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ACCOUNTING & AUDIT

Intuit's ProAdvisor Program Gets a Cloud-lift

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Taija Sparkman • Dec. 05, 2014

Fall proved to be a busy season for financial solutions maker Intuit. In October alone, they held their inaugural QuickBooks Connect Conference and announced a newly, redesigned QuickBooks Online Accountant product and a new, free QuickBooks ProAdvisor Program.

Intuit took the structure of the current ProAdvisor Program, which offers a desktop-focused program and a separate online-focused program, and built one complete program. Accounting professionals can sign up for the new QuickBooks ProAdvisor Program for free. In addition, the new program has more online benefits and products incorporated into the program. The new ProAdvisor Program has also been redesigned to allow accountants to completely manage their training, certification and membership details from inside QuickBooks Online Accountant. The new ProAdvisor Program includes a ProAdvisor Dashboard, numerous marketing resources and access to training, certification and your online directory profile (if certified) – all from within QuickBooks Online Accountant.

“We’ve consolidated our main ProAdvisor Program and our Cloud ProAdvisor Program into one program. We’ve combined the best benefits of both to create one program and one brand that everyone knows and loves,” said Luis Sanchez, Global Leader, QuickBooks ProAdvisor Program. “The world is changing and accountants need tools that will help them maximize growth – for themselves, their clients and their business.”

ProAdvisors previously had to login to a different website with a username and password that were different from their QuickBooks Online Accountant credentials in order to access their ProAdvisor membership details. Now users can access their ProAdvisor certification and benefits from inside QuickBooks Online Accountant to seamlessly view and manage their benefits. QuickBooks Online Accountant directly links into ProAdvisor membership details, such as status, and lets users know what they need to do to get to the next QuickBooks certification level. They also have access to the QuickBooks training program and more than 70 QuickBooks optional training courses. Certified ProAdvisors can edit their “Find-a-ProAdvisor” directory profile. As part of the new program, Intuit has also updated the program’s certification badges for a more modern and consistent look. Certified ProAdvisors can use these badges in their marketing materials, including business cards, websites and brochures.

The new ProAdvisor Program still has the same Silver, Gold and Diamond benefit structure, but now gives members two ways to advance through the program: through certification or through engaging with more QuickBooks Online customers. Historically, ProAdvisors started at the Silver level and moved up through certification, and Diamond level was only attainable through the desktop certification. Now, ProAdvisors can move up levels both by getting certified and by serving their QuickBooks Online clients. This benefit does not apply to the number of QuickBooks desktop clients a ProAdvisor serves, unless they move those clients over to the Cloud. ProAdvisors that have desktop clients can continue to move up based on certification also.

“We learned that lots of ProAdvisors like our certification program and want to get educated that way. However, there are some that are more hands-on and they prefer to learn by doing. This new program speaks to that learning style by allowing our ProAdvisors to unlock benefits by doing business with clients,” said Sanchez.

Intuit has also launched QuickBooks Online Advanced Certification, making it easy for both desktop and online users to get Advanced Certified. All users, regardless of

platform, can move from Silver to Gold by getting certified for QuickBooks Online and advance to Diamond level by getting their QuickBooks Online Advanced Certification. While users now have a variety of ways to unlock benefits, the free listing in the “Find-a-ProAdvisor” directory can only be unlocked through certification.

As part of the re-launch, Intuit has also announced a special partnership with Bill.com. Through the partnership, every ProAdvisor gets a complimentary corporate account. There are no fees to join, although users will still have to pay transaction fees, and accountants can add up to 50 users. ProAdvisors will also earn points for using Bill.com and making referrals to their clients that can be redeemed for cash, gift cards or charitable donations.

“We are extremely excited about announcing our partnership with Bill.com. They solve a very meaningful need for our customers. As our first big app partner, this represents our first step into becoming a program that’s about becoming a QuickBooks ecosystem, not just a product,” said Sanchez.

Other benefits ProAdvisors can enjoy include discount pricing on several products. QuickBooks Online Payments functionality is now integrated into the redesigned QuickBooks Online Accountant. ProAdvisors can take advantage of this payments integration without paying monthly fees, and receive the lowest rates available to any set of QuickBooks customers. ProAdvisors can also offer QuickBooks Online Payments services to their clients at very favorable rates. ProAdvisors also receive 50 percent off monthly pricing or 66 percent off annual pricing on QuickBooks Licenses, previously known as Docstoc. This bundle enables business owners to open their businesses the right way with simple and customized licensing guidance.

QuickBooks Self-Employed is a new product Intuit just launched, and as part of the new ProAdvisors Program, members get the product for one-twelfth of its regular price. Instead of the \$9.99 monthly subscription price, ProAdvisors can use it for themselves or offer it to their clients for \$9.99/year for the first year.

“We are reinventing the program and adding more online benefits because we know that our clients want to drive growth and that growth has to take place online,” said Sanchez.

To help accountants prepare for the launch, Intuit offered training in the weeks leading up to the release. From their website (accountant.intuit.com), accountants signed up for webinars that took place several times a week.

“We really wanted to make sure we gave accountants enough time to learn the new program before its launch. We’ve been dedicated to doing what it takes to deliver a great product. This is one of the biggest pieces of news we shared at QuickBooks Connect, and we’ve seen a lot of excitement following the announcement,” said Sanchez.

QuickBooks Online Accountant with the new ProAdvisor Program launched in early December for U.S. users. Intuit plans to roll out new programs in Canada, Australia, UK and India throughout 2015. Current users will be migrated over time, and QuickBooks ProAdvisors who serve desktop clients can purchase a QuickBooks desktop add-on to their membership, which offers QuickBooks desktop training, certification, support and software for an additional fee.

“Our customers have asked for a better experience and we’re excited to be able to give them that,” said Sanchez.

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