

CONTRACTOR_{mag.com}

The Newsmagazine of Mechanical Contracting




Advertiser Info

Click here for
FREE INFO
from Advertisers

FELDMAN ON COMPUTERS

FELDMAN ON COMPUTERS



**BY WILLIAM AND PATTI
FELDMAN, Computer Authorities**

Track and Bill Time On All Your Projects

A fast, out-of-the-box solution, BillQuick 2003 Time Billing Software (www.BQE.com, 888/245-5669) provides several industry-specific features designed to help contractors easily and accurately track and bill time on all their projects. Features of the stand-alone program, which is scalable and customizable, include complete automated QuickBooks integration, project control, budgeting and resource allocation, custom labels and more than 300 reports.

The program is a series of data-entry screens onto which information on daily activity is entered directly. Many of the setup chores offer “wizards,” which provide easy shortcuts for users during set-up of new profiles. Wizards are available for categories such as employees, clients, activities, billable and non-billable expenses (typically, materials, services or other items billed directly to the client or paid for out-of-pocket), service fee schedules (commonly used for hourly based projects), expense fee schedules and projects. The wizards request the basic required information on sequenced panels. More specific attributes to categorize or track the profiled function can be entered later.

Contractors start by putting in master information — such as employees and their rates or groups of employees and their rates — and time-billable and non-billable actions performed by

News/Features

Products

Columnists

Links

Classifieds

Subscribe

Contact Us

timekeepers being tracked. If a new activity occurs, it is a fast process to set up another activity code using the wizard.

During Client Setup, users can also utilize Client Clone, a shortcut that bases a new client on an existing one with similar attributes. Users can clone templates to minimize editing of a new profile, which then requires addition only of unique information.

Contractors can bill on any of seven contract types: fixed fee, hourly, hourly not to exceed contract, percentage completed, recurring, recurring with cap (weekly to annual) and recurring plus expenses contract. Two more contract types are useful for tracking internal activities: Marketing, which can track time and expense associated with efforts to win a project, and Overhead, for activities not directly billable to a client.

Project management features allow unlimited billing rates to be assigned to any combination of employee, activity and project. A "standard hours" field on the employee screen allows the program to automatically calculate overtime hours. The time card displays total hours and daily breakdown for all time periods and also shows a total of overtime hours. The software can automatically detect incomplete time cards and e-mail a note to the responsible party to complete the card.

The program, which has tiered security settings, can alert contractors if a project exceeds set parameters or is going over budget.

The software streamlines allocation of project amount to project phases. When the user enters the percentage of project, the contract amount of each phase is automatically calculated. Retainer in a phased project can be automatically disbursed to phases based on their percentage value.

All invoices, statements and reports are customizable with Seagate's Crystal Reports 9.0.

The software can exchange data with several other programs, including Microsoft Access databases, Excel spreadsheets and Peachtree, Microsoft Money, MAS 90 and Quicken. In addition to Basic, Pro and Enterprise editions for small, medium and large offices, the developer offers BillQuick Palm/CE for remote and wireless entry of time cards and BillQuick Web Interface for time cards, expense log, billing and reporting via the Internet.

William and Patti Feldman provide Web content and write for magazines, trade associations, manufacturers and other companies on a range of topics. They can be reached at

wfeldman@att.net.

William and Patti Feldman can be reached via e-mail at wfeldman@att.net or by phone at 914/238-6272.

CONTRACTOR | [Subscribe](#)