THE YEAR-END READINESS CHECKLIST

A practical year-end organization guide to help you prepare cleaner records and better questions for your financial professionals.

CLEAR BOOKS. CALM OPERATIONS. CONFIDENT DECISIONS.

Business Operations & Bookkeeping Support

A Better Year-End Starts Before Tax Documents Arrive

Year-end can become stressful when bookkeeping questions, missing documents, unusual transactions, payroll information, and business records all surface at the same time. A little organization before the year closes can make the handoff to your bookkeeper, CPA, or tax professional much smoother.

This checklist is designed to help you gather information, identify gaps, and prepare useful questions. It is an organization and readiness tool - not tax, legal, payroll, or accounting advice.

Use your professionals for professional judgment
Tax treatment, filing requirements, deadlines, entity-specific rules, payroll reporting, depreciation, deductions, and other accounting or legal decisions should be confirmed with the qualified professional who understands your business.

Your year-end goal

- ☐ The bookkeeping records are reasonably current and reconciled.
- ☐ Important documents are gathered and easy to find.
- ☐ Unusual transactions have enough context to review.
- ☐ Receivables, payables, payroll, contractor, and asset information is organized.
- ☐ Questions for the bookkeeper, CPA, or tax professional are captured before the meeting.

STEP 1

Bring the Books Up to Date

- ☐ All business bank accounts are recorded through the year-end period.
- ☐ All business credit-card accounts are recorded through the year-end period.
- ☐ Bank and credit-card reconciliations are complete or scheduled for completion.
- ☐ Transfers between business accounts are identified correctly.
- ☐ Owner contributions and owner draws/distributions are identified separately from ordinary income and expenses.
- ☐ Business expenses paid personally by the owner have been captured with supporting information.
- ☐ Loan and financing activity has enough detail for professional review.
- ☐ Uncategorized, duplicate, missing, or unusual transactions have been flagged.
- ☐ Merchant-processor deposits can be traced to sales, fees, refunds, and taxes where relevant.

Bookkeeping items still needing attention:

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STEP 2

Review Money Still Owed In and Out

Year-end is a useful time to identify open balances and make sure the records reflect what is actually outstanding.

Area	Reviewed	Follow-up needed	Notes
Open customer invoices / receivables	☐	☐	
Customer credits or unapplied payments	☐	☐	
Uncollectible or disputed balances	☐	☐	
Unpaid vendor bills / payables	☐	☐	
Vendor credits	☐	☐	
Recurring bills not yet received	☐	☐	
Deposits / prepayments requiring review	☐	☐	

Do not make year-end adjustments by guesswork

If you are unsure whether an old balance should be written off, reclassified, accrued, or otherwise adjusted, flag it and ask your bookkeeping or tax professional.

STEP 3

Organize Payroll and Contractor Information

Gather the records your payroll provider, bookkeeper, or tax professional may need to confirm year-end reporting.

- ☐ Final payroll reports for the year are available.
- ☐ Employee names and current contact information are reviewed in the payroll system.
- ☐ Bonuses, reimbursements, benefits, or other unusual payroll items are identified for professional review.
- ☐ Payroll tax filings/payment records are accessible where relevant.
- ☐ A list of contractors/vendors paid during the year is available.
- ☐ Tax-information forms collected from contractors/vendors are organized where required by your process.
- ☐ Potential reportable contractor payments are flagged for review with the appropriate professional.
- ☐ Any contractor-versus-employee classification questions are raised with a qualified professional rather than decided from this checklist.

Payroll or contractor questions to raise:

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STEP 4

Flag Assets, Financing and Unusual Transactions

Certain transactions deserve more context than an ordinary operating expense. Identify them so your professional can review the appropriate treatment.

Item / transaction	Date / amount	Supporting record	Needs review?
			☐
			☐
			☐
			☐
			☐
			☐
			☐

- ☐ Equipment, furniture, vehicles, computers, or other significant purchases.
- ☐ Assets sold, traded, disposed of, damaged, or no longer used.
- ☐ New loans, lines of credit, leases, or financing arrangements.
- ☐ Insurance proceeds, grants, settlements, or other unusual income.
- ☐ Large refunds, chargebacks, credits, or one-time expenses.
- ☐ Transactions involving owners or related parties that need context.

STEP 5

Review Business-Specific Records

Not every section applies to every business. Use the areas that match how your business operates.

Area	Ready	What needs attention?
Inventory quantities / year-end inventory records	☐	
Sales-tax records and filing/payment confirmations	☐	
eCommerce / marketplace annual reports	☐	
Merchant processor annual summaries	☐	
Mileage / vehicle-use records maintained for your professional	☐	
Business travel records	☐	
Home-office or shared-use expense records maintained for review	☐	
Business licenses / permits / registrations	☐	
Charitable or sponsorship records	☐	
Other industry-specific records	☐	

STEP 6

Gather the Year-End Document Folder

Create one dependable place for the documents that support the year's financial records and professional review.

- ☐ Year-end bank statements.
- ☐ Year-end credit-card statements.
- ☐ Loan, line-of-credit, and financing statements.
- ☐ Payroll year-end reports.
- ☐ Merchant processor / payment platform reports.
- ☐ Sales-tax filing and payment records where applicable.
- ☐ Major purchase and asset documentation.
- ☐ Insurance, grant, settlement, or unusual-income documentation where applicable.
- ☐ Key contracts or agreements relevant to financial reporting.
- ☐ Prior-year tax return and prior-year closing information if requested by your professional.
- ☐ Notices or correspondence from tax authorities or government agencies that require professional review.

Year-end folder / system location:

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Keep sensitive records secure

Use your normal secure document system or your professional's approved portal for confidential records. Do not place sensitive tax, banking, payroll, or identity information in an unsecured shared folder.

STEP 7

Prepare for the Professional Review

A strong year-end meeting is easier when you arrive with context and questions, not just a folder of documents.

Question / topic	Who should answer?	Notes / decision
Unusual income or expenses		
Large purchases / asset treatment		
Owner contributions / distributions		
Loans / financing		
Old receivables or payables		
Payroll / contractor reporting		
Inventory or cost-of-goods questions		
Sales-tax or other compliance questions		
Changes expected in the coming year		

Your Year-End Readiness Snapshot

Area	Ready	Needs follow-up	Not sure
Books & reconciliations	☐	☐	☐
Receivables & payables	☐	☐	☐
Payroll & contractors	☐	☐	☐
Assets & financing	☐	☐	☐
Business-specific records	☐	☐	☐
Year-end document folder	☐	☐	☐
Professional questions	☐	☐	☐

My three year-end priorities:

1. ____

2. ____

3. ____

Ready does not mean perfect
The goal is to reduce avoidable cleanup and make unresolved items visible. Your qualified professionals can then spend more time applying judgment and less time trying to reconstruct what happened.

STEP 9

Turn Year-End Cleanup Into a Better Next Year

If year-end exposed recurring problems, capture them while they are fresh. The best year-end improvement is often a better monthly habit.

What created friction this year?	What will change next year?	Owner / rhythm

One monthly habit that would make next year-end easier:

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Year-End Should Be a Handoff, Not a Rescue Mission

The purpose of year-end preparation is not to become your own accountant or tax adviser. It is to make the business records easier to understand, reduce unanswered questions, and give the professionals supporting you better information to work with.

A dependable monthly bookkeeping rhythm makes this easier. When the books stay current and unusual activity is documented as it happens, year-end becomes a review rather than a reconstruction.

When support may help

Professional Bookkeeping support can help when reconciliations, transaction review, documentation, monthly close routines, and financial record organization need a steadier rhythm throughout the year.

SCHEDULE A DISCOVERY CALL

MKG Legacy Ledger

Professional Bookkeeping + Business Operations Support
Clear Books. Calm Operations. Confident Decisions.
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