



By Cindy Bauer

No matter how large or small a business, hours upon hours can be spent managing the financial aspects of the company, including payroll. Payroll in particular can be very time consuming because there are so many aspects to consider: full-time hourly employees, part-time hourly employees, seasonal employees and salaried part-time employees. Don't forget vacation pay, bonuses, direct deposit, manual checks and taxes. It's no wonder utilizing a payroll service often seems like a great idea.

Stop for a moment and look at how much time and money you spend using that payroll service. Most often, you keep all of the payroll records on-site, such as the daily postings, number of hours each employee works and vacation and sick pay information. All of that information is entered, recorded and the data is most likely generated into a report. These reports are then sent to the payroll service so you can have checks generated for payday or direct deposits are set up.

have already done the hard work—just think if you had the right payroll software to take that data and process it yourself.

Many businesses can save money and add profit to the bottom line by using payroll software and keeping payroll in-house. Here are some things to look for when shopping around for payroll software:

- **Flexibility:** In order for you to benefit from using payroll software, you will want a system that can be flexible and handle your specific needs. There are many payroll software programs available today; you can find stand-alone programs that you can use with your general ledger, or if possible, payroll software that fully integrates with an accounting system is even better.
- **Versatile, easy setup:** The purpose of payroll software is to save you processing time and money. Look for a program that has tools and wizards to help you easily set up your payroll software the right way and software that gives you the ability to modify the reports you need and gives you the information you require.
- **Options:** Choose payroll software that is capable of handling many aspects of payroll reporting, not just collecting information to print a check. For instance, software that can handle piecework pay, seasonal pay, shift differential pay, hourly pay or a combination of any payment method can save you significant time by doing the correct calculations for you.
- **Automated W-2 state and federal forms:** Processing time and money can be saved if your payroll software offers automated W-2 and state and federal forms with electronic filing capabilities. Data from

your payroll is automatically added into your required forms for fast e-filing or printing on plain paper. If possible, choose a full-service W-2 and 1099 fulfillment option as an added resource.

- **Technology:** When choosing your payroll software, look for software that is built with the newest technology such as a Microsoft.net framework-based application. By doing so, it ensures the data security and reliability crucial for payroll data.
- **Experience, expertise and customer care:** Look for a payroll software company that is experienced in development and has the expertise necessary to create software that is easy to use and can handle your needs as you grow. Finally, take a look at the support and customer care the product offers. Is there personal attention offered? When you call for telephone support, do you actually talk to a person and not a recorded auto attendant?

Choosing a Match for Your Business

There are many payroll programs available from which to choose. Some programs have all of the features noted above while others have only a few. Do some research and choose your payroll software carefully, ensuring your product will do all that your business needs it to do.

When all is said and done, remember that the purpose of processing your payroll in-house and purchasing payroll software is to utilize the wide range of additional tools that can help your company increase efficiency, reduce costs, access the information you need at your fingertips and most importantly, pay your employees on time. *wqp*

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Why Pay Others for the Work You Do?

Before spending money on payroll services, look at how much you could save by bringing payroll in-house

Every time an employee is hired, leaves the company or their life circumstances change and they need to adjust their work schedule, you handle the information. That takes a lot of your time and effort. Once all of the data is entered, writing the check or direct deposit is the easy part.

Payroll Services

The U.S. Census defines “payroll service” as a service that “involves obtaining information on hours worked, pay rates and other payroll-related data from client organizations on their workers and using that information to generate paychecks, payroll reports and payroll tax filings.” The operative word is “obtain.”

Before a payroll service can help you, your business needs to collect all of the information to send on to the payroll service, which requires your time. It seems as though you