

How to Choose the Right Business Accounting Software

8 Questions You Should Ask

Introduction

Are you struggling to choose the right business accounting software? Overwhelmed by the many options? You're not alone...

More choice isn't always better. Indeed, countless studies support the finding that when we have too many options, we often fail to make a decision for fear we're making the wrong choice.

As a small business owner, you face a similar challenge when it comes to choosing your accounting software. Fret no more! This checklist will help find the best accounting software for your business by asking all the right questions.

01

What Are My Needs?

Before you even start researching different business accounting software solutions, assess your needs. Think about the accounting tasks that are significant for your business.

Do you have simple needs like sending invoices, managing expenses and tracking cash flow? Or do you have more complex needs like inventory control, payroll management and customer service? Once you understand your needs, you can shift your attention toward finding a solution.

Beyond your day-to-day needs, think about the areas of your business that you want to grow. You want a solution that works for you today (without overwhelming) but that can scale with your business too!



02

Is the Business Accounting Software Built for Me?

No two accounting solutions are the same. They target different kinds of business owners. Accounting solutions also differ in both the type and amount of features they offer, and vary in cost.

There's general accounting software built for pretty much everyone: Retailers, freelancers, designers, restaurateurs and small and large businesses. Because they're one-shoe fits all, these solutions can be feature-loaded and clunky to use. They can also be more costly.

So look and see if there's an accounting software built for your particular market. They won't have every possible bell and whistle, but they'll have the ones that match your needs, making them more streamlined and elegant to use.

If you're a small service-based business owner, FreshBooks is the right solution. It's designed for you and provides only the features you need. If you're a restaurateur, FreshBooks isn't the right solution. Why? Because it doesn't handle inventory, payroll, seating plans and so on.

03

Is the Software Easy to Use?

The more difficult any software is to use, the lower the utilization rates.

You likely have an existing way of doing things that's easy and familiar, even if you've found limitations or frustrations.

You're busy running your business and you're not an accountant, so you want your new system to be easy to adopt and simple to use. You don't want something that's marketed to CPAs if you aren't one! Anything too specialized or expert is going to end up unused and you'll then be in a worse place than when you started!

While you can ask your provider if the software is easy to use, chances are they'll say it is, even if it isn't. The solution is to read reviews, ask existing users and sign up for a free trial to test it out. For example, millions of people use FreshBooks, there are many positive reviews and they offer a free 30-day trial.

04

Is the Software Secure?

Because many software solutions are cloud-based, security is even more important. Without tight security, hackers can steal you and your customer's personal information. That's not to mention critical financial data.

Thankfully you can avoid buying software that has poor security by reviewing security policies online. Google the company's name with the words "security policies." See what security protocols they are using. FreshBooks protects personal information and secures transactions with the Secure Sockets Layer (SSL) protocol. The protocol encrypts crucial information such as credit card numbers and billing details.

Any software runs the risk of crashing. So remember: If your data isn't backed up, you risk losing critical information. You can back up information yourself, but it can be a time-consuming process. Instead, find a service that does this for you. A software like FreshBooks provides automatic data backups.

05

What's the Customer Support Like?

Providers often sell you on their features and the simplicity of the product. But, many fall short on a key aspect: Customer support. Stellar customer support is essential. When you have a problem, you want prompt service.

Any top business accounting software provider is serious about customer support. Support is available through many channels: email, online, telephone and via their software. Be wary of providers that don't have support numbers and emails listed online. It suggests they don't want you to contact them, aren't committed to helping you or both.

A company like FreshBooks has award-winning support through their "support rockstars." You can contact them by:

1. Submitting an online request
2. Emailing; they list their Support email online
3. Calling; they list their phone number online

And, if you enjoy fixing problems yourself, simply visit the FAQ page.

06

Does It Support Useful Integrations?

How often has a friend referred you to a product that doesn't have a feature you want? You can overcome this problem by checking the features before signing-up. If they don't have those features, move on to a company that does.

Also, check to see if the features are available through integrations. But make sure the features are useful and not a 'nice-to-have.' For example, [FreshBooks offers add-ons](#) such as Stripe, Zapier and Shopify, to name a few.



07

Will the Software Grow With My Business?

There's nothing worse than subscribing to a service only to find that it doesn't support your growth.

While today you might be content to send invoices to clients, track your expenses and get paid online, you might look for more sophisticated features as your business grows. So, yes think about your immediate needs, but also consider what happens when you start working with teams, or need to build financial reports.

Luckily, some companies support you. Companies like [FreshBooks which offers three plans](#)—Lite, Plus and Premium—at affordable prices. There's even [FreshBooks Select](#) for when you really start to thrive. Rest assured, there's a plan to support your growth.

08

Is the Software on Budget?

Like FreshBooks, many accounting solutions offer a free trial period. It's easy to jump in with both feet, but you must consider what happens after that trial is over.

Ensure your budget is realistic, given the features you want and make sure to select the plan that complements your business today.

Take a moment to look at the subscription model and understand where it fits in your business plan. Then approach that trial as a “business case” for that cost. If the software saves you time so you get more billable hours—it makes its own business case.





Conclusion

Choosing the right business accounting software doesn't have to be a difficult task. You don't have to feel crippled by choice. You just need to ask (and answer) the right questions.

Do that and you'll narrow down your list and find the right solution. A solution that's the perfect fit. A solution that offers the exact features your business needs. And, if you're a small business, a solution like FreshBooks.



About FreshBooks

FreshBooks is changing the way business owners manage their books. Its owner-first accounting platform, loved by businesses in over 160 countries, takes an easy-to-use approach to managing finances, billing, payments, and client engagement. FreshBooks, known for its 10x Stevie award-winning customer support, serves customers of all sizes from offices in Canada, Croatia, Mexico, Netherlands, Germany, and the U.S.