APP ADVISORY CHECKLIST

Choosing the Right Apps for Your Firm & Clients

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What is app advisory?

[App advisory] is the practice of understanding the challenges or opportunities your clients are facing, and advising them on the accounting or bookkeeping apps they can use to improve their business.

Many accounting and bookkeeping firms are starting to expand their service offerings to include app advisory. App advisory services can **benefit both your firm and your clients**, enabling you to increase profitability while better serving your clients' needs.

The quickly growing accounting app ecosystem is leading to an increased demand for app advisory services. Understanding how to efficiently navigate the landscape is becoming a key skill for advisors. As a result, it's becoming more important to systemize app selection and help small businesses make smarter tech decisions.

App advisory starts with finding the right apps

Implementing any kind of service expansion will come with a few challenges. When it comes to app advisory, perhaps one of the biggest challenges is actually understanding how to discover new tools and map them to your clients' and your firm's needs. Even if you think you know that a particular app will help you get the job done, there are other items to consider, such as security, support, implementation, and so on.

So, how can advisors efficiently improve their level of app expertise and better understand which apps are a good fit for their firm and their clients?

Standardize your app evaluation process by using a checklist! This document aims to provide you with a list of criteria to consider when evaluating whether or not an app is a good fit for your firm.

General Information

The most important item to determine in this exercise is whether or not the app will actually help to fulfill your firm's or your client's defined business need. (To discover potential business needs, **document your workflows** and analyze where there might be inefficiencies.)

This checklist will be especially helpful after you've had a demo of the app or during the free trial period. If you're completing this after a demo, be sure to take detailed notes about the app. Many apps offer a free trial or a free account for practices — if this is the case, be sure to note your main point of contact in case you have any questions about the app's features and functionality.

APP INFORMATION

App Name	
Website	
Point of Contact Name	
Contact Email	
Contact Phone	
Free Trial Period / Date	
Link to Customer Reviews / Ratings	
What is the business problem that this app solves?	
How many of my clients would benefit from this app?	
Does the app cater to a particular industry?	

NOTES FROM DEMO

[Insert notes here or include link to documented demo notes]

RECOMMENDED IMPROVEMENTS

1)

2)

3)

Features & Integrations

Integrations are key for ensuring that data can be seamlessly and securely shared between systems and enable real-time reporting. It is perhaps most important that the app integrates with your general ledger (i.e., Xero). Find out how the integration works, how frequently data is passed, and evaluate the accuracy of the data.

CRITERIA	RESPONSE	LINKS / NOTES
Does the app integrate with Xero?		
Does the app integrate with cloud storage applications? *(e.g. Box, Dropbox, ShareFile, SmartVault — if yes, specify in notes.)*		
On what platforms can the app be used? *(E.g., Mac, Windows, iOS, etc. – indicate in notes.)*		
Does the app sync data in real-time?		
Does the app bring in data to your accounting program in a way that is meaningful and accurate?		
Does the app have a pleasant user experience?		
Is the app available on mobile devices?		

Support

It's also important to vet the team behind the app — specifically, how they handle support requests. Support requests are often unplanned, so it's critical to know if they'll be there for you in your (and/or your client's) time of need.

CRITERIA	RESPONSE	LINKS / NOTES
Does the app have a dedicated, in-house support team?		
Does the app offer 24-hour support? *(If no, specify hours.)*		
Does the app integrate with any other software tools/applications? *(If yes, specify in notes.)*		
Does the app offer support with all pricing plans? *(If no, specify in notes.)*		
Does the app offer global support? *(If yes, specify regions.)*		
Does the app offer multi-lingual support? *(If yes, specify languages.)*		
Does the app offer support via phone?		
If phone support is offered, will I speak to a trained agent?		
Does the app offer support via email/ticket submission?		
If email/ticket support is offered, is the response time prompt? *(Specify response time in notes.)*		
Does the app have a helpful online support library *(e.g., a Help Desk or Resource Center)* **for self-serve support?**		
Does the app have an in-app chat feature that offers support?		

Implementation & Training

In addition to reviewing the app's support protocols, understand what kind of training, implementation, and ongoing customer success resources are available to you and/or your clients.

CRITERIA	RESPONSE	LINKS / NOTES
Is app implementation and training self-guided?		
Does the app have a dedicated, in-house customer implementation & training team?		
Does the app offer implementation and training with all pricing/plans? *(If no, specify in notes.)*		
On average, how long will it take to implement the app and use all features and functionalities?		
Does the app offer a standard certification program?		

Security

The security of your clients' data should be your firm's number one priority. Review the app's security policy in detail and ensure it's compliant with your security protocols and your clients' industry standards.

CRITERIA	RESPONSE	LINKS / NOTES
Does the app have a privacy/security policy? *(If yes, include link in notes.)*		
Does the app require two-factor authentication (2FA) to log in?		

Innovation & Development

The quickly growing accounting technology ecosystem means that many apps and add-ons are relatively new to the scene. If you're investing the time and resources required to implement an app, it's important to make sure that they're going to continue to innovate and develop.

CRITERIA	RESPONSE	LINKS / NOTES
Does the app have a public-facing product roadmap?		
Does the app have a system for managing feature requests and improvements?		
Does the app regularly introduce new features and updates? *(If yes, indicate frequency in notes.)*		
Does the app communicate new features and updates? *(If yes, indicate how in notes.)*		
Does the app have a beta program for new feature development?		
Does the app have an industry expert guiding feature development? *(E.g., an in-house accounting professional or outsourced thought leader)*		
Has the app received funding in the past year?		

Miscellaneous

What's the community reception and general sentiment surrounding the app? Check them out on social, review case studies that feature firms similar to yours, and find out how much they're invested in making you a better business partner to your small business clients.

CRITERIA	RESPONSE	LINKS / NOTES
Does the app have an active Facebook page?		
Does the app have an active Twitter handle?		
Does the app have an active LinkedIn page?		
Does the app facilitate any active online communities/groups?		
Does the app have any case studies featuring firms similar to mine?		
Does the app offer any annual awards or accolades?		
Does the app have positive reviews in the Xero app marketplace?		

Pricing

Firms that operate entirely in the cloud agree that pricing should be the least of your concerns — if the app is able to help you increase efficiency, make your clients' lives easier, and/or resolve a pertinent business need, it will be well worth the investment. With that in mind, take notes on pricing so you can compare pricing structures between competitive apps.

CRITERIA	RESPONSE	LINKS / NOTES
What is the app's pricing plan?		
Does the app offer pricing in multiple currencies?		
Is the app's pricing expected to change within the next year?		
Does the app offer a free subscription for your practice?		
Does the app offer a partner program, discounts for your clients, and/or wholesale pricing?		

Build your own checklist

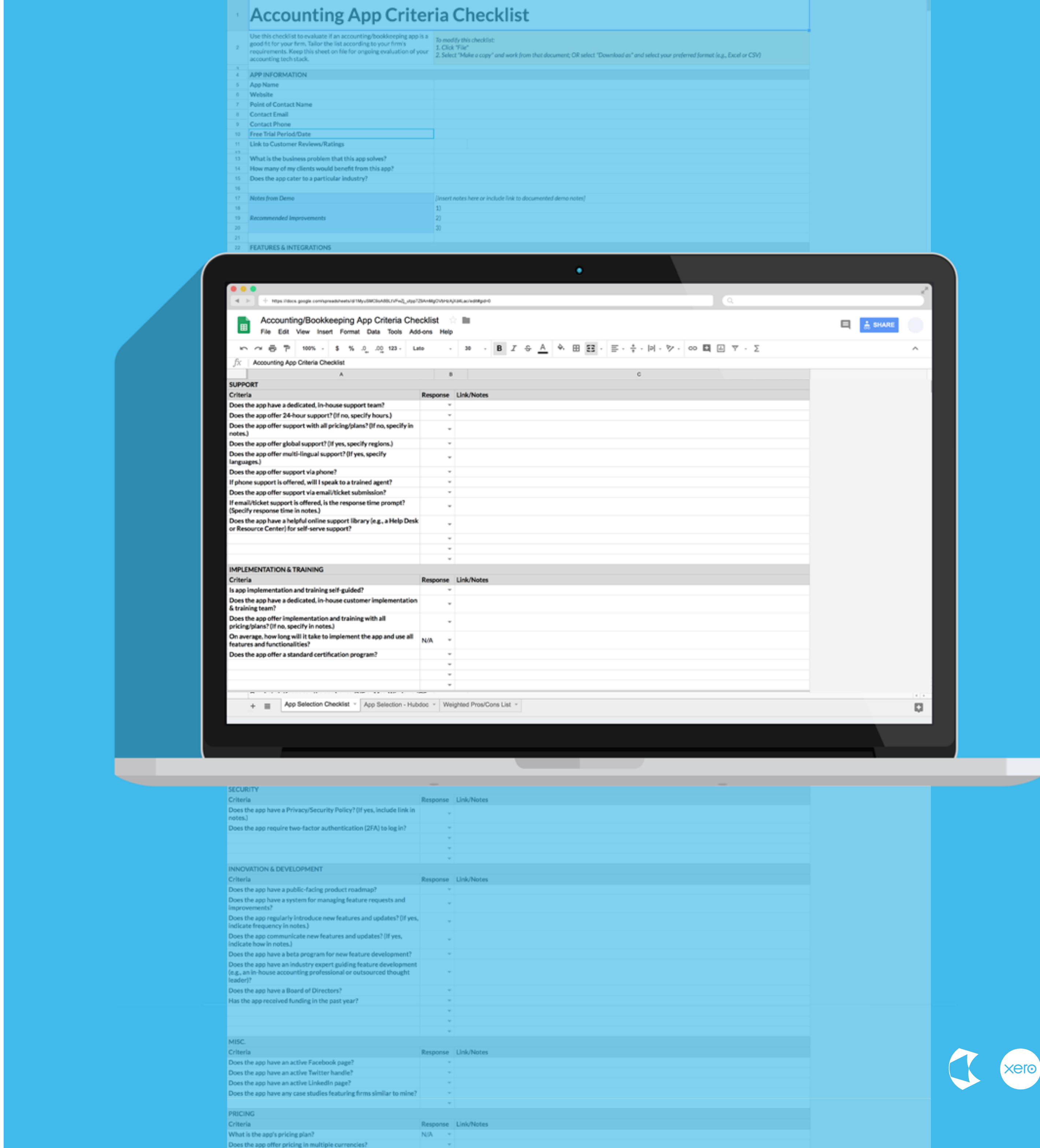
In this checklist, we provided a list of items to consider when evaluating new apps. Every client and firm has unique needs, and every app is different; however, there will always be standard items to consider when evaluating a new app.

To help you standardize your app selection process, we've also provided this checklist in a Google Sheet. Add your own requirements and update them depending on the business need you're looking to fulfill. Keep this document on hand when auditing your technology stack in the future to stay on top of product updates and new features.

To modify the Google Sheet, follow these instructions:

1. Access the **[Google Sheet](#)**.
2. Click "File".
3. Select "Make a copy" and work from the copied document. OR, select "Download as" and select your preferred format (e.g., Excel or CSV) and work from that document.

ACCESS THE CHECKLIST



Increase your firm's bookkeeping efficiency with Hubdoc & Xero

Advisors who offer bookkeeping services spend up to 30% of their time chasing down client documents every month. Hubdoc is a cloud bookkeeping application that seamlessly integrates with Xero to help you win back that time.

HOW IT WORKS: Hubdoc automatically fetches bank statements, bills, and receipts from over 700 financial institutions, utilities, and online vendors; extracts the key data; and publishes them as transactions to Xero for one-click reconciliation and audit-proofing. Document collection and management has never been so easy!

HUBDOC IS A GREAT FIT FOR YOUR FIRM IF YOU:

- ☑ Are a Xero partner
- ☑ Struggle with collecting your clients' documents
- ☑ Want to spend less time on manual tasks such as bank reconciliation and data entry
- ☑ Want to seamlessly audit-proof your clients' books
- ☑ Want to go paperless
- ☑ Want to increase the pace and quality of financial reporting

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

For more information about app evaluation:

- **Accounting App Evaluation Checklist**

For more information about app advisory:

- **App Advisory Playbook**
- **Trade & Construction App Playbook**
- **Professional Services App Playbook**
- **Retail and Ecommerce App Playbook**

For more information about Hubdoc & Xero:

- **Working with Hubdoc & Xero**
- **Demo video: How to Streamline Bank Reconciliation with Hubdoc & Xero**
- **Webinar: *How to Increase Practice Efficiency & Improve Your Client Experience***