagineTime takes a "build-your-own" approach to time and billing, with add-on modules to allow you to configure the application to your practice's needs. At the center of the application is time and billing. But depending on what optional (and extra cost) modules you decide to add, ImagineTime can be configured into a pretty nice practice management system. These additional modules include a due-date monitor, document management, and scheduling/CRM, with module prices ranging from \$95 to \$395.

Also available are separately priced features such as PDA/Blackberry integration, remote time entry, and direct import from Lacerte, UltraTax and ATX tax prep software. Outlook integration comes as part of the calendaring and scheduling module, and integration with QuickBooks is standard with the T&B core module (though these modules will function quite acceptably on their own).

Installation and use is quick and easy. ImagineTime has good documentation, but the interface is very intuitive and easy to navigate, so you won't spend a lot of time consulting the manual. Tabbed sections lead you to the desired task group, and an Office 2007-type ribbon bar and menu bar define the tasks and editing options. There's not a lot of customization available in the reports (and none in the data entry screens), but there is a wide range of standard reports available that should work for most practitioners.

One feature that's usually not standard on most time and billing systems, but is in ImagineTime, is credit-card processing. In today's hard economy, making it easy to get paid is a definite plus in an application.