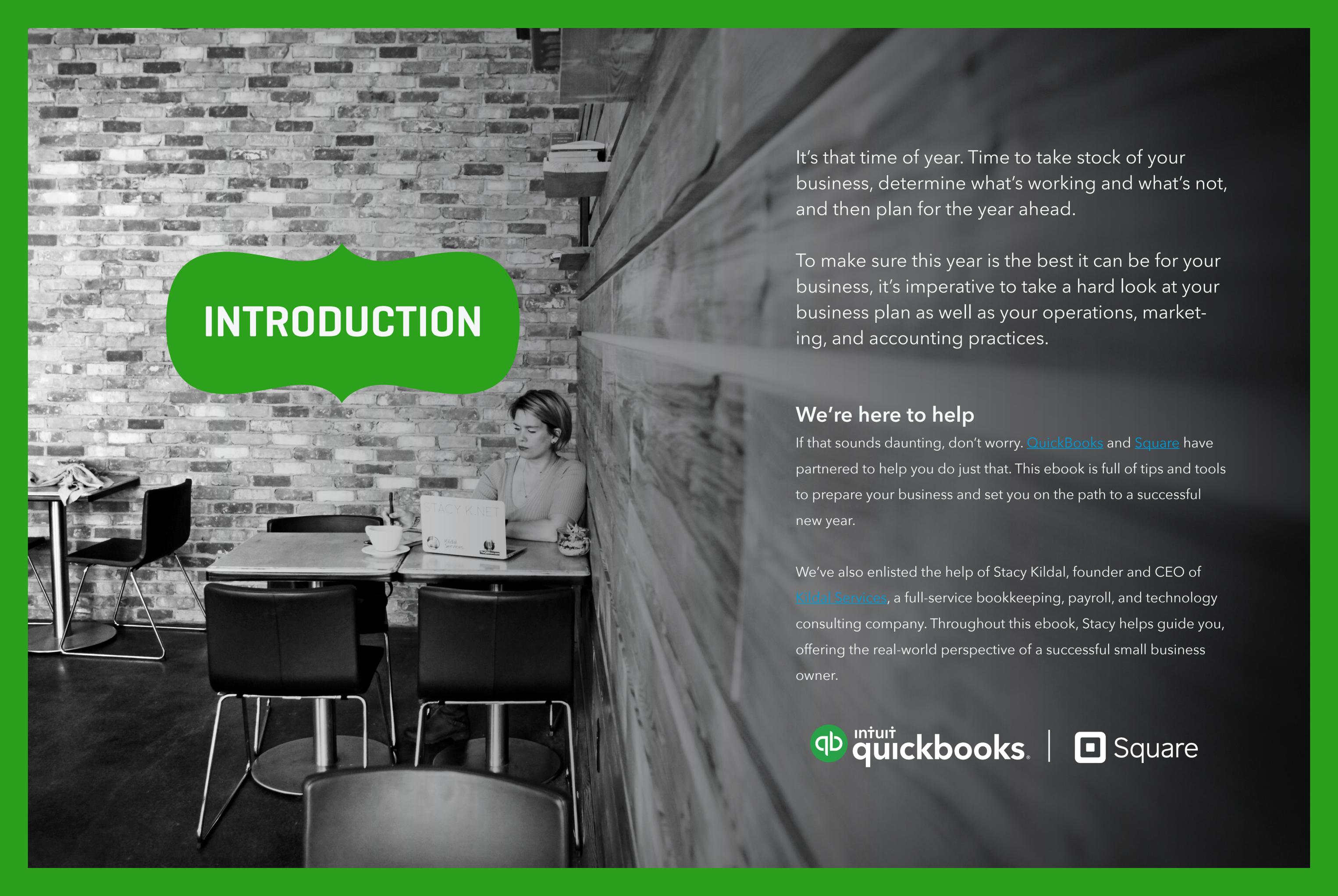


Five Steps To Jump-Start Business Success This Year

MAKE THIS A BIG YEAR FOR YOUR SMALL BUSINESS





INTRODUCTION

It's that time of year. Time to take stock of your business, determine what's working and what's not, and then plan for the year ahead.

To make sure this year is the best it can be for your business, it's imperative to take a hard look at your business plan as well as your operations, marketing, and accounting practices.

We're here to help

If that sounds daunting, don't worry. [QuickBooks](#) and [Square](#) have partnered to help you do just that. This ebook is full of tips and tools to prepare your business and set you on the path to a successful new year.

We've also enlisted the help of Stacy Kildal, founder and CEO of [Kildal Services](#), a full-service bookkeeping, payroll, and technology consulting company. Throughout this ebook, Stacy helps guide you, offering the real-world perspective of a successful small business owner.



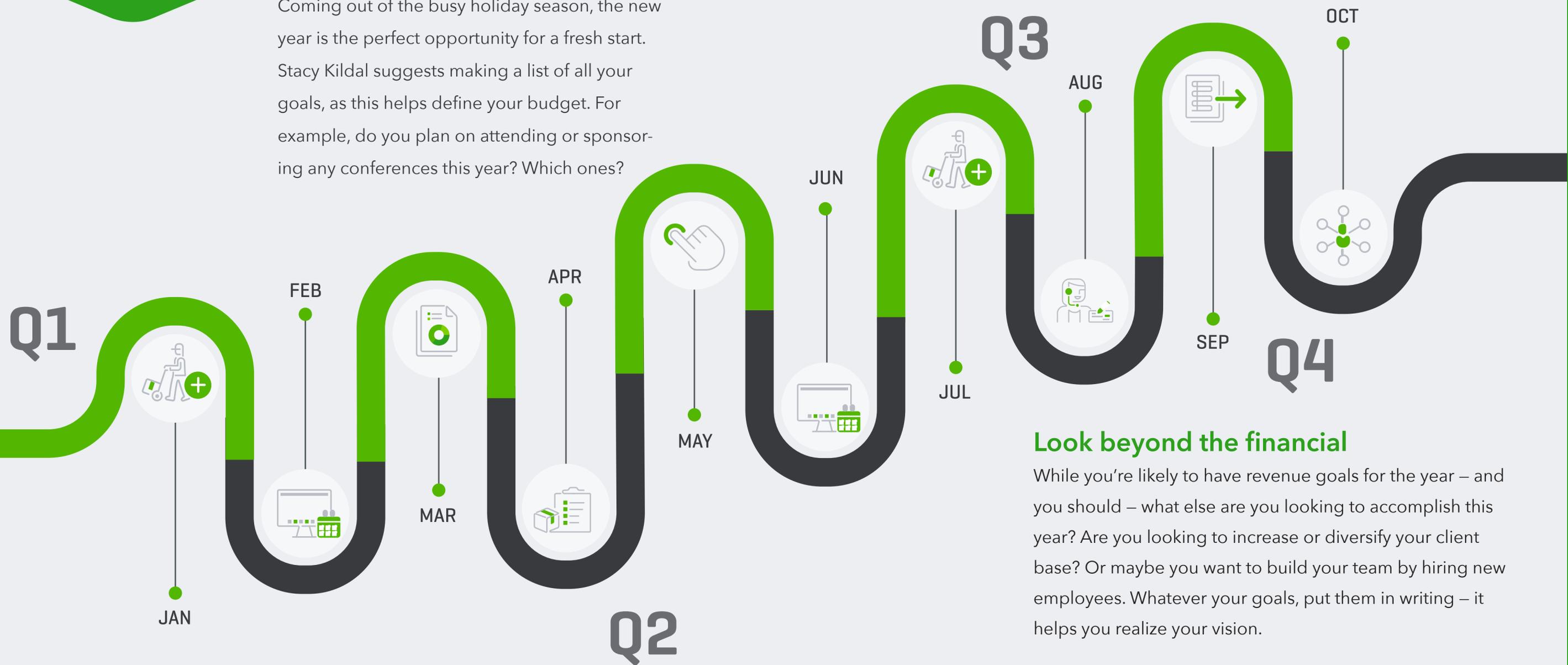
HAVE A VISION

Define your goals for the year

Coming out of the busy holiday season, the new year is the perfect opportunity for a fresh start. Stacy Kildal suggests making a list of all your goals, as this helps define your budget. For example, do you plan on attending or sponsoring any conferences this year? Which ones?

Break it down

Kildal recommends defining your company's goals for the year, and then breaking down those goals by quarter, and then by month. Defining your goals as specifically as possible helps inform the strategies and tactics that drive your budget. It also helps you keep yourself and your team on track by knowing what needs to get done and when.



Look beyond the financial

While you're likely to have revenue goals for the year – and you should – what else are you looking to accomplish this year? Are you looking to increase or diversify your client base? Or maybe you want to build your team by hiring new employees. Whatever your goals, put them in writing – it helps you realize your vision.

MAKE A PLAN

Revisit your roadmap

When you're starting out, a business plan is a great way to define your company's purpose and goals – and most important, how you'll make money. However, it's important to revisit your plan and adjust it as needed. That way it can continue to be your compass, guiding you toward reaching your goals.

Review, adjust, realign

"When I started out many years ago, my plan was to provide bookkeeping and payroll services. These days, that plan has changed. We still provide those core services, but I've expanded into speaking engagements, training, technology consulting, and providing social media management for other accounting professionals."

– Stacy Kildal

OVERVIEW



FINANCE



HUSTLING



BUSINESS PLAN

SUCCESS



CHALLENGES



KNOW WHAT'S WORKING AND WHAT'S NOT



Assess your current operations

The start of a new year is also an ideal time to evaluate how your company is run, from your sales process to the hardware and applications you use. Whether you hire someone to help with this or tackle it yourself, here are two critical questions to ask.



Is your sales process painful?

Stacy Kildal believes it's important to take a look at your current sales and purchasing process. Is the purchasing process too manual? Does that sales process take too long? Are you getting any feedback from customers once they've purchased? Identify specific pain points, and assign someone to own each point in the process. Finally, Kildal stresses, "Determine where improvements can be made – and make them!"



Are your payment options stuck in the past?

Magnetic-stripe credit cards aren't the only game in town now. Chip cards are reaching ubiquity in the United States: Nearly [75 percent of cards processed](#) on Square now contain a chip. At the same time, [mobile payments](#) are gaining favor among certain demographics like millennials.



Does your payment technology support chip cards and mobile payments as well as magstripe cards? If not, think about upgrading to something like [Square Reader for contactless and chip](#), which supports all of these payment options. Providing more options for payment guarantees a better experience for customers.

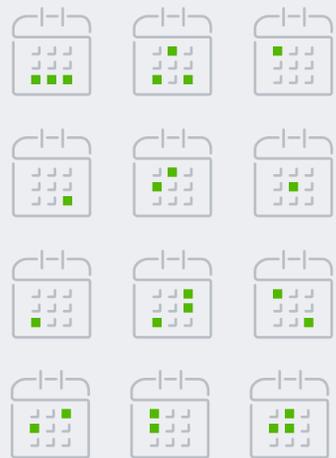
What's more, through the [Sync with Square app](#), Square sales-related transactions can automatically import into QuickBooks Online, saving you time from manually entering these, and getting you back to growing your business.



Do you have a marketing plan?

Marketing is one of the key ways you can drive new as well as repeat business. Odds are you've done some kind of marketing before, but to really see results from your efforts, you should formalize a plan for the year. That doesn't mean that the plan has to be complex.

Start with a promotions calendar



"Look at your budget, your goals, and your business plan, then create a marketing plan. What sort of promotions would align with all of them, and should you plan for promotions around specific times of year, or target specific holidays? Look at your historical sales to see who's buying what, and when they're buying it. Put it all together in a promotions calendar. And remember, this can be changed as needed."

– Stacy Kildal

Are you reaching your customers where they spend time?

Next, think about your current and potential customers. Where can you reach them with these campaigns and promotions? Based on that answer, decide what kind of channels you want to market through. Do you want to be on Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram? Should you start a blog? What about Yelp?

Build loyalty through CRM

Email is a powerful relationship-building tool that you can use to tell current and prospective customers about new products or special promotions. Customer relationship management (CRM) software like [Square's](#) can help you manage that email and your customer email lists. For your most devoted customers, why not think about developing your own loyalty program that rewards them for repeat purchases. With Square, you can even create [custom gift cards](#) for your business, which helps your favorite customers gift your business to friends and family.

ACCOUNT FOR EVERYTHING



Scrutinize your chart of accounts

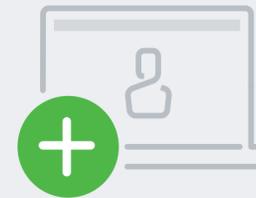
Do you have multiple income accounts? Why? Maybe you can track some of that information using product and service items. Or if you have duplicate expense accounts, [QuickBooks Online](#) makes it easy to merge them. Why does this matter? Your chart of accounts functions as the primary indicator of your company's financial well-being.

Keep your business at your fingertips

You're already reviewing your sales numbers yearly, quarterly, monthly, and weekly. But reviewing those numbers daily, hourly, or even in real time with tools like QuickBooks Online and Square, can give you a better idea of how your business is really running. That kind of data can help you make quick, strategic decisions about everything from holiday staffing to inventory. It also helps you trim accounts where appropriate.



Accounting,
Bookkeeping



QuickBooks Setup
& Consulting



Tax & Financial
Planning



Computer
Consulting

Bring in the pros

Managing your own bookkeeping and accounting may not always be the best choice. A bookkeeper or [QuickBooks ProAdvisor](#) can help you manage your business, prepare for tax season, and most importantly, reach your goals. It's likely you didn't get into business to learn accounting. Trust the pros and your finances will run more efficiently - so you can get back to doing what you love: growing your business.

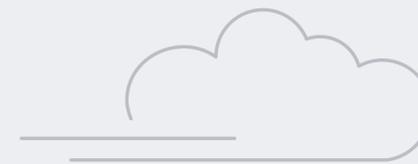


Know how much you'll owe

Did you know that you are required to make quarterly tax payments? Do you know when those are due? Taxes can be confusing, and if you need help sorting things out, professional tax preparers can be an invaluable resource. They also make sure you're taking advantage of all possible deductions and are compliant with your tax filing. If you're using a bookkeeper, she or he can work with your tax preparer to help keep you honest with Uncle Sam. The IRS website also has resources to help you estimate your payments.

Divide and conquer

Once quarterly estimates are determined, Stacy Kildal finds it helpful to break those down into even smaller amounts. She also suggests creating a separate checking account, where you can transfer funds to cover sales tax, payroll tax, and estimated quarterly taxes weekly. "When those tax payments are due, you can make them directly from that account," Kildal explains.



Mark your calendar

Save yourself time, frustration, and possibly money. Add these 2017 tax deadlines to your calendar now.



QuickBooks is the #1 accounting software for small businesses. It lets you run your business all in one place by tracking sales, expenses, and cash flow, paying employees, and ensuring you're always ready for tax time.

To learn more about QuickBooks Online, call Laurie Gonzales:

Direct: 1-800-449-8934

Email: laurie_gonzales@intuit.com



[Square](#) gives you everything you need to run and grow your business. Accept debit and credit cards with Square Reader for magstripe, and accept EMV chip cards and Apple Pay with Square Reader for contactless and chip. Funds are deposited fast – see money in your account in one to two business days. Use your POS to keep track of sales in real time, manage items and employees, and view business analytics.

[Contact us](#) or call us at 1-800-474-3398