



Mangrove Software — Mangrove Online

By Mark Weinstein, CPA

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Founded in 1994, Mangrove Software is a leader in delivering web-based payroll, human resource (HR) and employee self-service



solutions. Headquartered in Tampa, Florida, Mangrove supports payroll service bureaus, administrative service organizations (ASOs), hotels, manufacturers, healthcare organizations and retailers.

Mangrove Online (Mangrove) is a comprehensive and flexible payroll suite available to service bureau operators and directly to businesses. Through the Mangrove hosted payroll application, users can track and manage payroll information, including time entry, unlimited earnings, unlimited tax, unlimited benefits, unlimited deductions and

unlimited net pay information. You can feed checks and reports all without leaving your workstation.

The Mangrove hosted system is fully integrated with HR, payroll, benefits management and employee self-service. Customers can outsource HR functions, payroll processing and complete tax filing, and still maintain control that a typical in-house solution provides. Actually, the Mangrove hosted software application includes the full suite of products available from Mangrove for in-house use.

Mangrove includes robust features for the service bureau and PEO (professional employer organization) and offers private branding of the front-end online payroll application that clients will see. The front-end of Mangrove can be custom configured so that client access is through the service bureau's website. With the customized web address of the online portal, together with private labeling of the online portal and all reports, the client sees the service bureau as the sole provider of services.

Mangrove provides all the software needed to process payrolls, print checks, print reports, send ACH files, and report taxes directly from the desktop. Mangrove supports unlimited companies, earnings, deductions, taxes, net pays and employees. Mangrove can automatically sweep tax amounts from

clients' accounts via ACH transaction, managing the service bureau's escrow account and enabling payments to be sent to the respective taxing agency when the taxes are due.

Mangrove is written in Visual Basic and is configured to run under Microsoft SQL Server. It is scalable and supports small to large enterprise users, serving five to 30,000 employees.

Toledo, Ohio-based Precision Pay is a payroll service provider that services 550 clients. Gary Hartman says his company has been using the product for five years, and he appreciates its flexibility and the integrated HR capabilities. "When we started this service, Mangrove was the only one with a web-based product," Hartman says. "And we're able to do payrolls for clients with this product that we couldn't do with other software." Hartman recommends that potential users go slow and not try to do a real complex payroll to begin with. "It is flexible," he says, "but it's also fairly complex with a learning curve." He also notes that the user group is an excellent resource.

LEARNING CURVE

Mangrove is accessed via an Internet web browser. Those familiar with Windows conventions and navigation around a browser have

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all the tools they will need to operate Mangrove. The program's interface is consistent, intuitive and user friendly, and it was specially designed so that it would accommodate the heads-down keyboard user as well as the user who prefers a mouse. The product's consistency of navigation and conventions is evident throughout, and Mangrove's learning curve is fast.

The Mangrove front-end is configurable based upon the type of user, and there are six different types of Mangrove Online users: Employee, Manager, PayEntry, Payroll, PayrollHR and Personnel. Each front-end user sees a particular view of the program.

Employees see only their personal information and payroll history. Managers see information related to their departments. PayEntry supports the clerical data-entry function, a limited view where the clerk will only see screens accessed during data entry. Payroll allows full access to the front-end payroll system. PayrollHR allows full access to Payroll and HR systems, and Personnel provides full access to the HR system.

Upon entering user information, password and user type during login, users are greeted by a Main Menu screen that features the type of high-end graphics you would expect from an application designed for native web access. The Main Menu screen is not only state-of-art as far as graphic presentation, but it is well organized without a lot of clutter.

The Main Menu is organized with simple drill-down submenus organized vertically along the left-hand side of the screen. Menus are populated based upon user type and can include some or all of the following drill-down submenus: Company, Attendance, Employee, Events, Benefits, Time Entry, EE Setup, Prepare Payroll, Payroll, Reporting, Compensation, Program, Personal, and Resume.

On the right-hand side of the Main Menu is a mailbox area that supports messaging and reminders. Below this area is a section called "Pending your Approval," which lists items that require action. In the center of the screen is an area dedicated to news and announcements. Finally, towards the top of the screen is a small horizontal window that supports view of employee names one at a time. Users can navigate through the employee listing by using supplied buttons to the left (back) and right (forward). ★★★★★

FEATURES & SERVICES

Kudos to the customized views that are built-in to Mangrove, affording specialized access to users. Without question, this is a high-end feature. Many programs with similar Menu access require expensive custom programming.

Mangrove supports an unlimited number of employees and per-state transactions, unlimited deductions, unlimited direct deposit and payroll bank accounts, automated tips processing, and third-party AP check generation for garnishment, levies, union dues, labor allocation and more. Also available are multiple organizational tiers in support of job costing and financial reporting capabilities, net-to-gross calculations, web-based time and expense entry for employees, payroll scheduling, multiple pay frequencies, global pay overrides, auto-pay for salaries, timecard import, and comprehensive HR functions. ★★★★★

REPORTING CAPABILITIES

Mangrove includes more than 580 standard reports that are user configurable. Mangrove calls it robust, and I would have to agree. The product also includes access to its entire Report Library, supporting creation of ad-hoc, customized reports. All reports are created using Crystal Reports 8.5. Security

flows directly through reports, permitting users to only manipulate the data to which they have access. ★★★★★

INTEGRATION/IMPORT & EXPORT

Reports can be exported to Excel, ASCII, *.CSV and *.PDF formats. Mangrove includes specialized GL file formats that can export data to PeopleSoft, Oracle, QuickBooks and Peachtree users. Mangrove supports creation of file formats for any software via custom programming services. ★★★★★

TRAINING & SUPPORT

Online context-sensitive Help is available via the F1 key, but right-click mouse Help is not provided. The company also provides a program manual, training manual, online demo, and a CRM-based tool that includes a comprehensive knowledgebase. Toll-free technical support is included in the annual subscription, and training is available via webinars, onsite or at Mangrove's facilities. ★★★★★

SUMMARY

Mangrove is a comprehensive, efficient and flexible payroll suite that delivers industrial-strength payroll and HR services. Mangrove has several pricing options. The CPA Reseller Program offers wholesale monthly all-inclusive per-employee pricing, e.g. 50 employee biweekly payroll at \$6.75 per employee per month including unlimited web reporting access, check printing, tax filing, direct deposit services and annual W-2 preparation. The Standard Service Bureau Payroll Processing license costs \$25,000 for up to 6,000 active employees. The Enterprise Service Bureau Payroll Processing license costs \$50,000 with unlimited active employees.

2006 OVERALL RATING

