

Web-based bookkeeping made simple

BY DON STALLINGS, CPA

With the job market so tight these days it is almost impossible to find and keep good bookkeeping staff on hand.



Most small businesses who keep their own books have a family member doing the bookkeeping or a fairly low paid bookkeeper who lacks the skills necessary to maintain accurate records. Most businesses are lucky if they get any kind of

financial statements within twenty days after month end. What this means is that most small business owners are trying to manage their business with 45 day old information which is no way to run a business. With the new e-commerce driven marketplace, this type of accounting system will not survive.

Many CPA firms like ours are now offering outsourced web-based bookkeeping to meet this critical need. By utilizing the efficiency of web-based online software, these firms are able to recruit, hire, train, and retain first-class accounting personnel. By using this latest technology, the business owner can access his financial information from anywhere in the world via the internet. The business owner can be looking at his

ments via the internet. Within seconds he can see what his business did the day before, and e-mail any questions to his employees. He can issue purchase orders, approve checks, or even pay the bills electronically. He can send quotes or other messages to customers via the internet. This technology gives small business the ability to run totally or lose.

With business out of they way, the business owner can enjoy his cup of coffee on the balcony overlooking the Gulf. Another great thing about this system is that it allows actual results to be compared to the business plan, and any variances investigated. Boundaries can be set on critical elements to alert the client or his accountant to problems. Because the system is a real-time system, problems are discovered within a day of their occurrence. For example, assume the business person has a chain of five restaurants in Mississippi. Suppose the gross sales were expected to range from \$2,500 to \$4,000 per day at a gross margin ranging from 65% to 68%. If the results of any of the restaurants fall outside of these parameters, the accountant would be instructed to call the business owner in his condominium in Florida.

Because the client's data and the software are located on a server of a web-based application service provider, there is no need to purchase, maintain, or

update software, and the data backup is secure.

For less than the cost of a good bookkeeper, the small business owner can compete with giant companies and have access to his information in real-time

from anywhere in the world. **DBJ**

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