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Public accountants wear many hats, ranging from tax professional for individuals and business or nonprofit entities, to bookkeeper, payroll service provider, strategic business consultant and financial advisor, virtual CFO, and even the sleuth role of an auditor. At the same time, you're a small business owner and employer, too, which means you face many of the same challenges that your small business clients do.

Considering the important role that you play in the success of your small business clients, it makes sense that they turn to you for many other needs. So whether you've made technology consulting a part of your practice or not, it makes sense that if you discover a product or service that might help your clients be more productive in their day-to-day business, that you share the information with them. After all, your firm's success depends on the success of your clients and on your reputation as a business expert. Not to mention that successful and growing small business clients will likely need additional and potentially more profitable services from you in the future.

With current economic realities, nearly every business is trying to find ways to do more with less, be more productive, to find new channels for revenue potential and to maximize the potential of their resources, whether financial, real property or their

staff. Of course, every industry has unique needs, and every individual business has

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The goal: Finding solutions that your clients can use to be more efficient and productive.

The result: A financially stronger client, and a strengthened client relationship for your firm.

Sage Billing Boss

www.BillingBoss.com

Target Small Business Type: Service-based small businesses and freelancers/consultants, providing web-based creation and management of invoices.

Overview: BillingBoss is a free web-based system for creating, sending and tracking the status of invoices, providing an easy-to-use interface and features that include setting up recurring invoices, creating quotes, customer management options, and the ability to add custom design elements to invoices, such as a company logo. The web-based nature of the program means that the small business owner/manager can access the invoicing system from anywhere, and can even offer access to their public accountant. The system can be used in conjunction with merchant accounts or users can accept credit card payments using their smartphone. Mobile versions of the system are offered for iPhone, Android and Blackberry.

BillingBoss offers customization options for default messages and the ability to set up tax rates for those in jurisdictions where services are subject to sales tax. Client data management includes multiple company contacts, email and other information, and data can be imported and exported from/to CSV files. The system is also offered in multiple languages and supports multiple currencies, and the

management dashboard shows an easy-to-understand array of data, such as

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Sage Payment Boss

www.sagespark.com/paymentboss

Target Small Business Type: Mobile small business owners/contractors who want an easy way to accept credit card payments while on the road, using either their existing merchant service accounts or using services provided by Sage Payments.

Overview: Payment Boss gives small businesses the power to quickly receive credit card payments. By simply logging into a mobile website on their smartphone, users can enter transaction details and the credit card information. No need for a swiper (but they do work with the system) and no need for a bulky credit card terminal. The system automatically authorizes the transaction and processes the payment into the business' account, creates a paid invoice and can send an e-receipt to the customer.

The system also integrates with Sage Billing Boss, a free web-based invoicing system, which provides basic customer management and electronic billing tools. Together, the systems provide industry-standard banking security features, simplified processing, consolidated account management and up-to-the-minute tracking of payments. It also makes it easy to see who's paid and who hasn't, from any location.

Potential Benefits: For small businesses looking for an easy way to accept credit cards, Payment Boss offers a simplified and mobile solution. This is especially handy for contractors and service providers like electricians, HVAC and landscaping. An additional and not minor benefit is that the business can get paid immediately instead of relying on invoicing and waiting for a check.

Big E-Z Bookkeeping

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that helps track income, expenses, account balances and credit cards, and even provides basic budgeting.

Additional tools allow users to set up to 65 expense categories and 12 income subcategories, quickly run period summary reports and track fiscal and calendar years. Big E-Z also comes with a receipt organizer. The program is much more limited than many of the big brands, but that's the point: It gives these small business owners (and personal users) the basic tools they need, with common language terminology and reports that are easy enough to use that they actually *will* use it. Of course, that helps their accountant, too.

Big E-Z uses Excel (2003 or newer) for data management behind the scenes (so users don't need to know anything about spreadsheets), and includes reconciliation functions and customization options. The full program costs \$59 for a single user (multi-user versions also available), and can be downloaded or bought by CD.

Potential Benefits: For very small businesses that's still manage their books manually (or not at all), Big E-Z offers a very affordable and, more importantly, extremely simple-to-use program that even most non-tech savvy users can pick up in a few minutes.

Zachary Systems eZ Account Import

www.zacharysystems.com

Target Small Business Type: Businesses that want to run paperless, but have multiple incoming file types that need to be converted and imported into their QuickBooks bank registers.

Overview: The eZ Account Import utility gives a simple three-step process for

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other key features include the ability to split transactions, display debit and credit totals, filtering tools and tracking and billing of customers for expenses, with the added ability to set billable status for each transaction. The vendor also offers a credit card data import system that allows importing of those transactions into the QuickBooks register.

Potential Benefits: eZ Account Import and eZ Credit Card Import help small businesses transfer financial data into QuickBooks in a fast and accurate way, helping to reduce data-entry time and errors, and also helping speed reconciliation processes.

FreshBooks

www.FreshBooks.com

Target Small Business Type: Small businesses, especially self-employed contractors and professional services companies who want a simple invoicing utility with e-delivery, management and collaboration tools.

Overview: FreshBooks was one of the original web-based customer billing systems, giving users a quick tool for creating invoices and estimates, and offering multiple templates and options for customization. The system goes further, however, by providing interactive tools that allow the customer (the person/business being invoiced) to log into a secure portal where they can view, download and upload data, based on the permissions and settings that the FreshBooks business has predetermined. Single- and multi-user versions are available, and user-level access rights can also be set up for differing staff and employee roles.

The online application also provides dozens of reporting options and allows

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to submit time and invoices. Additionally, the program has inventory tracking tools and per-item tax settings. Other tools include built-in timers, expense tracking and billing, support tickets, and specialized apps for all major smartphones.

Potential Benefits: FreshBooks makes it easy to manage invoices and offers good reporting options for a web-based SMB invoicing program. Multiple user settings and customer portal access and payment options really further its collaboration capabilities, allowing small businesses to get paid faster, while also managing customer relationships.

NeatReceipts

www.NeatReceipts.com

Target Small Business Type: Any business or individual who is frequently mobile and deals with incoming paper-based data that needs to be transferred into their computer.

Overview: NeatReceipts is a program that works with a scanner to automatically identify the information scanned on a document, particularly receipts, business cards and forms, and then organizes that information. The result is a scanned PDF document instead of an image, and with all of the words on the document searchable and easily organized.

As its name might imply, the program specializes in receipts, simplifying the input of expense reports. The optical character recognition (OCR) functions automatically looks for the date and amount of the transaction, sales taxes, the vendor name and contact information. NeatReceipts is equally adept at business cards, with the system capturing contact name, company, phone, email and other contact information. It

then allows users to create a contact in their Outlook or other content management

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NELiX TransaX QuickBooks Module

www.nelixtransax.com

Target Small Business Type: Any business that wants to accept credit and debit card payments, whether mobile, in-store, over-the-phone or online.

Overview: NELiX TransaX is a payment acceptance system with a QuickBooks integration module that allows for multiple methods of cashless payment processing. In other words, credit, debit and ACH payments. Through this system, small and mid-sized businesses can use merchant accounts for Visa, MasterCard, American Express and Discover, and the vendor offers hardware such as point-of-sale swipe terminals for accepting debit and credit payments from customers.

TransaX also offers payment gateways, which are software programs used for non-swipe transactions, such as phone-based and online sales where the credit card isn't physically present at the retail location, and help with verification and security of transactions. They also support recurring payments; allow for direct-from-checking (ACH) payments, refunds, reissues and voids; and provide export of data to QuickBooks format.

Other products from the vendor include merchant cash advance services, gift/loyalty debit cards and ATM machine sales. NELiX specializes in custom database solutions, web application, site design and QuickBooks hosting.

Potential Benefits: While there are some per-transaction options on the market, businesses that rely on a significant part of their revenue coming from card-based transactions should really implement a true merchant account system such as

TransaX, which provides top-level security, excellent integration and lower per-

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mobility.

Overview: B2BEE is an online system centered around its invoicing features, but offering considerably more, including customer portals for viewing invoices, strong reporting options, branding customization, time and expense tracking, creation of estimates and user-defined dashboards that let you quickly see critical issues like aging, trends and new clients.

The program opens into a web interface that is [YourCompanyName.GetTheBee.com](#), which also provides customers with the ability to log in and see the invoices or other information the business wants to share. The system's customer management features include integration with BaseCamp and offers vendor-specific customization, while basic inventory management, sales taxability settings and reporting functions also offer good capabilities.

The Bee's primary focus, however, is on time-based billing (and expense tracking and billing), and the program offers the ability to create multiple users with varying access rights, as well as groups. Work can be assigned to client projects and tasks, with billing rates set by customer, project, task or staff member. Users can either enter data directly or use a timer. Creating invoices from timesheets is a snap, and they can be printed or an email can be sent to the customer with a link to view their invoices and estimates.

Potential Benefits: B2Bee is more than just invoicing, but that's what it really does the best, especially for small businesses that are primarily service-based. The Bee gets an A for user-friendly interface. As an aside, the company is also helping to educate people on the crisis facing the flying kind of bee, upon which much of the world's agriculture relies on for pollination.

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automated and secure web-based utility.

In short, what the program does is let the user reach out to all of the different areas of the business (or multiple businesses) for which he or she wants to produce reports, and allows them to compile and contrast the data, side by side, in almost any manner desired. This can be by company, division, sales teams or other business sub-entities, with all data presented in real-time through the browser interface. The administrator can also set up login capabilities for other users, such as managers, investors or financial advisors, allowing them the same access to anytime, anywhere reporting without using QuickBooks to view the reporting.

Qvinci.web uses top-level security features and only accesses transaction data, not sensitive data such as SSNs or credit card or account numbers. The simple interface makes it easy to view reports across all areas of a business, quickly generating comparisons of balance sheets, cash flows, ratios, forensic analyses, AR aging, AP, sales, sales by rep, sales by item, net revenue or virtually any other data.

Potential Benefits: Since Qvinci.web can instantly pull in data from these various business units, it gives users a powerful tool that keeps them on top of all areas of their organization. And its consolidation capabilities let users quickly create rolled up P&Ls, compare groups or other tasks that involve hundreds or even thousands of files, doing it in seconds instead of hours or days.

Fujitsu – ScanSnap S1100 & S1500

www.ScanSnap.com

Target Small Business Type: Small businesses with frequent need to convert documents into digital format, including mobile staff.

Overview: Many accounting professionals have found Fujitsu's ScanSnap line to be a

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automatically creating keywords. When scanning business cards (or even plastic ID cards), it finds and pulls the contact information and can sync with Outlook. It's PC and Mac friendly, and includes the ability to scan directly to a file, email, print or send to the cloud.

At the desk, the S1500 offers the same OCR and automatic file generation capabilities, along with greater speed, a document feeder, and advanced document detection functions. The system comes bundled with a collection of intelligent software to further its power, including Adobe Acrobat standard edition, ABBYY FineReader, CardMinder and the ScanSnap Organizer, which gives tools for viewing, managing, editing and storing PDFs and JPGs created with the scanner.

Potential Benefits: The benefits of going paperless are not just for tax and accounting practices, and small businesses are quickly seeing how digital storage and management of various documents, especially receipts, invoices, warranties, titles, insurance and other items helps them spend less time working with paper, and more time working at their jobs. Their accounting firm benefits, too, since digital documents and OCR capabilities help reduce data-entry time and increase accuracy when performing client services ranging from write-up to tax compliance.

Bill.com

www.Bill.com

Target Small Business Type: Small businesses who want an automated and paperless solution to payables and receivables management.

Overview: Over the past three years, Bill.com has become popular with small businesses and with accounting firms, allowing them to get rid of the inbox of

vendor bills. Instead, Bill.com allows small businesses to upload, fax or email their

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electronically send custom invoices, use customer collaboration features, and receive electronic payments, without a merchant services account. The system also includes branded payment portals for customers to log into or visit from an emailed link, allowing them to see invoices and other documents and pay them electronically if they wish. Recurring invoices and payments can also be set up.

Both the AP and AR capabilities integrate with QuickBooks and Intacct, with transaction data routed directly into payables and the GL. Bill.com is **SAS 70 Type II certified** and a partner with AICPA's CPA2biz.

Potential Benefits: Not having to worry about paying bills on time, but knowing they will be ... and for about the cost of a postage stamp. The new invoicing and ability to receive online electronic payments is a strong plus, as well.

Small Business • Technology

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