

Making Everything Easier!™

QuickBooks® 2011

FOR

DUMMIES®

Learn to:

- Organize financial information for your business
- Build a budget, pay bills, process payroll, and track expenses
- Balance accounts, manage inventory, and estimate job costs
- Prepare for tax time

Stephen L. Nelson,
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Author of Quicken® For Dummies



QuickBooks 2011[®] For Dummies[®]

Table of Contents

[Introduction](#)

[About QuickBooks](#)

[About This Book](#)

[What You Can Safely Ignore](#)

[What You Should Not Ignore \(Unless You're a Masochist\)](#)

[Three Foolish Assumptions](#)

[How This Book Is Organized](#)

[Part I: Quickly into QuickBooks](#)

[Part II: Daily Entry Tasks](#)

[Part III: Stuff You Do from Time to Time](#)

[Part IV: Housekeeping Chores](#)

[Part V: The Part of Tens](#)

[Part VI: Appendixes](#)

[Conventions Used in This Book](#)

[Part I: Quickly into QuickBooks](#)

[Chapter 1: QuickBooks: The Heart of Your Business](#)

[Why QuickBooks?](#)

[Why you need an accounting system](#)

[What QuickBooks does](#)

[What Explains QuickBooks' Popularity?](#)

[What's Next, Dude?](#)

[How to Succeed with QuickBooks](#)

[Budget wisely, Grasshopper](#)

[Don't focus on features](#)

[Outsource payroll](#)

[Get professional help](#)

[Use both the profit and loss statement and the balance sheet](#)

[Chapter 2: Answering Mr. Wizard](#)

[Getting Ready for the Big Interview](#)

[The big decision](#)

[The trial balance of the century](#)

[The mother of all scavenger hunts](#)

[Doing the EasyStep Interview](#)

[Tip 1: Get to know the interview protocol](#)

[Tip 2: Take your time](#)

[Tip 3: Get industry-specific advice](#)

[Tip 4: Accept the suggested filename and location](#)

[Tip 5: Go with the suggested Chart of Accounts](#)

[Tip 6: Consider tracking all your expenses with your checkbook](#)

[Tip 7: Add accounts you need](#)

[The Rest of the Story](#)

[Should You Get Your Accountant's Help?](#)

[Chapter 3: Populating QuickBooks Lists](#)

[The Magic and Mystery of Items](#)

[Adding items you might include on invoices](#)

[Creating other wacky items for invoices](#)

[Editing items](#)

[Adding Employees to Your Employee List](#)

[Customers Are Your Business](#)

[It's Just a Job](#)

[Adding Vendors to Your Vendor List](#)

[The Other Lists](#)

[The Fixed Asset list](#)

[The Price Level list](#)

[The Sales Tax Code list](#)

[The Class list](#)

[The Other Names list](#)

[The Sales Rep list](#)

[Customer, Vendor, and Job Types list](#)

[The Terms list](#)

[The Customer Message list](#)

[The Payment Method list](#)

[The Ship Via list](#)

[The Vehicle list](#)

[The Memorized Transaction list](#)

[The Reminders list](#)

[Organizing Lists](#)

[Printing Lists](#)

[Exporting List Items to Your Word Processor](#)

[Dealing with the Chart of Accounts List](#)

[Describing customer balances](#)

[Describing vendor balances](#)

[Camouflaging some accounting goofiness](#)

[Supplying the missing numbers](#)

[Checking your work one more time](#)

[Part II: Daily Entry Tasks](#)

[Chapter 4: Creating Invoices and Credit Memos](#)

[Making Sure That You're Ready to Invoice Customers](#)

[Preparing an Invoice](#)

[Fixing Invoice Mistakes](#)

[If the invoice is still displayed onscreen](#)

[If the invoice isn't displayed onscreen](#)

[Deleting an invoice](#)

[Preparing a Credit Memo](#)

[Fixing Credit Memo Mistakes](#)

[History Lessons](#)

[Printing Invoices and Credit Memos](#)

[Loading the forms into the printer](#)

[Setting up the invoice printer](#)

[Printing invoices and credit memos as you create them](#)

[Printing invoices in a batch](#)

[Printing credit memos in a batch](#)

[Sending Invoices and Credit Memos via E-Mail](#)

[Customizing Your Invoices and Credit Memos](#)

[Chapter 5: Reeling In the Dough](#)

[Recording a Sales Receipt](#)

[Printing a Sales Receipt](#)

[Special Tips for Retailers](#)

[Correcting Sales Receipt Mistakes](#)

[Recording Customer Payments](#)

[Correcting Mistakes in Customer Payments Entries](#)

[Making Bank Deposits](#)

[Improving Your Cash Inflow](#)

[Tracking what your customers owe](#)

[Assessing finance charges](#)

[Dealing with deposits](#)

[Chapter 6: Paying the Bills](#)

[Pay Now or Pay Later?](#)

[Recording Your Bills by Writing Checks](#)

[The slow way to write checks](#)

[The fast way to write checks](#)

[Recording Your Bills the Accounts Payable Way](#)

[Recording your bills](#)

[Entering your bills the fast way](#)

[Deleting a bill](#)

[Remind me to pay that bill, will you?](#)

[Paying Your Bills](#)

[Tracking Vehicle Mileage](#)

[Paying Sales Tax](#)

[A Quick Word on the Vendor Center Window](#)

[Chapter 7: Inventory Magic](#)

[Setting Up Inventory Items](#)

[When You Buy Stuff](#)

[Recording items that you pay for upfront](#)

[Recording items that don't come with a bill](#)

[Paying for items when you get the bill](#)

[Recording items and paying the bill all at once](#)

[When You Sell Stuff](#)

[How Purchase Orders Work](#)

[Customizing a purchase order form](#)

[Filling out a purchase order](#)

[Checking up on purchase orders](#)

[Receiving purchase order items](#)

[Assembling a Product](#)

[Identifying the components](#)

[Building the assembly](#)

[Time for a Reality Check](#)

[Dealing with Multiple Inventory Locations](#)

[Manually keep separate inventory-by-location counts](#)

[Use different item numbers for different locations](#)

[Upgrade to QuickBooks Enterprise Solutions](#)

[The Lazy Person's Approach to Inventory](#)

[How periodic inventory systems work in QuickBooks](#)

[The good and bad of a periodic inventory](#)

[Chapter 8: Keeping Your Checkbook](#)

[Writing Checks](#)

[Writing checks from the Write Checks window](#)

[Writing checks from the Checking register](#)

[Changing a check that you've written](#)

[Packing more checks into the register](#)

[Depositing Money into a Checking Account](#)

[Recording simple deposits](#)

[Depositing income from customers](#)

[Transferring Money between Accounts](#)

[Setting up a second bank account](#)

[About the other half of the transfer](#)

[Changing a transfer that you've already entered](#)

[Working with Multiple Currencies](#)

[To Delete or to Void?](#)

[Handling NSF Checks from Customers](#)

[The Big Register Phenomenon](#)

[Moving through a big register](#)

[Finding that darn transaction](#)

[Chapter 9: Paying with Plastic](#)

[Tracking Business Credit Cards](#)

[Setting up a credit card account](#)

[Selecting a credit card account so that you can use it](#)

[Entering Credit Card Transactions](#)

[Recording a credit card charge](#)

[Changing charges that you've already entered](#)

[Reconciling Your Credit Card Statement and Paying the Bill](#)

[So What about Debit Cards?](#)

[So What about Customer Credit Cards?](#)

Part III: Stuff You Do from Time to Time

Chapter 10: Printing Checks

Getting the Printer Ready

Printing a Check

A few words about printing checks

Printing a check as you write it

Printing checks by the bushel

What if I make a mistake?

Oh where, oh where do unprinted checks go?

Printing a Checking Register

Chapter 11: Payroll

Getting Ready to Do Payroll without Help from QuickBooks

Doing Taxes the Right Way

Getting an employer ID number

Having employees do their part

Getting Ready to Do Payroll with QuickBooks

Paying Your Employees

Paying Payroll Liabilities

Paying tax liabilities if you use the full-meal-deal Payroll service

Paying tax liabilities if you don't use the full-meal-deal Payroll service

Paying other nontax liabilities

Preparing Quarterly Payroll Tax Returns

Using the QuickBooks full-meal-deal Payroll service

Using the other QuickBooks Payroll services

Filing Annual Returns and Wage Statements

Using the QuickBooks full-meal-deal Payroll service

[Using the QuickBooks economy Payroll services](#)

[The State Wants Some Money, Too](#)

[Chapter 12: Building the Perfect Budget](#)

[Is This a Game You Want to Play?](#)

[All Joking Aside: Some Basic Budgeting Tips](#)

[A Budgeting Secret You Won't Learn in College](#)

[Setting Up a Secret Plan](#)

[Adjusting a Secret Plan](#)

[Forecasting Profits and Losses](#)

[Projecting Cash Flows](#)

[Using the Business Planner Tools](#)

[Chapter 13: Online with QuickBooks](#)

[Doing the Electronic Banking Thing](#)

[So what's the commotion about?](#)

[A thousand reasons not to bank online](#)

[Making sense of online banking](#)

[Signing up for the service](#)

[Making an online payment](#)

[Transferring money electronically](#)

[Changing instructions](#)

[Transmitting instructions](#)

[Message in a bottle](#)

[A Quick Review of the Other Online Opportunities](#)

[Part IV: Housekeeping Chores](#)

[Chapter 14: The Balancing Act](#)

[Balancing a Bank Account](#)

[Giving QuickBooks information from the bank statement](#)

[Marking cleared checks and deposits](#)

[Eleven Things to Do If Your Non-Online Account Doesn't Balance](#)

[Chapter 15: Reporting on the State of Affairs](#)

[What Kinds of Reports Are There, Anyway?](#)

[Creating and Printing a Report](#)

[Visiting the report dog-and-pony show](#)

[Editing and rearranging reports](#)

[Reports Made to Order](#)

[Processing Multiple Reports](#)

[Last but Not Least: The QuickReport](#)

[Chapter 16: Job Estimating, Billing, and Tracking](#)

[Turning On Job Costing](#)

[Setting Up a Job](#)

[Creating a Job Estimate](#)

[Revising an Estimate](#)

[Turning an Estimate into an Invoice](#)

[Comparing Estimated Item Amounts with Actual Item Amounts](#)

[Charging for Actual Time and Costs](#)

[Tracking Job Costs](#)

[Chapter 17: File Management Tips](#)

[Backing Up Is \(Not That\) Hard to Do](#)

[Backing up the quick-and-dirty way](#)

[Getting back the QuickBooks data you backed up](#)

[Accountant's Copy](#)

[Working with Portable Files](#)

[Using an Audit Trail](#)

[Using a Closing Password](#)

[Chapter 18: Fixed Assets and Vehicle Lists](#)

[What Is Fixed Assets Accounting?](#)

[Fixed Assets Accounting in QuickBooks](#)

[Setting Up a Fixed Asset List](#)

[Adding items to the Fixed Asset list](#)

[Adding fixed asset items on-the-fly](#)

[Editing items on the Fixed Asset list](#)

[Tracking Vehicle Mileage](#)

[Identifying your vehicles](#)

[Recording vehicle miles](#)

[Using the vehicle reports](#)

[Updating vehicle mileage rates](#)

[Part V: The Part of Tens](#)

[Chapter 19: \(Almost\) Ten Tips for Business Owners](#)

[Sign All Your Own Checks](#)

[Don't Sign a Check the Wrong Way](#)

[Review Canceled Checks Before Your Bookkeeper Does](#)

[Choose a Bookkeeper Who Is Familiar with Computers and Knows How to Do Payroll](#)

[Regularly Review Your Financial Statements](#)

[Choose an Appropriate Accounting System](#)

[If QuickBooks Doesn't Work for Your Business](#)

[Keep Things Simple](#)

[Chapter 20: Tips for Handling \(Almost\) Ten Tricky Situations](#)

[Selling an Asset](#)

[Selling a Depreciable Asset](#)

[Owner's Equity in a Sole Proprietorship](#)

[Owner's Equity in a Partnership](#)

[Owner's Equity in a Corporation](#)

[Multiple-State Accounting](#)

[Getting a Loan](#)

[Repaying a Loan](#)

[Chapter 21: \(Almost\) Ten Secret Business Formulas](#)

[The First "Most Expensive Money You Can Borrow" Formula](#)

[The Second "Most Expensive Money You Can Borrow" Formula](#)

[The "How Do I Break Even?" Formula](#)

[The "You Can Grow Too Fast" Formula](#)

[How net worth relates to growth](#)

[How to calculate sustainable growth](#)

[The First "What Happens If . . . ?" Formula](#)

[The Second "What Happens If . . . ?" Formula](#)

[The Economic Order Quantity \(Isaac Newton\) Formula](#)

[The Rule of 72](#)

[Part VI: Appendixes](#)

[Appendix A: Installing QuickBooks in Ten Easy Steps](#)

[Appendix B: If Numbers Are Your Friends](#)

[Let me introduce you to the new you](#)

[The first day in business](#)

[Look at your cash flow first](#)

[Depreciation is an accounting gimmick](#)

[Accrual-basis accounting is cool](#)

[Now you know how to measure profits](#)

[Some financial brain food](#)

[And now for the blow-by-blow](#)

[Blow-by-blow, Part II](#)

[How does QuickBooks help?](#)

[The first dark shadow](#)

[The second dark shadow](#)

[Appendix C: Sharing QuickBooks Files](#)

[User permissions](#)

[Record locking](#)

QuickBooks® 2011 For Dummies®

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About the Author

Stephen L. Nelson, CPA, MBA (finance), MS (taxation), has a simple purpose in life: He wants to help you (and people like you) manage your business finances by using computers. Oh, sure, this personal mandate won't win him a Nobel Prize or anything, but it's his own little contribution to the world.

Steve's experiences mesh nicely with his special purpose. A CPA in Redmond, Washington, his past small business experience includes a stint as an adjunct professor of taxation (S corporations and limited liability companies) at Golden Gate University graduate tax school and a few years working as a senior consultant and CPA with Arthur Andersen & Co. (er, yeah, that Arthur Andersen — but, hey, it was nearly 30 years ago). Steve, whose books have sold more than 4 million copies in English and have been translated into 11 other languages, is also the bestselling author of *Quicken 2010 For Dummies*.

Dedication

To the entrepreneurs and small-business people of the world. You folks create most of the new jobs.

Author's Acknowledgments

Hey, reader, lots of folks spent lots of time working on this book to make QuickBooks easier for you. You should know who these people are. You may just possibly meet one of them someday at a produce shop, squeezing cantaloupe, eating grapes, and looking for the perfect peach.

First, a huge thanks to the wonderful folks at Intuit who helped me by providing the beta software and other friendly assistance for this and past editions of this book.

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Introduction

Running or working in a small business is one of the coolest things a person can do. Really. I mean it. Sure, sometimes the environment is dangerous — kind of like the Old West — but it's an environment in which you have the opportunity to make tons of money. And it's also an environment in which you can build a company or a job that fits you. In comparison, many brothers and sisters working in big-company corporate America are furiously trying to fit their round pegs into painfully square holes. Yuck.

You're wondering, of course, what any of this has to do with this book or with QuickBooks. Quite a lot, actually. The whole purpose of this book is to make it easier for you to run or work in a small business by using QuickBooks.

About QuickBooks

Let me start off with a minor but useful point: QuickBooks comes in several different flavors, including QuickBooks Basic, QuickBooks Pro, QuickBooks Premier, QuickBooks Premier Accountants Edition, and QuickBooks Enterprise Solutions.

This book, however, talks about QuickBooks Premier Edition.

Does this mean that I somehow leave you adrift if you have one of the other flavors? No way. I wouldn't do that to you. QuickBooks Premier is a superset of QuickBooks

Simple Start and QuickBooks Pro, and is identical in most areas to QuickBooks Enterprise Solutions. By describing how you use QuickBooks Premier, I also tell you how to use the other flavors of QuickBooks.

What's more, for the readers of this book, there's no discernible difference between QuickBooks Premier and QuickBooks Pro. You aren't reading this book to prepare for the CPA exam, right? Right. The extra whistles and bells that make QuickBooks Premier, well, *premier* are all things that only accountants care about: remote access to QuickBooks and your QuickBooks data, reversal of general entries, extra security for general ledger closings, and so on. So I don't talk much about those things.



The bottom line? Yes, there are several flavors of QuickBooks, but if you're just trying to get started and want to use QuickBooks, this book works for QuickBooks Pro, QuickBooks Premier, and QuickBooks Enterprise Solutions.

About This Book

This book isn't meant to be read from cover to cover, like some *Stieg Larsson* page-turner. Instead, it's organized into tiny, no-sweat descriptions of how you do the things you need to do. If you're the sort of person who just doesn't feel right not reading a book from cover to cover, you can (of course) go ahead and read this thing from front to back. You can start reading Chapter 1 and continue all the way to the end (which means through Chapter 21 and the appendixes).



I don't think this from-start-to-finish approach is bad because I tell you a bunch of stuff (tips and tricks, for example) along the way. I tried to write the book in such a way that the experience isn't as rough as you might think, and I really do think you get good value from your reading.

But you also can use this book the way you'd use an encyclopedia. If you want to know about a subject, you can look it up in the Table of Contents or the index; then you can flip to the correct chapter or page and read as much as you need or enjoy. No muss, no fuss.

I should, however, mention one thing: Accounting software programs require you to do a certain amount of preparation before you can use them to get real work done. If you haven't started to use QuickBooks yet, I recommend that you read through the first few chapters of this book to find out what you need to do first.



Hey. There's something else I should tell you. I fiddled a bit with the Windows display settings. For example, I noodled around with the font settings and most of the colors. The benefit is that the pictures in this book are easy to read. And that's good. But the cost of all this is that my pictures look a little bit different from what you see on your screen. And that's not good. In the end, however, what the publisher found is that people are happier with increased readability. Anyway, I just thought I should mention it here, upfront, in case you have any questions about it.

What You Can Safely Ignore

Sometimes I provide step-by-step descriptions of tasks. I feel very bad about having to do this, so to make things easier for you, I describe the tasks by using bold text. That way, you know exactly what you're supposed to do. I also provide a more detailed explanation in the text that follows the step. You can skip the text that accompanies the step-by-step boldface directions if you already understand the process.

Here's an example that shows what I mean:

1. Press Enter.

Find the key that's labeled Enter. Extend your index finger so that it rests ever so gently on the Enter key. In one sure, fluid motion, press the Enter key with your index finger. Then remove your finger from the key.

Okay, that example is extreme. I never go into that much detail, but you get the idea. If you know how to press Enter, you can just do that and not read further. If you need help — maybe with the finger part or something else — just read the nitty-gritty details.



Can you skip anything else? Let me see now. . . . You can skip the Technical Stuff icons, too. The information next to these icons is intended only for those of you who like that kind of technical stuff.



For that matter, I guess that you can safely ignore the stuff next to the Tip icons, too — even if the accumulated wisdom, gleaned from long hours slaving over a hot keyboard, can save you much weeping and gnashing of teeth. If you're someone who enjoys trying to do something another way, go ahead and read the tips.



Sometimes, I use made-up examples (along with examples from my own experience) to help you understand how some topic or area of QuickBooks helps you and your business, and I mark these examples with the Case Study icon. This is just my way of continuing the giving. But sure, you can skip them.

What You Should Not Ignore (Unless You're a Masochist)



Don't skip the Warning icons. They're the ones flagged with the picture of the 19th century bomb. They describe some things that you *really* shouldn't do.

Out of respect for you, I don't put advice like "Don't smoke!" next to these icons. I figure that you're an adult, and you can make your own lifestyle decisions. So I

reserve the Warning icons for more urgent and immediate dangers — things akin to “Don’t smoke while you’re filling your car with gasoline.”



This icon is a friendly reminder to do something. Not to be too pushy, but it’s probably not a good idea to ignore these babies.

Three Foolish Assumptions

I make three assumptions about you:

You have a PC running Microsoft Windows. (I took pictures of the QuickBooks windows and dialog boxes while using Windows 7, in case you’re interested.)

You know a little bit about how to work with your computer.

You have or will buy a copy of QuickBooks Pro or QuickBooks Premier for each computer on which you want to run the program.



This book works for QuickBooks 2011, although in a pinch, you can probably also use it for QuickBooks 2010 or 2012. (I have to say, however, that if you have QuickBooks 2010, you may instead want to return this book and trade it in for *QuickBooks 2010 For Dummies* by yours truly.)

By the way, if you haven’t already installed QuickBooks and need help, jump to Appendix A, which tells you how

to install QuickBooks in ten easy steps. And, if you're just starting out with Microsoft Windows, peruse Chapter 1 of the *Windows User's Guide* or one of these books on your flavor of Windows: *Windows XP For Dummies*, 2nd Edition, *Windows Vista For Dummies*, or *Windows 7 For Dummies*, all by Andy Rathbone.

How This Book Is Organized

This book is divided into six, mostly coherent parts.

Part I: Quickly into QuickBooks

Part I covers some upfront tasks that you need to take care of before you can start using QuickBooks. I promise I don't waste your time here. I just want to make sure that you get off on the right foot.

Part II: Daily Entry Tasks

The second part of this book explains how to use QuickBooks for your daily financial record keeping: preparing customer invoices, recording sales, and paying bills — that kind of stuff.

Just so you know, you'll be amazed at how much easier QuickBooks makes your life. QuickBooks is a really cool program.

Part III: Stuff You Do from Time to Time

Part III talks about the kinds of things that you should do at the end of the week, the end of the month, or the end of the year. This part explains, for example, how to print checks, explore QuickBooks online resources, do payroll, and create a business budget.

While I'm on the subject, I also want to categorically deny that Part III contains any secret messages that you can decipher by reading backward. Yllaeer.

Part IV: Housekeeping Chores

Part IV talks about some of the maintenance tasks that you need (or someone needs) to perform to keep your accounting system shipshape: account reconciliations, financial report generation, job-costing mechanics, file management — and, oh yes, fixed asset accounting.

Part V: The Part of Tens

Gravity isn't just a good idea; it's a law.

By tradition, the same is true for this part of a *For Dummies* book. The Part of Tens provides a collection of lists: ten things you should do if you own a business, ten things to do when you next visit Acapulco — oops, sorry — wrong book.

Also by tradition, these ten-item lists don't need to have exactly ten items. You know the concept of a baker's

dozen, right? You order a dozen doughnuts but get 13 for the same price. Well, *For Dummies* ten-item lists have *roughly* ten items. (If the Dummies Man — the bug-eyed, pale-faced guy suffering from triangle-shape-head syndrome who appears on the back cover of this book and on icons throughout these pages — were running the bakery, a 10-doughnut order might mean that you get anywhere from 8 to 13 doughnuts.) Do you believe that I'm an accountant? So exacting that it's scary.

Part VI: Appendixes

An unwritten rule says that computer books have appendixes, so I include three. Appendix A tells you how to install QuickBooks in ten easy steps. Appendix B explains small business accounting, provides a short biography of an Italian monk, and explains double-entry bookkeeping. Appendix C describes how to set up QuickBooks for use by multiple users — and for multiple users on a network. Yikes!

Conventions Used in This Book

To make the best use of your time and energy, you should know about the conventions that I use in this book.

When I want you to type something, such as **With a stupid grin, Martin watched the tall blonde strut into the bar and order grappa**, it's in bold type. When I want you to type something that's short and