Micronetics, Int'l — Accounting Xpert Enterprise Edition – Accountants Version

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Micronetics recently released Accounting Xpert Enterprise Edition – Client Write-up, a completely new program from the vendor, which has been developing accounting software since 1978. The new Enterprise Edition of Xpert continues in the tradition of the company's Xpert Write-Up system (which is now branded as the Standard version), providing full General Ledger, Bank Reconciliation, and After the Fact Payroll. Optional modules available are AR, AP, inventory, payroll, check writing, client and vendor management tools, and other features, but with advanced database technology and a new interface that streamlines program usage. Released in August 2009, the system utilizes a Pervasive database and is among the first accounting programs to specifically support the new Windows 7 operating system, in addition to XP, Vista, 2000 and NT, as well as on alternative operating systems such as Linux. Pricing for Accounting Xpert Enterprise Edition starts at $995 (with competitive upgrade) for a single user, with additional concurrent user seats at $245 each, and annual renewals costing $495. Pricing and renewals include a full year of technical support, program updates and enhancements.

LEARNING CURVE & EASE OF USE

Firms can set up Accounting Xpert to require passwords for the main system and for each client. Setup functions also provide sample charts of accounts and the ability to copy existing charts from one company to another. The main client selection list uses a spreadsheet display with the ability to sort by columnar information and even drag and drop the columns to rearrange them. Employee and vendor selection lists also offer the same functionality.

The new system's security features are impressive, with the ability to create work groups and set group policies, and even to set up multiple security questions for added confirmation.

After logging into a client, the system opens into a well designed, but mostly blank entry screen that offers a traditional pull-down menu across the top, along with an Outlook-style module navigation panel on the left, providing access to registered modules including AR, AP, the GL, Inventory/Warehousing, Sales Order Processing, Sales Analysis, Bank Reconciliation, W2/1099 Processing, and the Checkbook Xpert, a client-bookkeeping application that integrates with the Enterprise system.

When a module has been selected, Xpert opens up additional selection lists for accessing key functions within that module. For instance, the GL module opens options for working with journal entries, setting up accounts and year-end information, reporting options, financials generation, and payroll-related activities. These selection lists offer yet more detail, letting users move directly to specific tasks, such as posting journal entries or reversing entries or creating automatically recurring entries. Data-entry screens are intuitive and offer multiple selection lists for entering information, with the ability to navigate fields either with or without a mouse, or access system functions using hot keys. Users can also drilldown to specific transactions from reports or other screens.

The system's Bank Reconciliation module can support an unlimited number of banks and accounts, with the ability to perform batch or separate reconciliations. Xpert includes after-the-fact payroll, with automatic calculation of FICA and Medicare, and the ability to track employee benefits and unlimited deduction types. The system also provides W-2 and 1099 compliance, offering these forms, plus 940, 941 and state unemployment forms, along with the ability to print to plain paper or special stock.

REPORTING & FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

In addition to payroll compliance reporting, the Xpert system can produce all traditional GAAP-compliance financial statements, along with summary and detail reporting, analysis, budgeting, period comparisons, and a wide range of managerial options, all of which can be customized as needed and can be saved to Word, PDF, Excel or other formats for additional customization or data analysis.

INTEGRATION/IMPORT/EXPORT

The Accounting Xpert Enterprise Edition offers import tools for transferring data from virtually all client bookkeeping programs, including QuickBooks, Quicken and Peachtree, and provides direct integration with the company's Checkbook Xpert system, which is designed for accountants to give to their clients for bookkeeping. Report options also enable emailing through integration with Microsoft Outlook, or faxing through a digital fax service provider.

SUPPORT, TRAINING & HELP SYSTEM

The system offers guidance through setup procedures and includes a PDF user manual, an extensive printed manual and a link to a web-based support meeting, but the early version of the program reviewed here was lacking a traditional Help index. Micronetics notes that it is being finalized and will be included with a future system update. The company's support website offers program updates and a contact form, but no self-help information such as a knowledgebase or tips. Live and web-based technical support is included for a full year with system pricing.

RELATIVE VALUE

Micronetics has done a great job of updating the Xpert system to the latest technologies and providing users with a new interface that provides ease-of-use and intuitive navigation

through the system's strong set of modules. Core write-up features for GL and Bank Reconciliation functions give comprehensive control, while other functions, such as the full W-2/1099 compliance tools are a great added benefit. The vendor is still working on some of the bells and whistles, but Accounting Xpert Enterprise Edition is a refreshing new option for accountants. And while the program is currently somewhat limited on built-in Help utilities, live technical support for a year is included in pricing. A web-based version of the program is also nearing completion.