A tactical guide to migration for accountants

These migration tips come from 9 accountants and ProAdvisors. They shared their best practices for moving clients online, along with what they wished they'd known before migrating.

1 Pre-conversion

Set the stage for success

- ☐ Complete these tasks as needed:
  - Review chart of accounts for accuracy
  - Ensure the balance sheet aligns with the latest tax return
  - Reconcile bank and credit card statements
  - Categorize open transactions
  - Pay outstanding invoices
  - Finish any payroll runs or payroll tax payments

- ☐ Pause here ⚠️ and back up your data using these steps:
  - From the File ▼ dropdown menu in Desktop, select **Create copy** and select **Backup copy**, **Portable company file**, or **Accountant's copy**.
  - Make a backup or portable company file for the client, *and* make an accountant's copy for you.

- ☐ Confirm that your client has a new, active QuickBooks Online account that is ready to receive the data.

- ☐ Does your client require specific third-party apps? Pause here ⚠️ to find out whether they will work with QuickBooks Online.

- ☐ Does your client have just one company file or multiple company files they didn't disclose? Pause here ⚠️ to double-check.

- ☐ **Do you have multi-company clients?** Make sure your client's QuickBooks Online account includes one subscription for each company.

Additional resources

Find out more about data cleanup and considerations in **Webinar: 3 tips for helping clients migrate smoothly**

Learn more about **QuickBooks Online subscriptions** to find the best one for your client

To help inform your client about what to expect during migration, share with them **Moving to QuickBooks Online** (a PDF you can co-brand).

Check the data

- ☐ Know which types of data will convert and which will not.

- ☐ Thoroughly assess the current setup and company file.

  - **Quantity of data**:
    In Desktop, press the **F2** key to see your client's **number of targets** on the product information screen. Condense the data if it's 750,000 or more, or:

  - **Choose which data to migrate:**

    - Transactions within a date range

    - Lists and balances, without transactions

    - Only selected lists like customers, vendors, charts of accounts and employees

  - **Verify the data** with the built-in tool. Data kept over many years can corrupt.

  - **Run your client's key reports** from Desktop on an accrual basis (like Profit & Loss, Accounts Receivable, Accounts Payable), which you'll use in Step 3.

  - **Remove inactive accounts** from the chart of accounts.

  - **Beware of the "other names" category**, which does not exist in QuickBooks Online. Prior to conversion, these items must be assigned to vendors or customers.

  - **Be sure to clear any billable charges** that are associated with inactive accounts. These can cause problems with migration.

  - **Tidy the data as much as possible** prior to conversion.

- ☐ Will your client migrate Desktop Payroll or inventory?
  Make sure to clean up negative inventory, and pause here ⚠️ to learn more about facilitating a smooth transition for this data.

- ☐ After inspecting the company file, pause here ⚠️ to propose a cut-off date (1 or 2 years of data, for instance). If the data file is unwieldy or the cleanup step seems unmanageable, it may be better to start fresh. If so, keep the original file for reference.

Test the migration

- ☐ Before estimating the cost and timeline for the project, you can run a test migration.

- ☐ Let your client explore the trial of QuickBooks Online that comes with the test migration.

- ☐ Take a moment to share with your client the terminology they'll see Online that is different from Desktop.

Additional resources

Learn which data moves to QuickBooks Online

Reduce your migration's target size with the **Condense Data utility**

More about **migrating Desktop Payroll to Online Payroll**

More about **migrating inventory to QuickBooks Online**

Help your client get familiar with **different terminology in QuickBooks Online**

2 Conversion

Pick a method

☐ There are several ways to migrate your client's data:

- **You can migrate the data with an online tool:** With this method, you no longer need QuickBooks Desktop installed. Your clients don't need to be using the latest version, either.

- **Your client can migrate their own data:** If they use the latest version of Desktop or can update to it, your client can complete this step themselves.

- **You can use assisted migration:** If your client has unique needs or you would simply like more support, you can have the migration done for you.

3 Post-conversion

Confirm your successful conversion

☐ After their conversions, most accountants felt it wasn't necessary to maintain their books in both Desktop and Online.

- After a client's Desktop subscription is canceled, they'll get 12 months of view-only access to Desktop in order to reference their old file.

☐ From QuickBooks Online, run your client's key reports once more, on an accrual basis. If they match your Desktop reports from Step 1, you can move forward.

- If not, pause here ⚠️ to ensure you didn't run reports on a cash basis, as these may not match. If not, revisit the books and find the inconsistency.

☐ Check each connected service or feature, like QuickBooks Payroll, Payments, and time tracking. Once these are running online, you can shut them down in Desktop.

- If your client uses QuickBooks Payments, make sure to set up any recurring charges in QuickBooks Online. Then, you can cancel them in Desktop.

☐ Reconnect any third-party apps your client used with Desktop, and make sure the integrations are syncing as needed.

☐ Give your client the backup files you created.

Additional resources

Move your client's books to QuickBooks Online with an online tool

For clients wishing to migrate their own data, share **Move your QuickBooks Desktop file to QuickBooks Online**

Ask about assisted migration
We can help you move as many clients as you'd like from any version of QuickBooks Desktop to QuickBooks Online, at no charge to you or your clients.*
Schedule a call or call
844-333-1893
M-F, 8 AM to 8 PM ET

Learn more about **view-only access to Desktop**

Download the **Post-conversion Toolkit** to learn more about comparing reports

Learn more about:
QuickBooks Online Payroll
QuickBooks Online Payments
QuickBooks Time

Congratulations!

You've migrated your client's files!

To help set them up for success, check out the **Migration Toolkit** to find tips and resources for moving online.