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Gail Perry • Oct. 28, 2014



Intuit, known for its financial software including Quicken, QuickBooks, TurboTax, Lacerte, ProSeries, and more, has joined the ranks of many vendors that serve the accounting community in hosting its inaugural user conference to an audience of thousands of QuickBooks users and ProAdvisors, small business operators, and software developers who gathered last week in San Jose at the McEnery Convention Center.

According to sources at Intuit, approximately 2,700 accountants, software

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said Charlie Carne, London, England-based owner of Charlie Carne & Co.

The conference, billed as an ecosystem event, was a confluence of training opportunities, thought leadership, product announcements, and networking, located in a setting that was both modern and approachable. “From the beginning, we had a clear vision for QuickBooks Connect: TED meets a user conference, built on three equal pillars offering education, inspiration, and connection,” said Kara DeFrias, senior manager, brand and innovation experiences for Intuit and co-executive producer of QuickBooks Connect.

“We wanted to break the mold for what conference attendees would expect. We studied great events like Sundance and SXSW [South by Southwest] and brought design thinking and a user-centered approach to each touch point of the QuickBooks Connect experience. The vibe we were going for was cool but not trendy, surprising yet familiar, and bold but not brazen. The overwhelmingly positive feedback from attendees across all aspects of the event shows that all of this resonated with them!”

Product announcements at the event included the launch of the new [QuickBooks Online Accountant](#), designed to transform how accountants work with their online QuickBooks accountants. Specific features include the ability to monitor all clients at once, any time, from anywhere, and see alerts on all outstanding items for all clients. Accounting firms can now assign access rights so employees have customized access to specific clients. New book-to-tax features allow direct flow-through from QuickBooks Online to Intuit Tax Online for generation of tax returns.

Intuit also announced its [new partnership](#) with document management provider Box to enable a new document collaboration center inside QuickBooks Online Accountant. In addition, Intuit used the occasion of the conference to announce many other changes and upgrades to its products:

- New mobile enhancements for small businesses including automatic syncing

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The conference schedule afforded attendees opportunities to choose from a variety of learning sessions geared toward growing small businesses and improving accountant relationships with clients, onsite certification training for the various QuickBooks Pro Advisor designations, and a star-studded cast of main stage speakers who shared their growing pains in starting their own businesses. The keynote speakers included Earvin “Magic” Johnson, Martha Stewart, Arianna Huffington, Bill and Giuliana Rancic, poet Sekou Andrews, and others.

“You brought amazing entrepreneurs – they inspired me to no end,” said Silvia Chestnut-Evans, president of Palm Beach Accounting and Financial Services, LLC.

The speaker lineup from within the accounting profession was just as impressive, featuring well-known thought leaders including Scott Cook and Brad Smith, Intuit founder and CEO respectively, Gary Boomer, Greg LaFollette, Darren Root, Joe Woodard (“These are our rock stars,” said Kirkby), Ron Baker, Dawn Brolin, Cathy Iconis, Stacy Kildal, Michelle Long, Edi Osborne, Doug Sleeter, and many many more.

Intuit pulled out the stops when it came to entertainment, hiring rock band Train to provide an event of live music and dancing. Food and beverages were abundant throughout the event, as were comfort stations for lounging, networking, and regrouping (and watching the World Series games). A two-story social media board kept attendees apprised of what was happening at all points throughout the conference. In addition, many participants were invited to participate in what Intuit likes to call Design 4 Delight – a half-day exercise wherein attendees were placed in a Donald Trump’s Apprentice-like setting and asked to create experiences, the intelligence from which could someday become incorporated into Intuit products.

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