



Accounting runs in Ann Walton's family. Her mother is an accountant and Ann started out by helping in her mother's accountancy practice in her native South Africa. She subsequently consolidated her training by gaining a Diploma in 'Management Accounting and Finance' (The South African Institute of Management).

Now, a few years after settling down in the UK, Ann has started her own consultancy called ABW Financial and Accounting Services advising micro businesses about their accounts. When she founded the business Ann took a different tack to traditional accountants. She combines her strong practical and technical knowledge of book-keeping with an equally strong understanding of how small businesses can make good book-keeping easier, by using Intuit QuickBooks.

Ann first used QuickBooks seven years ago when she worked for a property management company, which used the software. She ended up training the entire office in QuickBooks and this led her to set up her own company three years ago.

"The beauty of QuickBooks is that it is very easy to use. It has an approach to financial management which suits people who want to run a business. Some people get real stage fright when they're confronted with the need to do their accounts. Because it is so simple and logical to use QuickBooks, I can help my clients overcome their fears."

Working in her home town of Bournemouth, Ann identifies her ideal customers as the very smallest enterprises - micro businesses employing between one and five people. These enterprises generally want someone who could do some or all of the book-keeping and/or train them to do it themselves. They also wanted a trouble-shooter who could tidy up their accounts and advise on queries from the Inland Revenue.



By combining her knowledge of financial management with her aptitude for QuickBooks software, Ann is able to respond to the very different needs of each of her clients. Her client work varies from helping a client to set up QuickBooks through to training in the software. She also uses it herself to prepare their accounts and reports.

Ann uses QuickBooks Accountants Edition to run her own practice. This software allows her to coordinate her client work. She also has the ability to access her

clients' accounts remotely from her own office. This is handy as some clients' offices are very short of space. She can therefore do their accounts without the need to remove them from the office or take up any desk space.

“All my clients have quirks to their accounts. QuickBooks is adaptable, allowing me to customise it as much or as little as the customer needs to enable them to do their own book-keeping should they so desire. Even though these are very small enterprises, it doesn't mean they are not complex financially. QuickBooks has helped me think through solutions to some of the complications that my clients' businesses involve”

From a handful of clients Ann now has a healthy roster of work. Naturally, Ann has become an advocate of QuickBooks.



Because of QuickBooks' remote access facility, she plans on expanding her business nationally and even internationally, using the Internet. She is developing a web page www.financial-and-accounting-services.com that offers genuine help and advice to small and micro business users. She is placing strong emphasis on using software to keep records and is advocating QuickBooks as the preferred choice.

“I wouldn't want to use any other software. QuickBooks does everything that I need to fulfil my clients' requirements. And, so far, there has been no situation where it has not proved extremely useful. Quite simply it is the best tool for the job”: she says.