Making QuickBooks™ Yours: *All About Customizing*

FEATURING:

1.) Make Your Preferences Known in QuickBooks
2.) Customize QuickBooks Forms for a More Professional Image
3.) Use QuickBooks Custom Fields to Improve Insight

QuickBooks R us
Your QuickBooks Resource

QuickBooks R us
(317) 290-0611 Option 2 • Help@QuickBooksRus.net

About Us

Tony has been a trusted Certified QuickBooks Advisor since 1999. Specializing in all versions of QuickBooks, Desktop and Online. Primarily focused on the following: For Profits: Service and Retail Businesses. Non-Profits: Associations, Churches, Fraternities/Sororities. Also Small Business Consulting. including system design, IT support, and setup, ISO9000 procedure development, operations, marketing, and financial planning, analysis, and benchmarking. Worldwide Availability.

QuickBooks R us

Your QuickBooks Resource

QuickBooks R us
Your QuickBooks Resource

Making QuickBooks™ Yours: All About Customizing

Make Your Preferences Known in QuickBooks

QuickBooks is ready to use when you install it. But you can change its settings to make it work the way your company needs it to.

There are some features that all small businesses need in their accounting software. Everyone needs a Chart of Accounts and a good set of report templates. There must be tools to bill customers and to document income and expenses. Some companies need payroll management, and some need the ability to create purchase orders. These days, many businesses want to accept payments online.

But what does your company need? It's unlikely that you would use absolutely every feature that QuickBooks offers, but you need to make sure that every tool you want to use is set up properly.

If you've been using QuickBooks for awhile, you may have been directed to the **Preferences** window already (accessible by clicking on **Edit** | **Preferences**). If you're just starting out with the software, it's a good idea to acquaint yourself with at least the most important elements contained there. Here are some of them.

Accounting

Click on the **Accounting** tab in the left vertical pane, then on the **Company Preferences** tab. Here, QuickBooks wants to know whether you

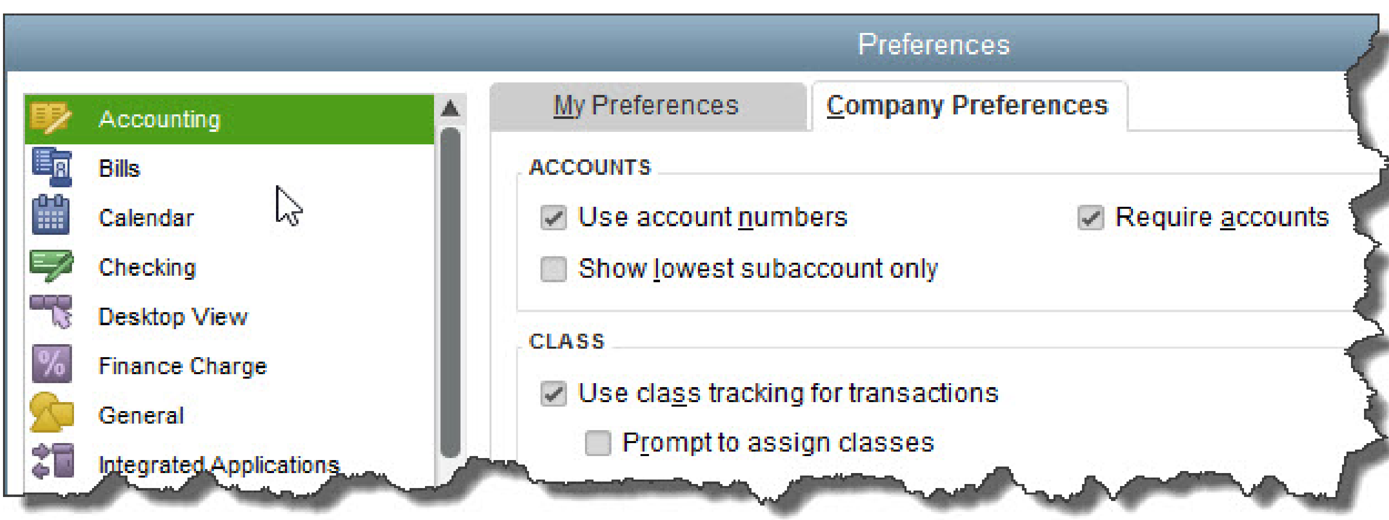

Figure 1: QuickBooks' **Preferences** window. Some features are already turned on or off by default, but you can change their status.

Make Your Preferences Known in QuickBooks, con't

plan to use account numbers. It also offers the option to turn on **class tracking**, which lets you define **classes** like company locations or divisions, or salespeople. Not sure what you should do here? Please ask us.

Desktop View

Options here involve usability and visibility issues. Getting them right can save you time and frustration. For example, under the **My Preferences** tab, you can choose between a **VIEW** that displays only **One Window**, or one that keeps **Multiple Windows** open. Click on the **Company Preferences** tab to turn specific features – like **Payroll** and **Sales Tax** -- on and off.

Finance Charge

Should you decide to apply **Finance Charges** to late payments, for example, please let us go over this feature with you. We'll explain how it is set up and how it works in day-to-day accounting.

Items & Inventory

This is critical: You <u>must</u> visit this screen if you will be buying and selling products. First, you need to make sure that the box in front of **Inventory and purchase orders are active** has a check mark in it. If not, click in the box. Also important here: QuickBooks can maintain a real-time inventory level for each item you sell so that you neither run short nor waste money by stockpiling. Check the box in front of **Quantity on Sales Orders** if you want the software to include items that appear on sales orders in the count. Also, do you want a warning when you don't have enough inventory to sell (as you're filling out an invoice, for example)? We can explain the difference between **Quantity on Hand** and **Quantity Available**; it's rather complex.

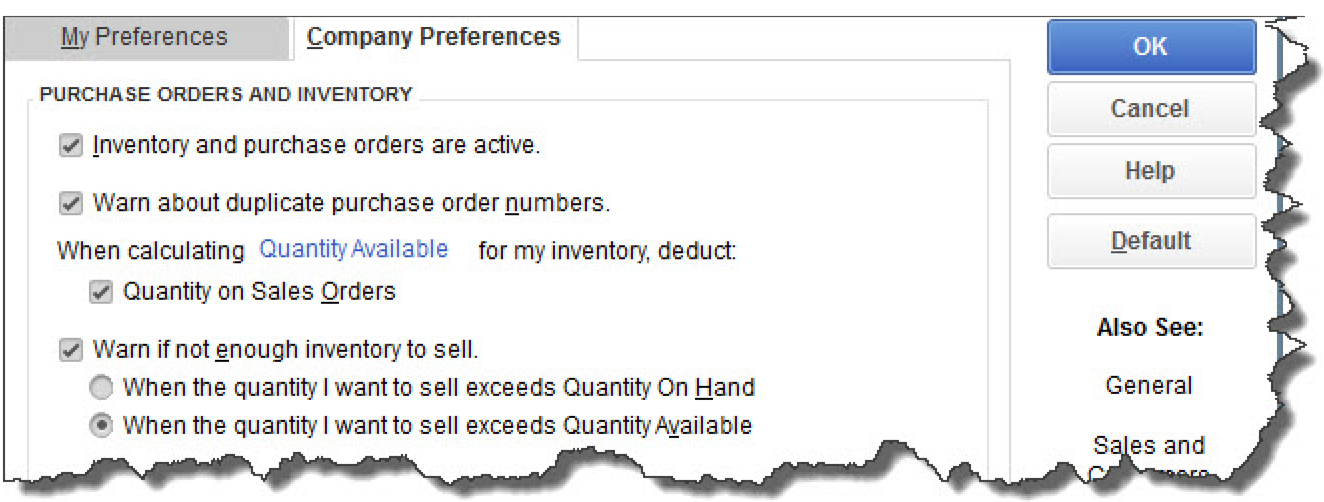

Figure 2: Some inventory concepts may be unfamiliar to you. If you'll be buying and selling items, let us walk you through this section.

Make Your Preferences Known in QuickBooks, con't

Payroll & Employees

Payroll is integrated with QuickBooks, but it's so complex that it almost acts as another application. If you're planning to take this on yourself, some training will be necessary.

Reminders

Unless you have a very simple business or an extraordinarily good memory, you'll probably want Quickbooks to remind you when you need to complete certain tasks. Click **Reminders | Company Preferences** to see the lengthy list of events that QuickBooks supports, like **Paychecks to Print, Inventory to Reorder,** and **Bills to Pay**. You can have the software display either a summary or a list of what needs to be done, and you can specify how many days in advance you want to be alerted.

Sales & Customers, Sales Tax, and Time & Expenses

If your accounting workflow includes tasks in any of these areas, you'll need to visit them to turn features on and make other preferences known.

You probably won't need to have absolutely every feature turned on from the start. But as your business grows and changes – and we hope it does – you can always revisit the **Preferences** window to let QuickBooks know about your new needs. We hope you'll let us know, too.

NEXT UP:

Customize QuickBooks Forms for a More Professional Image

Customize QuickBooks Forms for a More Professional Image

Want an easy, free way to make your business look more professional and polished?

You probably don't get as many paper forms in the U.S. Mail as you used to. But when you do, do you draw conclusions about the business that sent them based on what their forms look like?

Whether or not you think you do, most people make judgements on businesses based on collateral materials. You might notice that there's no company logo, or that there are unnecessary blank fields. Maybe the print is very light or blurry, and there's no message at the bottom thanking you for your business and your payment.

How you present yourself on paper does matter. There's a lot of competition out there, and you need to use all of the tools available to you to stand out. QuickBooks provides one way to do so with its simple forms customization features.

Getting Started

To see what forms are available for customization, open the **Lists** menu and select **Templates** to open this window:

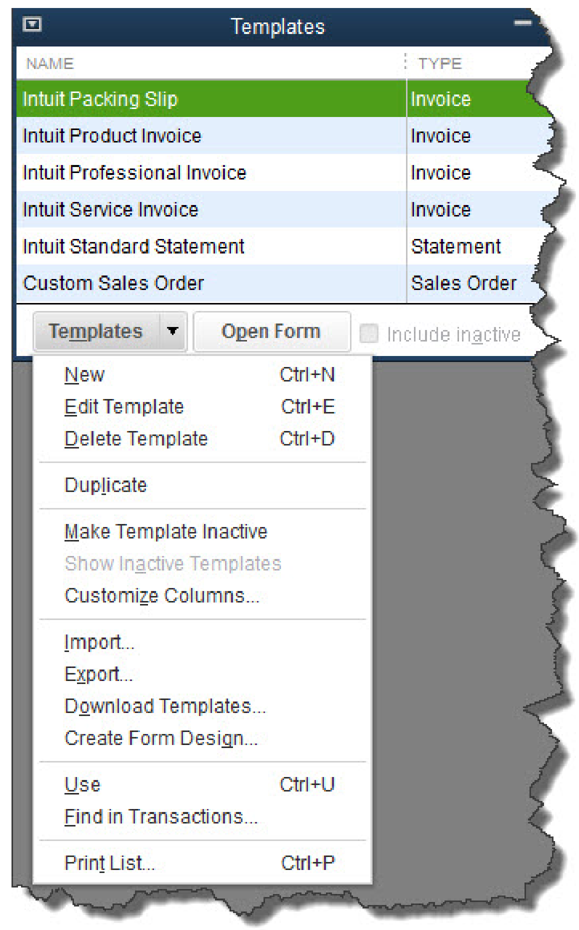

Figure 1: QuickBooks' Templates window shows you what forms can be customized and provides tools for working with them.

Before you try your hand at customizing a form, make a copy to work with first. Highlight **Intuit Product** Invoice. Click the down arrow next to **Templates** in the lower left, and select **Duplicate**. A small window will open, displaying your options. Select **Invoice** and click **OK**.

QuickBooks will then take you back to the **Templates window**, and you'll see a new entry labeled **Copy of: Intuit Product Invoice**. Right-click on it and select **Edit Template** from the menu that opens. This will open the **Basic Customization** window.

There are two parts to this screen. The editing options for the template you selected will appear on the left, and a preview of your invoice will

Customize QuickBooks Forms for a More Professional Image, con't

display on the right. As you make modifications to the template, the preview will change to reflect them.

The best, most noticeable thing you can do to customize your invoice is to add a logo. Click the box in front of **Use logo**, and locate the file in the computer directory that opens. Double-click it. You logo will appear to the left of your company name and address in the upper left corner of the preview.

You can make numerous changes to your template in this window, like:

- Selecting a new color scheme,
- Changing fonts,
- Deciding how much of your contact information should appear, and
- Indicating whether the **Print Status Stamp (PAID, PENDING**, etc.) should appear where appropriate on your invoices.

Note: You can choose to use the same modified design on multiple types of forms. This is a little complicated; let us help you.

More Customizing Options

The changes you just made were fairly superficial. However, QuickBooks offers tools that let you go much further, modifying the actual content of the invoice itself, its columns, and its fields. To get started on this, click the **Additional Customization** button at the bottom of the screen. The window that opens displays a preview of your invoice on the right side, just like in the previous window.

Your customization options appear on the left

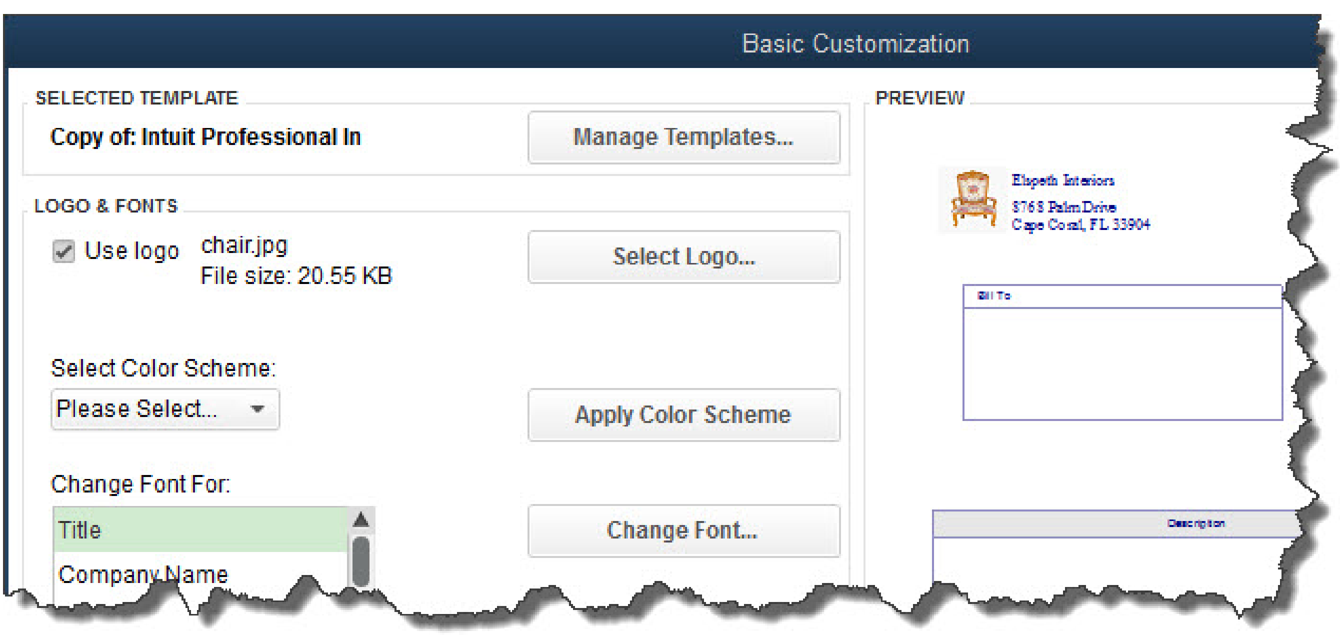

Figure 2: The ***Basic Customization*** *window displays options for modifying your copy of the* ***Intuit Product Invoice*** *template.*

Customize QuickBooks Forms for a More Professional Image, con't

side, divided into five different sections. You'll work primarily with three of them for your invoice:

Header. This includes all of the information that appears on about the top third of the form, like **Bill To, Terms, Due Date,** and **Project/Job.**

Columns. What are you billing the customer for? **Item, Description, Quantity, Rate**, etc.

Footer. What information will you want to enter after you've completed the invoice's product or service content? You'll likely want fields like **Total, Balance Due,** and **Payments/Credits,** perhaps a **Message.**

As you can see from Figure 3, QuickBooks lets you choose whether specific fields and columns will appear on your invoices onscreen and/or in print. You can also change field labels if you'd like. And if you have overlapping fields or want to further modify the appearance of the invoice, you can use the **Layout Designer.** It's a simple tool, but it requires some design skills.

Of course, you may not be printing many invoices at all if you're set up to email them and accept payments online. But your customers, of course, will still see how carefully you've crafted your forms, which will feed into their overall perception of you. Let this impression be a good one.

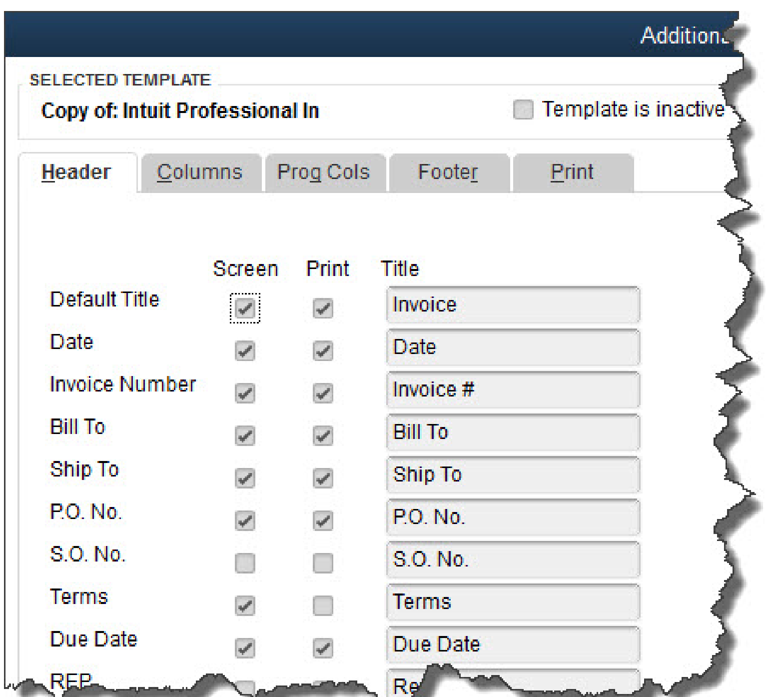

Figure 3: QuickBooks gives you tremendous control over the content in your forms.

NEXT UP:

Use QuickBooks Custom Fields to Improve Insight

Use QuickBooks Custom Fields To Improve Insight

QuickBooks' structure is universal enough to appeal to millions of small businesses. Custom fields help you shape it to meet your company's unique need

If you're using QuickBooks, you probably know that you're complying with the rules of double-entry accounting. The software is designed such that you can be compliant with these requirements without even being aware of it. You're dealing with invoices and purchase orders, bank account reconciliation and bill-paying and payroll, not debits and credits and journal entries. QuickBooks does the double-entry part in the background.

While every business that uses QuickBooks is following those same rules, each has its own unique structure and its own need to modify some elements of the program to do certain tasks, for example:

• Store more specific information about customers, vendors, and employees in their records,

• Differentiate between variations of similar inventory items, and,

• Create more targeted reports.

This is where custom fields come in.

Defining Custom Fields

One of the ways that QuickBooks simplifies your life as your company's accounting manager is by providing pre-designed record and form

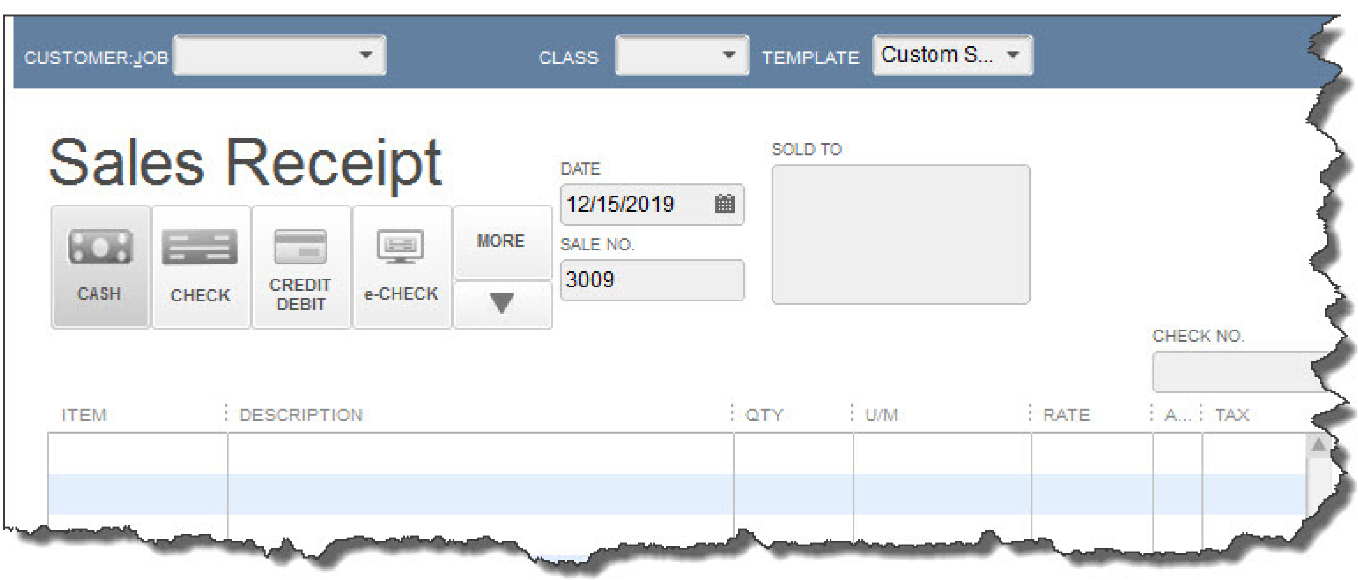

Figure 1: QuickBooks comes with pre-designed form and record templates.

Use QuickBooks Custom Fields to Improve Insight, con't

templates. Need to create an invoice? There's a form that already contains the most commonly-used data fields; you just fill in the blanks or select from drop-down lists. Want to store information about your customers and about the items you sell? Ditto.

But if you need more fields than QuickBooks offers on a record or form, you can easily add your own. The software lets you add 15 fields total to customers and jobs, vendors, and employees, and you're limited to seven for any one record type. (If you want to use the same field in two of these, it will only count as one.) And you're allowed to define up to five fields for your item records.

This type of modification is easy to do, but **it's critical that you think carefully about what fields you should add**. You don't want to learn three or six months down the road that one isn't really necessary and two more are needed, for example. This is especially important when you're creating records for inventory items.

You may want to schedule some time with us to go over this (and to explore QuickBooks' item-tracking features if you're new to managing inventory). You can change custom field names, but you need to understand how this will affect your data if you do this.

Let's say you want to add some custom fields to your customer records. Open the Customer Center by clicking the tab in the left vertical pane or opening the **Customers** menu and clicking on **Customer Center**. Double-click on a customer or click on the small pencil icon in the upper right. The **Edit Customer** window opens.

Click on the **Additional Info** tab on the left and

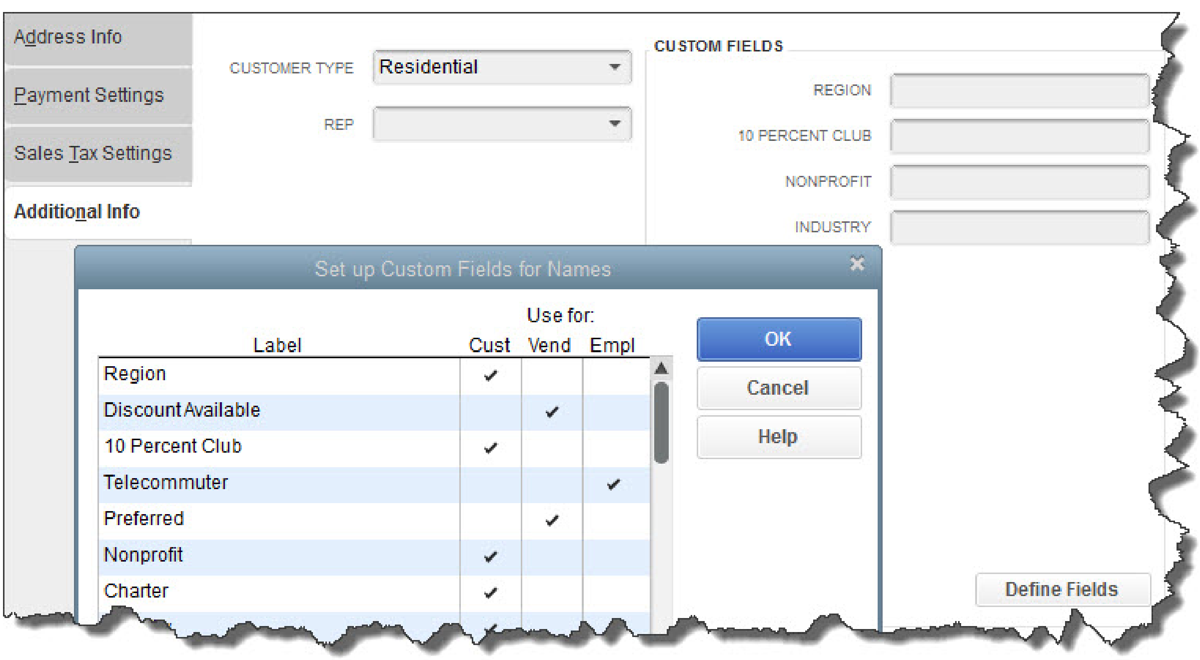

Figure 2: It's easy to add custom fields to records, but be sure you give a lot of thought to what will be needed.

Use QuickBooks Custom Fields to Improve Insight, con't

then on the **Define Fields** button in the lower right. The **Set up Custom Fields for Names** window opens, as pictured above.

Click in the first column, under **Label**. Enter the name of the field as you would like it to appear in records and reports. Then click in the box or boxes below **Cust, Vend,** or **Empl**. If you want to use the same field in more than one record type, enter a check mark in both. Continue to enter field names until you're done, then click **OK.**

Now when you create a customer record, you can fill in the blanks. And your new fields will appear as filters in some reports.

You'll follow a similar set of steps when you create custom fields for items in QuickBooks. Open the **Lists** menu and select **Item List.** Double-click on any item to open the **Edit Item** window. Click the **Custom Fields** bar on the right, then **Custom Fields** and **Define Fields.** If your company sells a lot of products with multiple variations, talk to us before you attempt this.

Personalizing your copy of QuickBooks by adding custom fields has a lot of benefits. But this major structural change requires a lot of thought and planning up front to make sure that this feature is a plus for your business.

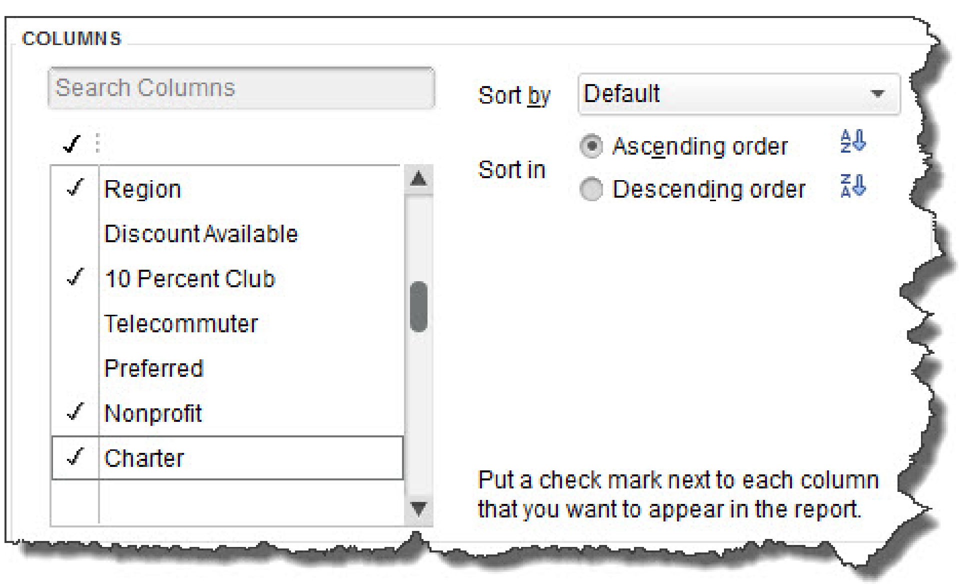

Figure 3: Custom fields can sometimes be used in reports.