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CONTRACTOR'S GUIDE TO

QuickBooks® 2015

Karen Mitchell
Craig Savage

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Acknowledgments

The authors wish to express their thanks to *Tina Svalina* and *Laurence Jacobs* for all the work they did to get this book in your hands.

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ISBN13: 978-1-57218-304-9

Text update edited by Tina Svalina

Cover design by John Wincek

Contents

Introduction	5	3 Chart of Accounts	55
Why You Need This Book	5	The Chart of Accounts	55
2015 New Features	6	How to Use the Sample Chart of Accounts ..	57
One Click Create	9	Change, Add to, and Print Your	
QuickBooks Pro, Premier and		Chart of Accounts	63
Enterprise Editions	13		
QuickBooks Premier Contractor			
Edition Features	13		
What You Can Expect from This Book	21		
Why Should You Believe Us?	22	4 Items	67
What Does the Download Include?	23	Entering Items for a Non-Inventory-	
How to Download	23	Based Business	68
Removing the Installed Files	24	Entering Items for an Inventory-	
		Based Business	70
		Creating a Group of Items	72
		Entering Non-Job-Related Items	73
1 Setting Up Your			
QuickBooks Company	25		
Getting Started	25	5 Payroll Items	77
QuickBooks Company Files	25	Your Payroll Items List	77
Begin With Our Sample		Adding and Linking Payroll Items	79
and Company Data Files	26	Including Sole Proprietor and Partners'	
Upgrading an Old QuickBooks Company		Time Costs in Job Costs	83
to Version 2015	30		
Converting a Quicken Company Data File			
to QuickBooks	32	6 Classes	91
Converting an Existing QuickBooks 2015		Using Classes to Track Cost Categories	91
Company Data File to Our Setup	33	How to Create a Class	92
2 How to Set			
QuickBooks Preferences	35	7 Customers and Jobs	95
General Preferences	36	How to Set Up a Customer	95
Accounting Preferences	37	Adding a Job for a Customer	99
Bills Preferences	38	Exporting or Printing Your Customer List ..	102
Checking Preferences	39		
Finance Charge Preferences	41		
Items & Inventory Preferences	43		
Jobs & Estimates Preferences	44	8 Vendors and Subcontractors	103
Payroll & Employees Preferences	44	Setting Up 1099 Vendors	103
Reminders Preferences	46	Setting Up a Non-1099 Vendor	106
Reports & Graphs Preferences	47		
Sales & Customers Preferences	47		
Sales Tax Preferences	49		
Send Forms Preferences	49		
Service Connection Preferences	50		
Spelling Preferences	51	9 Employees	109
Tax: 1099 Preferences	51	Setting Up Your Employee List	109
Time & Expenses Preferences	52	Setting Up a Sole Proprietor/Partner	
		(Employee) Card	116

10 Opening Balances 117

Entering Opening Balances in QuickBooks	117
Entering Invoices for Accounts Receivable ..	118
Entering Bills for Accounts Payable	120
Beginning Job Balances	121

11 Organizing Work Flow 123

Setting Up Your Office Files	124
Organizing Your Payroll	128
Keeping Office Paperwork Current	128

12 Estimating 131

Using a Summary Estimate You Make Outside of QuickBooks	132
Customizing an Estimate Form	134
Memorizing an Estimate	134
Estimates and Progress Invoicing	137
Getting Detailed Estimates	137

13 Receivables 139

Four Ways to Invoice a Customer	140
Tracking Change Orders on Estimates	150
How to Handle Retainage	152
Recording a Payment You Receive	157
Recording a Deposit	158
Recording a Job Deposit	159

14 Payables 163

Creating and Using Purchase Orders	164
Using Purchase Orders to Track Multiple Draws and Committed Costs	166
Entering Bills Without Purchase Orders	169
Entering Bills for Overhead Expenses	171
Selecting Bills for Payment	172
Printing Checks	173
Vendor Workers' Comp Reports	174

15 Payroll 179

Entering a Timesheet	179
Processing Employee Payroll	182
Allocating Sole Proprietor or Partner's Time to a Job	188

16 Using QuickBooks on a Cash Basis 193

How to Record a Check	194
How to Record a Deposit	198
Checking Your Transactions with the QuickBooks Register	199

17 Reports 201

How to Customize Reports	201
Using Our Memorized Reports	205
Using Jobs, Time & Mileage Reports	222
Using Reports in QuickBooks Premier Contractor Edition	229

18 End of Month and End of Year Procedures 233

End of Month Procedures	233
Reading and Understanding Your Financial Reports	242
End of Year Procedures	245
Back Up Your Data Files and Close the Year	249

19 Real Estate Development 251

New Accounts	251
Setting Up a Development Job	252
Using Items to Track Construction Costs as WIP	253
Land Purchase Transactions	255
Personal Loans	258
Development Loans	264
Construction Loans	268
Recording the Sale of a Property	270
Conclusion	273

Index 275



Introduction



Why You Need This Book

Three years ago we released *Contractor's Guide to QuickBooks 2012*, because there had been significant improvements made to QuickBooks since the previous edition. Now, in this 2015 edition, we show three years of new features and improvements that will apply in a construction office. If you're running QuickBooks 2013, 2014 or 2015, this manual will guide you to and through these new features, helping eliminate the need for multiple programs, reduce data entry, and automate many tasks right inside of QuickBooks. This program is robust, and if you learn how to use all the features, you can streamline your processes, run a more efficient office and use the time saved to manage projects and increase revenue.

Some of the new features found since the 2012 release are:

- Income Tracker, for at-a-glance A/R details
- Enhancements to the Customer, Vendor and Employee Centers
- Enhancements to Purchase Orders, Enter Bills, Estimates, Invoices and Sales Receipts
- Support for multiple email attachments and customizable email templates
- Bank feed pulls that support more than one bank or account. Feeds can be categorized and sorted for your tax records.
- A tracker for all income records, including overdue invoices
- A bounced-check tracker
- Quick one-click reporting options

The customizable left side menu makes navigation faster too. Note that the 401 (K) service is no longer available but a new Health Service can be found in HR Essentials.

If you haven't seen the more-recent releases, those upgrades included:

- Lead Center - for tracking and managing sales leads.
 - Calendar - see at a glance what's due to be paid, due to be received from customers, and what you have on the To Do list.
-

- Batch Timesheets - for those crews or field employees with similar timesheets.
- Enter Memorized Transaction - feature enhancements make it easier to batch-process monthly recurring bills.
- One Click Create - the next big thing is the One Click Create button that Intuit added to QuickBooks in 2012. Once you get used to it, you'll wonder how you managed without it.
- Improved Excel Integration - Automatic updating of data from QuickBooks to your customized Excel reports.

We've described each of the features listed above (and a few more) in detail later in this section. We've covered the features in the last three releases in later chapters. You'll find QuickBooks has more features than we've listed, but the ones we bring to your attention are the features most useful to those in the construction business.

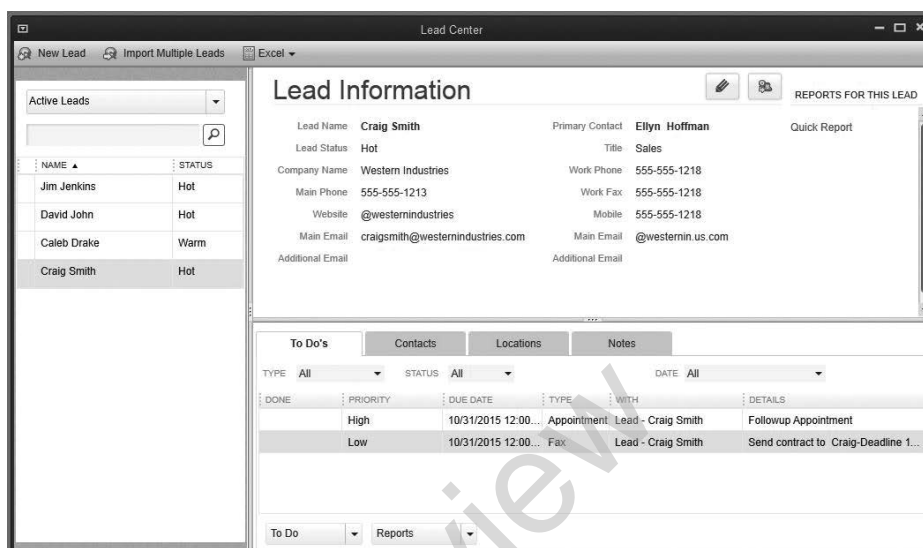
In the Recent Features section is information describing the different versions of QuickBooks — including Pro, Premier Contractor Edition, and Enterprise. This book is designed for all 2015 versions of QuickBooks, including Pro, Contractor, Accountant, and Enterprise. If you have a different version, you might want to read through that section to learn about the additional features built into that edition.

If you're using a version of QuickBooks older than the 2015 edition, you'll find the illustrations look different from those your program displays, because QuickBooks has given the software a largely cosmetic makeover in this release. But the information is mostly the same, with some changes in procedures from past years. Many new features were added in 2012, and more enhancements followed in 2013, 2014 and 2015. If you're using versions from 2003-2011, you won't have all the options. Discovering the latest features and enhancements covered in this book may inspire you to update to a newer issue of the program.

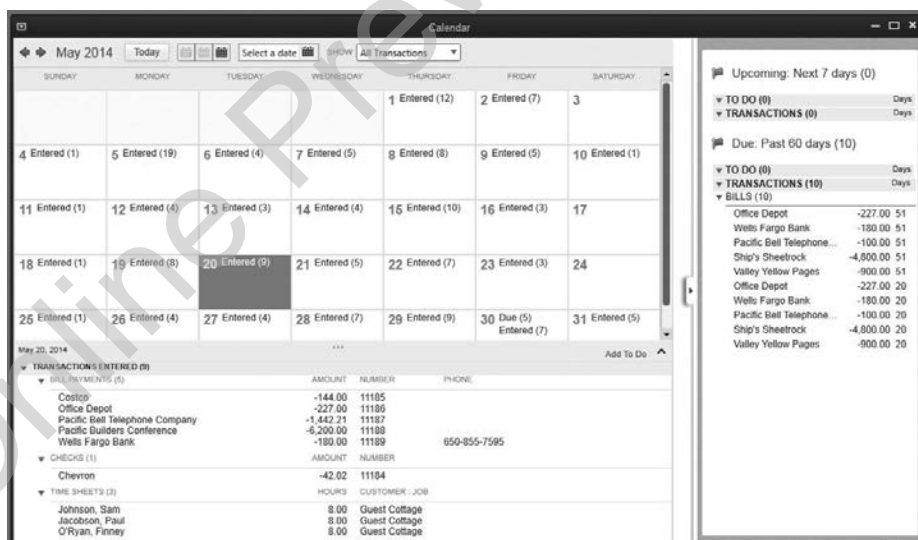
Your next question might be “Which version should I buy: Pro, Contractor or Enterprise?” The answer to that question is another question: Do you have the additional \$100 per user for Premier Contractor Edition or an extra couple thousand for Enterprise? If so, get the upgrade. They're worth the additional expense. But if you're on a budget and don't need the features we describe in that section, save your money. You can always upgrade in the future. For now, buy Pro. Chances are it will take you a couple of years to outgrow it.

Intro-1

This is an example of a lead who called in to get more information about the business. All the information for the lead is tracked along with a nice To Do list at the bottom.

**Intro-2**

The calendar view helps you keep track of your bookkeeping and accounting-related items, as well as the lead tracking To Do lists. You can sort it by specific types of transactions (at the top).

**Recent Features****Lead Center**

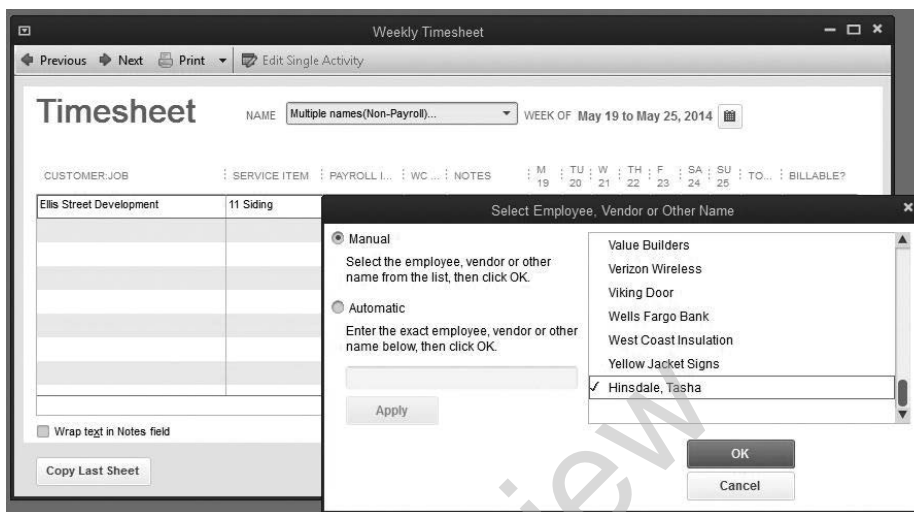
The Lead Center makes it easy to track your sales leads, summarize conversations in notes, and manage tasks on your To-Do list. When a lead becomes a customer, you can transfer the contact information into the Customer Center with one click. Set the status of your leads as Hot, Warm or Cold. Filter leads by Active, Converted, All, or Status.

Calendar View

See your invoices, billing and other important tasks in a Calendar View.

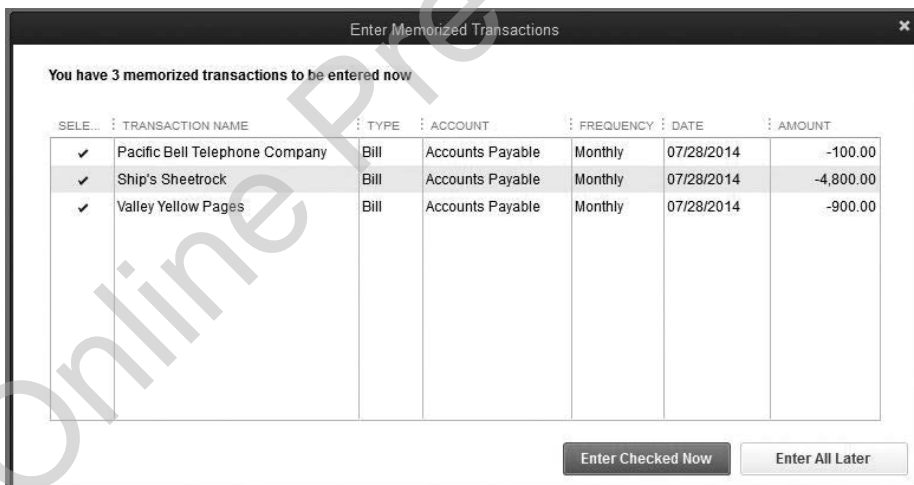
Intro-3

Shows you how to create the same timesheet for members of a crew who worked together during the week. The task(s), of course, can be changed after the individual timesheet is created.



Intro-4

An example of the new screen that helps us pick more than one memorized transaction at a time.



Batch Timesheets

If you have crews that work together on projects, you'll appreciate Batch Timesheets. This feature will help you create the same timesheet for everyone on the crew, including employees *and* subs.

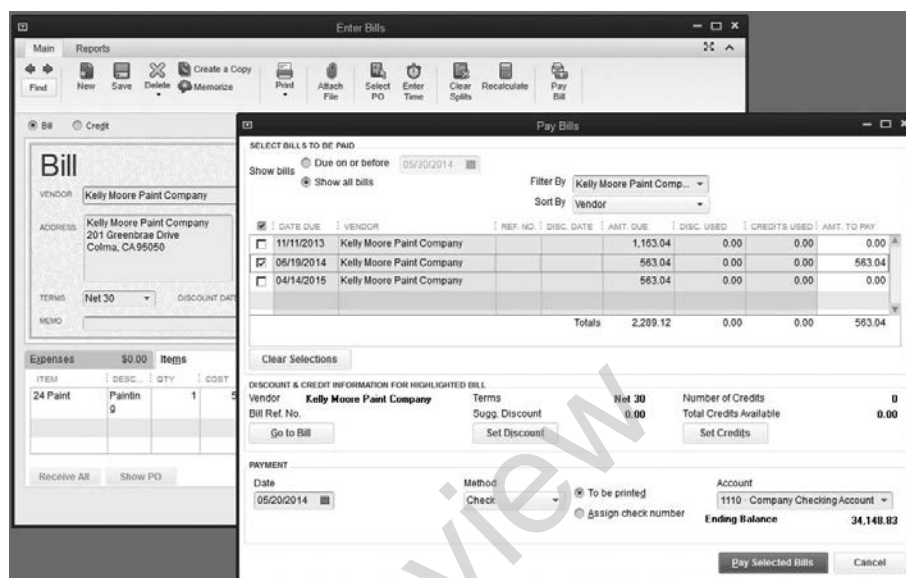
Enhancements to the Memorized Transactions

The ability to set up memorized transactions for recurring billing, invoices, and estimates has been available for a long time. But in this version, it's easier to review and process memorized transactions, as this new screen allows you to select more than one at a time.

Memorized transactions are handy on the 1st and the 15th of the month — when you have a number of recurring bills that need reviewing and enter-

Intro-5

Here we created a bill (on the Enter Bills screen in the background) and hit the Pay Bill button. In the Pay Bills screen in the foreground, the bill you just entered appears, ready for you to print or pay online via bill pay.



ing. If the transaction doesn't have to be reviewed and edited before it's created, you would memorize it to automatically post the transaction; that way you don't have to remember to create it. Office rent is a good example of a fixed recurring bill that needs to be entered prior to the first day of each month. An example of a memorized transaction that would be modified would be a cell phone bill, where the amount changes every month.



One Click Create

QuickBooks was one of the pioneers of the “drill down” technology — something that we now can't imagine living without. The interesting thing is that our kids think we're from another planet when we refer to the days before drill down. Believe it or not, there are accounting software programs available for purchase that *don't* have drill down ... or the ability to go from a transaction on a report back to the document, like the check or the deposit screen you originally used when entering the transaction.

You'll find that the One Click Create feature is like drill down — in the long run it could save you and your staff a lot of time.

Small construction firms usually need to process transactions quickly. They don't always have the luxury of entering a bill and waiting until the 1st or 15th to print all the checks that need to be issued for the prior 15 days. At times they need to enter a bill and turn right around and pay that bill immediately. The pay bill icon takes you directly from the bill to the pay bills screen; no more scrolling through multiple vendors and bills to find the one you want to pay.

Intro-6

In this example, we entered Title Company in the search. When we hit the search button, all transactions with the Title Company will be shown.



Search Tool

This is a time-saving feature. It's now easier to find transactions as well as view the pertinent information surrounding the search. You can choose to **Show Results From**

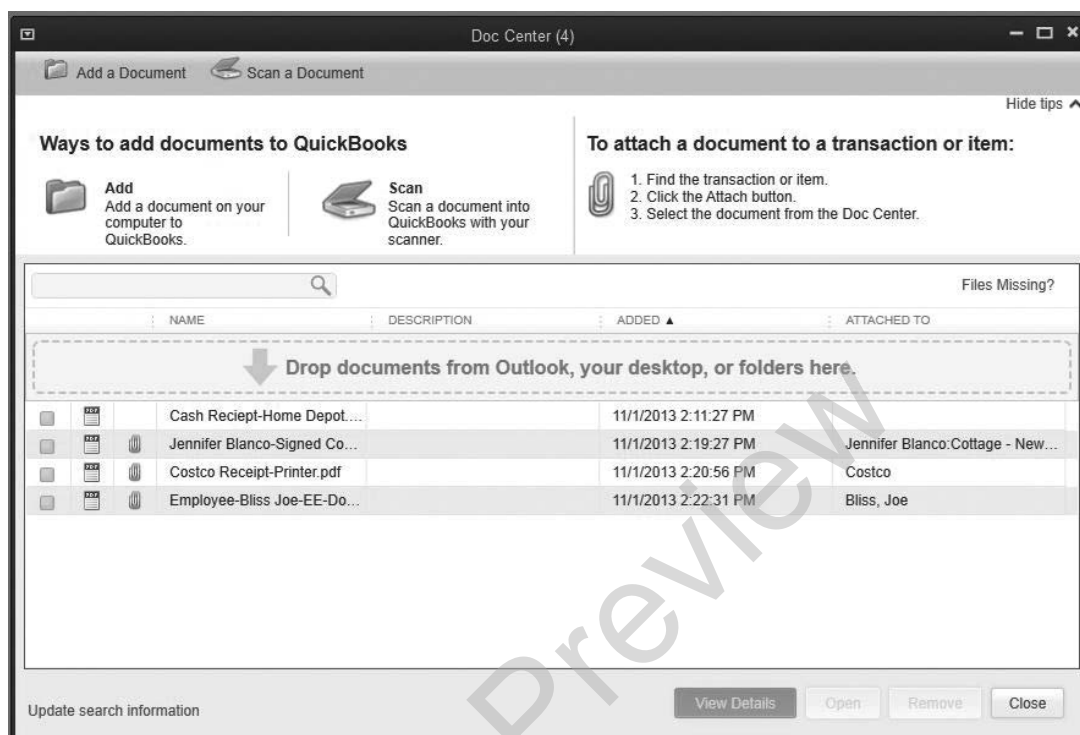
- Transactions
- Customers
- Vendors
- Accounts
- Items
- Employees
- Other

When searching for a dollar amount, open the search window by clicking the Edit menu and selecting Search. As you can see in figure Intro-7, there's a field for Amount. Select Exact, More than or Less than from the pull-down. You may also specify a date range.

Intro-7

This is an example of what the search screen shows us after it has completed the search for Title Company.





Intro-8

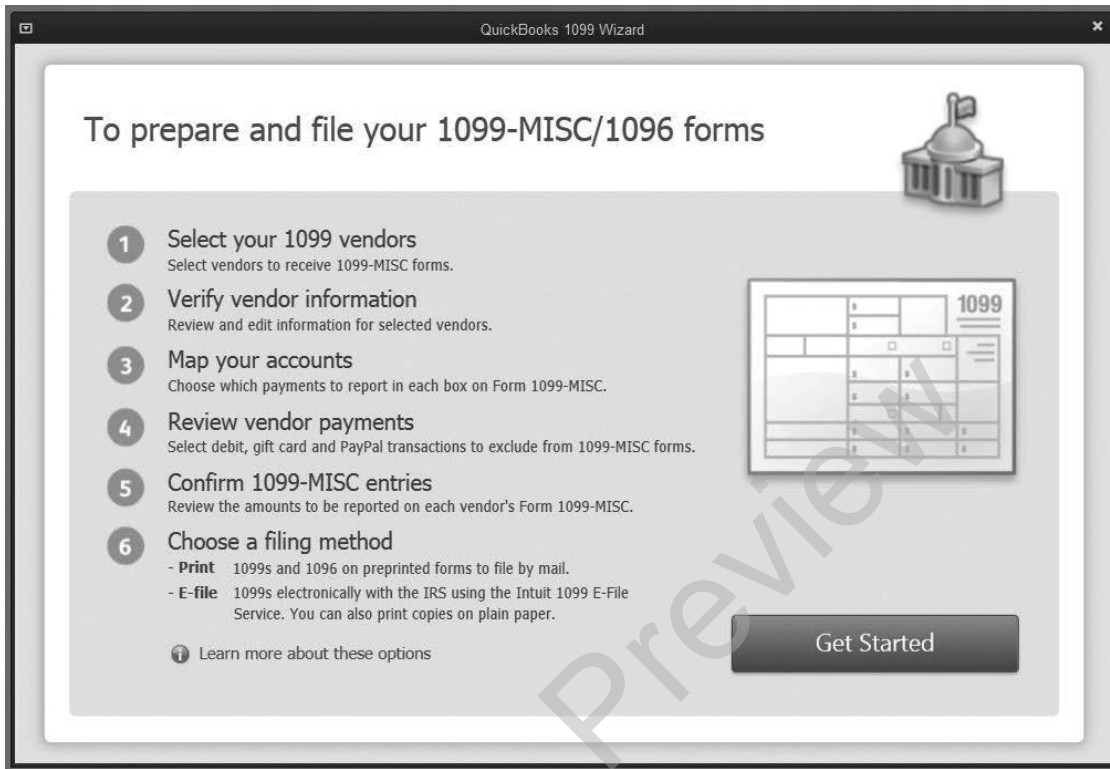
This screen shows you how easy it is to drag and drop items like a signed contract, Costco receipt, employee W-4 and a cash receipt from Home Depot to the vendor, customer and employee card in QuickBooks.

Document Center

Since 2012, the Document Center has allowed you to attach original documents, such as subcontractor invoices, supplier receipts, etc. by dragging and dropping them into QuickBooks. This feature will save you time because you can find receipts faster in QuickBooks than in your filing cabinet.

1099 Wizard

This feature allows you to e-file directly through QuickBooks, as you can see in figure Intro-9. The 1099 E-File Service makes it easy for small businesses to file 1099s electronically in minutes. With 1099 E-File service you can skip the 1096 (not required when you e-file). Also, with one flat fee per company, you can file an unlimited number of forms. Later in the book, we'll describe 1099s, as well as how to create them in QuickBooks.



Intro-9

Since 2012, the 1099 screen makes it easier to prepare and file your 1099 forms. The Wizard is located in the Vendor menu under Print/E-File 1099s. In the past we had to print and send in the 1099s.

Excel Integration Refresh

Since 2012, you can export your QuickBooks reports to Excel and create a template for future updates, retaining many formatting elements such as:

- Change the fonts in row and column headers.
- Create new formulas.
- Rename column and row headers.
- Change report titles.
- Resize columns.
- Insert columns and rows.
- Insert text (when entered as a formula).

When you want to update the Excel report, click the Excel button from the top of the QuickBooks report and select Update Existing Worksheet.



QuickBooks Pro, Premier and Enterprise Editions

At the minimum, a construction company should be using QuickBooks Pro because:

- Simple Start, the most basic version of QuickBooks, is very limited and doesn't have what you'll need to run your construction office.
- Pro includes job costing and estimating.
- Premier Contractor Edition costs between \$100 and \$200 more per user, depending on where you buy it. It adds a very useful feature that will warn you while entering bills if a subcontractor's workers' compensation and general liability insurance has expired. It also includes construction industry reports like accounts payable, sorted by job. Below you'll see an additional list of added features that are included in Premier, as well as how to use them.
- Enterprise Solutions allows up to 30 users to access the program at the same time — a true multiuser program. It costs a couple of thousand more but it's still less expensive than moving to vertical market or industry-specific programs like Masterbuilder or Timberline. Keep in mind that anything in Pro and Premier is also in Enterprise.



QuickBooks Premier Contractor Edition Feature

If you're using QuickBooks Premier Contractor (or Accountant) Edition, you have a Business Planning feature.

Business Planning

Using your QuickBooks data and answering simple step-by-step questions, a balance sheet, profit and loss statement, and statement of cash flows will automatically be projected for the next three years. The business plan is based on the format recommended by the U.S. Small Business Administration for loan applications or a bank line of credit.

- To use the Business Planning feature, from the Company menu, select Planning and Budgeting, and then Use Business Plan Tool.

Features Now Available in Premier and Pro Edition

Previously, several features were only available in Premier or higher editions of QuickBooks, but are now also included in the Pro edition.

- Fixed asset tracking
- Loan manager
- Cash flow projector
- Forecasting

Intro-10

The New Item window for the Fixed Asset Tracker gathers asset details your accountant needs in order to calculate depreciation. Once saved, the Fixed Asset will appear in the Fixed Asset Item List.

The screenshot shows the 'New Item' window with the following details:

- TYPE:** Fixed Asset (Use for property you purchase, track, and may eventually sell. Fixed assets are long-lived assets, such as land, buildings, furniture, equipment, and vehicles.)
- Asset Name/Number:** Ford F250 Truck
- Asset Account:** 1511 - Ford F250 Truck
- PURCHASE INFORMATION:**
 - Item is: new used
 - Purchase Description: Ford F250 Truck
 - Date: 12/09/2015
 - Cost: 30,000.00
 - Vendor/Payee: Frontier Ford
- SALES INFORMATION:**
 - Item is sold: Item is inactive
 - Sales Description: (empty)
 - Sales Date: (empty)
 - Sales Price: 0.00
 - Sales Expense: 0.00
- ASSET INFORMATION:**
 - Asset Description: Ford F250 Truck
 - Location: Riley Carket
 - PO Number: (empty)
 - Serial Number: F24308890
 - Warranty Expires: 12/09/2018
 - Notes: (empty)

Below the window is a preview of the 'Fixed Asset Item List' table:

NAME	FAM NUMBER	PURCHASE DA...	PURCHASE DESCRIPTI...	ACCOUNT	COST	ATTACH
Ford F250 Tr...		12/09/2015	Ford F250 Truck	1511 - Ford F250 Tr...	30,000.00	

Fixed Asset Tracking

Fixed asset tracking allows you to record each asset you purchase in the Fixed Asset Item List located under the Lists menu. Use this list to track each item you purchase, including: property, automobiles and trucks, equipment, large tools, and computer purchases. Only use the Fixed Asset Item List for items that cost over \$500, as shown in the screen in Intro-10.

Unfortunately, the Fixed Asset Item List doesn't set up depreciation schedules or post depreciation for you. Instead, it gives you one convenient location to store information about an asset, such as date of purchase, purchase price, where you bought it, when, for how much you sold the asset, and so on. Your accountant can use the information from the fixed asset item to calculate depreciation, but you or your accountant will have to post a general journal entry to record depreciation.

Loan Manager

The Loan Manager is a payment calculator that computes the principal and interest portion of your loan payment, plus handles any fees or charges. It helps you track loans based on the information in your Long Term Liability and Other Current Liability accounts in QuickBooks. When you use the Loan Manager, you can track all of your loans in one location and be reminded of upcoming payments. Use the Loan Manager to:

- Add and remove loans you want to track.
- View payment schedules.

Intro-11

Use the Add New Account window to create a liability account for a loan.

- Set up loan payments.
- Analyze different loan scenarios.

The Loan Manager creates payment schedules that you can view and print, allowing you to track loan-related information on a per-payment and per-total-payments basis. Plus, when you need to edit or make changes to a loan, the Loan Manager recalculates your payment information and payment schedule. Before using the Loan Manager, walk through our example below.

To set up a loan in the Loan Manager:

1. First, make sure you have a liability account set up for the loan. For example, if you took out a loan to purchase a truck, set up a loan account for the truck. See Intro-11.
 - Click **Home**, then click **Chart of Accounts**, or from the **Lists** menu, choose **Chart of Accounts**.
 - Pull down the **Account** menu at the bottom of the window and choose **New**.
 - Select the account type:
 - (a) For short-term loans (one year or less), from the **Other Account Type** drop list, choose **Other current liability** as the account type.
 - (b) For long-term loans, choose **Long Term Liability**.
 - Click **Continue**.
 - Enter the name of the lender and a description of the loan.
 - Leave the opening balance at 0.00.
 - Click **Save & Close**.

Intro-12

Use the Add New Account window to create a new asset account for a truck.

2. Next, set up an asset account for the truck.
 - Click **Home**, then click the **Chart of Accounts** icon, or from the **Lists** menu, choose **Chart of Accounts**.
 - Pull down the **Account** menu at the bottom of the window and choose **New**.
 - Select the account type. Click **Continue**.
 - Create the new account similar to the example in Intro-12.
 - Click **Save & Close**.
3. Now we'll set up a Fixed Asset Item for the truck. Make sure you have a vendor set up for making loan payments. For example, if you'll be paying Ford Motor Credit, get that vendor entered now. For more information on entering vendors, see Chapter 8.
 - From the **Lists** menu, choose **Fixed Asset Item List**.
 - Pull down the **Item** menu at the bottom of the window and choose **New**.
 - Create the new account similar to the example in Intro-13.
 - Click **OK**.
4. Next, we'll enter a transaction that records the purchase of the asset and the creation of a loan in the liability account you set up. For this example, let's say you purchased a truck for \$30,000, put down \$3,000, and took out a loan for \$27,000.
 - Click **Home**, then click the **Write Checks** icon, or from the **Banking** menu, choose **Write Checks**.

Intro-13

Use the New Item window to create a fixed asset item for a truck.

Intro-14

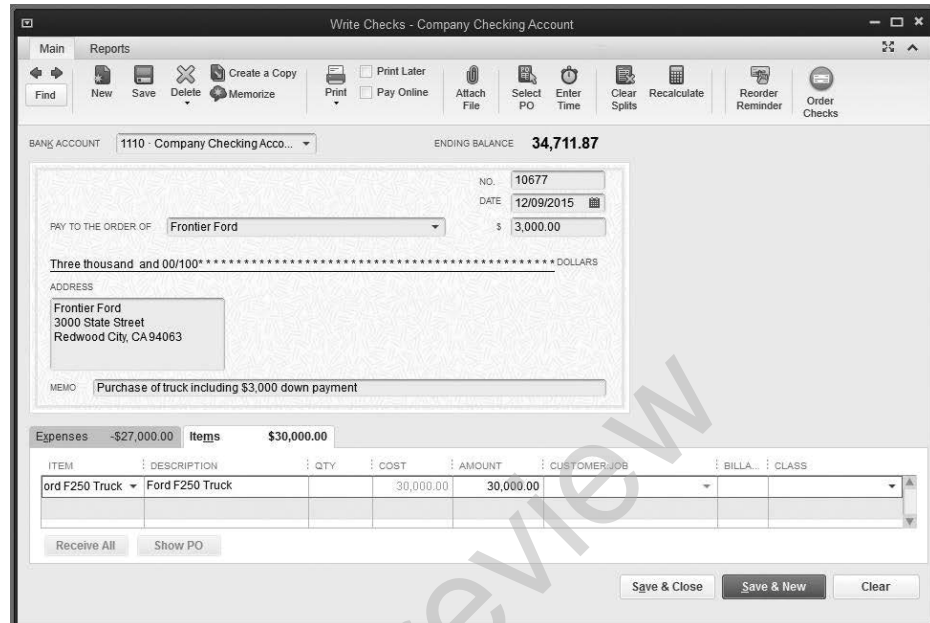
Enter the loan amount as a negative number on the Expenses tab.

ACCOUNT	AMOUNT	MEMO
2511 - Ford F250 Loan	-27,000.00	

- Fill out the top portion of the check as shown in Intro-14.
- Click the **Expenses** tab.
- From the drop-down list in the **Account** column, select the liability account you created for the truck. In our example, it's 2511 Ford F250 Loan. In the **Amount** column, enter the amount of the loan as a negative number, as shown.
- Click the **Items** tab.

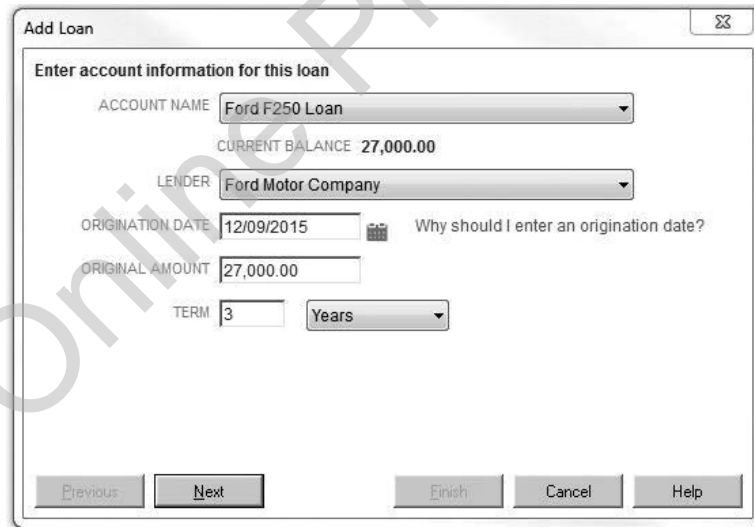
Intro-15

Use the Items tab of the Write Checks window to record the cost of the truck.



Intro-16

Enter the account information for the loan.



- From the drop-down list in the **Item** column, select the fixed asset item you created for the truck. In the **Amount** column enter the cost of the truck. See Intro-15.
 - Click **Save & Close**.
5. From the **Banking** menu, select **Loan Manager**.
 6. Click **Add Loan**.
 7. Fill in the Enter account information for this loan section, as shown in Intro-16. Click **Next**.

Intro-17

Enter the payment information for the loan.

The screenshot shows the 'Add Loan' dialog box with the 'Enter payment information for this loan' section. The fields are filled with the following values:

- DUE DATE OF NEXT PAYMENT: 01/11/2016
- PAYMENT AMOUNT (PRINCIPAL + INTEREST): 786.38
- NEXT PAYMENT NUMBER: 1 (optional)
- PAYMENT PERIOD: Monthly
- Does this loan have an escrow payment?: No
- ESCROW PAYMENT AMOUNT: 0.00
- ESCROW PAYMENT ACCOUNT: (empty dropdown)
- TOTAL PAYMENT: \$786.38
- Alert me 10 days before a payment is due

Buttons at the bottom: Previous, Next, Finish, Cancel, Help.

Intro-18

Enter the interest information for the loan.

The screenshot shows the 'Add Loan' dialog box with the 'Enter interest information for this loan' section. The fields are filled with the following values:

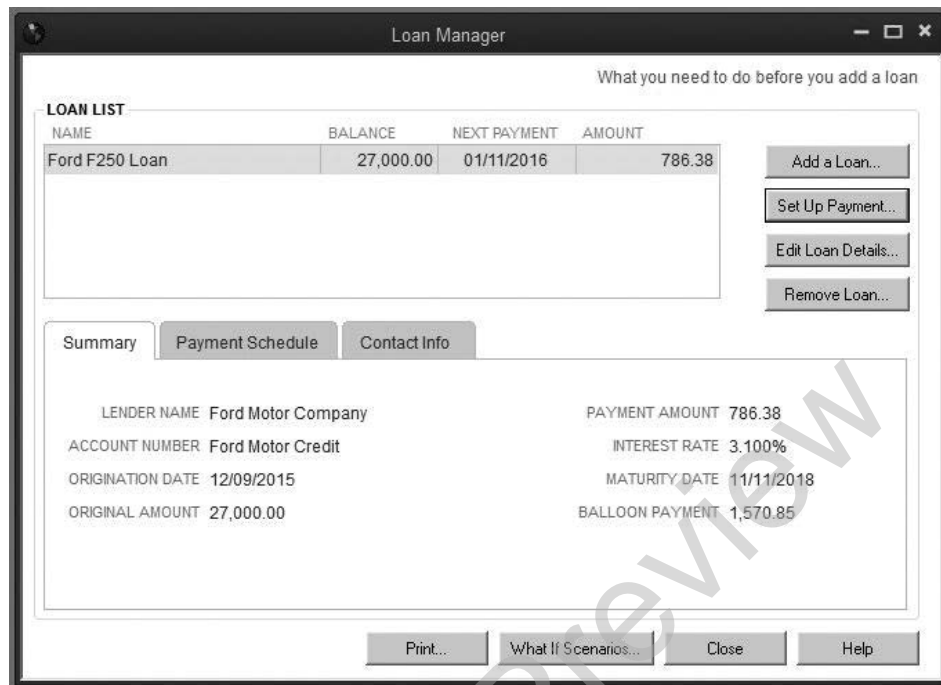
- INTEREST RATE: 3.100 %
- COMPOUNDING PERIOD: Monthly
- COMPUTE PERIOD: 365/365
- PAYMENT ACCOUNT: Company Checking Account
- INTEREST EXPENSE ACCOUNT: Loan Interest
- FEES/CHARGES EXPENSE ACCOUNT: Bank Service Charges

Buttons at the bottom: Previous, Next, Finish, Cancel, Help.

8. Fill in the Enter payment information for this loan section, as in Intro-17. Click **Next**.
9. Fill in the Enter interest information for this loan section as shown in Intro-18.
10. Click **Finish**. The loan will now appear in the Loan Manager window. See Intro-19.

Making Loan Payments from Loan Manager

If you're using Loan Manager to handle your loans, you should pay all of your business loans from Loan Manager.

**Intro-19**

Track loan-related information in the Loan Manager.

When you're ready to make a payment, click **Set Up Payment** in the Loan Manager. From that window, the Loan Manager takes you directly to the Write Checks or Enter Bills windows, where you can edit your payments.

Keep in mind that you won't be allowed to automatically create a loan payment if you haven't logged in the balance of the loan as a liability.

Cash Flow Projector

This report helps forecast how much cash you'll have by projecting your cash inflows, cash disbursements, and bank account balances on a week-by-week basis.

To see a list of the transactions that make up an amount, double-click the amount.

You can change the report date range, you can change the forecasting periods, and you can delay receipts for late customer payments. QuickBooks Help file will step you through these tasks.

- To create this report, from the **Reports** menu, select **Company & Financial** and **Cash Flow Forecast**. Or from the **Report Center**, on the **Standard** tab, **Company & Financial** and **Cash Flow Forecast**.

Forecasting

Forecasting lets you make predictions about future revenue and cash flow, as well as assess “what if” scenarios to help you make better business decisions.

A forecast can be created from scratch, from actual data from the previous fiscal year, or from the previous fiscal year’s forecast. A forecast is uniquely identified by its fiscal year, and if desired, further identified by Customer:Job or Class.

- To use the forecasting feature, from the Company menu select Planning & Budgeting, then Set Up Budgets.



What You Can Expect from This Book

According to a recent national survey, more construction contractors use QuickBooks than all other accounting programs combined. When set up properly, QuickBooks can handle the accounting for most small- to medium-sized (up to \$10 million a year) construction companies.

But, QuickBooks isn't as easy to set up and learn as the sales hype would have you believe. Dozens of options and preference settings may lead you down the wrong road, resulting in hours of frustration. We've spent years testing the options and preferences in QuickBooks so that we can guide you through the process quickly and correctly the first time. Follow our examples and you'll have an effective accounting system that provides any successful business just about all the information it needs.

QuickBooks doesn't replace bookkeepers or tax accountants. But it does help organize and standardize your bookkeeping system. Every report your accountant needs is readily available, smoothing the tax preparation process. In addition, the many features QuickBooks offers assures you always know where your business stands financially. Nothing is more important to the success of your business than having your books managed properly. Using QuickBooks to accomplish this goal will save you and your tax accountant frustration, time and money during tax season.

In this book, we'll explain how to:

- set preference options correctly for your company
- set up a Chart of Accounts that matches the work you do
- set up, edit, and use classes
- set up customers and jobs
- set up vendors and subcontractors
- set up employee payroll
- get your current account balances into QuickBooks
- track transactions through QuickBooks

- create and use estimates
- set up a simple and effective job cost system
- create and send invoices
- enter vendor bills
- write checks
- process payroll
- get payroll tax and workers' comp expenses into job cost reports
- get an owner's time into job cost reports (for a sole proprietorship)
- run workers' comp reports
- create and interpret job cost reports to keep track of your business
- prepare financial statements
- set up end-of-the-month and end-of-the-year procedures

By the time you finish this book, you should understand how to maximize the full potential of your QuickBooks software. If you learn and apply the methods we teach, you can expect accurate accounting records, streamlined processes, and financial information you can trust to wisely manage your business. As the saying goes, work smarter, not harder.



Why Should You Believe Us?

Both authors have been in the construction industry and used QuickBooks for many years. We've assisted hundreds of contractors set up and use QuickBooks. The culmination of all those years of experience is in the pages of this book, provided to you in step-by-step, easy-to-follow instructions. We're confident that what we've done for others we can also do for you.

Karen Mitchell is a partner at Online Accounting (www.onlineaccounting.com), a business that specializes in guiding contractors through organizing their bookkeeping using QuickBooks. Karen conducts seminars nationwide for contractors using QuickBooks. She is a frequent speaker at many construction trade shows such as: A/E/C SYSTEMS, JLC LIVE!, and NAHB's PCBC (Pacific Coast Builders Conference). In addition to this book, Karen has written many other books, including: *The Organized Contractor*, *Construction Forms for Contractors*, and industry-specific books for architects, engineers, interior designers and real estate investors.

Craig Savage has been a general building contractor, remodeler and custom homebuilder for over 25 years. He was an editor at *The Journal of Light Construction* magazine for many years, director of the *JLC LIVE! Training Shows*, Vice President of Marketing & Sales at www.BobVila.com, and most recently, VP of Marketing at Building Media, Inc.

In his free time Craig is a construction management computer consultant. He started *Construction Business Computing* and *Macintosh Construction Forum* newsletters, and his articles have appeared in *Architectural & Engineering Systems*, *Architectural Record*, *Fine Homebuilding Magazine*, *Computer Applications Newsletter*, *Remodeling News*, *NAHB Commercial Builder*, *NAHB Single Family Forum*, *Remodeler Magazine*, *Mac Week*, *Document Imaging*, *Imaging World*, and *A/E/C Computer Solutions*.

Craig is a regular speaker at the A/E/C Systems, NAHB, NARI, CSI, and PCBC annual conventions. He also instructs at seminars sponsored by the University of Wisconsin College of Engineering, and the University of California Santa Barbara Extension.

Other books he has co-written for Craftsman Book Company are *Construction Forms & Contracts* and *Quicken for Contractors*. With Taunton Press he wrote *Trim Carpentry Techniques*.



What Does the Download Include?

You may have bought this book because it comes with a free downloadable QuickBooks company and sample data file. The company file includes a Chart of Accounts, items list, class list, and memorized reports that you can easily adapt to your business. Just plug in your own company data — vendors, subs, customers, etc. — and you're up and running.

However, the download doesn't include QuickBooks. You won't get much out of this book without a working copy of QuickBooks. So the first step will be buying and installing QuickBooks if you don't have it already.

Fortunately, you can get QuickBooks at most large software outlets. For the lowest price, try searching for a dealer on the Web.

Download Instructions

To use the download provided with this book, you'll need a computer running Windows XP or higher, and up to 160MB available on your hard drive. Use your Internet browser to go to the Web page www.craftsman-book.com/quickbooks2015. Click the **download now** button and follow the instructions on the screen. By default, the files will be installed to C:\Program Files\Intuit\QuickBooks.

Get Help by Phone

If you need help downloading the file, call Craftsman Book Company (Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Pacific time) at 760-438-7828.

If you need help with QuickBooks, call Intuit technical support (Monday through Friday from 6 a.m. to 4 p.m. Pacific time) at 888-320-7276 or call Online Accounting (Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Mountain time) at 888-254-9252.



Removing the Installed Files

To remove any of the programs installed from the Contractor's Guide to QuickBooks Download from your hard drive:

- Choose **Start, Control Panel**, then click on **Add or Remove Programs**.
- Click the name of the program you want to remove, **Contractor's Guide to QuickBooks 2015**.
- Click **Change/Remove**.
- Click **Yes**.



Conclusion

Most contractors don't love accounting, and we imagine you don't either. But it's a critical part of doing business. Don't be intimidated. We've all learned to use computers and have even become dependent on the ever-growing electronic devices available to manage our busy lives. Learning to use QuickBooks for the first time is no scarier than it was learning how to use apps on your smart phone. There are even icons to help you along the way. In no time you'll be a whiz, gaining confidence with every use.

We wrote this book because so many of our friends and colleagues asked us for a simple guide to setting up a construction accounting system. We've worked hard to keep it simple and still provide all the information you need. We feel the mission has been accomplished and hope you agree.

Now it's time to take the plunge. In Chapter 1, we'll dive right in by giving you some choices on how best to start using QuickBooks for your bookkeeping and accounting.



Chapter 1

Setting Up Your QuickBooks Company



Getting Started

Before moving forward, you should have QuickBooks 2015 software, and both these two download files, *sample.qbw* and *company.qbw*, installed on your computer. The sample file is used to practice transactions as shown in the book. This file has all our examples entered for the dummy company, Twice Right Construction. The company file is the file we recommend you customize with your company name and details, and use for actual book-keeping. The steps to edit company information are detailed later in this chapter.

As explained in the Introduction, to download the QuickBooks sample data files, use your Internet browser to go to the Web page on Craftsman's website: www.craftsman-book.com/quickbooks2015. Click the **download now** button and follow the instructions on the screen. By default, the files will be installed to C:\Program Files\Intuit\QuickBooks.



QuickBooks Company Files

QuickBooks keeps all of your company records in a single file. QuickBooks refers to this file as your “company” file and that’s what we’ll call it in this manual. For many users, the first task is setting up a company file using QuickBooks’ “EasyStep Interview.” We’ve designed a better method, as you’ll soon see. And we recommend that you try it our way.

You can set up as many company data files as you want. The only requirement is that each one must have a different file name. We recommend that you use our *sample.qbw* file for practice while you experiment with QuickBooks. When you’ve gained enough confidence to take off the training wheels, you can start your own “real” company with real records in the Company file.

Storing all company records in a single file simplifies moving your QuickBooks company to another computer. A utility program built into QuickBooks makes it easy to create a backup of any company file. We’ll have more on backing up and moving your company file later in this book.

How to Find Your Company Data File

We've created the company data file and a sample file to get you started off on the right foot. Regardless of where you've installed Intuit's QuickBooks, the *Contractor's Guide to QuickBooks* setup program will install the example files to C:\Program Files\Intuit\QuickBooks.

To search for your QuickBooks folder:

- Click **Start, Search**, then **All Files and Folders**.
- Enter QBW32.EXE, and click **Search**. Under "In Folder" you'll see the location of QBW32.EXE. Make note of that folder. You may need to find it occasionally.

To find all the QuickBooks company data files on your hard drive:

- Click **Start, Search**, then **All Files and Folders**.
- Enter *.QBW, and click **Search**. Under "In Folder" you'll see the name and location of all company files on your hard drive.



Four Choices

Where you go from here depends on your preference and what accounting program you're using now. Here are the possibilities:

1. You're new to QuickBooks: We suggest you use our preformatted company.qbw file. Start at Section 1 below — Begin With Our Sample and Company Data Files.
2. You're using a prior version of QuickBooks: Begin at Section 2 — Upgrading an Old QuickBooks Company to Version 2015.
3. You're using Quicken (another Intuit product): Begin at Section 3 — Converting a Quicken Company Data File to QuickBooks.
4. You've been using QuickBooks 2015 and want to set up your company data file to match our suggestions: Begin at Section 4 — Converting an Existing QuickBooks 2015 Company Data File to Our Setup.

Section 1

Begin With Our Sample and Company Data Files

We've created a sample company data file that has all the elements of a real QuickBooks construction company. We call the file *sample.qbw*. It includes:

- a Chart of Accounts for a sole proprietorship
- a list of items
- sample customers and jobs
- sample vendors
- a list of classes
- payroll items set up to track workers' compensation costs and help with the workers' comp report
- memorized transactions
- memorized reports

You can use any sample file for practice while you're learning how QuickBooks works. Of course, we think you'll find our *sample.qbw* data file the best one to use to learn QuickBooks. We've designed it specifically for the construction industry.

However, don't use sample data files for your actual company data. When you're ready to begin entering actual records, use the company file we have on the download called *company.qbw*. This file includes:

- a Chart of Accounts
- items
- payroll items
- classes
- memorized reports

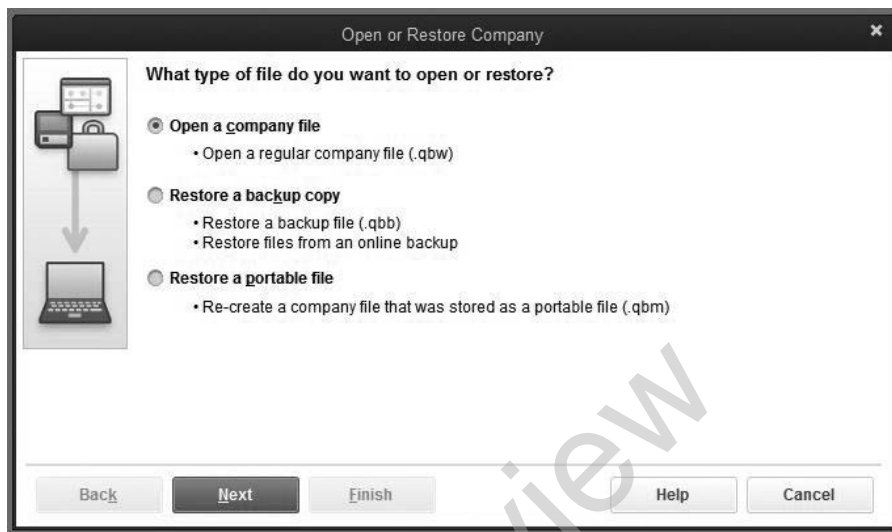
We recommend modifying the company data file rather than creating your own company data file from scratch.

Besides saving time, *company.qbw* is structured to prevent errors and make it easier for you to enter your own company information. To begin:

- Start QuickBooks.
- From the **File** menu, choose **Open or Restore Company** or click **Open or restore an existing company** in the No Company Open window.
- Select **Open a company file**, as seen in Figure 1-1. Click **Next**.
- Select *company.qbw* (the .qbw extension may not display, depending on your computer configuration), then click **Open**.

If you don't see *sample.qbw* and *company.qbw* in the list of QuickBooks company data files, you need to doublecheck that you downloaded them correctly. For instructions, refer back to the Getting Started section at the beginning of this chapter.

Figure 1-1
The Open or Restore Company window.



First, let's add your company information to the new file:

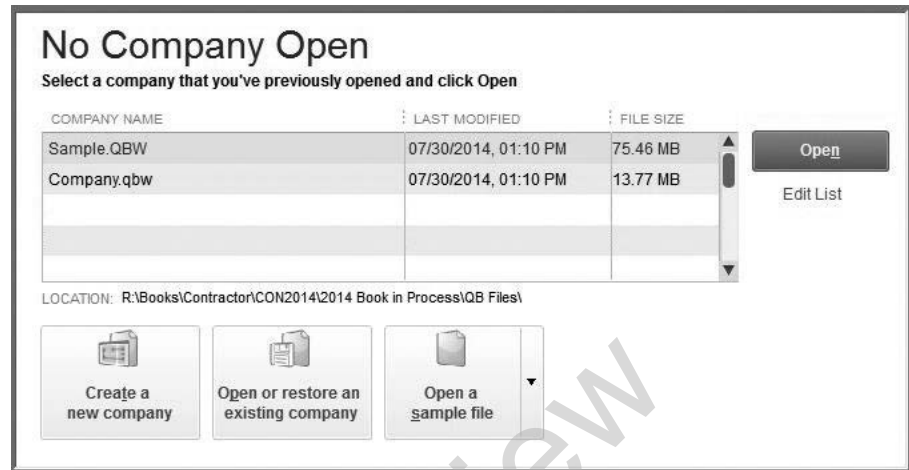
- From the **Company** menu, choose **Company Information**.

Then fill in your company information:

- **Company Name** — Enter your business name.
- **Address** — Enter the address you want QuickBooks to print on invoices and purchase orders.
- **Legal Name** — If you registered your business with a name different from the name in the Company box, enter it here. For example, if you're incorporated as A. C. Company but do business as Any Construction Company, enter the incorporated company name here.
- **Legal Address** — Enter the address you want QuickBooks to print on legal forms.
- **First month in your fiscal year** and **First month in your tax year** — Enter your company's first accounting month. Usually this is January.
- **Income Tax Form Used** — This depends on the type of ownership of your business. Use the drop-down list here to choose the tax form for the type of ownership your business is held under. For example, if you own the business with someone else and it hasn't been incorporated, select Form 1065 (Partnership). If you own the business yourself and it hasn't been incorporated, select Form 1040 (Sole Proprietor). If the business has been incorporated as a regular C corporation, select Form 1120 (Corporation) or Form 1120S for an S corporation.

Figure 1-2

The No Company Open window.



- **Federal Employer Identification No.** — Enter your company’s EIN if you’ll be processing payroll.
- Click **OK**.
- From the **File** menu, choose **Close Company**.

It’s important to note here that you’ve changed the company name that appears on the title bar of QuickBooks. But you haven’t changed the name of your QuickBooks company data file. It’s still *company.qbw*.

To change the *company.qbw* data file name:

- Open the QuickBooks folder.
- Right click on *company.qbw*.
- From the pop-up menu, choose **Rename**.
- Enter the file name you prefer over the *company.qbw* data file name. That’s the new file name of your company.

To use our *sample.qbw* data file:

- From the **File** menu, choose **Open or Restore Company** or click **Open or restore an existing company** in the No Company Open window. See Figure 1-2.
- Select **Open a company file**, as shown in Figure 1-1.
- Click **Next**.
- Select *sample.qbw* and click **Open**.

Now you’re ready for Chapter 2, where we set up company preferences. You can skip the remainder of this chapter.

Figure 1-3
Check box to initiate QuickBooks update.



Section 2

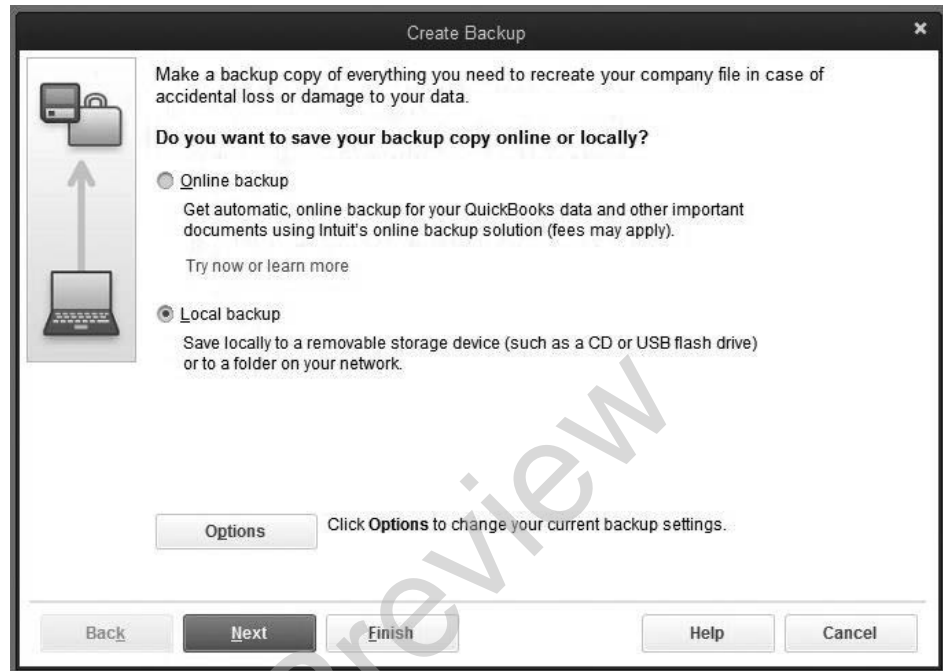
Upgrading an Old QuickBooks Company to Version 2015

To update your QuickBooks company file:

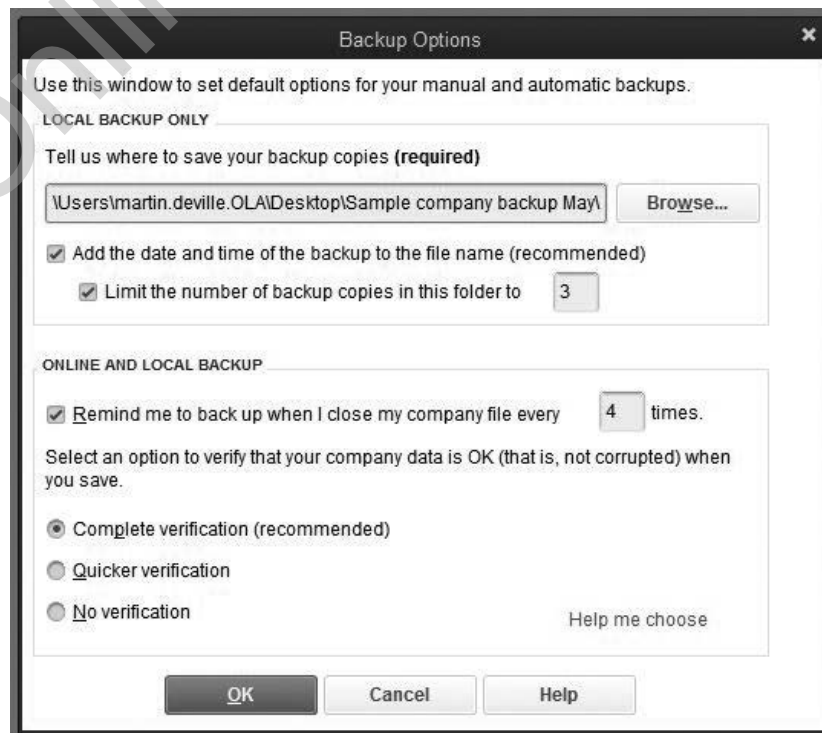
- Install and start QuickBooks.
- In the No Company Open window, click on **Open or restore an existing company**.
- Select **Open a company file**. Refer to Figure 1-1.
- Click **Next**.
- Select your existing QuickBooks file and click **Open**.
- You'll be prompted to enter or create an Admin user name and password, as well as to select a security question. Enter the information and click **OK**.
- At the Update Company File for New Version window, check the box to confirm you want to update the file. Click **Update Now** (Figure 1-3).
- You'll get a message prompting you to back up your data. Click **OK**. If QuickBooks doesn't display that message, it isn't set to open your old company file.
- At the Create Backup window, select **Local backup** (Figure 1-4).
- Click **Next**.
- In the Backup Options window, Figure 1-5, click **Browse**.
- Select a location to store the backup file. Typically, this will be cloud storage, like Dropbox, or Google Drive, or use a USB flash drive. Make your selection and click **OK**.
- Click **OK** in the Backup Options window.
- In the Save Backup window, click **Save**.

Figure 1-4

The Create Backup Copy window.

**Figure 1-5**

Use the Backup Options to specify the device for backup.



QuickBooks will display a message that it's updating your data. The updating program scans your data three times. The process may seem to get stuck at a certain percentage. If there's still activity on your hard drive, don't worry. Let the update continue.

Before the file opens, confirm that you want to update the file by clicking **Yes**.

When your company has been updated, you can work through the rest of the book to set up your company data. Chapters 2 through 9 will walk you through setting up QuickBooks using our methods.

If your company is different from what we recommend, you may want to follow what we recommend anyway. For example, in Chapter 3 you may find that your Chart of Accounts is different from our sample Chart of Accounts. Compare your Chart of Accounts to ours to find the differences. Add new accounts where needed and consider making inactive any accounts that aren't on our recommended list. You can inactivate accounts, items, payroll items, classes, customers and jobs, vendors, and employees. Anything marked inactive isn't deleted. It just doesn't show up on the list.

To make an account, item, payroll item, class, customer and job, vendor, or employee inactive:

- Open the appropriate list (i.e. Lists menu, or Customer, Vendor, or Employee Center).
- Select the name of the item in the appropriate list.
- Right click the item and select **Make Inactive**.

To see everything on the list, including anything inactive:

- Click **Include Inactive** at the bottom of the List window.
- For customers, vendors and employees, click the appropriate center. In the drop-down **View** field, select **All**.

Now you can skip the rest of this chapter and begin by setting up your QuickBooks preferences in Chapter 2.

Section 3

Converting a Quicken Company Data File to QuickBooks

Since Intuit is the developer of both Quicken and QuickBooks, it would seem logical that you should easily be able to “upgrade” from Quicken to QuickBooks; however, it simply isn't very practical to do so. Although QuickBooks has a built-in conversion tool for Quicken, when your data is moved over, it tends to end up in the wrong place. In addition, during the conversion process it creates new accounts, classes, customers, jobs and classes, which can make a mess of your new QuickBooks file.

In order to move successfully from Quicken to QuickBooks:

- Keep Quicken installed on your computer, as well as your Quicken data file, in case you need to look up transactions prior to your QuickBooks start date.
- Pick a date to start using QuickBooks. It's best to start at the beginning of a calendar or fiscal year, but you could also start at the beginning of a quarter.
- Start using QuickBooks as instructed in Section 1 — Begin With Our Sample and Company Data Files.

Section 4

Converting an Existing QuickBooks 2015 Company Data File to Our Setup

To convert to our setup, you'll want to work through these chapters following our suggestions:

- Chapter 2 *Preferences* — Set up your preferences the way we suggest in Chapter 2.
- Chapter 3 *Chart of Accounts* — Compare your Chart of Accounts to ours and add, change, or inactivate accounts as needed.
- Chapter 4 *Items* — Add, change, or inactivate items as needed.
- Chapter 5 *Payroll Items* — Add, change, or inactivate payroll items as needed.
- Chapter 6 *Classes* — Add, change, or inactivate classes as needed.
- Chapter 7 *Customers* — Add, change, or inactivate customers as needed.
- Chapter 8 *Vendors* — Add, change, or inactivate vendors as needed.
- Chapter 9 *Employees* — Add, change, or inactivate employees as needed.

During this process, if you find particular items that you want to keep but don't want to appear on any list, you can inactivate them.

To make an account, item, payroll item, class, customer and job, vendor, or employee inactive:

- Open the appropriate list (i.e. Lists menu, or Customer, Vendor, or Employee Center).
- Select the name of the item in the appropriate list.
- Right click the item and select **Make Inactive**.

To see everything on the list, including anything inactive:

- Click **Include Inactive** at the bottom of the List window.
- For customers, vendors and employees, click the appropriate center. In the drop-down **View** field, select **All**.

Now the item won't show up in any list. However, it's not deleted, so you can activate it again later if you wish.

Go through Chapters 10 through 16 to make sure you understand how to enter transactions correctly into QuickBooks. In Chapters 17 and 18 you'll see how QuickBooks will make it easier for you to get the reports you need for your business.

Online Preview

Index

- A**ccounting, setting QuickBooks
 - preferences 37-38
 - Accounts, making inactive 32, 33-34
 - Accounts, organizing with QuickBooks 21
 - Accounts, standard numbering 55
 - Accounts payable 163-177
 - A/P Aging Detail report 238-241, 248
 - accrual basis 163-177
 - bills 163-177
 - entering opening balance bills 117-122
 - purchase orders 164-166
 - Accounts receivable 139-161
 - accrual basis 139
 - A/R Aging Detail
 - report 237-239, 246, 248
 - entering opening balance
 - invoices 118-119
 - Accrual basis 139, 163-177
 - payables 163-177
 - reasons for using 193
 - receivables 139-161
 - setting QuickBooks preferences 47
 - Adding payroll items,
 - office and officer's wages 80-82
 - Additional info tab 111-112
 - Address and Contact tab 110
 - Adjustment register 251
 - Advanced payroll specialist 183-184
 - Aging detail reports 237-240, 246, 248-249
 - A/P Aging Detail report 238-241, 248
 - A/R Aging Detail report 237-239, 246
 - Assets
 - Chart of Accounts 55-56
 - Chart of Accounts, sample 57-62
 - current 55-56
 - fixed 55-56
 - Assisted payroll service 183-184
 - Author biographies 22
 - B**ackup
 - end of month reports 240-241
 - end of year reports 249-250
 - Bad debts, writing off 246-248
 - Balance sheets
 - comparison 242
 - end of month 240
 - end of year 248-249
 - printing 118
 - Balances, opening 117-122
 - Basis, accounting
 - accrual 193
 - cash 193-200
 - preferences 47, 193
 - Batch timesheets 8
 - Beginning job balances 121-122
 - Billables, marking 54
 - Bills
 - Accounts Payable 120-122
 - entering without
 - purchase orders 169-172
 - job-related expenses 169-170
 - overhead expenses 171-172
 - preferences 38-39
 - selecting for payment 172-173
 - setting QuickBooks preferences 38-39
 - unpaid, by job 232
 - Biographies, authors' 22
 - Builder's Guide to Accounting 273
 - Business planning 13
 - C**alendar view 7
 - Capital, Chart of Accounts 56
 - Carryback loan, recording 257
 - Cash basis accounting 193-200
 - checking transactions 199-200
 - preferences 47
 - reasons for using 193
 - recording checks 194
 - recording deposits 198-199
 - recording job-related costs 196-197
 - recording overhead costs 197-198
 - setting QuickBooks preferences 193
 - Cash Flow Projector report 20
 - Change orders, tracking 150-152
 - estimate, reviewing and changing 152
 - Chart of Accounts
 - adding accounts 63-64, 251
 - adjustment register 251
 - assets account 55-56
 - capital account 56
 - changing accounts 63-64, 251
 - company.qbw 57-62
 - construction loan account 251
 - corporation 56
 - escrow account 251, 257
 - how to use sample 57
 - income account 56
 - job costs account 57
 - land acquisition loan 251, 258-259
 - land development loan 264
 - land purchase 251
 - liabilities account 56
 - linking accounts to items 67
 - loans payable 258-259
 - opening balances, entering 117-118
 - overhead costs account 57
 - partnership 56
 - printing 64
 - report 206-207
 - revenue account 56
 - sample Chart of Accounts 57-62
 - sample.qbw 57-62, 77
 - setting up retentions account 152-153
 - sole proprietorship 56
 - standard numbering 55
 - subaccounts 64-65
 - work in process (WIP) account 251
 - Check runs 173
 - Checking account, reconciling 233-234
 - Checking, setting QuickBooks
 - preferences 39-41
 - Checks, printing 173-174
 - Class tracking, setting QuickBooks
 - preferences 37, 92
 - Classes
 - setting Class Tracking preference 37, 92
 - subclasses 93
 - tracking cost categories 91
 - tracking job costs 91
 - Closing costs, land purchase 256-258
 - Closing, end of month
 - backup 240-241
 - checking transactions 236-241
 - procedures 233-241
 - profit & loss statements 240
 - reports 236-241
 - reports to print 240
 - Closing, end of year
 - backup 249
 - financial statements 249
 - procedures 245-250
 - profit & loss statements 248-249
 - reports to print 249-250
 - Committed costs, tracking 168
 - Company data file
 - changing name 29
 - converting from Quicken 32-33
 - locating on hard drive 25-26
 - upgrading older version 30-32
 - Company files 25-26
 - Company information,
 - adding & changing 28
 - company.qbw 132
 - changing name 29
 - Chart of Accounts 57-62
 - Chart of Accounts report 206-207
 - contents 27
 - Item List 67
 - Job Cost Class report 208-210
 - Job Profitability by Class report 214-215
 - locating 27
 - memorized reports 205-221
 - opening 27
 - Profit & Loss by Job Type report 210-212
 - renaming 29
 - Unpaid Job Bills report 218-220
 - Vendor Workers' Comp Expirations
 - report 222-223
 - Work in Process account 251
- Computerized accounting 273-274
- Construction business, organizing
 - with QuickBooks 13-14
 - accounts 21-22
 - fixed asset tracking 14
 - loan manager 14-19
- Construction draws 268-269
- Construction Loan account 251
- Converting existing data file 33
- Corporation, Chart of Accounts 56
- Craftsman Book Company
 - technical support 23
 - website 273-274
- Credit card charges
 - entering 172
- Credit cards, payment by 97
- Current Liability accounts 14
- Custom field,
 - adding to purchase order 176
- Customer Contact List report 102
- Customer:Job List 96-102
 - adding a customer 96-102
 - exporting 102
 - printing 102
- Customer, snapshot 95
- Customers 95-102
 - adding job for 99-102
 - change orders 150-152
 - fixed price contract invoices 145-147
 - invoices 140-150
 - organizing files for 124-125
 - recording payments 157-158
 - set price invoices 140-142

setting QuickBooks preferences . . .	47-49	End of month procedures	233-241	Interest payment, personal loan . . .	261-262
setting up	95-102	backup	240-241	Intuit	
time & materials invoices	143-145	checking transactions	236-241	payroll services	182
transactions flow chart	125	reports	237-241	phone number	23
Customizing		End of year procedures	245-250	technical support	23
estimate forms	134	financial statements	249	website	274
reports	201-204	profit & loss statements	249	Inventory-based business, items	70-71
Data files		reports	245-250	Inventory, items	70-71
how to download	23	Retained Earnings account	38	Invoices	
removing installed files	24	writing off bad debts	246-248	Accounts Receivable	118-119
technical support	23	Enhanced payroll service	183	applying deposit to	161
Deduction payroll item, setting up for		workers' comp tracking	187	fixed-price contract	145-147
owner or partner	85	Escrow, land development		progress invoices	43, 147-150
Deliveries		closing	256-258	recording payments	157-158
checking	130	deposit account	251-252	recording sale of property	271-272
Deposit item	73-74	earnest money	255	retainage	154
Deposits		recording fees	266	set price	140-142
construction draws	268,270	sample statement	265	terms of	140-142
printing customer receipts for	161	Estimates, creating with QuickBooks		time & materials	143-145
recording	158-159	customizing estimate form	134	IRS 1099 forms	
recording job deposits	159-161	Job Cost Wizard	137	for subcontractors	103-106
recording on a cash basis	198-199	markup	134	for vendors	103-106
Developers		memorizing	134-136	setting QuickBooks preferences . . .	51-52
construction draws	268	National Estimator	137	Item list, fixed asset	14
deposits	268,270	progress billing	137	Item List window	68
payments	268,270	reviewing and changing	152	Items	67-75
recording sales	270-271	setting QuickBooks items for . . .	132-134	deposit	73-74
setting up development job	252-253	setting QuickBooks preferences . . .	44	grouping	72-73
using items	253-254	transferring summary estimate . .	132-134	inventory-based business	70-71
Development loans	264-267	using memorized estimate	135	linking to Chart of Accounts	67-68
closing escrow	264	Excel, refresh reports	12	loan fees and taxes	266
costs	266	Expenses, Chart of Accounts	57	making inactive	32-34
recording payoff	267	Fees, land development	266	non-inventory-based business . . .	68-69
Development, real estate		File name for New Company	29	non-job-related items	73-75
construction draws	268	Files, office		payroll	77-89
deposits	268,270	keeping current	128-129	real estate development	253-254
payments	268,270	organizing	124-126	setting up retentions	152-154
recording sales	270-271	Filters tab, modifying reports	204	subitems	69
setting up development job	252-253	Finance charges, setting QuickBooks		Items & inventory preferences, setting . .	43
using items	253-254	preferences	41-43	Job balances, work in progress . . .	121-122
Display tab, modifying reports	202-203	Financial statements		Job Cost Class report	208-210
Document center	11	analyzing	242-245	Job Cost Wizard, description of	137
Download		balance sheets	242, 249	Job costs	
how to download files	23	end of month	240	Chart of Accounts	57
QuickBooks data files	23	end of year	249	tracking owner's time	112-116
removing installed files	24	printing	240, 248-250	Job Costs Detail report	216-217
system requirements	23	profit & loss		Job deposits, recording	159-161
technical support	23	statements	240, 243-245, 249	Job Estimates vs. Actuals	
Web page	23	Fixed Asset Item List	14	Detail report	225-226
Drill down	9	Fixed asset tracking	14	Summary report	224-225
E-File Service (1099)	11-12	Fixed price contract invoices	145-147	Job Estimates vs. Actuals Detail	131
Earnest money, land purchase	255	Forecasting	21	Job Profitability by Class report . . .	214-215
Easy Step Interview	25	Forms		Job Profitability Detail report	223-224
Employee Files		IRS 1099 forms	51-52	Job Profitability Summary report . . .	222-223
what not to include	127	IRS 1099s for vendors and		Job Progress Invoices vs. Estimates	
Employee Payroll		subcontractors	103-106	report	226
Info tab	112-116, 181-182	send forms preference	49	Job-related expenses, entering bills	169-170
Employees		setting QuickBooks preferences . .	51-52	Job Report, unbilled costs	227
adding workers' comp cost to jobs .	187	setting up non-1099		Job status	100-101
correcting timesheets	186	subcontractors	106-107	Job transactions, flow chart	125
entering timesheets	179-180	Getting started with QuickBooks	25	Job types	101
missing payroll items on timesheet .	185	Graphs, setting QuickBooks preferences .	47	profit & loss by	210
organizing files for	126-127	Group of items	72-73	subtypes	101
paycheck additions	186-187	Help		Jobs	
paycheck deductions	186-187	contact Craftsman Book		adding	99-102
payroll info tab	112-116	Company	23, 274	adding workers' comp cost to jobs .	187
setting QuickBooks preferences . .	44-46	contact Intuit	23, 274	beginning balances	121-122
setting up custom fields for	111-112	contact Online Accounting	23, 274	change orders	130
setting up new employees	109-116	Immigration Form I-9	127	Chart of Accounts costing account . .	57
template	45	Income, Chart of Accounts	56	IRS 1099s for subcontractors . . .	103-106

profit & loss by type	210
recording job deposits	159-161
setting QuickBooks preferences	44
status	100-101
subtypes	101
transactions flow chart	125
types	101
Jobs, Time & Mileage project reports	222-232
L and acquisition loan, Chart of Accounts account	251-274
Land development	251-274
interest, closing costs	256-258
loan, Chart of Accounts account	264
loan transactions	258-259
recording fees and taxes	266
Land purchase, Chart of Accounts account	251-252
Land purchase transactions	255
closing escrow	256-258
personal loan	258-259
seller carryback loan	257
Lead center	7
Liabilities, Chart of Accounts	56
Loan manager	
making loan payments from	20
setting up	14-19
Loan Manager, example	14-19
Loans	
making payments	20
managing	15
Loans payable	251, 258-259
Chart of Accounts account	258-259
Long Term Liability accounts	14
M aking items inactive	32-34
Manual Calculations (payroll)	183-185
Markup, QuickBooks estimate	134
Marking billables	54
Memorized reports	205-221
Chart of Accounts	206-207
Job Cost Class	208-210
Job Costs Detail	216-217
Job Profitability by Class	214-215
Profit & Loss by Job Type	211-212
Retentions Receivable	212-213
Unpaid Job Bills	218-220
Vendor Workers' Comp Expirations	220-221
Memorized transactions	8-9
Memorizing, estimates	134-136
Modifying reports	201-204
N ew Item window	69
Non-inventory-based business	68-69
Non-job-related items	73-75
O ffice files	
keeping current	128-129
organizing	124-126
Office organization	123-129
keeping current	128-129
Office staff, adding new payroll items	80-82
Office work flow, organizing	123-129
Officer's wages, adding new payroll items	80-82
One click create	9
Online Accounting, how to contact	23
Open Purchase Orders by Job report	228-229
Opening balances	
Accounts Payable	120-122
Accounts Receivable	117-119

entering in Chart of Accounts	117-118
entering in QuickBooks	117-118
printing balance sheet	118
Organizing work flow	123-129
Overhead, Chart of Accounts	57
Owner's labor, payroll items	83-84
deduction	85-89
Owner's timesheet	188-191
P aperwork	
change orders	130
customer files	124-125
employee files	126-127
job files	124-126
keeping current	128-129
organizing	124-126
payroll files	128
timesheets	129
vendor files	126
Partnership	
adding partner's costs to jobs	188
Chart of Accounts	56
setting up payroll items	83-89
timesheets	188-191
Payables	163-177
Paychecks	182-188
printing	188
Payment calculator	15
Payment settings tab	96
Payments	
by credit card	97
construction draw, entering	268
recording customer payments	157-158
selecting bills for payment	172
Payroll info tab	112-116
Payroll items	77-89
adding	77-79
deduction for owner or partner	85-89
items list	77
linking to Chart of Accounts	79-89
office and officer's wages	80-82
owner's labor	83-84
sole proprietor and partners job costs	83-89
Payroll, See also Payroll items	
accountant services	182-184
adding workers' comp cost to jobs	187
correcting timesheets	186
entering items not set up	181-182
entering timesheets	179-182
info tab	181-182
missing payroll items on timesheet	185
organizing files for	128
paycheck additions	186-187
paycheck deductions	186-187
processing	182-192
processing for owners	190-191
processing for partners	188-191
services	183
setting up manual calculations	183-185
setting up payroll module	182-192
setting QuickBooks preferences	44-46
Payroll service, QuickBooks Enhanced	46
Payroll schedules	113
Personal loans	258-263
recording deposit	259-261
recording interest/principal	261-263
recording repayment	262-263
Personal tab	110

Phone numbers	
Craftsman Book Company	23
Intuit	23
Preferences	35-54
accounting	37-38
bills	38-39
checking	39-41
class tracking	92
customers	47-49
employee template	45
employees	44-46
estimates	44
finance charges	41-43
general	36
graphs	47-48
IRS 1099 forms	51-52
items & inventory	43
jobs	44
payroll	44-46
progress invoicing	43
reminders	46
reports	47-48
sales	47-49
sales tax	49
send forms	49
service connection	50
spelling	51
time tracking	52, 54
Principal payment, personal loan	262-263
Printing	
balance sheets	118, 240, 248-250
Chart of Accounts	64
checks	173-174
customer list	102
customer receipts for deposits	161
financial statements	240, 248-250
paychecks	188
profit & loss statements	240, 248-250
receipts	161
Processing payroll manually	183-185
Profit & Loss by Job Type report	210-212
Profit & loss statements	243-245
end of month	240
end of year	249
printing	240, 248-250
Progress invoicing	137
Progress invoice	147-150
Progress invoicing, setting QuickBooks preferences	44
Project reports	222-232
Job Estimates vs. Actuals Detail	225-226
Job Estimates vs. Actuals Summary	224-225
Job Profitability Detail	223-224
Job Profitability Summary	222-223
Time by Job	227
Purchase orders	
adding custom fields	176
creating	164-165
creating custom fields	176-177
tracking committed costs	168
tracking draws and buyouts	166-168
tracking multiple draws	166-168
tracking unfilled orders	169
using custom fields	176-177
workers' comp expiration	174-176
Q uickBooks	
advantages	5-6
beginning job balances	121-122
bringing estimates in	131
calendar view	7
document center	11

downloading data files	23	QuickBooks Premier Contractor Edition	229	using custom fields	176-178
getting started	25	Retentions Receivable	212-213	Workers' Comp expiration	175
IRS 1099 wizard	11-12	setting QuickBooks preferences	47	Subitems	69
lead center	7	Time by Job	227	Subtypes	101
one click create button	9	Time by Job Detail	229-230	Summary estimates	132-134
organizing accounts with	21	Time by Name report	229-230	System requirements for download	23
programs, choosing	6	Transaction Detail by Account	236-239	T ax tracking, compensation	87-89
search tool	10	Unbilled Costs	227	Taxes, payroll options	182-184
technical support	23	Unpaid Job Bills	218-220, 232	Taxes, land development	266
website	274	using project reports	222-232	Technical support	
what to expect from	21	using sample memorized reports	205-221	Craftsman Book Company	23
why you need book	5	Vendor Workers' Comp Expirations	174-178, 220-221	Intuit	23
QuickBooks Payroll services	182	Retainage	152-156	QuickBooks	23
Enhanced service	46	Chart of Accounts	152-154	Time & materials invoices	143-145
QuickBooks Premier		invoicing	156	billing for employee labor	181-182
Accountant Edition features	13	setting up retentions item	152-154	Time by Job Detail report	229-230
Contractor Edition features	13	viewing retainage amounts	155	Time by Job report	227
Contractor Edition, using reports	229	Retained Earnings, posting a transaction	38	Time by Name report	229-230
Quicken, converting files from	32-33	Retention, invoicing	154-156	Time recording	179-180, 189-191
R eal estate development	251-274	Retentions receivable	152-154	Time tracking, setting QuickBooks preferences	52, 54
closing escrow	256-258	Retentions Receivable report	212-213	Timesheets	
construction draws	268	Revenue, Chart of Accounts	56	batch	8
deposits	268, 270	Review or Change Paycheck	186	correcting	186
escrow deposits	251-252	S ale of property, recording invoice	271-272	entering	179-182
land purchase transactions	255	Sales leads, tracking	7	missing payroll items on	181
payments	268, 270	Sales tax, setting QuickBooks preferences	49	organizing	128-129
personal loans	258-263	Sample company file	26-27	owner/partner	189-191
recording fees and taxes	266	<i>sample.qbw</i>	132-134	Tracking	
recording sales	270-271	Chart of Accounts	57-62, 77	change orders	150-152
seller carryback loan	257	Chart of Accounts report	206-207	committed costs (buyouts)	168
setting up development job	252-253	contents	27	multiple payment draws	166-168
using items	253-254	Item List	68	owner's time for job costs	116
Receivables	139-161	Job Cost Class report	92-93	setting class tracking preferences	92-93
accrual basis	139-161	Job Profitability by Class report	214-215	setting time tracking preferences	52, 54
entering opening balance		locating	27	unfilled purchase orders	168-169
invoices	118-121	memorized reports	205-221	using classes for cost categories	91
setting up retentions account	152-153	payroll, processing	179	Transaction Detail by Account report	236-239, 240
Reconciling, checking account	233-234	Unpaid Job Bills report	218-220	Transactions	
Recording		Vendor Workers' Comp Expirations report	220-221	flow chart	125
escrow fees, land development	266	Workers' Comp Expires	174-178	memorized	8-9
invoice, sale of property	271-272	Search tool	10	U npaid bills by job	232
sales	270-271	Selecting a QuickBooks Program	6	Unpaid Job Bills report	218-220, 232
Reminders, setting QuickBooks preferences	46	Seller carryback loan, recording	257	Upgrading	
Renaming <i>company.qbw</i> file	29	Service Connection, setting QuickBooks, preferences	50	QuickBooks older version	30-32
Reports	201-232	Service items	68-69	Quicken data files	32-33
A/P Aging Detail	238-241, 249	Set price invoices	140-142	V endor report, preparing on custom field	176-178
A/R Aging Detail	237-239, 249	Set up (employee) card, sole proprietor or partner	115-116	Vendor Workers' Comp Expirations report	174-175, 220-221
balance sheets	242, 249	Snapshot, customer	95	Vendors	103-106
Cash Flow Projector	20	Sole proprietorship		Accounts Payable	120-122
Chart of Accounts	206-207	adding owner costs to jobs	188-191	IRS 1099 forms	103-106
Cost to Complete by Job Detail	231	Chart of Accounts	56	organizing files for	126
Customer Contact List	102	set up (employee) card	115-116	setting up non-1099 vendors	106-107
customizing	201-204	setting up payroll items	83-89	using custom fields	176-178
end of month	236-241	timesheets	188-191	Workers' Comp expiration	174-175
end of year	249	Spelling, setting QuickBooks preferences	51	W ages, adding new payroll items	80-82
Job Cost Class	208-210	Subaccounts, adding	64-65	Web page for download	23
Job Costs Detail	216-217	Subclasses	93	Website	
Job Estimates vs. Actuals Detail	225-226	Subcontractors	103-106	Craftsman Book Company	273
Job Estimates vs. Actuals Summary	224-225	Accounts Payable	120-122	QuickBooks	274
Job Profitability by Class	214-215	IRS 1099 forms	103-106	Work flow, organizing	123-129
Job Profitability Detail	223-224	organizing files for	126	Work in Process account	251-252
Job Profitability Summary	222-223	setting up non-1099 subcontractors	106-107	Workers' Compensation	
Job Progress Invoices vs. Estimates	226	using sample memorized reports	205-221	checking expiration dates	174-175
Jobs, Time & Mileage projects	222-232	Vendor Workers' Comp Expirations	174-178, 220-221	tracking	187-188
modifying	201-204	Workers' Comp Expires	174-178	Vendor Workers' Comp Expiration report	220-221
Open Purchase Orders by Job	228, 229	Search tool	10		
payables	163-177	Selecting a QuickBooks Program	6		
Profit & Loss by Job Type	210-212	Seller carryback loan, recording	257		
profit & loss statements	243-245, 249	Service Connection, setting QuickBooks, preferences	50		

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