



RYEGRASS
BOOKKEEPING

Considering a Bookkeeper for Your Business? Here's Some Things to Look For

Did your New Year's resolution include getting your business' books in order? Now it's tax time and you are wondering where to start. A bookkeeper might be one option. They offer a variety of services, from coding and tracking expenses that can help you save money at tax time, reconciling accounts to make sure your money is accurately accounted for, handling out-going invoices for clients, filing tax forms for your business, in addition to other services you might not even be aware of, depending on their skill set.

A quick Google search will bring up a lot of options when it comes to bookkeepers. The first question to ask yourself is how involved do you want to be? Do you want to keep your hand in things as much as possible? If so, an option like getting training in a program might be a good option. QuickBooks tends to be the go-to program used here in the U.S. Some bookkeepers will offer training in the program they are certified in as a service or you can find comprehensive training through their website, like QuickBooks.com. They will train you and act as your assistant, walking you through the process of doing your own books through the program.

If you are overwhelmed by this task though and want to delegate whenever possible, then you might be better looking into contracting with an actual bookkeeper, depending on how technologically inclined you are this person might either be local or online. Either way, they should work with your needs and your

level of commitment, know the local city and state requirements as well as maybe even work with others in your industry so they know the needs of your business.

So, what should you look for in a bookkeeper? Your business is personal, just as your finances are, so don't feel like you must choose the first one you come upon. Take some time to talk to them; you are hiring a business partner to some degree and there will be a lot of conversations between you two so you want this to be someone you can work with and respect. You want someone who is trustworthy, reliable, organized and asks lots of questions about your business; they should let you do most of the talking because let's face it, this is all about you and your business. Finally, you want someone who is a good communicator and problem solver. Everyone is different so there is no one size fits all solution out there. You want someone who will adapt to your needs and find solutions to your problems.

That's all well and good, but how do you find that person? How do you know they will be a good fit? Ask your peers or other business owners whose opinion you trust, who they use. And with your first meeting, if possible, meet in person. A phone call or video chat isn't the same for either of you and it's an investment in your business so the time spent here will be worthwhile. Talk to the candidate(s) and remember you are getting to know them as much as they are you. Ask about their previous work or life experiences that will give them credibility to the responsibility they are taking on. How do they prefer to work? Being a usually introverted field, most will prefer email interactions. Does that work for you? When exchanging records and reports, do you prefer physically mailed copies, exchanges in person, or are you open to technology to speed up the process? How did they solve problems in the past? You can ask for examples or provide a scenario from your own business. Some bookkeepers will offer a monthly meeting to review your reports, you should try to take advantage of this, so you know where your business stands and what you need to know or do for the coming months. Do you prefer these meetings in person or will a phone call work?

Ultimately taking care of your business' books is just one of the many hats you must wear as a business owner, but for many it can be overwhelming or intimidating and as such can often be left until the last minute, making the

situation even more stressful. Overlooking this aspect of your business though can be costing you valuable time and money.

- If you want to try to tackle your books on your own, consider getting some training in the program either through a bookkeeper or online.
- If you go with hiring it out, look for someone that is trustworthy, reliable, organized, and asks a lot of questions about how you do business. They should be a problem solver and focused on helping you be successful.
- Find a bookkeeper by doing an internet search for one local in your area or ask others who they use. Many work virtually these days, so if you aren't intimidated by a little technology don't be afraid to cast a wider net.
- Leaving your books until the last minute is not only stressful for you but could be costing you money. Use the pressure of tax time to find a long-term solution that will set you up for success in the future.

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