

CPA Practice Advisor

Today's Technology for Tomorrow's Firm

AccountantsWorld Payroll Relief

2012 OVERALL RATING ★★★★★

Best Firm Fit: Accountants in public practice looking to expand service offerings or process payroll in a cost effective manner without the administrative burden

Strengths

- Designed with accounting professionals in mind
- Good management and analytical tools
- Fully automated for payments and compliance filings
- Web presence may be branded
- Mobile application includes payroll processing, compliance and reporting

Potential Limitations

- Limited human resource and benefit management capabilities
- Comprehensive set of reports provides little customization

Payroll Relief is part of the web-based suite of products offered by AccountantsWorld. All products in this suite lineup are specifically designed and marketed to accounting professionals. Payroll Relief provides a fully automated system with a number of enhancements to efficiently manage payroll. A unique aspect to Payroll Relief is the all-inclusive pricing and functionality.

Basic System Functions: 5 Stars

Payroll Relief is a web based solution and is accessible through most modern Internet browsers. The login processes and all data housed are secured with advanced encryption and intrusion detection systems. The opening screen allows selection of company file and access to all company files may be controlled for each user login.

Once inside the system, navigation and data entry are presented in a logical workflow and interface. A client overview dashboard is provided and shows the current status of the company along with any upcoming tasks.

Payroll Relief uses exception-based data entry. Processing payroll is straightforward and the employee payroll grid is pre-populated with all basic information, including assumed hours based on noted payroll frequency. This information can be easily edited, as necessary. Alternatively, a customized Excel spreadsheet can be generated with the default values. The completed spreadsheet can then be imported easily into Payroll Relief.

Multiple department, locations and job cost codes may be entered and hours are then allocated as appropriate. Once payroll data is entered into the system, Payroll Relief processes the remainder automatically. This includes all calculations, direct deposit transfers, tax payments and electronic filing of compliance forms among other items.

Compliance reporting is provided for all states and localities. Electronic payment is currently provided for 45 states and electronic form processing is provided for nearly 30. Alerts are generated and sent via email to clients to help ensure funds will be available to cover any electronic payments. Paychecks and forms may be printed at any time and may be processed in batches within each company.

AccountantsWorld recently released the Payroll Relief Mobile app, which is available through any internet-capable device and allows processing payrolls, filing compliance forms, and viewing reports. Only users with appropriate permissions will have login access to the service. Employee portal access via mobile will be available in the near future.

Reporting & Monitoring: 5 Stars

Payroll Relief includes around 40 reports, each of which may be filtered based on a few options. A standard grouping of reports is provided and users can assign custom report groups per company. Most reports are static and the ability to create custom reports is not currently available. Regardless of where the reports are generated, each report may be exported to Microsoft Excel format for further editing as necessary.

Since Payroll Relief is designed for accounting professionals,

numerous monitoring and company management tools are included to manage a busy payroll service. These include

- A Payroll Management Center, which serves as the command center for managing payroll processing functions.
- A Dashboard that provides a detailed overview of each client employer's payroll situation.
- A Monthly Calendar for keeping track of payroll obligations.
- A Notes feature for maintaining internal documentation on any client.
- A feature that can track all e-services related activities including status of all e-services, including e-file exceptions, errors, rejections and client billing.
- The ability to track payroll activities performed and time spent, detailed invoicing, and realization rate (i.e. ratio of revenue to resources spent) through the separate, but integratable Practice Relief firm management system.
- Consolidated audit reporting by period of all critical changes made for all employers.

Integration/Import/Export: 4.75 Stars

Payroll Relief is part of a suite of offerings by AccountantsWorld and integrates with many of these products. The most noted integrations are with Accounting Relief, CyberCabinet and Practice Relief. New integration has been added over the past year to allow detailed invoice information to be shared with Practice Relief, the practice management and billing offering.

Payroll Relief also provides direct debit capabilities for fee collection from client bank accounts. Each payroll run may be automatically transferred to CyberCabinet for archival storage and will include all forms, paychecks and reports required. Payroll Relief directly integrates with QuickBooks desktop and online products and Peachtree. Excel and CSV file formats may also be imported to or exported from the system to achieve integration with other third-party products.

Help/Support: 5 Stars

Help and support is accessible from each screen throughout Payroll Relief. By selecting the on-screen help, users get detailed instructions and descriptions of each field and component on the current page. An online knowledgebase is maintained and is accessible in the support request section within the software.

Email, telephone and online chat support is also available during business operating hours. Short training videos are posted on the site and are intended to provide a broad overview of the various components and capabilities of Payroll Relief. Webinars offering more detailed training are also offered monthly.

In addition to program help and support, Payroll Relief provides a number of marketing materials and support for accounting profes-

sionals. These materials are available to aid in marketing payroll services provided by the accounting professionals and include client brochures, checklists and other resources. All support and marketing materials noted are fully included in the Payroll Relief pricing.

Client Self-Service Features: 5 Stars

Employee portals are included with the service costs for Payroll Relief. Each employee portal may be branded to either the accounting professional overseeing the payroll or to the employer's company. The portal allows viewing the most recent paystubs as well as annual W-2 information. Employees may also update personal address, contact information and passwords as appropriate.

Payroll Relief automatically sets up each employee portal and provides separate emails with user name and login information. Accounting professionals and users with appropriate rights may view and edit each employee portal without separately logging on to the portal system.

Summary & Pricing

Payroll Relief provides a fully automated payroll system designed specifically for accountants. Available as a web based product and through the newly released mobile offering, payroll may be processed from virtually anywhere. First year pricing is set at \$997 and provides for unlimited payroll runs, payroll checks and direct deposits.

Subsequent year pricing is split between two pricing options; per paycheck and per payroll. Per paycheck pricing starts at \$1.25 per paycheck, regardless of payroll frequency, for up to 1,600 paychecks. Pricing is tiered from this point based on volume of paychecks processed and is priced as low as \$0.45 per paycheck. Per payroll pricing starts at \$5.95 to process up to 10 paychecks for a weekly payroll frequency.

Other payroll frequencies are priced at \$9.95 per payroll run and allow up to 10 paychecks per frequency. Additional paychecks may be processed as low as \$0.50 per paycheck.

2012 Overall Rating: 5 Stars

