Tolla Tax Co.

WE PREP. WE PLAN. WE RESOLVE

Simple Habits That Will Make You Feel In Control Of Your Business Finances

Hey Friend, I'm glad you are here. This means you are ready to take control of your finances. I am proud of you. This is a free guide— the 4 habits we walk our clients through, broken down so you know exactly how to start each one this week. I try to be as detailed as possible and include some links but if you have any questions don't hesitate to DM me.

1 Separate Business & Personal Finances

WHY IT MATTERS

When business and personal money mix in one account, every tax season becomes an investigation. You end up combing through months of statements trying to remember whether that $84 charge was client software or a birthday gift. Separating the two isn't just tidier; it's what makes your deductions defensible if the IRS ever asks questions, and it's often the first thing that breaks down when a business is scaling fast.

HOW TO DO IT

- Open a dedicated business checking account and a business debit or credit card — most banks and fintechs (Novo, Relay, Mercury, or your local bank) offer no-fee options for small businesses. • Run every business expense through that account: software subscriptions, supplies, contractor payments, business meals, mileage-related purchases.
- Pay yourself from the business account into your personal account on a set schedule (weekly, biweekly, or monthly) this is your "owner's draw" or salary, not ad hoc withdrawals.
- If you've already been mixing accounts, don't panic, go back through the last 90 days and flag which personal-account charges were actually business expenses, so you don't lose those deductions.

COMMON MISTAKE

Waiting until "the business is bigger" to separate accounts. The earlier you separate, the less untangling you'll have to do later and the cleaner your books look to a lender, investor, or advisor from day one.

THIS WEEK'S ACTION STEP

Open a business checking account this week if you don't have one, and move every new transaction through it starting today. My favorite bank is Live Oak

2 Integrate QuickBooks (or a Bookkeeping System)

WHY IT MATTERS

A bank account being separate doesn't mean your books are accurate; someone still has to categorize every transaction. QuickBooks (or any bookkeeping software) connects to your accounts and lets you tag expenses as they happen, so you always know your real profit, not just your bank balance. It also means tax time becomes an export-and-review process instead of a monthslong reconstruction project.

HOW TO DO IT

- Connect your business bank account and credit card directly to QuickBooks (or Wave, Xero-whatever fits your budget) so transactions import automatically. I like Quickbooks hence my recommendation.
- Set a recurring 20-30 minute block, weekly or biweekly, to categorize new transactions and don't let them pile up for months.
- Use classes or tags if you have multiple income streams (e.g., brand deals vs. product sales vs. services) so you can see what's actually profitable.
- Reconcile your accounts monthly meaning your books match your actual bank statement — so small errors get caught before they compound.

COMMON MISTAKE

Connecting the software and then never logging in. QuickBooks only helps if the categorization actually happens an uncategorized "Uncategorized Expense" bucket at year-end is just a prettier version of a shoebox of receipts.

THIS WEEK'S ACTION STEP

Block 30 minutes on your calendar this week, same day, every week, to categorize transactions in QuickBooks.

3 Set Aside Taxes As You Earn

WHY IT MATTERS

As a business owner, no one is withholding taxes from your income the way an employer would from a paycheck. If you don't set money aside as it comes in, you're spending money you don't actually get to keep, and the tax bill doesn't disappear, it just arrives all at once, usually with an underpayment penalty attached. This is the single biggest source of tax-season panic for self-employed people.

HOW TO DO IT

- Open a separate savings account labeled "Taxes" and transfer a percentage of every payment you receive into it before you spend anything.
- A common starting range is 25-30% of net income, but your actual rate depends on your income level, entity type, and deductions, this is exactly what your advisor should confirm with you.
- If you're required to, make quarterly estimated tax payments (typically due mid-April, June 15th, September 15th, and January 15th) using the funds you've already set aside, so it never feels like new money leaving your pocket.
- Treat the transfer like a bill you already owe, automate it if your bank allows recurring transfers tied to deposits.

COMMON MISTAKE

Using a flat percentage without ever revisiting it. Your rate should be reviewed as your income grows or your deductions change, a rate that was right last year may leave you short (or oversaving) this year.

> **THIS WEEK'S ACTION STEP**
>
> **Open a separate "Taxes" savings account this week and set aside a percentage of your very next payment before you touch the rest.**

4 Meet With Your Tax Advisor Quarterly (or Monthly)

WHY IT MATTERS

Most people only think about their taxes once a year, right before filing which means by the time anyone looks at the numbers, the year is already over and there's nothing left to plan around. Meeting regularly turns your advisor into a strategist instead of a historian. Quarterly check-ins catch problems while there's still time to fix them: adjusting estimated payments, timing a purchase, or restructuring how you pay yourself.

HOW TO DO IT

- Schedule standing quarterly meetings in advance, don't wait for a reason to reach out, put them on the calendar now for the rest of the year.
- If your income is irregular or growing quickly, move to monthly check-ins so your tax-savings percentage and estimated payments stay accurate in real time.

- Come to each meeting with your updated QuickBooks numbers so the conversation is about strategy, not data entry.
- Use these meetings to ask forward-looking questions: Should I be an S-corp yet? Am I missing deductions? Is my tax-savings percentage still right?

COMMON MISTAKE

Treating your advisor as a once-a-year filing service instead of an ongoing partner. The advisors who save clients the most money are the ones who see the numbers before December 31st, not after.

THIS WEEK'S ACTION STEP

Reach out this week to put a standing quarterly (or monthly) meeting on the calendar with your advisor even if it's just to get the first one scheduled.

You don't need the most organized books to be successful, you need someone in your corner who knows the numbers as well as you know your business.

That's what we're here for.

Ready to get your business finances in order? Reach out to Tolla Tax Co. for tax planning and IRS resolution built for self-employed people and small business owners.