

Tax Ready Bookkeeping

DIY vs. Guided Implementation Comparison

Tax Ready Bookkeeping | projectbits.com/taxready

Overview

This guide helps you decide whether to implement Tax Ready Bookkeeping yourself (DIY) or engage professional assistance (Guided). Both paths lead to the same destination—the right choice depends on your situation.

Quick Decision Framework

Answer These Questions

Question	DIY Indicator	Guided Indicator
Do you have bookkeeping experience?	2+ years	Little/none
Is your bookkeeping current?	Within 30 days	>90 days behind
Do you have time available?	5+ hrs/week	Limited time
Is your situation straightforward?	Standard business	Complex issues
What's your budget for help?	Limited	Available
Do you prefer learning by doing?	Yes	Prefer guidance

Score: Count your indicators for each column.

DIY Indicators	Guided Indicators	Recommendation
4-6	0-2	DIY is a good fit
3-4	2-3	Either could work
0-2	4-6	Guided recommended

Detailed Comparison

Time Investment

Activity	DIY Time	Guided Time (You)	Guided Time (Pro)
Phase 1: Foundation			
Assessment & planning	3-5 hours	1-2 hours	2-3 hours
Access & security	2-3 hours	1 hour	1-2 hours
COA cleanup	4-8 hours	1-2 hours	3-5 hours
Vendor foundation	5-10 hours	2-3 hours	3-5 hours
Banking reconciliation	8-20 hours	2-4 hours	6-15 hours
Phase 2: Stabilization			
Documentation system	4-6 hours	1-2 hours	2-3 hours
AR cleanup	3-8 hours	1-2 hours	2-6 hours
AP cleanup	4-10 hours	1-3 hours	3-7 hours
Statement review	4-8 hours	1-2 hours	3-6 hours
Phase 3: Optimization			
Controls implementation	4-8 hours	2-3 hours	2-5 hours
Tax compliance	3-6 hours	1-2 hours	2-4 hours
Process documentation	6-12 hours	2-4 hours	4-8 hours
Total	50-110 hours	16-32 hours	34-70 hours

Note: DIY time includes learning curve; Guided time assumes professional expertise.

Cost Comparison

DIY Path

Item	Cost
Tax Ready Bookkeeping book	\$30-50
Time investment (your hours)	Value varies
Tools/software (if new)	\$0-200
CPA consultation (optional)	\$150-500
Total Out-of-Pocket	\$30-750

Hidden Costs of DIY: - Learning curve mistakes - Delayed completion - Opportunity cost of your time - Potential to miss issues

Guided Path (Professional Bookkeeper)

Item	Cost Range
Initial assessment	\$200-500

Item	Cost Range
Implementation (Phase 1-3)	\$1,500-5,000
Training/handoff	\$200-500
Follow-up support	\$100-300/month
Total Initial	\$2,000-6,500

What You Get: - Expert execution - Faster completion - Issues caught and fixed - Knowledge transfer - Ongoing support option

Guided Path (CPA/Accounting Firm)

Item	Cost Range
Initial assessment	\$500-1,500
Implementation	\$3,000-15,000
Training	\$500-1,500
Ongoing support	\$300-1,000/month
Total Initial	\$4,500-18,000

What You Get: - CPA-level oversight - Tax optimization included - Comprehensive review - Strategic guidance - Full professional service

Skill Requirements

Skill	DIY (Must Have)	Guided (Helpful)
Basic accounting knowledge	[X] Required	Nice to have
Software proficiency	[X] Required	Helpful
Research skills	[X] Required	Not needed
Attention to detail	[X] Required	Helpful
Time management	[X] Required	Helpful
Problem-solving	[X] Required	Helpful
Tax knowledge	Helpful	Not needed

Risk Comparison

Risk	DIY Impact	Guided Impact
Errors made	Higher probability	Lower probability
Issues missed	More likely	Less likely
Takes longer than expected	Common	Less common

Risk	DIY Impact	Guided Impact
Doesn't stick (revert to old ways)	Higher risk	Lower risk
Wrong approach chosen	Possible	Unlikely
Learn less about your finances	Lower risk	Higher risk

DIY Implementation Details

What DIY Looks Like

Weekly Commitment: 5-10 hours per week for 12 weeks

Your Responsibilities: 1. Follow the book chapter by chapter 2. Complete all worksheets and templates 3. Make all changes in your accounting system 4. Research answers to questions that arise 5. Track your own progress 6. Solve problems as they come up

What You Need: - Tax Ready Bookkeeping book - Access to your accounting system (admin) - Access to bank accounts - Time and commitment - Willingness to learn

Best For: - Experienced bookkeepers wanting structure - Business owners who want to deeply understand their books - Budget-conscious situations - Straightforward, current books - Learning-oriented personalities

DIY Success Factors

Factor	Why It Matters
Dedicated time	Can't do in spare moments
Consistent schedule	Momentum matters
Support system	Someone to ask questions
Patience	Takes 12 weeks minimum
Persistence	Will hit roadblocks

Guided Implementation Details

What Guided Looks Like

Your Commitment: 3-5 hours per week for 12 weeks

Your Responsibilities: 1. Provide access and information 2. Attend weekly check-in meetings 3. Make decisions when asked 4. Learn the new processes 5. Communicate with your team

Professional's Responsibilities: 1. Execute the implementation 2. Make system changes 3. Clean up issues 4. Create documentation 5. Train you on new processes 6. Ensure Tax Ready status achieved

Best For: - Busy business owners - Those with complex or behind books - Situations requiring expertise - Those who value speed over learning - Companies with budget for professional help

Choosing the Right Professional

Type	Best For	Typical Cost
Bookkeeper (Tax Ready Certified)	Standard implementations	\$1,500-4,000
Fractional Controller	Growing/complex businesses	\$3,000-8,000
CPA Firm	Tax-heavy or audit-prep situations	\$5,000-15,000+
Tax Ready Consulting	Any situation, methodology experts	Contact for quote

Questions to Ask: 1. Have you implemented Tax Ready before? 2. What's your timeline for completion? 3. What do you need from me? 4. How do you handle issues found? 5. What's included in ongoing support?

Hybrid Approach

Best of Both Worlds

Structure: DIY with professional support

How It Works: 1. You do the work using the book 2. Professional provides weekly guidance 3. Professional reviews your work 4. Professional helps with complex issues 5. You learn while getting expert input

Typical Investment: - 4-8 hours/week of your time - \$500-1,500 in professional support - 12-16 weeks to complete

Best For: - Learning-focused owners - Moderately complex situations - Those with some bookkeeping knowledge - Budget-conscious but want safety net

Decision Worksheet

Complete This Assessment

Section 1: Your Situation

Factor	Score (1-5)
My bookkeeping knowledge	1=None, 5=Expert
Time I can commit weekly	1=<2hrs, 5=>10hrs
How current are my books	1=>1yr behind, 5=Current
Complexity of my business	1=Very complex, 5=Simple
My budget for help	1=None, 5=Plenty
Total	/25

Interpretation: - 20-25: DIY is a great fit - 13-19: Either could work; consider hybrid - 5-12: Guided strongly recommended

Section 2: Your Preferences

I prefer to...	DIY	Guided
Learn by doing	[X]	
Have expert do it		[X]
Move quickly		[X]
Keep costs low	[X]	
Deeply understand my books	[X]	
Minimize my time		[X]
Have accountability		[X]
Work independently	[X]	

Count checks in each column: DIY | Guided

Section 3: Red Flags

Check any that apply:

Red Flags for DIY: - [] Books are more than 6 months behind - [] Previous bookkeeper left mess - [] Have been through an audit or notice - [] Multiple years of 1099s not filed - [] Don't understand my financial statements - [] Have had cash flow surprises - [] Complex entity structure - [] Sales tax issues suspected

If 3+ checked: Strongly consider Guided

Making the Decision

Final Recommendation

Based on your assessment:

Choose DIY if: - Section 1 score: 18+ - More DIY preferences - 0-2 red flags checked - You're motivated by learning

Choose Guided if: - Section 1 score: <13 - More Guided preferences - 3+ red flags checked - You're motivated by results

Choose Hybrid if: - Section 1 score: 13-17 - Mixed preferences - 1-3 red flags - Want learning + safety net

Getting Started

If DIY

- Get the book (if you don't have it)
- Complete Quick 10-Question Assessment

- Schedule your weekly implementation time
- Join the community (projectbits.com/taxready)
- Start Week 1

If Guided

- Review professional options above
- Request 2-3 consultations
- Ask the recommended questions
- Make your selection
- Schedule kickoff

If Hybrid

- Get the book
- Find a professional offering coaching/review
- Schedule weekly check-ins
- Start Week 1 with support
- Adjust approach as needed

For more resources: projectbits.com/taxready/ch12

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