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**Priscilla Meli
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Foreword by **Nicolette Maury**
VP and Country Manager, QuickBooks Australia





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Australian Edition

**by Priscilla Meli
Elaine Marmel**

for
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Foreword

Dear reader,

Welcome to Intuit QuickBooks Online! I'm delighted that you're taking a closer look.

You're actually in great company, with the world's leading cloud accounting solution for small businesses *and* their financial advisors. Each day, more than 50 000 Aussies — together with more than 1.6 million global customers — rely on our financial management solution to fuel business success.

Whether you're new to cloud accounting software, switching from another program, or just checking us out, this book will give you plenty of tips and shortcuts to help make you a QuickBooks Online pro in next to no time.

In case you wondered, Intuit offers a localised, cloud-based QuickBooks Online version specifically made for Australia, backed by more than 30 years of leading innovation.

Our Aussie small business customers tell us that using QuickBooks Online is easy and frees up their time to focus on growing their business or doing what they love. What's more, QuickBooks Online was designed mobile first, and customers can access and manage their finances anytime, anywhere and on any device.

A *For Dummies* book suggests the topic might be complex, so let me assure you, cloud accounting is pretty simple. For a start, it automates many business processes and removes time consuming tasks like data entry. QuickBooks Online can even help you get paid twice as fast thanks to our growing ecosystem and product innovation.

Around the world, we spend more than 10 000 hours with small business owners each year gathering insights to understand their experience with QuickBooks Online. The information we gather is then shared with our product development team so we can continually enhance our products, services and support. This is our innovation process and one that ensures we're continuously working to improve how we fuel your success.

The move to the cloud is well underway with rapid changes taking place. I'm so excited about the emerging trends and their impact on cloud accounting. In fact, I look forward to the next edition of this book because I anticipate highlighting our continued innovation, such as artificial intelligence and machine learning.

I wish you the best of everything with your small business. Based on what our customers tell us, we know that managing a small business presents challenges, yet the rewards can be great.

I'd also like to thank you for picking up this book. Your commitment to building a strong financial foundation by using QuickBooks Online helps ensure your business is more resilient to market forces. In turn, this helps build a prosperous economy and nation. That's great news for all.

Be sure to visit our community of customers at the following sites. I know they'd love to have you onboard and join the conversation.

You can find us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/QuickBooksAU.

Engage with us on Twitter at [@QuickBooksAU](https://twitter.com/QuickBooksAU).

If you are looking for more resources, please visit our Small Business Centre at www.intuit.com.au/r/.

And lastly, should you need an accountant or bookkeeper to help you get set up or to provide training, please find your perfect match at <https://proadvisor.intuit.com>.

Until next time,



Nicolette Maury

VP and Country Manager, QuickBooks Australia

Find me on Twitter or LinkedIn

Introduction

Have you been thinking about moving your accounting into a web-based product? Are you a QuickBooks desktop user who wants to stick with something you know but wants the flexibility of a web-based product? Are you interested in finding out more about Intuit's web-based product, QuickBooks Online (QBO)? Are you an accountant who is considering beginning to support your QuickBooks clients via QuickBooks Online Accountant (QBOA)? If you answered yes to any of these questions, this book is for you.

QuickBooks Online and QuickBooks Online Accountant are web-based accounting solutions from Intuit. Don't be fooled; they are *not* the desktop product migrated to the web. They've been built from the ground up to function on the Internet and can be used on multiple devices such as PC, Mac, iOS and Android. No matter which device, QBO will instantaneously synchronise data between users and devices.

About This Book

Intuit's web-based accounting product is really almost two products: Business users who want to do their accounting on the web use QBO, whereas accountants use QBOA, which enables the accountant to log in to a client's books and make changes and queries as needed. Although much of QBO and QBOA look and behave alike, QBOA incorporates tools that an accountant needs while working on a client's books. And accountants need to manage multiple client companies, whereas business user clients typically do not.

This book has been divided into three parts. In the first part of the book, we examine what QBO and QBOA are — and what they aren't — and we describe what you need to be able to use QBO and QBOA. We explain the various editions and features available. And in Chapter 1, you'll find some information about the available interfaces for QBO and QBOA (you can work with the products using a browser or using an app).

The second part of the book focuses on using QBO and is aimed at the business user; however, the accountant who opens a client's company via QBOA will be able to use the same tools that the business user uses to manage lists, enter transactions and print reports.

The third part of the book is aimed at the accountant and covers using QBOA.

We don't pretend to cover every detail of every feature in QBO or QBOA. Instead, we focus on covering the tools we think most users will need as they navigate QBO and QBOA.



REMEMBER

As we discuss in Chapter 2, different versions of QBO are available; we used QBO Plus as we wrote this book because it contains the most features. Users of other versions might find references in this book to features they don't have because they aren't using the Plus version.

Before we dive in, let's get a few technical convention details out of the way:

- » Text that you're meant to type as it appears in the book is **bold**. The exception is when you're working through a list of steps: Because each step is bold, the text to type is not bold.
- » Web addresses and programming code appear in monofont. If you're reading a digital version of this book on a device connected to the Internet, note that you can tap or click a web address to visit that website, like this: `www.dummies.com`.
- » In our experience, QBO and QBOA function best in Chrome. For that reason, we've devoted The Part of Tens chapters in this book to Chrome so that, if you aren't familiar with Chrome, you can get up and running more quickly.
- » When we discuss a command to choose, we separate the elements of the sequence with a command arrow that looks like this: ⇨. For example, when you see Chrome Menu ⇨ Settings, that means you should click the Chrome Menu button and, from the drop-down menu that appears, click Settings.

Foolish Assumptions

We had to assume some things about you to write this book. Here are the assumptions we made:

- » You know that you need to manage the accounts for your business, and you might even have some sort of setup in place to record this information. We *don't* assume that you know how to do all that on a computer.

- » You have some interest in managing the accounts for your business using a web-based product.
- » You are probably but not necessarily a QuickBooks desktop edition user.
- » You have a personal computer (that you know how to turn on) running Microsoft Windows Vista, Windows 7, Windows 8.1 or Windows 10. We wrote this book using Windows 10.
- » You might have purchased an edition of QuickBooks Online, but not necessarily.
- » You have some basic accounting or bookkeeping knowledge.

Icons Used in This Book



TIP

Think of these icons as the fodder of advice columns. They offer (hopefully) wise advice or a bit more information about a topic under discussion.



REMEMBER

This icon points out juicy tidbits that are likely to be repeatedly useful to you — so please don't forget them.



WARNING

Danger, Will Robinson, danger! Well, okay, it's really not life-threatening. In this book, you see this icon when we're trying to help you avoid mistakes that can cost money.

Beyond the Book

In addition to the content in this book, this product also comes with a free access-anywhere cheat sheet that gives you keyboard shortcuts for QBO and QBOA and some handy tool buttons in QBO. To get this cheat sheet, simply go to www.dummies.com and search for 'QuickBooks Online For Dummies Cheat Sheet' in the Search box.

Where to Go from Here

Simply turn the page. Seriously. You can dive in anywhere you want and come back as often as you like. You don't have to read through this book cover to cover, because each section stands alone and provides step-by-step instructions for common tasks. You should consider this book a reference that you use when you need it.

That said, if you're just getting started with QBO or QBOA, you might want to turn the page and follow, in order, the chapters in Part 1. Then feel free to explore any topic you like, using the table of contents or the index to help you find a topic.

1

Getting Started with QBO and QBOA

IN THIS PART . . .

Compare the differences between QBO products.

Learn the requirements to use QBO.

Meet the QBO interface.

- » Taking a first look at QuickBooks Online and QuickBooks Online Accountant
- » Considering the cloud
- » Meeting requirements to use QBO and QBOA

Chapter **1**

Introducing QBO and QBOA

QuickBooks Online (QBO) and QuickBooks Online Accountant (QBOA) are web-based products you can use to manage your business's accounting. This chapter introduces these products and discusses whether you should move into the cloud to manage your accounting. It also examines the system requirements for these products.

QBO for the Business User and QBOA for the Accountant

QuickBooks Online offers you the ability to manage your business's accounting in the cloud. The software is divided into two products: One for the business user and the other for accountants. QBO and QBOA work on multiple devices, such as PC, Mac, smartphone, tablet and mobile devices.

QuickBooks Online (QBO) is the cloud-based product for business users who need to perform typical accounting tasks.

QuickBooks Online Accountant (QBOA) is the cloud-based portal that accountants use to access their clients' QBO companies, work in them, and communicate with clients and other members of their accounting team. QBOA also comes with one free company that accountants can use to track their own businesses.

Comparing interfaces

QBO and QBOA were initially written and optimised to be used in the major web browsers — Chrome, Safari and Firefox. Later, Intuit added QBO apps that you can use for Windows, Mac and Android mobile devices. In this section, you explore what QBO and QBOA look like in a browser and in the Windows app.

In a browser, an open company in QBO looks similar to the one shown in Figure 1-1. We cover the interface in more detail in Chapter 3 but, for the time being, the most important thing to notice is the Navigation bar that runs down the left side of the screen. If you've been a QuickBooks desktop user and you've used the Left Icon bar in that product, you might find the Navigation bar a familiar tool. The Left Icon bar and the Navigation bar work the same way; you click a link in either of them to navigate to a portion of the program.

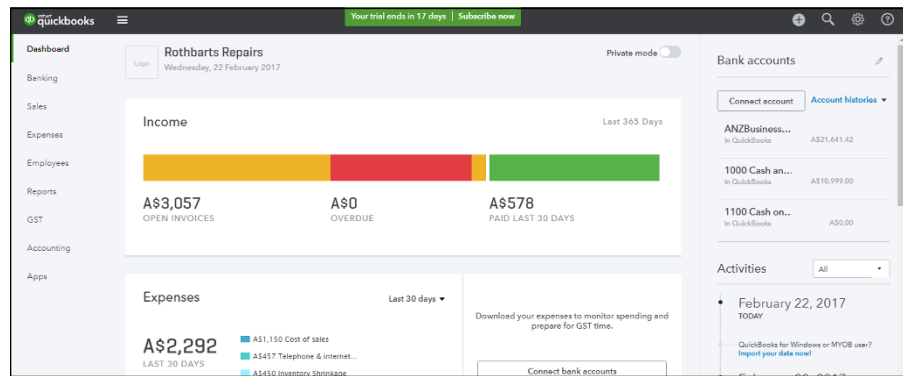
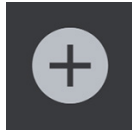


FIGURE 1-1:
An open
company in QBO.

When you collapse the Navigation bar, you have more screen real estate to view the right side of the QBO interface.

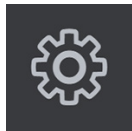
At the top of the screen on the far right side, you see tools that help QBO users create transactions, search for existing transactions and view recent transactions. These tools are marked by icons as follows:



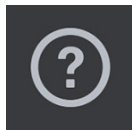
Quick Create Tool: Shortcut to frequently used transactions



Search Function: Including basic and advanced search options



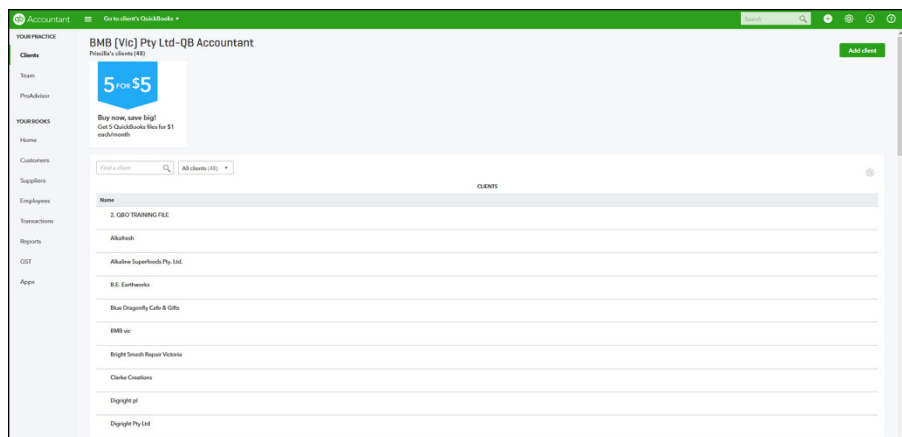
Settings Menu (Gear icon): Links to advanced settings and more complex functions



Help Menu: Shortcut to support feature, including Online Chat and Forums

Figure 1-2 shows what an accountant sees immediately upon logging in to QBOA. The Navigation bar changes to support an accountant's needs; you can read more about the QBOA interface in Chapter 13.

FIGURE 1-2:
The first view an accountant sees when he opens QBOA.



When an accountant opens a client’s company from within QBOA (see Figure 1–3), the interface resembles what a client sees, with some minor differences — compare, for example, Figure 1–1 with Figure 1–3. First, you know you’re using QBOA because the top of the Navigation bar shows QuickBooks Accountant. Second, the tools used to search for a transaction, go to a report and view recent transactions are combined into one Search box near the right side of the screen. And third, the Accountant Tools menu (the briefcase icon) displays tools not found in QBO that help accountants manage client companies.

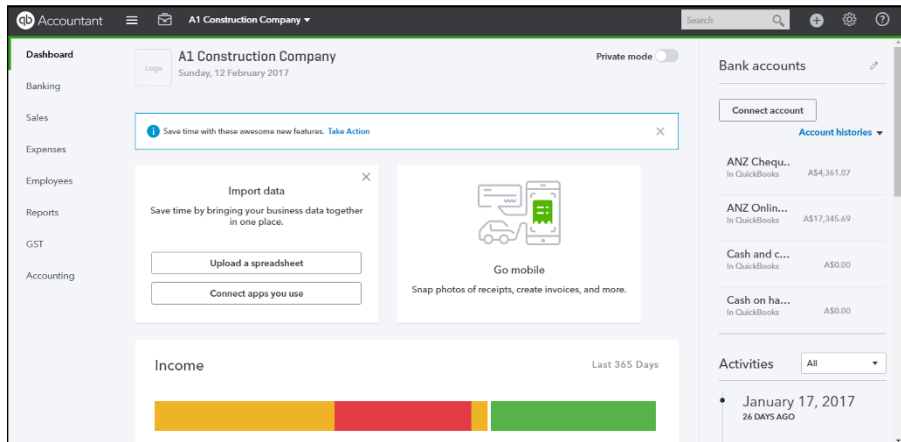


FIGURE 1-3:
An open
company in
QBOA.

Even though an open company looks a bit different depending on whether it is opened using QBO or QBOA, the basic functionality doesn’t really change, other than accountants having more options than business users have.



REMEMBER

Because QBOA contains functionality that QBO doesn’t have, we’ve organised this book so that QBO users can focus on Part 2 when using the product, and QBOA users can use the information in both Parts 2 and 3 to work with a company file.

To browse or not to browse . . .

In addition to working in a browser, you also can work in mobile apps. To find the app that works best for you, visit the Intuit Mobile App website (www.intuit.com.au/mobile).



TIP

Mobile apps are also available for Macs and iPhone, iPad and Android devices. You'll find Pinch and Zoom functionality is now available in the mobile apps and in browsers on mobile devices.

So take your choice: Work in a browser, work in a mobile app or work in both, depending on your needs at the moment! You're not limited; you don't have to choose between an app and a browser. Work in one or the other, or both. The free app is a great resource for businesses with people on the road or offsite. They can have their customers sign off on orders via the tablet app, issue invoices, input expenses and receipts while all the time collaborating instantly with their teammates in the office.



TIP

An example Priscilla uses all the time to highlight the benefits of the free app is that when she wakes up, she checks her bank accounts via her mobile phone to see what has gone out and what has come in overnight (hopefully more has come in than what has gone out!). After she closes her bank app, she opens the QuickBooks app on her phone and cashes off the customer payments. In a matter of seconds, her books are updated before she even gets into the office and turns on a computer! Just keep in mind that the browser provides a full experience (that is, full functionality), whereas a mobile app includes only certain functions. See Figure 1-4 for an idea of how the mobile app looks.

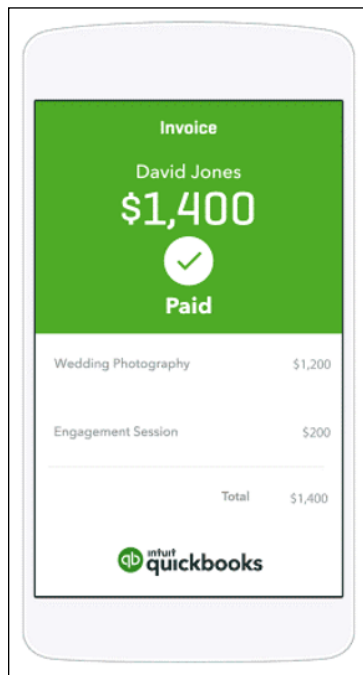


FIGURE 1-4:
QBO on a
smartphone.



REMEMBER

QBO and QBOA come with free smartphone and tablet apps that sync automatically with your PC or Mac; however, QBO also has Self Employed — a standalone app separate to the other software that can only be used on a smartphone (see Figure 1-5). At the time of writing, QBO Self Employed does not support GST but does have a great feature that enables you to track mileage, which the other QBO programs don't have.

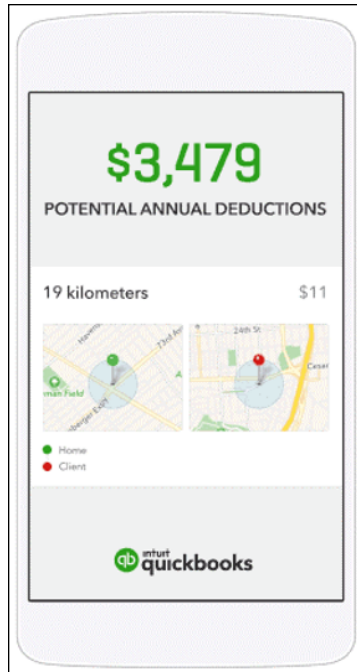


FIGURE 1-5:
The QBO Self Employed app.

Understanding the Cloud

Just to make sure we're on the same page here, we're defining the *cloud* as software and data housed securely in remote data centres (not on your office premises) and accessed securely using the Internet. Working in the cloud can increase your efficiency by offering you the opportunity to work anywhere, communicate easily with others and collaborate in real time.



REMEMBER

Regardless of whether you use QBO or QBOA in a browser or in an app, both the software and the data are housed on servers controlled by Intuit and accessible via the Internet.

In the traditional model of software use, you buy software and install it on your computer. Or you might buy the software and install it on a vendor's server. QBO and QBOA fall into the category of Software as a Service (SaaS). You typically don't buy SaaS software; instead, you rent it (that is, you purchase a subscription).

Because SaaS software is typically web-based software, you access SaaS software over the Internet using a browser. A *browser* is software installed on your local computer or mobile device that you use to, well, browse the Internet, looking up cool stuff like what the stock market is doing today, what kind of weather you can expect on Friday when your vacation starts, how to get to your boss's house for the party she's having, and — oh, yes — to work with web-based software such as QBO and QBOA. In the case of QBO and QBOA, you can work with these web-based SaaS products using either a browser or an app you download to your computer.

Using web-based software can be attractive for a number of reasons. For example, using web-based software, you have access to that software's information anywhere, anytime, from any device — stationary or mobile.



REMEMBER

Some people see the 'anywhere, anytime' feature as a potential disadvantage because it makes information too readily available — and therefore a target for hackers. Intuit stores your data on servers that use bank-level security and encryption, and Intuit automatically backs up your data for you. Others see the 'anywhere, anytime' feature as a disadvantage for exactly the reason that they have access to the software's information anywhere, anytime and from any device, offering the opportunity to work more than they'd like. You are in charge of your life, so . . . no comment on this 'disadvantage'.

In addition to the 'anywhere, anytime' advantage, web-based software like QBO and QBOA promotes collaboration and can help you save time. Using QBO and QBOA, accountants, bookkeepers and business users can communicate about issues that arise, as described in Chapter 16.

Then there's the issue of keeping software up to date. Desktop software such as QuickBooks is updated typically once each year. Unlike their desktop cousin, QBO and QBOA are updated (automatically by Intuit without your time and effort) every two to four weeks.



REMEMBER

Because updating occurs so frequently to QBO and QBOA, by the time this book is published, things (and screens) might have changed. Actually, make that 'probably have changed'.

Should You Move to the Cloud?

Before you make the move to the cloud, you should consider the needs of your business in the following areas:

- » Invoicing, point of sale, electronic payment and customer relationship management
- » Financial and tax reporting
- » Budgeting
- » Time-tracking and payroll
- » Inventory, job costing and job scheduling
- » Managing company expenses and vendor bills

Beyond the advantages described in the preceding section, the particular needs of a business might dictate whether you can use QBO. For example, QBO may not work for you if your business has industry-specific needs for which add-on applications are not currently available. In addition, QBO won't work for you if you need to track your balances by class.

System Requirements

Using a web-based software product typically doesn't require a lot of hardware and software; in fact, the demands of QBO and QBOA aren't extensive. In particular, you need

- » An Internet connection — Intuit recommends a high-speed connection
- » One of the four supported Internet browsers:
 - Chrome
 - Firefox
 - Internet Explorer 10 or higher
 - Safari 6.1 if your operating system is iOS 7 or higher

Although QBO and QBOA work in all the major browsers, they work best, in our experience, in Chrome, with Firefox coming in a close second. Therefore, we use Chrome throughout this book, and the Part of Tens chapters cover using Chrome