



QUICKBOOKS FOR CONTRACTORS: WHY (AND WHEN) WE RECOMMEND IT

BY FOUNDATION SOFTWARE

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QuickBooks® is among the best accounting systems for smaller companies, and for contractors just starting out, it's a great place to begin toward an organized accounting system. While it isn't designed for construction, it's made to work for a wide range of businesses.

So contractors can still benefit from using QuickBooks for construction. How much, of course, depends. More extensive job costing, specialized billing and complex payroll can mean contractors eventually experience some limitations. That said, here's why we can recommend QuickBooks for contractors.

Starting Out on QuickBooks for Contractors

To begin with, whether you're an established GC transitioning off spreadsheets or a roofer launching out on your own, QuickBooks gives you options. That can be perfect if you're really just looking to get your accounting jumpstarted as you're working toward growth. QuickBooks Online "Self Employed" edition, for example, lets a single user:

- ✔ import and track transactions,
- ✔ invoice and accept payments, and
- ✔ run basic reports like P&Ls and cash flows.

With small business editions like "Essentials" and "Plus" — plus payroll add-ons — you can





get numerous other important features too. So there's room to grow before moving into a true job cost accounting system with other software.

For starting out, QuickBooks Online Plus gives you up to five named users. So each user has their own separate login credentials. Notice, that's different from a "concurrent user," where you might have 15 people with logins but only so many can be logged in at once. If needed, you can always purchase more users — currently up to 25.

Upgrading between QuickBooks Online editions is easy too — first, because it's cloud-based. That means no downloads or installations to use the app on your desktop. Because QuickBooks Online doesn't currently require a contract, you're free to switch plans at any time. In most cases, you should be able to purchase a higher-level plan right from inside the application.

Easy-to-Use

One of the biggest appeals of QuickBooks for contractors is that it can be really simple to use. Of course, that does depend on the depth of features and options you have available. That said, basic invoice entry can be extremely straightforward, and connecting your QuickBooks account to bank accounts can make importing transactions easy. Some customization options also let you tailor major reports so you can play around and save them for later.

What this amounts to is that you don't need to have a strong accounting background to use

QuickBooks pretty effectively. Don't know your "credits" from your "debits"? That's OK. Like a lot of accounting software, the simple entry screens take care of most of that for you. Short of delving into some of the more advanced features, like adjusting journal entries or integrating third-party apps, you shouldn't need a lot of prior knowledge to get a minimum value.

Support

Another great help for contractors is that QuickBooks' support is as consistently well-rated as anyone's. Users have several options, including calling for direct phone support. You can also check with a library of online resources or post your question to the QuickBooks online community.

And because QuickBooks has a large user community in different industries beyond construction, many users have also created their own support resources. You can find countless websites and YouTube videos for a quick overview or an unofficial how-to guide.

Cloud

Recently, QuickBooks has been moving its users to an entirely [cloud-based accounting application](#). That means you can access it anywhere you have an Internet connection. That can be your desktop in the office, or it can be the brand-new laptop you just bought. With cloud software, there are no downloads or installations.

Of course, the other benefit with the cloud is that backups are handled for you automatically, and the servers that your software runs on are professionally secured. Contractors can definitely feel good about that.



Free Accounting Software Trial

Finally, there's one last benefit of QuickBooks for newer construction businesses worth mentioning. Right now, *it's free accounting software for contractors*. At least, it's free for a [30-day trial](#). Of course, while 30 days might not really be enough to transact business, it might give you enough of a feel to decide whether you'd want to pay to try it out further. From there, you can determine whether you're the right size to be a QuickBooks contractor or whether something else might be a better fit.

Conclusion: Why Are We Telling You All This?

QuickBooks offers contractors a really good application from a company with a really good reputation. Just because we offer specialized accounting software for the construction industry, we're not going to diminish what others do well. [A lot of our clients come to us from software like QuickBooks](#). We talk to contractors every day who are relatively happy with it or don't feel ready to upgrade yet. We respect that.

The important thing for us is that contractors are getting the most out of an accounting system that fits their current needs and goals. If you think it might be right for your construction business, investigate QuickBooks. Interview the vendor Intuit, and



talk to contractors in your trade who use QuickBooks for construction. If you conclude it has the capabilities you need, make the decision that best positions you for success.

If you're looking for more construction-oriented reporting and features — on-premise or on the cloud — then invite us to the table. We want to learn about your needs and goals. Let's find out if we're a good fit for you. [Start with a self-guided product tour.](#)



Foundation Software is the developer of FOUNDATION® – America's #1 Construction Accounting Software. Since 1985, we've been dedicated to giving contractors the back office tools they need to manage their job cost accounting and project management, with on-premise, cloud and mobile.

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