THE QBC

Growing Your Business Thru QuickBooks®

FROM THE OFFICE OF

AA

ACCOUNTING ADVANTAGE

6276 Jackson Road, Suite B
Ann Arbor, Michigan 48103
888 503-6265 • www.AcctgAdvant.com

October 2016

Creating Reports in QuickBooks, Part 1

QuickBooks comes with dozens of report templates that can be run as is. This month and next, we'll show you ways to make them "fit" your company.

Reports are your reward for all that hard work you put in entering records and transactions in QuickBooks. Sure, you can always find individual invoices, sales receipts, and customers by using the software's search tools, but in order to make smart business decisions, you need to be able to see related subsets of the information you so carefully entered in neat rows and columns.

You've probably created at least some basic reports in QuickBooks. You may have, for example, wanted to see who's late paying you, or whether you have unpaid bills. You might need to know your stock levels, or which purchase orders are still unfilled. You certainly want to keep a close eye on whether you're making or losing money.
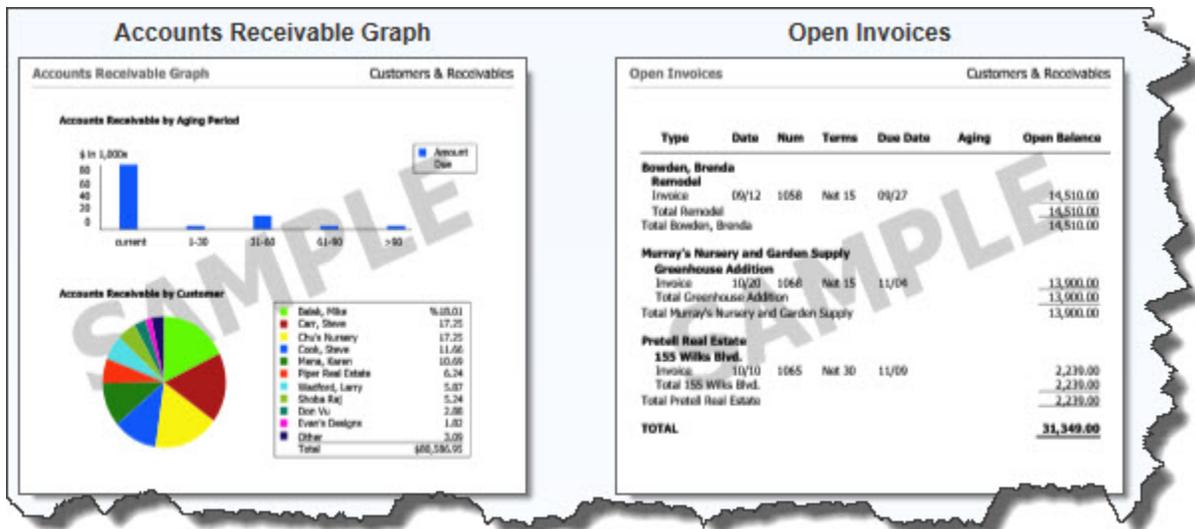
*The QuickBooks **Report Center** displays examples of reports you can create using your company's own data.*

QuickBooks makes it easy to get those answers in only a few seconds. But to get really meaningful, targeted views of your accounting information, you'll want to shape your reports so that they reveal *precisely* what you need to know. You can do some of this on your own, but you might want to enlist our help to drill down even further – and to create and analyze the more complex output that some reports can provide.
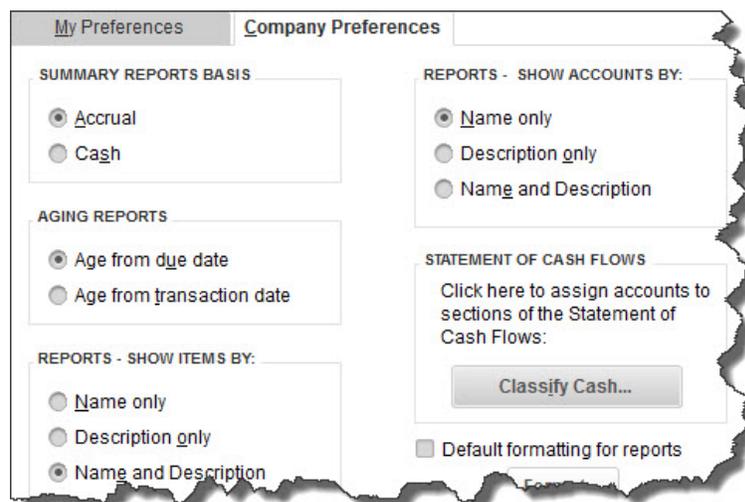
Configure Preliminary Settings

As we often do when we're starting a tutorial on a specific QuickBooks feature, we're going to send you to the **Preferences** window first thing. Open the **Edit** menu and select **Preferences**, then **Reports & Graphs**. With the **My Preferences** section open, you can instruct QuickBooks on some of the ways reports should be handled. You can choose to:

- Have the **Modify Report** window open every time you create a report (to remind you to make any necessary changes first).
- Set your **Refresh** options. If you always want to have the most current data displayed when you generate a report, you can tell QuickBooks to **Prompt me to refresh** or **Refresh automatically** by clicking on the button in front of the appropriate response. Choose **Don't refresh**—the fastest method—if you don't want to be interrupted when you're working with a report. You can refresh when you're done.
- **Draw graphs in 2D** to make them run faster, and **Use** [black and white] **patterns** instead of colors to better differentiate between segments.

Each person who has access to QuickBooks can set these **Preferences** any way he or she wishes.

Setting Up Company Preferences

*You must be the QuickBooks Administrator to set **Company Preferences**.*

You can decide on your own whether **Aging Reports** should start the aging process from the due date or the transaction date. Decide how you want **Items** and **Accounts** to appear in reports. And if you click the **Format** button located directly below **Default formatting for reports**, you can alter their appearance, for example, by changing fonts and indicating what information should appear in the header and footer.

For other preferences, you may need our help. Do you understand the difference between running **Summary Reports** as **Accrual** or **Cash**? And have you worked with a **Statement of Cash Flows** before so you can assign accounts to various sections? This is a report we should be generating and analyzing periodically for you, so don't worry about dealing with it on your own.

Note: QuickBooks was designed for small businesspeople, not accountants. But if you really want to get the most out of it to make the best business decisions possible, let us help you with those concepts you don't understand.

Navigating the Report Center
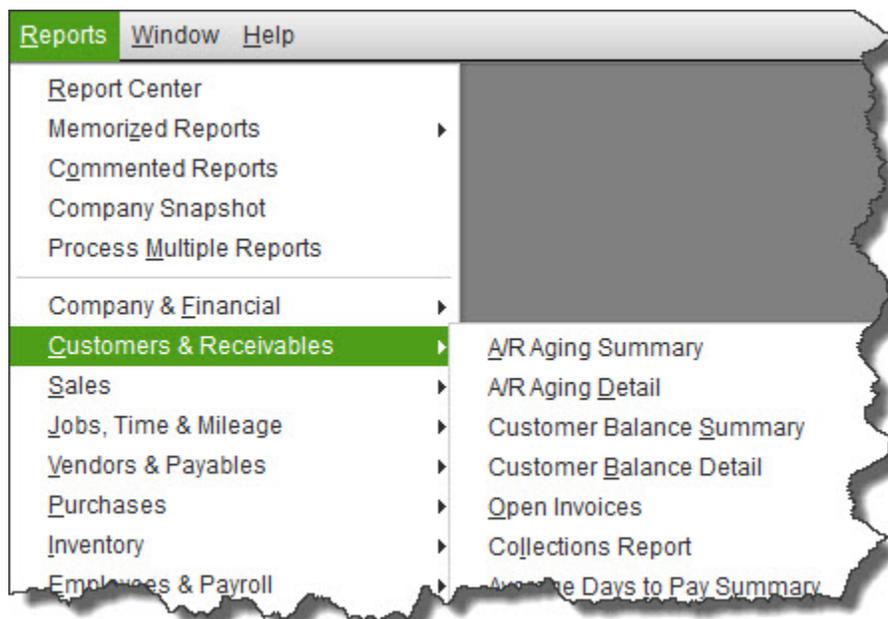
*The QuickBooks **Reports** menu*

Unless you're working with a very old version of QuickBooks, you have two options for accessing the software's reporting functions. You can simply click on **Reports** in the left vertical pane to open the **Report Center**. Or you can get there by opening the **Reports** menu (which includes links to other areas, like the **Transaction Journal,** in addition to lists of QuickBooks' reports divided by category).

Next month, we'll look at some reports and their customization options in QuickBooks. In the meantime, as always, we're available to work with you on enhancing your knowledge of QuickBooks reports and their setup.