Intuit, Inc. – QuickBooks Premier Contractor 2012

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- Limited time/expertise needed for installation and setup
- Solid accounting capability with industry specific chart of accounts
- Good integration with third-party software and a wide range of add-ons

Potential Weaknesses

- Limited ability for product expansion
- Limited customization capability

As in previous years, Intuit continues to update its popular QuickBooks business management software with new features and product enhancements. QuickBooks Premier Contractor 2012 provides tools to manage and track jobs for most small and mid-sized construction companies.

BASIC SYSTEM FUNCTIONS

QuickBooks continues to provide users with a customizable, easy to navigate user interface screen. The application uses transaction cycle-based Home Page as the main navigation point. All controls are navigated by using a drop down menu at the top of the screen, as well as workflow diagrams that display the available options for each area of the business (customers, vendors, employees, banking etc). Data entry screens are consistent with earlier versions, and all screens include look up options for quicker data entry. The new Calendar View provides better calendar management functions and users can scan documents and add to-dos to further improve functionality. Company Snapshots provide users with comprehensive views of selected reports such as payment status and company aging reports. A QuickBooks add-on provides remote personnel with easy system access. Data entry screens are consistent throughout QuickBooks and contain the necessary look up options.

Although there is a Mac OS version of QuickBooks Pro, as well as a separate Online

which allows users to manage inventory transactions from a single location. Users can utilize batch transaction processing when invoicing the same item or service. Recurring billings and invoices can be automated, and users can set the intervals between processing. The Premier Contractor edition uses construction related vocabulary and the chart of accounts that installs with this edition includes construction specific accounts. QuickBooks also offers numerous Payroll options, where users can either process payroll in-house, or utilize an outside payroll service. Solid banking functionality simplifies the import, tracking, and reconciliation of bank accounts and credit cards. QuickBooks contains a transaction audit trail, with an audit trail report available on demand. Managers can assign varying levels of access to QuickBooks, including full or specified access to each transaction cycle, and system areas can be made accessible or off limits as desired.

CONSTRUCTION/CONTRACTOR-SPECIFIC FEATURES

QuickBooks Premier Contractor 2012 contains solid estimation tools, allowing users to create custom estimates and estimate templates which can be used in future jobs. Quotes can be easily modified if necessary, and users have the ability to create multiple quotes for each job in the system. Good reporting ability allows users to track all job related costs, and project managers can easily track job estimates against actual results. Change orders are easily entered, and can be added to an existing estimate. Subcontractor time and expenses can be tracked and paid directly from the system. QuickBooks centers easily track all customer, vendor, and employee information, allowing users to create new items, search for existing data, or print lists or reports as needed. The new Leads Center provides users with the ability to better track any potential sales leads and can easily convert those leads to sales. The Inventory Center provides users with a centralized area to manage inventory transactions which include entering part numbers, units of measure, and re-order points. There are also a number of user-defined fields available for additional

tracking. Users can create purchase order templates for future use, and add new

Loss by Job provides management with income and expense information, and can also compare actual results with amounts estimated. The QuickBooks Report Center makes it easy to run reports from a central location, with all available system reports categorized for quick access. Reports can be easily customized as needed, and exported to Excel directly from the print screen. QuickBooks incorporates templates throughout the application, so users can quickly create and save billing, invoicing, reporting, or other recurring transactions for future usage. QuickBooks users can now also access industry specific report templates created by other users. The application can create groups of reports as well as customer invoices and statements. All reports can be published as a PDF file. QuickBooks allows users to maintain complete control over all documents by attaching relevant documents such as blueprints, contracts, and reports to transactions / items / customers / vendors / employees within the software for free – the documents are stored locally next to the data file. An online document storage service is no longer offered with the 2012 version of QuickBooks.

INTEGRATION/IMPORT/EXPORT

Standing data can be imported and exported using a text file format, and third party tools are available to simplify the transaction import process. Users can also import data using a .csv format, and files can be exported to Excel as needed. All data imported into QuickBooks will need to be modified prior to importing into existing data files. QuickBooks works with a long list of third-party software applications, as well as existing Intuit add-ons such as Intuit Sync Manager, which helps to keep files accurate.

HELP/SUPPORT

All QuickBooks products are truly designed for the new system user, and as such, contain a wide range of learning tools and training options. Learning tutorials guide

new users through basic system functions and the Windows 'help' function allows

routine support calls are frequently routed overseas, all payroll related questions are handled by U.S. personnel only. A word of caution: if utilizing local 'experts,' look for certification and construction industry experience and references. Many consultants call themselves QuickBooks experts. The true experts will be able to document their capabilities and expertise.

SUMMARY

QuickBooks Premier 2012 is a reliable, consistent application. A single user system is $399.95, with the 2012 upgrade version priced at $359.95. A 3-user version has a list price of will run $999.95, with suggested upgrade pricing of $899.95.

An excellent entry level product, QuickBooks is ideal for the smaller construction company looking for an affordable product that just about anyone can use.