

Choosing a QuickBooks Accountant?

13 Critical Questions to Ask...

Who? (You? Staff?)

Fees? (Hourly? Fixed Price?)

Style? (Big-picture? Detail?)

Response Time? (Hours? Days?)

Where? (In office? Computer?)

Job-Costing Expertise? (None?)

Training? (Experience? Self?)

Software Expertise? (QuickBooks?)

Accounting Expertise? (Certified?)

Industry Expertise? (Construction?)

Written By:
Diane Gilson





**COPYRIGHT ©INFO PLUS ACCOUNTING.
BY DIANE GILSON. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.**

Published by Info Plus Accounting, Inc.

This eBook is licensed purely for your business use. If you would like to share this book with another person, we encourage you to do so (mentions on social media are welcome). You may provide this eBook to other people only if you let them know its value is worth its weight in gold!

If you're reading this eBook, please consider telling your favorite eBook provider (Info Plus Accounting, Inc.) what you think of it.

No part of this publication may be reproduced in any form by an electronic or mechanical means, including information storage and retrieval systems, without permission in writing from Info Plus Accounting, Inc., except by a reviewer who may quote brief passages in a review.

Thank you for respecting the hard work involved in creating this Copyright Page and the content to follow.

For more information, please write to:

Info Plus Accounting, Inc., 6291 Creekside Circle, Ypsilanti, MI 48197

Email: help@infoplusacct.com

Phone: (734) 544-7620

Website: buildyournumbers.com

Published in the United States.

Table of Contents

About the Author.....	4
Introduction.....	5
What's Your Accounting Focus?.....	6
Qualifications & Certifications?.....	7
Your Industry Background?.....	8
Your Software Expertise?.....	9
Your Experience?.....	10
Frequency and Type of Interaction?.....	11
What's Your "Accounting Style?".....	12
Who Will I (or We) Be Working With?.....	13
Your Technology Expertise?.....	14
Where is Work Performed?.....	15
What Are Your Fees?.....	16
Will You Prepare My Taxes?.....	17
Your Response Time For Day-to-Day Questions?.....	18
After You Select Your Accountant.....	19
Job-Cost Resources.....	20-22

About the Author

In 1994, Diane Gilson created Info Plus(+)
Accounting® to help business owners establish
job-cost accounting systems so they can
access critical day-to-day operations data using
QuickBooks as their primary management
accounting tool. Her passion is designing,
customizing, and upgrading accounting
systems for small to mid-sized construction and
manufacturing companies.



Diane Gilson

Diane's online workshops offer job-cost and management accounting training using QuickBooks and Intuit Enterprise Solutions. Info Plus Accounting also offers in-house products to teach, troubleshoot, and coach clients and other accounting professionals throughout the United States.



Contact Diane:

Phone: 1-734-544-7620
(9-5 Eastern)

6291 Creekside Circle
Ypsilanti, MI 48197

dcg@infoplusacct.com

Introduction



Recently, a participant in one of the online forums that I like to follow asked:

“What should I look for when I choose my next accountant?”

As an experienced accountant and Certified Advanced QuickBooks® ProAdvisor I've worked with hundreds of clients in the construction and manufacturing industries.

That forum participant asked a **very intelligent question!**

Working in the 'wake' of other accountants, I've learned that **many business owners didn't really know what they SHOULD have asked BEFORE** they hired some of their previous service providers.

If so, and you are looking to recruit one (or more) fantastic long-term “accounting partners” to your company team, you will need to:

- **Think through and clearly define** what your company really needs
- **Discuss and openly communicate your needs and expectations BEFORE** you engage them, AND
- Continue the search **until you find the right fit!**

Here are 13 discussion topics to get you started...

Questions to Consider...

#1 – What's Your Accounting Focus?



“What kind of accounting work do you do?” Are you:

- A CPA who can do audits and/or taxes?
- An Enrolled Agent? (IRS certified primarily to do taxes?)
- An accountant with a software specialty (e.g., “Are you a QuickBooks accountant and ProAdvisor”?)
- An accountant who likes to train, support, and work with you or your in-house accounting staff?
- Someone who primarily performs bookkeeping services?
- Someone who will double-check and clean up the work we do before submitting it to a tax preparer?

Note: The accounting field has many variations and specialties, so you don't have to limit yourself to just ONE accountant. For example, you may decide to utilize one person for taxes, and another for software/industry accounting training.

Questions to Consider...

#2 – Qualifications & Certifications?

- What are your degrees and professional certifications?
- Do they line up with my needs ?

Education and certifications obviously don't guarantee expertise.

However, they do indicate that the individual has (at the very least) spent the time to read about, study for, and pass an exam in the areas in which they are certified.

Ask what these degrees and certifications represent in terms of education and testing requirements. **Be sure to look for a good fit between their qualifications and your needs.**



Questions to Consider...

#3 – Your Industry Background?



- Do you specialize in my industry?
- If so, how long have you worked in my industry, and what percentage of your clients are in my industry?

The vast majority of accountants (and bookkeepers) are "**generalists**" who service many different types of companies. Their approach is to "**go wide**" vs. "**going deep.**"

Alternatively, specialists who have worked extensively in your industry bring **more immediate clarity and problem-solving tools** to the table. They can quickly spot, and solve, issues that generalists may not be able to see, or even know about.

Their deeper understanding of specific requirements and techniques can **help create efficiencies and increased profits for your company.**

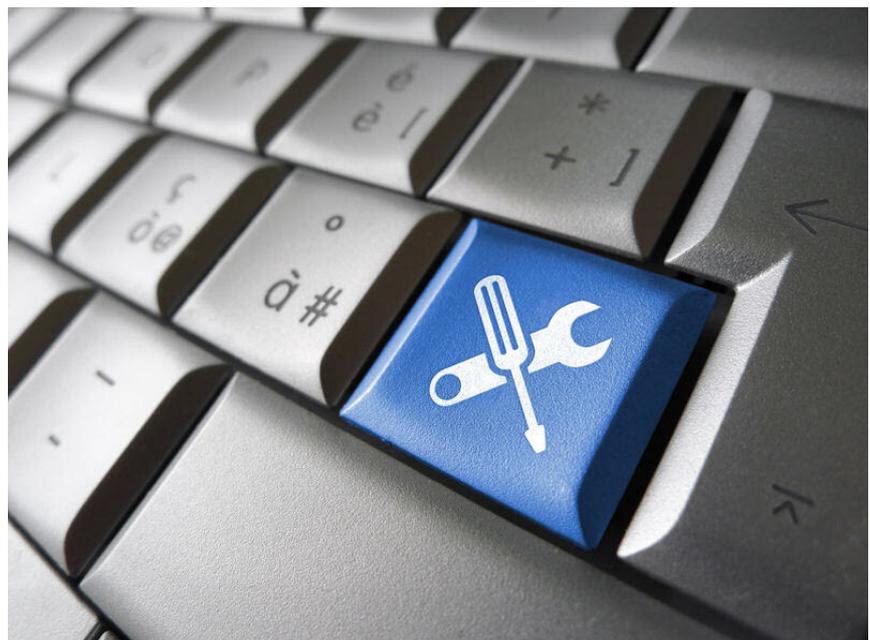
Questions to Consider...

#4 – Your Software Expertise? (e.g., QuickBooks®, Enterprise or other)

- Do you specialize in, and do you have certifications in, my software?
- How many years of experience do you have using this software?
- Will you require me to change my software, or upgrade my software to a current version?

If your accountant doesn't know your software, you won't be "speaking the same language."

If they don't know how your software works, **they could even make critical errors when working with your information.**



Questions to Consider...

#5 – Your Experience?



How long have you been doing this type of work?

Like certifications, years of experience don't necessarily guarantee expertise. However, they do have the potential to add greatly to your accountant's exposure to the "right and wrong" ways of handling accounting and business matters.

Experience creates exposure to a wide variety of businesses and financial scenarios, and most intelligent people will become wiser as they add to their years of experience.

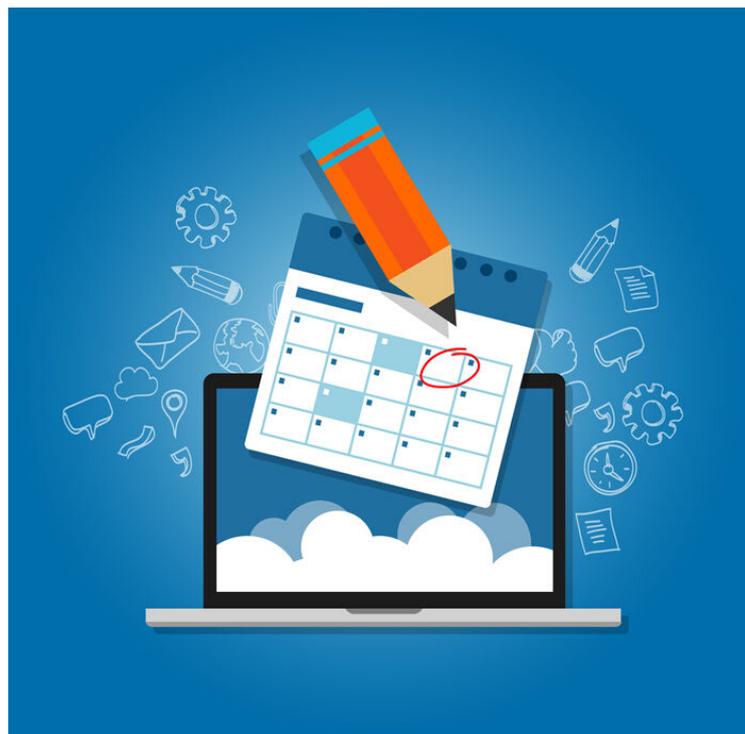
Questions to Consider...

#6 – Frequency and Type of Interaction?

How frequently do you typically meet with your clients, and what types of topics do you discuss?

For example:

- Pre-tax planning meetings?
- Once a year for annual tax work?
- CFO services?
- Business coaching services?
- Training?
- Trouble-shooting?
- Ongoing support?



Questions to Consider...

#7 – What's Your "Accounting Style?"



Are you more of a “big-picture” (binoculars) or a “detail-oriented” (magnifying glass) accountant?

You probably know people who are very structured and detail-oriented and others who find that detail is a real bother. The same can be said for accountants.

If you are most comfortable with detail, you may be happier with a detail-oriented accountant. If you're a "top-down" individual, you may find a big-picture accountant to be more your style.

Ideally, you should look for an accountant who knows **how and when to apply the appropriate level of research and accuracy** for your specific circumstances.

Questions to Consider...

#8 – Who Will I (or We) Be Working With?

- Will I (or we) be **working directly with you**, or will you delegate **most of the actual work and contact with us to a staff member** in your firm?
- If a staff member: **Can I meet that person to see if we have a good ‘fit’?**
- How frequently might we **experience turnover in your staff?**



Questions to Consider...

#9 – Your Technology Expertise?



Are you up-to-speed from a technology perspective?

Some accountants aren't technologically inclined, so **you should check this out.** For example:

- If you live on your smart phone, and your accountant doesn't believe in using the Internet - you probably don't have a good match.
- If your accountants want you to just make rough entries into your software, say they'll "fix it up" for you, and then send you a scribbled-up paper version of your reports to document what they used for tax prep - you may not have a good fit.

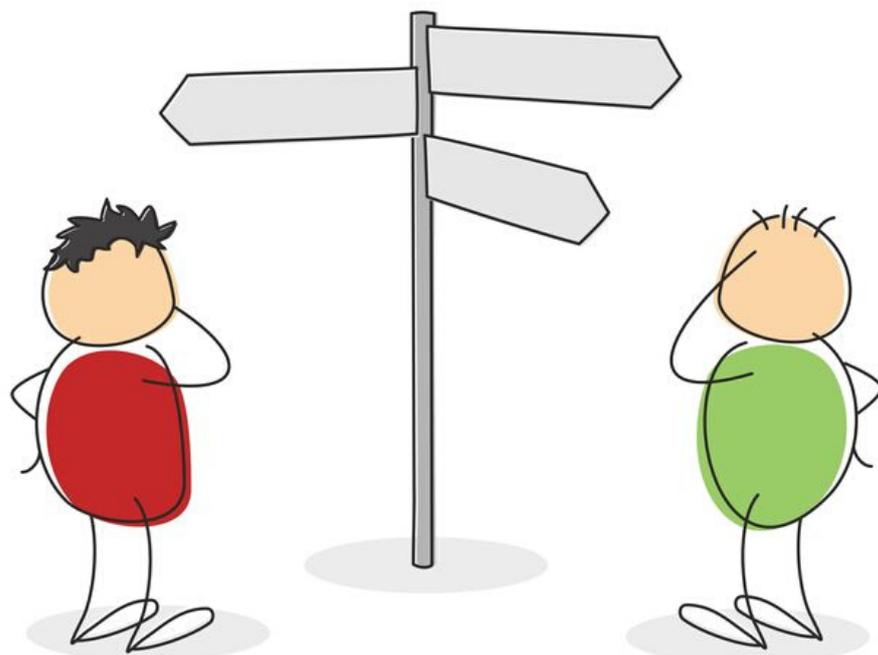
Questions to Consider...

#10 – Where is Work Performed?

Where will we work together?

- Do **you come to my office** to work with us?
- Do **we need to go to your office** to work with you?
- Do you work **primarily by phone**?
- Do you communicate **primarily via email**?
- Can you work with us, **computer-to-computer, using an Internet connection**?

You should **ask about, understand, and be comfortable with** these arrangements **BEFORE** agreeing to work with a new accountant or bookkeeper.



Questions to Consider...

#11 – What Are Your Fees?



- **How do you charge?**
(By the hour, tenth hour, fixed price package, "value billing?")
- **How frequently do you Invoice?**
- **Your payment terms?** *(i.e., pay over time or as-you-go?)*
- **What types of payment do you accept?**
(e.g., Check, Credit Card[s], online payments?)

You will want to have a complete, in-advance understanding regarding financial arrangements.

NOTE: Many accountants will require an Engagement Letter to help define not only fees, but various other aspects of how they will work and collaborate with you.

Questions to Consider...

#12 – Will You Prepare My Taxes?

- Will you perform **pre-year-end tax planning** with us?
- **Do you check our financial information** (including Balance Sheets) **for accuracy?**
- **After we submit our information** to you, **how long does it usually take** to get our returns prepared?



- Will you provide us with a **list of adjusting entries?**
- Will you **review, and help us understand,** our tax results?
- Will you **help us bring our QuickBooks reports into agreement** with your final numbers?

Questions to Consider...

#13 – Your Response Time For Day-to-Day Questions?



- **How do you handle questions that may come up as we do our day-to-day accounting?**
(e.g., E-mail, phone, internet connection?)
- **How long does it typically take to hear back if we place a call to you or your office?**
(e.g., Do you have a “return calls within x hours” policy?)



Final Considerations

After You Select Your Accountant...



AFTER you locate someone that you believe will be a good fit to meet your needs, it's also **extremely important to provide regular and truthful feedback as you work together** .

If there's something that you don't like, let him or her know so they can fix it. As a business owner yourself, you know that anyone who truly cares about providing quality, professional service appreciates hearing ideas about how to improve their service.

AND if you ARE pleased with their services, be sure to let them know!

Why? Good accountants CARE about their clients and about the quality of the work they do. Your appreciation will mean a LOT to them!

Resources

Tired of working without the information you need to run your company most efficiently and successfully? If so, please take a look through the following training and support tools we've developed over our years of working with construction companies...

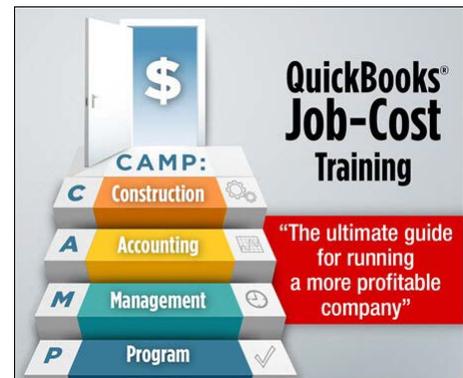
Online QuickBooks Training

[Subscription Program \(CAMP\)](#)

Is your company losing out because the advanced features you need are buried somewhere in QuickBooks or Enterprise Solutions? Take a closer look at our accounting lessons where you'll learn how to structure your system, enter transactions, and create the reports that can make a REAL difference in your financial results!

When you become a member of our Construction Accounting & Manufacturing Program (CAMP) you get:

- **Full and immediate access to more than 90 individual workshops**
- Plus: **Substantial discounts on QuickBooks, Enterprise, Intuit, and Info Plus Accounting products.**
- Plus: **Private Q&A and coaching sessions** (no additional charge) with your QuickBooks consultant and instructor, [Diane Gilson](#).



[Show Me More...](#)

Job-Cost Support Products from Info Plus

[eCPA – employee Cost and Pricing Analyzer™](#)



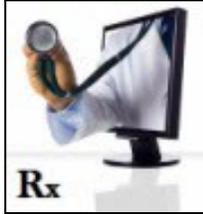
Convert Labor Burden to Profits!

Calculate regular and overtime labor burden and employee billing rates. Display actual, fully-burdened labor costs for each employee (per year, hour, or minute). Compute exactly what to charge to achieve your desired profit on labor costs.

[Show Me More...](#)

Watch these [eCPA videos](#) to see how you can determine profitable labor rates

[Comprehensive Check-Up & Action Plan™ for your QuickBooks accounting system](#)



Get a Clean Bill of Health...

You'll get your own individualized report after we test a variety of your most critical job-cost and financial elements and then outline how you can get your system back on track.

[Show Me More...](#)

[Percentage of Completion Analyzer™](#)



See True Job Profitability for Long-Term Contracts

Don't rely on guesstimates from job-site supervisors! Instead, use this tool to perform background calculations and see the exact \$ amounts and journal entries you need to make to accurately adjust income for long-term contracts. *(Also includes sample calculations and overview of "Percentage of Completion" concepts.)*

[Show Me More...](#)

[Month-End Procedures](#)



Accurate, On-Time Reports – Each and Every Month...

These month-end closing, proofing, and balancing procedures give you the tools you need to review, self-correct, and protect your monthly records and job-cost reports. This date-driven checklist will help you meet those monthly reporting deadlines.

[Show Me More...](#)

[AccountingPRO™ \(QuickBooks file template for construction companies\)](#)



Put a Clean Start in your Cart!

AccountingPRO™ was created by Info Plus to meet the specific needs of the construction industry. This flexible, pre-built QuickBooks data file not only saves start up time but is designed to help business owners (or their accountants) more easily and effectively access QuickBooks' powerful data collection and reporting features.

[Show Me More...](#)

[The Profit-Booster Analyzer™](#)



“A little here, a little there... pretty soon you’re talking BIG money.”

Get the sober truth by using this tool to estimate your own company’s invisible costs and the impact of lost income. Next, you’ll see the benefits of small, but effective improvements to your financial, operating, and accounting controls. Finally, decide for yourself: Could an investment in tighter controls and better financial info have a substantial impact on your bottom line?

[Show Me More](#)

[Cleancut TimeSheets™ – English + Spanish](#)

OR [Cleancut TimeSheets™ – English-only](#)



Regardless of Language, Accurate Time Reporting = Better Job-Cost Reports

Job-costing requires employees to accurately record time and activities spent on various jobs and tasks. Originally designed as a solution for one of our construction clients with Spanish-speaking employees, this set of Excel-based time sheet templates (construction terms included) provides varied layouts, streamlines data entry, and is easily customized.

English + Spanish version [Show Me More](#)

English-only version [Show Me More](#)

Discounts on QuickBooks, Enterprise, and Intuit ‘Plug-Ins.’



***Trust our years of experience to find the right fit for your business
(then we’ll help you locate the best available price!)***

As Intuit Premier Resellers, we can access a variety of promotional discounts and special pricing for you.

- We offer **significant discounts on current versions of [QuickBooks Pro and QuickBooks Premier](#).**
 - **Get the best available pricing on [Intuit Enterprise Solutions \(all versions\)](#).**
 - Be sure to ask us for **insights (and quotes)** on these two integrated ‘plug-ins’: [Intuit Payroll and Intuit Payment Solutions](#).
-