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Happy Thanksgiving



Fountainhead Forum

Editor: Nina Cormier

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Dear Nina,

We hope you are all getting into the spirit of the holiday season. Unfortunately, the seasonal rush often coincides with busy times at work. We are seeing requests for seasonal contract help from our clients. Please keep us in mind if we can assist you with some year-end hiring needs - for either contract or permanent placement.

All of us at Fountainhead Staffing send our best wishes to you for a wonderful Thanksgiving!



Does your company need an extra hand for year-end? One of the most costly decisions hiring managers make is measuring interviewing ability rather than job competency. Let us help you stop guessing at the critical game of employee evaluation and start hiring the right candidates today.

Tax Department - Compliance Software Assessment

By: Mike Carabott, PTS Services LLC

Contributors: Bill Hujsak, CMS Energy; Paul Sotiropoulos and Lisa Espinoza, PTS Services LLC



Taking into consideration the pace at which technology and organizational structures change, every tax department should perform an analysis of their tax software on a regular basis. The optimal time frame would be to initiate the process nine to twelve months prior to the expiration of the

current licensing agreement. Time and care should be taken to evaluate all of the latest vendor offerings rather than just moving to the next version of what is currently in use. There are a number of organizational and legislative changes that may have evolved in the years since you last purchased software. These are important and worthwhile factors supporting an investment of time for product research. The evolution may be more technology based, such as ERP and data integration. Additionally, consideration of your business's changes in structure, related industry, new tax laws, control requirements, geographic expansions and reductions, resource utilization, and other global tax department dynamics needs to be addressed. What you will find as you examine the different tax software packages is that most are web-enabled, and offer truly outstanding features which can provide your department with immediate productivity gains through better functionality and automation opportunities. You should be mindful of the fact that some of them are geared toward certain user flexibilities while others are more vendor restrictive. If your company is using a package that was chosen based on compliance needs 10 or even just 5 years ago, then it's likely that you're not getting the most out of your tax software in terms of its suitability with your business today.

As you embark on the evaluation and selection of your next-generation tax software, there is a proven process you can

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1. Which ship did the Pilgrims sail on to Plymouth Rock?
 - a. The Nina
 - b. The Pinta
 - c. The Mayflower
 - d. The Continental
2. Which President set the official celebration day for Thanksgiving as the last Thursday?
 - a. Abraham Lincoln
 - b. Franklin D. Roosevelt
 - c. Woodrow Wilson
 - d. Herbert Hoover
3. Which President moved Thanksgiving to the third Thursday in November to lengthen the Christmas shopping season? (Three years later it was moved back.)
 - a. Abraham Lincoln
 - b. Franklin D. Roosevelt
 - c. Woodrow Wilson
 - d. Herbert Hoover
4. What is a female turkey

follow which will assist in achieving the best results. Listed below are the suggested steps to follow in the selection process:

- Identify the fields of vendors and software
- Determine tax requirements and process wants and needs
- Distribute questionnaire to identified vendors
- Score and measure vendor responses
- Schedule product demos and rescore vendors

By applying a structured methodology to the selection process, more comprehensive and detailed information can be acquired about each software package that is free from bias. Begin by identifying the field of contenders for your business. Because there are several different products available, careful consideration must be taken in choosing which vendors will be evaluated. A beneficial tool to utilize as a starting point is the ACT User Survey. This annual survey illustrates which tax software packages ACT members are currently using as well as feedback relating to successes and failures. The survey focused on the following topics:

- Tax software used compliance, provision and planning
- Service and reliability ratings for tax software
- Electronic filing
- Data collection tools
- Document management software
- Sales and use tax software

called?

- a. a chick
- b. a hen
- c. a rooster
- d. a turket

5. Which balloon was the first balloon to make a debut in the 1927 Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade?

- a. Felix the Cat
- b. Mickey Mouse
- c. Betty Boop
- d. Porky Pig

Answers Below

Trivia Correction (October):

Rusty Rogers, a friend of Fountainhead Staffing and horror film aficionado, informed us of an error in last month's Trivia questions. Please note the correction: Michael Myers did not wear a hockey mask (that was Jason from "Friday the 13th" fame). Believe it or not, Michael Myers actually wore a William Shatner mask with the eye holes enlarged. Much more weird and scary than some old hockey mask.

Thanks, Rusty!

Other tax specific application software

[Click here to continue reading this article](#)

The New Directory Assistance

Google goog-411

When was the last time you dialed "411" or "Directory Assistance" on your cell phone, only to notice that the \$2.99+ charge on your bill at the end of the month wasn't worth the information call to begin with? Well, Google has created a new option - GOOG-411 - and would you believe it, it is free of charge!

What it is:

GOOG-411 is just like the normal "411/Directory Assistance" but there is no charge to use it and it offers some cool new solutions. You don't need a computer, an Internet connection, or even the keypad on your telephone or mobile device. GOOG-411 is voice-activated, so you can access it from any telephone (mobile or land line), in any location, at any time. For free!

How to use it:

Dial (1-800) GOOG-411 (that's 1-800-466-4411) and follow the automated prompt directions. Say the business name or type of business you are looking for and the city/state where they are located. The system will then prompt you to the closest match in the directory. Once you select the proper business, GOOG-411 will then automatically connect you.

When prompted for your query:

- To enter city and state and business name or category: Say the full names (for example, Fountainhead Staffing Scottsdale Arizona).
-



1. c
2. a
3. b
4. b
5. a

Common Errors on Resumes*

1. Unrelated and personal information (like your age).
2. Writing in the "first person".
3. Repetition.
4. Quantifying numbers that don't add up.
5. Poor or "over flashy/fancy" font or formatting.
6. Overusing key words.
7. Not using action words at all.
8. Typos and other spelling/grammatical errors.
9. Sounding like a job description.
10. Squeezing in 3 pages of information onto 1 page.
11. Copying someone else's resume.
12. Not describing the company.
13. Using graphics.

*(In our opinion - there are obviously exceptions to everything.)

To enter a zip code: Say it or enter it with the keypad.

- To spell a business name: Press 1 and spell with the keypad (for example, Walmart, would be 9256278).
- To go back: Say "go back".
- To start over: Say "start over" or press *.

Additionally, if you are calling from a mobile device, GOOG-411 can send you a text message with more details and a map. Simply say "text message" or "map it".

Nothing is free:

Come on now, you know that this couldn't truly be at no cost to you whatsoever, right? Well, technically, there is no monetary charge to your telephone line. However, let's just say Google is building a good tracking system for the types of businesses you are looking for in your approximate location. Therefore, you are paying by having your information collected, and possibly (at some point in time) sold to companies looking for a list of leads. For example, perhaps a local barbershop would like to purchase a list of cell phone numbers that called GOOG-411 from their surrounding area looking for a place to get their hair cut within the last month. Or maybe the barbershop will have to cover that \$2.99 charge in order for that potential customer to "connect" the call through GOOG-411. Pretty smart, right? But, no, you're not paying - think again!

Set the privacy feature:

You can, however, choose a different privacy setting; the catch is that you have to know how to do so. Google gives an option to delete any information that has been associated to your phone number from the point of "deletion date" (the time you set the privacy feature) back.

Here's how:

- Call GOOG-411, and press the star (*) key after you



hear the introduction to enter the privacy menu.

- From the privacy menu, press 9 to delete past information associated with your phone number.
- To confirm you'd like to delete the information, enter the confirmation code when prompted. You can also press star(*) to cancel and return to your search.
- After you've called GOOG-411 several times, you'll stop hearing the introduction to enter the privacy menu. However, you'll still be able to press the star (*) key to access the privacy menu.

For more information:

Visit the website Goog411 or call (1-800) GOOG-411, (that's 1-800-466-4411) and say "details" or "help".



A Client of
Fountainhead Staffing

Providing consulting services that assist business by bridging the gap of technology and business process and personnel, Kona Kai Corp. specializes in Business Process Optimization. To many this is a broad statement. To us, it means that given your unique situation, we have the ability to AID your business - Assess....Improve...Deliver.

Company President, Paul Benvenuto, has over 20+ years of "hands on" operations experience in a broad range of industries: telecom, wireless, logistics, packaging, order processing, healthcare, food distribution, contact centers, and startups. Along with a team of professional consultants, they approach each opportunity with a business value assessment that provides a recommendation for your unique situation, whether that be existing systems and process re-engineering, organizational change management, or new application introduction to streamline operations; providing for efficiency gains, revenue growth and cost reductions.

Business demands are growing, while budgets for

employees and benefits are not. Kona Kai Corporation can aid your employees, working collaboratively to achieve your desired objectives and results. Teaming with Fountainhead Staffing, Kona Kai Corp. provides professionals in the fields of business operations, business analysis, project/program management, technical writing, systems analysis, network operations, development, testing, financial analysis and quality assurance, as well as business and operations modeling. As always, our professionals are reliable, adaptable, and can deliver solutions to help you increase revenues and maximize operational efficiencies.

Let us deliver results for you. Curious to know more about Kona Kai Corporation? Please contact us today at info@konakaicorp.com or visit our website for further information at www.konakaicorp.com.

National News Highlights

In what seems to be par for the course these days, we have a very mixed bag of national news....



Dow Industrial Average Hits New 2009 High

The DJIA reached 10,438 during the month of November - a new high for 2009.

U.S. Economy Expanded in the Third Quarter

The U.S. economy expanded in the third quarter after shrinking for four consecutive quarters, marking an apparent end to the worst recession since World War II. But the recovery is expected to be slow and painful, as companies shed jobs and credit remains tight.

Gross domestic product expanded at a 3.5% seasonally adjusted annual rate in the quarter ended in September, a rise that leaned heavily on government spending. Some of the largest components of growth came from spending on cars and home building -- two areas propped up by federal

programs.

Without stimulus programs such as "cash for clunkers" and a first-time home buyer's credit, "real GDP would have risen little, if at all, this past quarter," Christina Romer, President of the White House Council of Economic Advisers, said in a statement.

President Barack Obama warned: "We have a long way to go to fully restore our economy."

The Wall Street Journal, Conor Dougherty, October 30, 2009

U.S. Unemployment Rate Rose to 10.2% in October

The 10.2% rate is the highest in 26 years and exceeded economists expectations. Employers cut more jobs than expected, particularly in construction, manufacturing, and retail.

Unemployment rose in 29 states in October. Arizona's jobless rate was 9.3% in October. Federal Reserve Chairman Ben Bernanke said "The best thing we can say about the labor market right now is that it may be getting worse more slowly".

The Wall Street Journal, Sudeep Reddy, November 9, 2009

The Wall Street Journal, Jeff Bater, November 20, 2009

Fed Vows to Keep Interest Rates Low

In their early November meeting, the Federal Reserve agreed to keep interest rates "exceptionally low" for a long period of time. The Fed said they wouldn't consider raising rates unless unemployment fell or inflation kicks up.

In its November statement, the Fed said they "will continue to employ a wide range of tools to promote economic recovery and to preserve price stability. The Committee will maintain the target range for the federal funds rate at 0 to 1/4 percent and continues to anticipate that economic conditions, including low rates of resource utilization, subdued inflation trends, and stable inflation expectations, are likely to warrant exceptionally low levels of the federal funds rate for an extended period."

The Wall Street Journal, WSJ Staff, November 4, 2009



U.S. Manufacturing Sector Grows in October

The U.S. factory sector posted its third consecutive month of growth in October, as the Institute of Supply Management's manufacturing index rose to 55.7 from 52.6 in September. A reading over 50 indicates expansion. The ISM's employment index rose for the first time in 15 months as manufacturers sought to recall workers or enlist temporary help, offering further hope that the overall labor market may be stabilizing.

Separately, construction spending climbed by 0.8% in September, as a forecasting gauge of housing-market activity also posted an increase.

The Wall Street Journal, Sudeep Reddy & Timothy Aepfel, November 3, 2009

Existing home sales jump 10% in October

Spurred by the federal government's first-time buyer tax credit program, sales of existing homes increased 10.1% to a 6.10 million annual rate from 5.54 million in September, the National Association of Realtors said Monday. This was the highest rate since February of 2007.

Inventories of previously owned homes decreased by 3.7% at the end of October to 3.57 million available for sale. That represented a 7.0-month supply at the current sales pace, compared to 8.0 in September. Regionally, sales in October compared to September rose 11.6% in the Northeast, 14.4% in the Midwest, 12.7% in the South, and 1.6% in the West.

Of the 6.10 million in overall U.S. sales, 30% were distressed, which includes foreclosures. That compares to a range of 45% to 50% in the months during late 2008 and early 2009.

The Wall Street Journal, Jeff Bater, November 23, 2009

Tax Department - Compliance Software Assessment

Article Continued

Identify the field of vendors and software

Initially, you will need to engage your internal groups. With the advent of SOX, all departments throughout the organization are more focused on processes and procedures, so you will be dealing with these internal groups at some point. It is essential to understand their requirements and processes at the onset, facilitating cooperation and more importantly securing availability to maintain the project timing and avoid delays. When incorporated from the start, each group will welcome the opportunity to participate and will become an ally in your efforts. There may also be business or technical requirements for other departments that are not apparent, and these internal groups will be key to identifying those issues. Be mindful that these requirements will not be avoided by choosing a vendor-hosted solution. Your organization will have a security review process for any hosting of corporate data outside the company's firewall which can be just as strenuous as the process for bringing in new software. Typically, a close partnership with your IT organization as well as Purchasing and Internal Controls groups is integral. The IT liaison will identify any other groups that should be brought to the table.

Determine tax requirements and process wants/needs

The next step in the process is to narrow down the prospects by learning more about each vendor's software package. The most efficient way to do this is by using a Vendor Questionnaire. The foundation of this document will transition into the creation of an RFQ (Request for Quote) and is referred to by some as an RFI (Request for Information) or an RFP (Request for Proposal). Assemble a group representing all areas of your tax department for this phase. Each group that uses the software, as well as those who do not, should be asked to contribute to the list of questions that will be presented to the vendors. You can either work as a team to create a list of questions or engage a specialty tax consulting firm that has experience in the vendor selection process and who has the necessary tools available. An outside firm will provide a questionnaire which

must be customized to include specific needs of your business, saving you vast amounts of time and touching upon categories of questions you might not have identified on your own. If you choose to create your own list of questions, be sure to phrase your queries in a manner that will garner a higher level of detail to determine if the approach is one that fits your department. At this stage, also consider including questions from related organizations, IT, or Internal Controls. Regarding pricing, most vendors have pricing models that take into account the number of legal entities, users, filings and other criteria, so you may be asked to provide pertinent information in order to be supplied with initial estimated pricing.

Distribute questionnaire to identified vendors

A uniform best practice process will produce an unbiased score to measure each vendor against the others. To do that, each question should first be weighted for importance. During weighting, a value is assigned to each question within the categories. A numeric scale is adequate in most instances, providing the right level of granularity. For example, you may have extensive international operations, so you would weight those questions relating to the international tax functions higher, while filing for only two partnerships would result in related questions being weighted lower. The completed questionnaire is then sent to the vendors along with a letter of introduction and a firm but reasonable expectation of timely responses.

Score and measure vendor responses

Once responses from the vendors are received and compiled back into the Vendor Questionnaire, the same group that worked to create the questions will meet to evaluate the answers. If any answers are unclear or it is apparent that the vendor misunderstood what was being asked, contact them to clarify their answer. This is another area where a specialty tax consulting firm can be useful. Their familiarity with the products can provide you with comparative product analysis as well as answering secondary questions that arise amongst your team. Once you are satisfied that you have the vendor's best answers,



each answer will be scored. A formula is used to compute the weighting against the scoring and the result is the preliminary score for each vendor.

Schedule product demos and rescore vendors

Scoring will highlight which vendors are best suited to your needs and in turn will be invited to perform product demonstrations. Instead of scheduling a generic product demo, work with each vendor to develop an agenda focused on those areas in the questionnaire where further clarification is necessary. In addition, as you build each agenda, request that the vendors elaborate on how their software will flow from importing the financial statement data to the output of filing mandated tax returns. A product with a cumbersome GL load can be a problem, but a product that feels cumbersome producing returns can be unbearable. A quality consulting firm that understands tax can offer the added benefit of articulating best practices and process improvements that you may not have considered.

As part of the demos, the vendors should communicate with technical staff to discuss the technical IT and controls concerns of your organization. This part is essential, as there will likely be technology and security requirements that must be met, and failure to do so may become a show-stopper, depending on your corporate policies. If your list started with software companies based on the ACT survey referred to above, these vendors will be comfortable dealing with your internal groups and your corporate policies.

Upon completion of the product demonstrations, there will be a need to rescore the vendors. The answers that were initially provided in the Vendor Questionnaire could differ significantly from what was shown. Rescoring will produce documentation and support for your final tax compliance software choice.

In summary, a collaborative effort involving the internal tax function, outside consultants, internal IT and vendors will culminate in a clear and informed decision. Using this proven methodology will assist significantly in delivering all

the information and documentation necessary to ensure that your next generation software has been well chosen.

PTS Services LLC (PTS) is a tax specialty services firm, focusing in the areas of tax process assessment and redesign, tax vendor selection and software implementation, research and development credits, tax planning, and tax compliance. We provide affordable loan staff services in all areas of the tax function, including federal and state income tax compliance, international tax compliance, and tax accounting compliance. To learn more about PTS's services, contact us by calling 813-569-5113, emailing us at services@ptsservicesllc.com or visiting our website, www.ptsservicesllc.com.

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Additionally, Fountainhead Staffing would like to thank Danielle Gonzalez of PTS Services LLC for coordinating the publishing of this article.

Cranberry Pudding Recipe

You will need:

- 1 1/4 cups fresh cranberries
- 1/3 cup brown sugar
- 1/2 cup granulated sugar
- 1/2 cup flour
- 1/3 cup chopped pecans
- 1/3 cup melted butter
- 1 egg, beaten

1. Preheat oven to 325F.
2. Put the cranberries in a medium bowl. Sprinkle the brown sugar over the cranberries and toss gently.
3. Mix in the chopped pecans and turn into an ungreased 9" pie plate.
4. In another medium bowl, combine all the remaining ingredients and mix well. Pour this over the cranberry mixture.
5. Bake for 45 minutes.



Can be served hot or cold. Top with whipped cream or ice cream. Makes 8 servings.

Sincerely,

Fountainhead Staffing

