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ACCOUNTING

4 Apps for Small Business Accounting

The ability to check on the status of cash, receivables, and payables from anywhere is a critical business need.

Brian Tankersley, CPA.CITP, CGMA • Feb. 27, 2013



Although accounting professionals may not think of mobile access to accounting data as a key need for entrepreneurs, the ability to check on the status of cash, receivables, and payables from anywhere is a critical business need.

We review six SaaS small business accounting applications [in this issue](#), and four of the reviewed products provide at least one mobile app to help businesses perform common tasks on the go.

- Kashoo Accounting for the iPad
- FreshBooks app for iPhone/iPad
- Xero Touch for iOS and Android
- QuickBooks mobile apps (multiple)

While some would argue that a mobile app is not a necessity due to the availability of mobile web access to all of the reviewed applications, the user experience is improved by each of these mobile applications.

Kashoo Accounting

Kashoo Accounting is an app for the iPad which allows users of Kashoo to synchronize their offline data on the device with the information online at Kashoo.com. Accounting professionals who have access to multiple companies can select which entity they would like to work with from a simple drop down menu.

Users can access banking information, create invoices from anywhere, and can record expenses in real time. The app includes three simple dashboards for profitability, vendors, and customers.

Users can review transactions automatically imported from bank and credit card accounts, view the status of billing and collections, see unpaid bills, view account details in the general ledger, and view four basic reports from the iPad.

The ability to view data for multiple companies offline and sync from an internet connection is appealing to many users. While security could be improved by requiring a PIN or password entry every time the user starts the app, users can mitigate this risk by requiring users to enter a PIN each time the iPad is booted or powered up.

Figure 1: Kashoo Accounting for iPad summarizes data in a simple dashboard.

FreshBooks

Since our May 2012 discussion of mobile clients for FreshBooks, the Company has released its own app for iOS and Android devices. These applications allow users to perform common tasks such as create estimates, send invoices, enter payments, classify expenses, and enter time for projects.

The software includes some graphics within the interactive diagrams (for example, the boat and squirrel in Figure 2) which brighten up the somewhat drab experience of dealing with accounting and financial matters.

The free FreshBooks apps for iOS and Android can be downloaded from either the iTunes App Store or Google Play.

Figure 2: The FreshBooks mobile app presents a fun, interactive view of small business finances.

QuickBooks Mobile Apps

We discussed some of the capabilities of the QuickBooks Mobile app in July 2012 issue of The CPA Practice Advisor. These features include creating estimates, invoicing, entering cash sales and payments, and viewing customer information.

Although the free QuickBooks Mobile application does not allow users to enter or capture expenses, the software integrates with QuickBooks Online as well as the desktop product (desktop access requires an optional Intuit's mobile data access service).

Intuit has a number of applications which work with data that touches QuickBooks Online. These applications include:

- Intuit GoPayment, a mobile payment app and device which allows users to read and transmit data from supported smartphones. Intuit Online Payroll, a mobile app which allows users to work with Intuit's web-based payroll service for QuickBooks Desktop and QuickBooks Online.

All three of the apps (QuickBooks Mobile, Intuit GoPayment, and Intuit Online Payroll) are available from the iTunes App Store and Google Play.

Figure 3: QuickBooks Mobile permits iOS and Android users to perform common tasks on a tablet or smartphone.

Xero Touch

Xero Touch is the mobile version of the Xero web-based accounting software. Since Xero Touch was covered in August 2012, the company has continued to update its features and has released a version for Android devices.

Both versions of this application support innovative features like capturing and uploading pictures of receipts to support expense claims, and real-time, mobile bank reconciliation supported by a direct interface which automatically imports data from most U.S. financial institutions.

Figure 4: The Xero Touch app permits users to capture a receipt with a mobile device camera.

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