Pixie

The Bookkeeper's Cleanup Workflow Guide + Template

Learn a step-by-step workflow for scoping, reviewing, and fixing your clients' books (without missing a step!)

About this guide

You know that nearly every new client that comes your way needs some level of cleanup.

But what’s the best way to find (and fix) those issues?

Some errors are obvious, but some you won’t find until you dig beyond the Balance Sheet and Profit & Loss Statement.

You need a system you can count on that’s flexible yet thorough and assures you don’t miss anything! (Since every client’s books will be different).

In this guide you’ll see the step-by-step workflow I use in my own bookkeeping practice to find and fix clients books, as well as how to expand the services you can offer win-win style (more profit for you, better financial health for your client)

Here's what's included:

- [Flowchart] The Bookkeepers Cleanup Workflow Process
- [Checklist] Completing a QB Cleanup
- [Pixie template] The QB Cleanup Workflow process complete with checklists and emails
- [Bonus tips] QB Cleanup best practices

Ready to get started?

About the author

Hi there! I'm Gabrielle Fontaine.

For the last 30+ years, I've done everything from in-the-trenches bookkeeping, to taxes, business & marketing consulting / coaching, and everything in between.

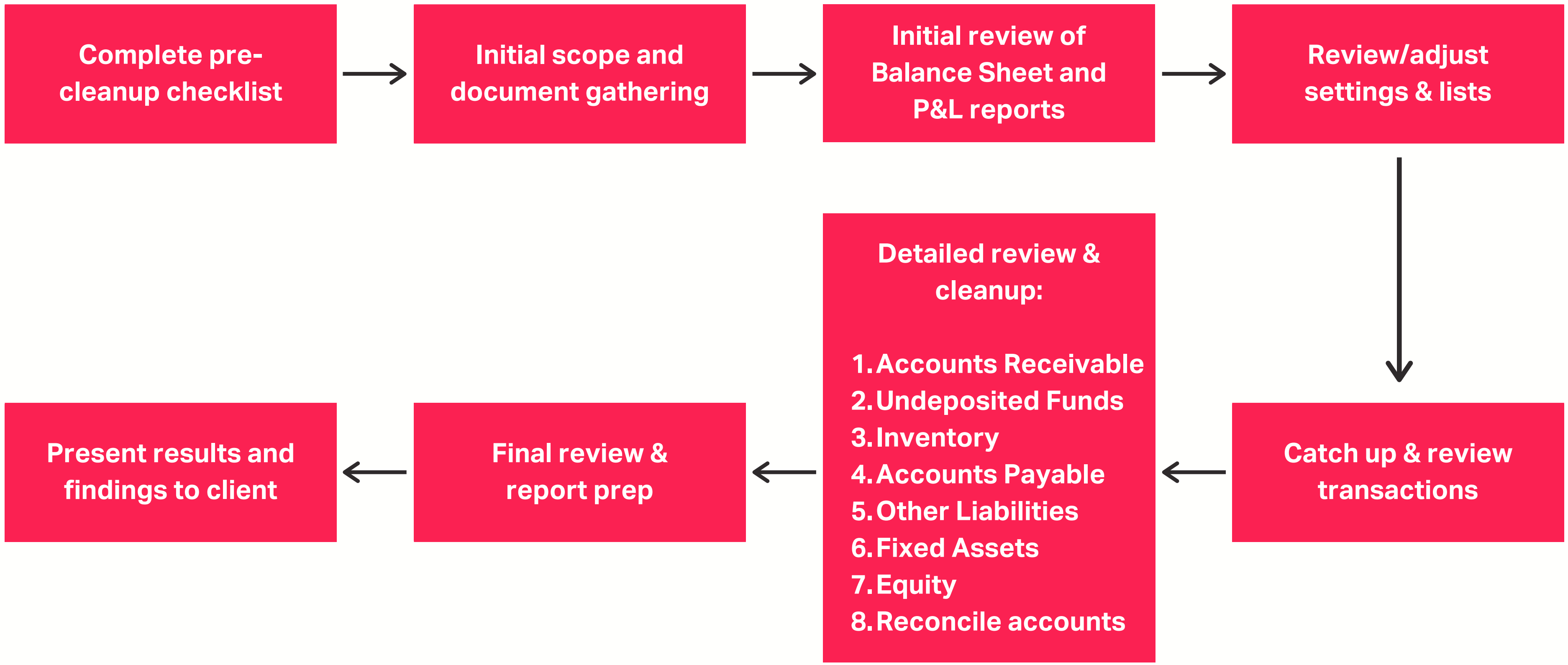
Today, I still run a small bookkeeping practice and work with other small bookkeeping & accounting firms to identify and blast through the operational and growth roadblocks that are preventing you from reaching your next level of success.

When it comes to bookkeeping cleanups, the work that needs to be done varies widely – some are quite simple while others are pull-your-hair-out complex! This cleanup workflow guide + template gives you a basic, systematic process that I’ve honed over many years, with the goal of making it easy to customize to fit your needs without missing any important parts of the bookkeeping records.

Having a basic workflow template as a guide makes this complex process easier and more efficient. My goal is to help you get started fast so you can succeed quickly.

Have questions? Reach out to me at gabrielle@usepixie.com

[Flowchart overview] QuickBooks® Cleanup Process



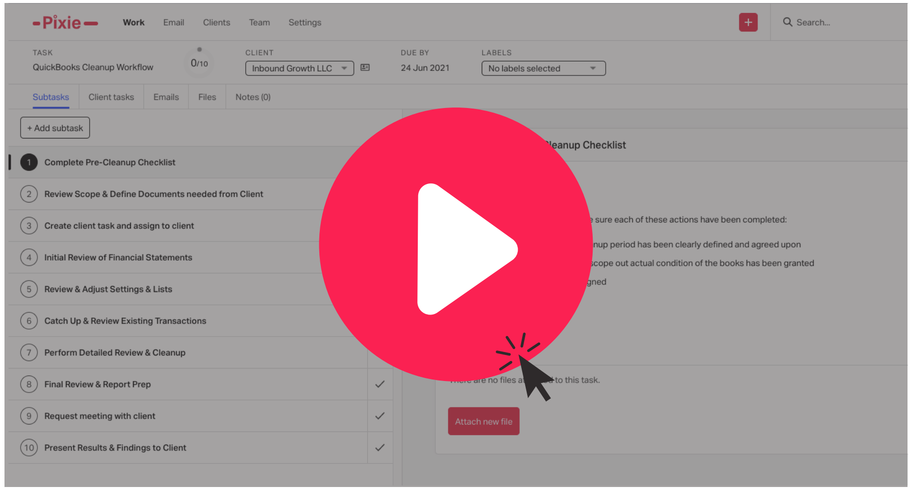
Looking at the workflow from the top-down view helps us see all the core phases of the cleanup. Depending on the scope of the project and the needs of the client, you can add blocks and even decision points.

While there are many options, an easy way to customize your workflow is to use sticky notes so you can rearrange the order or assign who on your team will accomplish which parts of the project. You can also include any supporting apps you might want to use. Make it your own!

[Checklist] Completing a QuickBooks® Cleanup

- [ ] Establish client objectives/desired results/motivation for the cleanup
- [ ] Scope out current state of bookkeeping records
- [ ] Agree on scope and price via signed engagement letter and retainer payment
- [ ] Set up initial appointment and documentation gathering meeting
    - Provide client with a list of needed information prior to this meeting
- [ ] Review financial statements for obvious issues
- [ ] Review Quickbooks® settings, features being used, apps, and lists
- [ ] Download/categorize catchup transactions and review client-entered transactions
- [ ] Perform detailed review and clean up of the key areas of the records:
    - Accounts Receivable
    - Undeposited Funds
    - Inventory
    - Accounts Payable
    - Other Liabilities
    - Fixed Assets
    - Equity Accounts
    - Reconciliations
- [ ] Perform final review and prepare summary report of findings for client
- [ ] Present cleanup project results and discuss next steps

[Pixie template] QB Cleanup Workflow + Checklists



Preview the Quickbooks® Cleanup workflow template in Pixie here!

Want to start using this template today?

All you need to do is:

1. Start a 30-day free trial here (no credit card required)
2. Click the button below to download your workflow template
3. Go to Settings > Task templates and import your template
4. Enjoy!

Download your cleanup workflow template

The Bookkeeping Cleanup workflow template has been built in Pixie.

Why? Because that's the best way to see exactly how a live workflow can be used, including adding email templates and even assigning clients' tasks to get done.

Having a workflow template that you can use again and again, as well as easily customized for specific project needs AND stay on track with all the moving parts is a godsend!

- You can easily customize the template, checklists, and email language to fit your own practice and the needs of your clients. It's intuitive so you can make adjustments quickly, even "on the fly" as needed
- Since it's integrated in the practice management, all the email communication between you, your team and the client are centralized, so everyone's on the same page and no steps get missed in the process
- When requesting information from clients, you also don't have to worry about them sending sensitive content via email, since there's a built-in document portal too.
- You can even assign clients tasks to complete, and easily see what they've completed and what they still owe you at a glance. There are also automated reminders to cut way back on the tedious nagging that some clients need!

Bookkeeping Cleanup Best Practices

- Never quote or start a cleanup job without first getting access to the books. You need to know the true state of the records (the client usually either doesn't know or will downplay the issues they are aware of)

- It's usually best to do a diagnostic engagement BEFORE taking on the actual cleanup work (two engagements). This gives you the ability to thoroughly scope out the job and helps the client get a sense of the magnitude of what needs to be done. It also opens the door for consultative and training services as additional engagements

- If you choose to do a diagnostic engagement, it should be paid. But you can choose to apply that payment toward the cleanup job if the client is price sensitive.

- At the end of the diagnostic and/or full cleanup project, prepare a summary report of all the issues you resolved, as well as root causes that need to be addressed (often training services are needed), prioritized according to the practical importance to the client's desired results.

- Always get an up-front retainer for all cleanup projects. No matter the urgency of the project, no work should begin until that money is in your account. It is important that the client is invested in the success of the project.

- For large cleanup projects, consider setting client expectations with deadlines, milestones, and comparable payments. That way you're getting paid as the work is completed, and it's easier on the client's cash flow too

[Case Study] How to deliver month-end reports 2 weeks faster with Pixie

Even though it's the norm for business owners to receive their month-end financials almost a month later, Jessica & Elizabeth wanted to improve this. But at the time, they faced the same challenges that many small bookkeeping firms deal with daily. There was lots of confusion about workflows and not knowing who was working on what, which made it hard to deliver work in a timely manner.

So they started looking around for a workflow management tool but kept getting stuck. They attended different conferences and tried to implement the tools on offer, but the software's complexity and the steep learning curves were overwhelming.

All of this changed once they start using Pixie to manage their workflows, tasks, and deadlines. Each team member now knows exactly what's on their plate, when it needs to be worked on, and what's still outstanding from clients.

"One of the things I love the most is the client tasks feature. I don't like to hound clients for information, so having the feature to automatically remind clients to check their task list every few days until complete has been game-changing for us."

Using Pixie has meant that Jessica & Elizabeth have been able to streamline their processes so much that instead of month-end financial reports delivered between the 20th-25th, they now get delivered to clients between the 8th and 10th of the month.

"When I was working in a corporate position as an accountant, I could get reports out by the 5th. But when you're working with 50-100 clients, this is much harder. Since bringing in some outsourced bookkeeping assistants and setting them up in our Pixie workflows, we're now able to (almost) achieve the same level of efficiency our clients would get from an internal bookkeeper."

About

Jessica Farmer and Elizabeth Bergen are the Co-Founders of Foray Business Group, a small online bookkeeping & payroll firm based in Vancouver, Washington.

They work with clients ranging from small to mid-sized businesses across the USA, helping them to demystify, simplify, and streamline their business processes to help them succeed and grow their business.

Jessica Farmer & Elizabeth Bergen
Foray Business Group

About Pixie

Pixie is a practice management and workflow app built for small accounting & bookkeeping firms. In just a few clicks, Pixie helps you to take control of your clients, deadlines, emails, workflow, and team members all within the same simple-to-use app.

Do you find yourself struggling with any or all of the following?

- Getting work done efficiently and hitting deadlines on time
- Keeping track of what you and your team are working on for different clients
- Using multiple apps to manage work, emails, files (which wastes a ton of time!)
- Emails and other client communications falling through the cracks and getting missed
- A feeling of anxiety when you finish work, wondering, 'what have I forgotten?'
- Constantly chasing clients for missing information.

Pixie can help you save at least 5 hours per week, take control of your work, and get organized.

In one simple, flexible, and easy-to-use app, you can manage your:

- Clients: with our built-in CRM and customizable client fields
- Emails: make sure nothing falls through the cracks with our 2-way email integration
- Tasks: set up recurring tasks & never miss a deadline again
- Workflows: build simple workflow templates to improve consistency & efficiency
- Team: easily set your teams' to-do's and keep track of what's in progress

Start your 30-day free trial below and get your first tasks and templates set up in minutes.

Start your 30-day free trial

Capterra 5

Pricing

Pixie costs the same no matter how many people are in your team or how many clients you have. No surprises. It's one flat fee for your entire firm.

Here's everything that you get:

- Flexible drag-and-drop workflow templates
- Ready-made workflow template library
- Automated email reminders
- Email management & integration
- Recurring tasks and deadline tracking
- Client tasks to assign checklists and to-do's to your clients
- CRM with customizable fields to manage all of your clients
- Built-in document portal and unlimited storage
- Team management and work reporting
- Thousands of integrations via Zapier

Just $59 per month, per firm

(No per-user fees!)

Start your 30-day free trial

www.usepixie.com