You can have a combination of employees who want direct deposit of their paychecks and those who want a paper check.

The 941 Report and 1099s can be easily created with a couple of clicks.

Create your W-2s and W-3s and print directly from the program or even file them electronically.

Transfer all of your payroll transactions, both direct deposit and manual, to Accounting with a single click.

Wrapping It Up
Perhaps now is the time to poll your committee chairs, volunteers, and staff to find out what reporting capabilities are needed at your church. Ask them, "In an ideal world, what information would be helpful to you in your activities and long-range planning to set the church on the right path?"

After reading some of these scenarios and talking with everyone, it is then time to ask these two questions:

* Is it time to invest in a good program to assist us in our ministry?
* Can my current software give me this information easily or is it time to shop for a new one?

There are many software companies out there that provide good options of programs for all sizes of churches and all different reporting capabilities. Search, study, ask questions, look at previews, attend free introductory webinars, and take a test drive to discover which is best for you. Don't let your data just sit there gathering dust in the "drawer" of the file cabinet. Put it to work for you!

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Sidebar
Benefits of Facility Management Software
By Tim Cool

How do you track and process work requests and facility management tasks at your church? Do you use a legal pad? Excel spreadsheet? Post-it notes? Cross your fingers, then hope and pray?

Let's explore the options for tracking work orders, service history, equipment inventory, capital improvements, vendor log, and much more. We will investigate the needs of most churches to track service requests and work orders, as well as being proactive on tracking capital improvements to assist in your annual budgeting process.

 To keep this all in perspective, let's not forget that our ministry facilities are large complex commercial structures with lots of very expensive moving parts that need to be maintained, serviced, and repaired. These facilities have been entrusted to us, so let's do our part to steward them.

1. Be Intentional
There is a quote that most of you have heard:"People do not plan to fail, we fail to plan." Having a proactive system that will serve as your "reminder" for these items will not only save you time, but assist you in being intentional with the care and maintenance of your facility.

2. Central Database
Do you have a spreadsheet here…a post-it note there…an e-mail requesting work to be done…a legal pad full of ideas…your computer calendar with dozens of reminders? Unfortunately, this is more the norm than the exception. So, what happens when you lose one of these items?

3. Hit By a Truck
What would happen to all of your data, plans, procedures, systems, process, etc. if your key person at the church was (heaven forbid) hit by a truck? Would you lose all of the data that is squirreled away in their head?

4. Long-Term Capital Improvement Planning
We have been pretty surprised by how many churches do not have an active "sinking fund" or some form of capital improvements process. When we ask them about their planning process for major capital expenses (i.e., replacing flooring, replacing HVAC equipment, resurfacing parking, etc), the too-common answer is, "We wait until it breaks and then replace it." That does not sound like planning.

5. Prioritize Work
Does the "urgent" take precedence over the important? Does that last e-mail or call take you off task? If so, you are not alone. Trying to keep all of this in your head or on a legal pad will only increase the stock value for Advil.

6. Manage Vendors
Who is approved to work on your site? How do you track their names, address, e-mails, phone numbers, etc? How do you dispatch work to the vendors? Most good facility management software solutions will, at the very least, provide a section to list all of the pertinent data about your vendors and subs and provides a means for assigning work orders to vendors.

7. Historical Data
I have been using the P90X workout series, and the trainer keeps reminding us that we need to write down what weights we use and how many reps. He says, "If you don't know what you've done, how can you know what you need to do?" That same applies to our building management and maintenance

8. Asset Database
Do you know the make, model, serial number, and filter size of each piece of equipment at your facility? Do you

know what kind of light bulbs you have and how many fixtures in the facility use that type bulb? Now, I would not expect you to know all of this off the top of your head, but could you, with a few clicks, get to this data?

9. Warranty Tracking

Have you ever paid for a service call to later find out that it was under warranty? How did that make you feel? Were you able to get a full refund? Knowing what the warranty is for your major components can save you a great deal of money…both short-term and long-term.

Now that we have addressed why facility management software is a good idea, let's explore the features you should be looking for:

Minimum Features

* Produce and assess service requests
* Prioritize the service requests
* Track work orders
* Store historical data

Upgraded Features

* Track vendors and assign work orders directly to them
* E-mail notification process for all work
* Asset tracking and assigning of work orders to specific equipment
* Assessment tools such as life cycle projections, energy usage, defective equipment tracking, capital improvement tracking and projections

The above lists will help get you off on the right foot. Do your shopping and due diligence. It is worth your time, and it will save you money over the long run.

Tim Cool is president and chief solutions officer of Cool Solutions Group, www.coolsolutionsgroup.com.

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