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Mary Girsch-Bock • Jun. 14, 2016

www.freshbooks.com

From the 2016 Review of Accounting Systems for Small Businesses.

Best Fit: FreshBooks is designed for sole proprietors and other small business owners that desire a mobile system that can be used to track customer, payment, and client information.

Product Strengths:

- Designed for mobile users
- Integrates with a variety of apps
- Easy system startup, with little training needed
- Offers time tracking capability

Potential Weakness:

- Users may find themselves overwhelmed with apps in order to obtain the functionality they need

FreshBooks was one of the mobile pioneers, with the company started in 2003. Designed for small, one-person businesses and freelance professionals, the product has continually added features such as time tracking, customer billing and invoicing, and estimating. FreshBooks also works with a long list of third-party apps that increase the functionality of the product considerably.

Basic System Functions – 4.5 Stars

required. The user interface is basic, with tabs providing access to system functions, which include People, Invoices, Estimates, Expenses, Time Tracking, and Reports. Users can click on one of the tabs to access additional functions in that area.

Users can easily add customers and vendors on the fly, while they're processing an invoice or posting a payment, eliminating a lot of up-front setup time. A variety of 'getting started' screens are available to guide users through certain tasks like creating an invoice or posting a payment.

Core Accounting Capabilities: 4.5 Stars

Creating an invoice is easy in FreshBooks. Users simply need to setup the address they wish payments to be sent to, choose whether to invoice for products, services, or both, and then enter any client information, if the client has not already been entered in FreshBooks. Invoices can be easily printed, emailed, mailed, or even set up to be paid online if desired, using the online portal, which is included in the product. FreshBooks will also display client information, such as if a client has viewed an online invoice, or if an invoice has been paid. Late notices can be set up to be automatically sent, and appropriate late fees added to the invoice if desired. The Expense Status Legend, at the bottom of the screen will display the status of any expense that is entered into the system, including Unbilled, Invoiced, or Recouped, which appears on invoices that have been paid in full.

Users can manage invoice payments directly from the invoice interface, and notate whether a payment has been received in-house, or paid online. Users can easily track any sales tax details, with users able to enter the appropriate tax information when the client is entered, as well as any discounts. Users can track up to two levels of tax detail for each client, per invoice. For those needing to track time, FreshBooks also includes a built-in timer, or users can simply enter time information when entering estimates or invoicing information. FreshBooks integrates with Gusto Payroll

Services, so businesses that need to pay employees will be able to do so. FreshBooks

that client will be immediately accessible. Built-in project management capability allows users to create a specific project, assign staff members to that project, and record any activity associated with the project. Once the project is completed, an invoice can be automatically created that will include all related items, as well as staff time. Customer and vendor detail is easily managed in FreshBooks, with users able to add clients and customers as needed, entering specific preferences for each client. Any relevant documents can also be easily attached to the customer or vendor file. Inventory, Purchase Order, Point of Sale, and shipping integration is available from a variety of applications that are offered on the FreshBooks website.

Management Features: 4.25 Stars

FreshBooks offers a solid selection of reporting options, with Accounting Reports, Client Reports, Invoicing Reports, and Time-Tracking Reports available. Users can click on the one of the categories to display the available reports, which include Accounts Aging, Expense Reports, Invoice Details, Profit and Loss, Balance, Sheet, Payments Collected, Tax Summary, Recurring Revenue, and Item Sales, and Timesheet Details. Users can also access reports via the Most Popular Reports option, where the most frequently used reports are saved. All reports can be viewed on screen, printed, emailed to recipients, or exported to a CSV or Excel file.

For those using an accountant, they can simply invite their accountant to access reports for read-only access, or add them as a system user, so they will be able to access the system and make any changes or additions needed. FreshBooks also offers accountants the opportunity to become certified via a live webinar, where accountants can earn CPE credits, while also receiving a free FreshBooks account. Once they are certified, firm information will also be listed in an online directory that is accessed by users looking for an accountant.

Integration/Import/Export: 4.75 Stars

FreshBooks offers numerous add-ons in a variety of categories including Customer

FreshBooks website offers a support page, where users can access frequently asked questions, tips, and detailed information on how to complete specific tasks in the system. Product support is also available via email, or by calling FreshBooks toll-free support line. Help functionality can also be accessed directly from the product, and tutorials are available for new users to utilize at their convenience. Users can also choose to sign up for a free webinar, which provides an in-depth introduction to the product.

Summary & Pricing:

FreshBooks offers new users a free 30-day trial, with no credit card needed. Users have access to the full system, where they can try out the product at their leisure. For those looking to purchase FreshBooks, pricing starts at 9.95 per month for Sprout, which supports up to five customers/clients. Evergreen, which includes unlimited customers/clients, and one additional system user runs $29.95 per month.

2016 Rating – 4.5 Stars

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