Certified Payroll Reporting – A Bookkeeper's Nightmare

Article has been Contributed by Roxanne Brown, CQA – Professional Business Solutions 4U, LLC & Contribution Editor, IDNAC Newsletter   **March, 2005**

Company Information:

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Established: August 2000 **IDN Membership:** Premier/2001
QuickBooks Integration: Since October 2000
Integration with other software: No, QuickBooks Exclusively

> An Interview With
>
> Nancy Smyth CQA & President
> Sunburst Software Solutions, Inc.

> *I work for a plumbing contractor located in California, we are currently working on 10 public works projects, I was spending at least 12 hours a week generating Prevailing Wage Reports on the state mandated form DIR A-1-131, your Certified Payroll Solution software has cut the amount of time I spend to about 15 minutes. All I have to do now is sign my name to the reports.*

Kristi McNutt, Office Manager – Montano Plumbing, Inc.

Why was Certified Payroll Solution (CPS) developed?

Certified Payroll Solution was developed based on my own bookkeeping "pain points". As an active bookkeeper and QuickBooks consultant between 1996 and 2000 I dealt with a lot of construction clients and did payroll in QuickBooks Pro 6 for 105 employees. I was tracking 5 Prevailing Wage Jobs in two states, subject to 2 different Unions for Benefits, and 3 Unions for Dues manually through the use of Excel to prepare the Weekly Certified Payroll Reports.

When I started on this venture to get a program written, did I know what I was getting into initially? Not on your life! However it was an eye-opening experience and did make me wonder just how many other people were doing exactly the same thing that I was…trying to get this kind of information out of QuickBooks and manually manipulating it the best they could, hoping a solution would soon come along. The seed was planted for a program that would reach into QuickBooks, now I needed to find someone to write it.

After a 4 year search; still doing certified payrolls with Excel on a weekly basis, for a smaller company at the time, I found a programmer who didn't think I was a total nutcase for wanting to add this kind of functionality to QuickBooks.   I wanted a method to retrieve data I had already entered in QuickBooks; and by using a product called OfficeQPro that we could do so; and in October 2000 I ran my very first certified payroll report using CPS in less than 5 minutes!

Who is Your Target Market and Why?

Certified Payroll Solution is geared toward the end-user; specifically contractors who perform any sort of work on Federal or State Funded Construction projects over $2,000.00 – whether that work involves new construction or remodeling. The work performed can be anything from Interior Design to Bridge Construction.

These contractor's must submit weekly certified payroll reports following guidelines established under Federal Davis-Bacon Laws or State Specific Laws that are derived from the Federal Guidelines.

Currently we have approximately 2,000 active customers; in all 50 states, using Certified Payroll Solution.

How does Certified Payroll Solution (**CPS**) Work?

Certified Payroll Solution begins by reading information contained in the QuickBooks Weekly Timesheets and Paycheck Transactions. It also reads information contained in both the Employee and Job Records.

Since there is an abundance of information that is required on the Certified Payroll Report that QuickBooks by itself cannot track; each QuickBooks Employee, Job, and Payroll Item has a "linked" record within the **CPS** database to hold those missing pieces. The information from both programs is then merged together and the final reports are generated; ready for signature and mailing.

Detailed information is available on our website; including integration overviews, whitepapers and Flash Demonstrations at http://www.sunburstsoftwaresolutions.com/advisors-accountants.htm

Who is your competition and how does **CPS** differ?

Our competition is manually compiling the information needed and completing the required forms, Quantum Software Solutions Certified Payroll Reports – Quantum Project Manager and Wizard Business Solution's CertPay Wizard.

Certified Payroll Solutions main differences and strengths lie in the fact that is was specifically designed for QuickBooks user's and that it was designed to be a flexible and complete solution for both the General Contractor as well as the Subcontractor (whether Union or Non-Union) by providing Federal and State specific Certified Payroll Reports, Statements of Compliance, "No Work" Performed payrolls, EEOC, and Benefit Reports.

A detailed comparison can be found on our website in the On-line Support Area at
http://www.sunburstsoftwaresolutions.com/cps-support.htm

A mini customer case study:

Before purchasing CPS, we did our reports manually. They were not as detailed as they should have been, accuracy and missing information was a problem. We no longer worry about our reports making the compliance "grade".
Kirsten Russell, Office Manager
Direct Digital Control, Inc.

Additional Case Studies and user reviews can be found on our website at http://www.sunburstsoftwaresolutions.com/advisors-accountants.htm as well as on the QuickBooks Solutions Marketplace.

QuickBooks Integration:

Certified Payroll Solution only "reads" data from the QuickBooks Weekly Timesheet, the Employee Record, Job Record, and Paycheck transactions; it does not write anything back to your QuickBooks data file.

Error checking is preformed by verifying that the Payroll item used in the Weekly Timesheet does exist in the Employee Record, with a rate of pay, and that the same Payroll Item and Pay Rate exists in the Paycheck. If those items do not match; the user is presented with an "error" box. The same type of error checking and reporting is done for the Job selection.

Installation & Setup:

Installation and setup will vary depending upon the size of the company; number of employees, number of jobs, and overall utilization of QuickBooks capabilities. We have had customers who were up in running in less

than two hours and others in a week. In general, the initial setup takes no longer than the manual creation of one of these weekly reports.

The learning curve is greatly diminished by simply spending 15-20 minutes watching the Flash Training Demonstration provided on the CD or our website; as it is simply a matter of adding a couple pieces of additional information in the QuickBooks Job Record and then mapping data in linked records.

Demonstrations & Trials:

State specific self-running Flash demonstrations and full-sized sample reports are available at
http://www.sunburstsoftwaresolutions.com/certified-payroll-quick-tour.htm and take approximately 15-20 minutes to view. Live demos are available upon request with 24 hour notice.

Free 30-day Trial versions are available upon request from the last slide of the demo. The Trial is a full version of the program with two stipulations: a "demonstration" watermark is displayed on the final reports and users are allowed to run payroll's dated 30 days before or 30 days after the issue date. Trials are easily converted to fully licensed versions.

Pricing, Support, Enhancements & Updates:

Pricing begins at $375.00 for a company license via electronic download and includes one full year of product updates/enhancements, including QuickBooks compatibility updates.

Our support policy includes provisions for Free Support, Free Training, Paid Training, Maintenance and Special Additional Services. Complete details are available at
http://www.sunburstsoftwaresolutions.com/support-policy.htm

Product enhancements are based on customer feedback.

Compatibility updates for QuickBooks are available as soon as the new QuickBooks version begins shipping.

How can Certified Payroll Solution help Advisors with their clients?

As a ProAdvisor working with construction clients who are dealing with this sort of complex payroll reporting; being able to offer your clients a reliable solution to the time-consuming and error prone manual process will make you look like a "hero".

Closing – What is the most important point you would like to make?

The most important point that I'd like to make is this: when dealing with contractors who are required to generate certified payroll reports and/or deal with multiple unions….make sure that you know your stuff; because they'll be able to see right through you if you don't and you could loose a very good client. By using, or offering, **CPS** as a solution to your client, it shows that you understand the importance of these required reports and they will feel like your number one priority.