

PROADVISOR review

ACOWIN for Windows version 4.30 by Team Management Systems, Inc.

Overall Rating **9.5**



Product Name

ACOWIN for Windows version 4.30 by Team Management Systems, Inc.

Reviewed By

Sarah Watson, CPA
Certified QuickBooks
ProAdvisor

sarahwatsoncpa@yahoo.com

Date Reviewed

11/20/07

Summary

Designed as a complete management solution for the field service industry, Acowin for Windows hits the mark as a robust software offering developed by Team Management Systems, Inc. With an outstanding base product and powerful add-on modules available, the software can handle dispatching, invoicing, purchase orders, inventory, service contracts, and many other features too numerous to list.

Acowin can be used as a stand-alone product, or it can integrate with QuickBooks Pro/Premier 2005-2008 and Enterprise Edition 5.0-8.0.

Strengths

- The available ACOTRUCK Mobile Work Order add-on module allows technicians in the field access to call slips, equipment and inventory information via their tablet PC. Customers can even be invoiced and payment collected while the technician is on-site.
- Integration with Microsoft MapPoint® can provide mapped service locations and optimization of a technician's route in the field potentially saving travel time between appointments.
- The ability to split a purchase order between multiple vendors allows the user to create one supply order for an entire job.
- The document attachment feature is easy to use and makes locating documents fast and effortless while keeping valuable information at the fingertips of all Acowin users.
- Another valuable add-on module, Caller ID makes locating established customer sites quick and efficient.

Limitations

This product appears to be as complete as it needs to be and no limitations were noted during the scope of this review.

Wish List

A couple of items I would like to see considered for future program releases are:

- When accessing areas such as customer/site, equipment or contracts from the main menu screen, it would be nice if the user could select a preference to have the search screen appear first rather than the first item on the list.
- The ability to synchronize vendors bi-directionally with QuickBooks as an available option on the synchronize with QuickBooks screen. This could eliminate some redundancy in data entry when address or other vendor updates are encountered.

Product Ratings	Rating	Ratings Definitions
<p>Setup and Installation:</p> <p>Installation and initial company setup can be done with the assistance of an Acowin support representative who will walk you through the entire process in about 1 ½ hours. This complimentary service is provided at no charge for new users. For those who would prefer to do it themselves, the program materials are well documented and easy to follow. A sample Acowin and QuickBooks data file are available to those who would prefer some extra practice before working with their live company data.</p>	9.9	<p>10.0 (Perfect): This exceedingly rare score is reserved for a product that is as perfect as it could be.</p> <p>9.0 to 9.9 (Spectacular): A product that receives a rating in this range succeeds at meeting all of its intended users' needs and has no meaningful drawbacks.</p> <p>8.0 to 8.9 (Excellent): A product that receives a rating in this range is superior in so many ways that its relatively few drawbacks are not very important.</p>
<p>Interface:</p> <p>Acowin's uncomplicated program interface is icon based and the main menu is similar to a flowchart. Most of the basic navigation is performed by selecting convenient toolbar icons located on each screen the user is accessing within the product. In addition, the dispatch screen can be customized for individual users and the calls can be scheduled with a simple drag and drop functionality. Overall the program interface is intuitive and easy to use.</p>	9.5	<p>7.0 to 7.9 (Very good): While the strengths of a product scoring in this range certainly outweigh its weaknesses, it has some minor faults that certain users should be aware of.</p> <p>6.0 to 6.9 (Good): This range represents a product that is above average. Its strengths slightly outweigh its weaknesses, making it good for most uses but not a standout.</p>
<p>Features:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The program includes the ability to create an unlimited number of sites per customer while tracking site history. Equipment on-site can be added so that warranties and repair history are maintained within Acowin. • The document attachment feature is an efficient way to keep pictures and pertinent customer documents at the fingertips of all Acowin users. • Acowin data can be merged into the established Microsoft Word form letters or the user can create their own master templates. • Service agreements are easily maintained and inspection slips can be automatically generated for dispatching. • The dispatch board features a drag and drop functionality as well as an available daily, weekly, or 31 day calendar view. Dispatchers can customize their dispatch boards and can even create up to six different technician arrangements. • Customer invoices are easily created with the "Build an Invoice" concept. Information from the completed call slips is used to finalize and bill the customer. • Inventory can be tracked by warehouse or truck and serialized inventory is uncomplicated to maintain. The automatic truck restock feature can save valuable time. • The program can handle project management as well as the ability to generate numerous management reports. • Add-on modules available include the ACOTRUCK mobile work order for technicians in the field, the Caller ID option, the ability to e-mail or page technicians their service call assignments, and a convenient integration with Microsoft MapPoint®. 	9.5	<p>5.0 to 5.9 (Average): A product that scores in this range is functional but unremarkable.</p> <p>4.0 to 4.9 (Mediocre): Products in this range are below average. They fall in the middle of the pack for most features, but suffer from a few additional major flaws.</p> <p>3.0 to 3.9 (Poor): A customer should probably not consider purchasing a product in this range or lower. There may be one or two specialized circumstances, however, that could justify the purchase of this product for a very low price for a specific demand.</p> <p>2.0 to 2.9 (Terrible): A product that receives a rating in this range does not satisfy any of its intended users' needs and has no meaningful strengths.</p> <p>1.0 to 1.9 (Abysmal): A product in this range should never have been produced. This product has no redeeming qualities and worse, may actually harm the user or the user's productivity.</p>



Ease of Use/Service and Support

Acowin's ease of use is supported by the flowchart organization on the main menu. Even with all the available features, the product is uncomplicated and a new user can be operational in a short period of time.

Technical support is included for six months with the initial program purchase after which support packages are available. On-line tutorials are provided to assist with training. Program documentation is also available as an on-line manual so that materials are always up to date when product changes occur.

9.5

Data Security / Privacy

Acowin includes some exceptional features for data security. First on the list is the requirement to establish user ids and passwords for employees that need to access the program. Additionally, various permission selections are available to help control which areas of the program are accessible to each specified employee user id. The program also includes a back-up utility and an automatic program update feature that checks for any available product updates each night.

The company's privacy policy is adequate and can be viewed on their website at <http://www.acowin.com/public/privacy.htm>.

9.5

Integration with QuickBooks

Acowin's seamless integration with QuickBooks can save valuable time by sharing customer data bi-directionally between programs. Invoices are exported manually to better insure the integrity of information shared with QuickBooks. The only feature I would like to see added is the ability to automatically recognize and update vendor data within Acowin when changes are made in QuickBooks.

9.0