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The

QuickBooks Premier line of small business accounting programs from Intuit includes several industry-specific versions, including the Contractor Edition, which offers features specifically geared toward builders. All versions of Premier include the same core module set, providing integrated GL, AR, AP, contact management, inventory and a variety of options for payroll. The Contractor Edition adds additional functions for tracking jobs and change orders, managing subcontractors, billing by phase, estimating, job costing and profitability analyses.

Recent new additions to QuickBooks are also available in the Contractor Edition, including the new Client Data Review tool, which helps with write-up and troubleshooting functions. Suggested retail price for QuickBooks Premier 2009 Contractor Edition is \$399.95 for a single user, \$749.95 for two users, and \$1,099.95 for the three-user edition, which can support up to a total of five concurrent users. (Current discounts apply that could bring the price down significantly.) Each of the QuickBooks Premier industry-focused editions (Professional Accountant, Contractor, Professional Services, Manufacturing, Retail, General Business and Nonprofit) are included with all of the other editions, which can be useful for entrepreneurs running different types of entities. Likewise, the program can support any number of client businesses.

LEARNING CURVE/EASE OF USE:

QuickBooks revolutionized small business accounting, specifically due to its

interfaces, which have evolved significantly over the years, but have always

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interface. It uses a workflow design with icons for accessing common vendor, employee and customer tasks, such as entering purchase orders and employee time, paying bills, and receiving payments. Additional functions for these entities are available via customizable workflow-oriented Customer, Vendor and Employee Center screens. These Centers and additional functions can also be accessed using the menu and icon bars at the top of the program window. Housed on the right side of the screen is an assistance panel along with a business financial summary table with account balances, AR, AP, etc.

From virtually any screen, users can easily drilldown deeper into transaction information, reporting, client histories and contact data, or journal entries, while the program's full-time audit trail monitors and records all actions and changes. Data-entry screens are exceptionally well developed and include a multitude of link functions, drilldown options, selection lists and various other smart features that let users quickly check inventories, customer credit limits, histories and other details.

KEY MODULES & MANAGEMENT TOOLS:

Premier Contractor Edition offers a good standard module set that includes GL, AP, AR, invoicing, inventory, scheduling, revenue forecasting and budgeting. It also offers options for integrated or outsourced payroll, credit card acceptance in-person or over the phone, sales tax compliance, and support for multiple currencies.

The system's construction industry-specific features include a Job Costing Center that acts as a management dashboard, displaying real-time drilldown summaries

of key information, including the profitability of jobs and clients. The system also offers customizable job cost tracking reports, the ability to quickly convert

estimates into invoices and purchase orders, and tracking of change orders.

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clearing open AP and AR items, cleaning up sales and payroll tax accounts, and reviewing changes and errors made by clients. Intuit also enhanced its Accountant's Copy function, which speeds data transfer, and added new features to the bank reconciliation function.

REPORTING:

All of QuickBooks Premier's versions include a well-stocked Report Center with more than 150 prebuilt financial statements and reports, lists and other options, as well as a financial statement designer and custom reporting tool. The Contractor Edition also offers several industry-specific options, including job profitability detail and summary, cost to complete job detail and summary, estimates versus actual detail and summary, job status, job costs by job or vendor, billed/unbilled hours and expenses. Reports can be output into Excel and Word, saved as PDFs or emailed directly from the program.

IMPORT/EXPORT/INTEGRATION:

Premier Contractor Edition's modules automatically route all data throughout the program, and can share data with third-party add-on programs available through the Intuit Marketplace, including more than 200 programs specifically designed for the construction sector. The Premier industry versions also directly integrate with the professional accountant's version of the system, and can import data from Excel, Quicken, Microsoft Office Accounting and other programs.

SUPPORT & TRAINING:

QuickBooks Premier offers hundreds of assistance and guidance tools, from on-screen tips to right-click options and wizards that guide users through various tasks. Intuit offers an excellent support website that provides an extensive knowledgebase,

access to QuickBooks user communities (including one for builders and contractors),

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2009 OVERALL RATING:

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