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ACCOUNTING

2016 Review of Intuit QuickBooks Online Accountant

John Higgins • May. 20, 2016



QuickBooks for the desktop has been the undisputed market leader in small business accounting software for the past two decades. Intuit is working to replicate and exceed that success with QuickBooks Online (QBO.) QBO is a comprehensive accounting system that can be extended to meet the specific needs of industry niches through the expansive catalog of third party add-on applications.

The QBO Accountant version is designed to provide a solution that integrates the client side needs of QBO with the firm side needs for trial balance reporting and tax preparation.

[From the 2016 Reviews of Virtual CFO Accounting Systems.](#)

Best Fit:

QBO Accountant is best suited for firms that have a current focus on QuickBooks desktop version and want to leverage their staff expertise to transition to a more collaborative cloud-based service delivery model.

Strengths:

- Extensive catalog of third party add-on applications to meet unique client requirements
- Client dashboard with direct access to the client's system and an "Account Watchlist" to monitor client KPI's and task tracking
- New trial balance feature to manage adjusting journal entries, tax line mapping and more
- Extensive training resources and certification with the ProAdvisor program
- Wholesale pricing at 50% discount enhances the opportunity for a value pricing virtual accounting service model
- Cloud based client document center

Potential Limitations:

- Ubiquity of QuickBooks makes it more challenging to differentiate
- QBO is continually compared to QB desktop, which creates an expectation gap

Summary and Pricing:

QuickBooks Online Accountant is free for ProAdvisor members, and is also at no cost for accountants that have at least one user of the QuickBooks Online business system on his/her client roster. The small business, traditional version of QuickBooks Online is available in three versions based on the features the business needs and the number of staff.

QuickBooks Online Simple Start costs \$12.95 per month; QuickBooks Online Essentials costs \$26.95 per month; and QuickBooks Online Plus costs \$39.95 per month. Separately, the QuickBooks ProAdvisor program is free for accounting firms who wish to support only online accounting clients. A paid model is available if supporting clients using the desktop version of QuickBooks. Wholesale pricings is provided at 50% discount off the prices listed here.

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