

Bookkeeping cleanup: quote comparison worksheet

Put up to three cleanup quotes in one grid and compare what each firm will actually deliver, not only the total.

Working template — fill in your own figures. Not client data.

Before you fill it in

Assumptions: every quote covers the same months in scope and the same bank, card, loan and processor accounts. If one quote covers a shorter stretch or fewer accounts, write that in the first two rows before comparing totals, because a quote for less work is not a cheaper quote for the same work.

The quotes, side by side

Ask each firm	Quote A	Quote B	Quote C
Months in scope: first month and last month			
Accounts included: bank, card, loan, processor			
Fixed fee in writing, or an hourly estimate?			
Total quoted, and any cap on hours			
Every account reconciled to its statements, every month?			
Holding and suspense accounts reconciled — only identifiable receipts awaiting deposit left, nothing stale or unmatched?			
Opening balances agreed to last year's filed return?			
Who checks the work before it is delivered?			
Written list of open items at delivery?			
What happens if more is found mid-job?			
Start date and delivery date			
Whose QuickBooks file holds the books afterwards?			
Stated exclusions: tax returns, amended returns, payroll filings			

Reading the answers

- A lower total that leaves out reconciling each account to its statements prices a smaller job. The unfinished part lands on your CPA at tax time.
- An hourly estimate is a forecast; the invoice is the price. Ask for a written cap, and what happens when the cap is reached.
- A quote that can't name its months and accounts isn't a quote yet. Ask for them in writing.

- Tax returns, and any amended return, stay with your CPA or tax preparer whichever bookkeeper you choose. A cleanup can list what changed in a filed year; the decision to amend is not bookkeeping.

Questions to send every firm

- ☐ Which months and which accounts does this price cover?
- ☐ Is the figure fixed in writing, and what would change it?
- ☐ Will every account be reconciled to its statements for every month in scope?
- ☐ What will I receive at the end: reports, reconciliations, an open-items list?
- ☐ Who reviews the work before delivery, and what do they check?
- ☐ Will the books stay in my own file, with my own login, when you finish?