Small-shop software cost and contract checklist

Ten questions to ask before you sign up for any business software, plus what five common tools say in their own pricing pages and terms.

The 10 questions to ask before you sign

Ask every vendor these, and get the answer from their pricing page, help center or terms, not a sales call.

1. **Price.** What is the monthly price if I pay month to month, and what is it if I commit for a year? ☐
2. **Users.** How many users does the plan include, and what does each extra user cost? ☐
3. **Add-ons.** Which features I need are paid add-ons, and what does each cost per month? ☐
4. **Payments.** What are the card, tap-to-pay and bank (ACH) processing rates, and are instant payouts extra? ☐
5. **Trial.** How long is the free trial, which plan does it cover, and does it need a card? ☐
6. **Cancellation.** How do I cancel, and when does it take effect? ☐
7. **Lock-in.** Is there a minimum term? What happens if I cancel partway through it? ☐
8. **Auto-renew.** Does it renew on its own, at what price, and how much notice do I need to give to stop it? ☐
9. **Refunds.** Are fees refundable, including partial months and prepaid years? ☐
10. **Price changes.** How much notice does the vendor give before raising the price? ☐

What we found for three common tools

Starting prices from each vendor's own pricing page on the date shown. Prices change; check the source before you buy.

Tool	Plan price	Fees and add-ons	Source
Jobber	Core $49/mo for 1 user, month to month ($39/mo with a 1-year commitment). For 2-5 people, Connect starts at $199/mo.	Card payments 2.9% + 30¢ per payment; bank (ACH) 1% per payment (no cap shown on the pricing page, so any cap is Unknown). Add-ons: Marketing Suite $99/mo, Receptionist (Jobber AI) $29/mo, Pipeline $49/mo.	Vendor pricing (https://www.getjobber.com/pricing/) checked 2026-11-02

Tool	Plan price	Fees and add-ons	Source
Housecall Pro	Basic $79/mo month to month ($59/mo billed yearly), 1 user. Essentials $189/mo, up to 5 users.	See the cost page for payment rates and the users each plan includes.	Vendor pricing (https://www.housecallpro.com/pricing/) checked 2026-11-02
QuickBooks Online	Simple Start $38/mo (1 user), Essentials $85/mo (3 users), Plus $140/mo (5 users), list prices.	See the cost page for payment processing rates.	Vendor pricing (https://quickbooks.intuit.com/pricing/) checked 2026-11-02

Contract terms, quoted from the vendor

"Unknown" means the vendor doesn't publish it where we looked, not that it doesn't exist. Read the full terms before you sign.

Jobber

Term	What the vendor says	Source
Cancellation	Monthly, no commitment: "Your subscription will end at the end of your current billing period. You won’t be charged again."	Source (https://www.getjobber.com/pricing/) checked 2026-11-02
Annual lock-in	Monthly with 1 year commitment: "a 12-month minimum term, billed monthly." Cancel during the year and you keep being billed monthly until the 12 months end.	Source (https://www.getjobber.com/pricing/) checked 2026-11-02
Auto-renew	"All subscriptions automatically renew at the end of the current term unless set to non-renew." The terms say renewals are "at Jobber’s then-current price."	Source (https://www.getjobber.com/terms-of-service/) checked 2026-11-02
Trial	"For 14 days you get full access to all of Jobber’s features on the Grow plan—no credit card required."	Source (https://www.getjobber.com/pricing/) checked 2026-11-02
Refunds	Annual (prepaid): "your initial payment is non-refundable." The terms add "fees are non-refundable" with no refunds for partial months, upgrades or downgrades.	Source (https://www.getjobber.com/terms-of-service/) checked 2026-11-02
Price-change notice	Unknown. Renewals are at the then-current price, but we found no stated notice period on the pricing page or terms.	Source (https://www.getjobber.com/terms-of-service/) checked 2026-11-02

Housecall Pro

Term	What the vendor says	Source
Cancellation	"Am I locked into a contract with Housecall Pro? No ... Housecall Pro does not require long-term contracts." The trial says "Cancel anytime." Cancellations go to cancellations@housecallpro.com per the terms.	Source (https://www.housecallpro.com/pricing/) checked 2026-11-02
Annual lock-in	Unknown how cancelling an annual plan mid-term works. Downgrades take effect "at the end of your current monthly or annual billing period."	Source (https://www.housecallpro.com/pricing/) checked 2026-11-02
Auto-renew	The terms say "ALL SUBSCRIPTIONS AUTOMATICALLY RENEW" for a period equal to the subscription period, at the then-current fee.	Source (https://www.housecallpro.com/terms-of-service/) checked 2026-11-02
Trial	"Try 14 days free. No credit card required."	Source (https://www.housecallpro.com/pricing/) checked 2026-11-02
Refunds	"Subscription fees will not be prorated or refunded, except as expressly set forth in this Agreement."	Source (https://www.housecallpro.com/terms-of-service/) checked 2026-11-02
Price-change notice	The terms say Housecall Pro may change pricing "upon prior notice to you." No number of days is stated, so the length is Unknown. They also say it may change your billing frequency "without notice."	Source (https://www.housecallpro.com/terms-of-service/) checked 2026-11-02

QuickBooks Online

Term	What the vendor says	Source
Cancellation	The pricing page FAQ says you can switch plans or cancel at any time. The terms say cancellation "take[s] effect the day after the last day of the current subscription period."	Source (https://www.intuit.com/legal/terms/en-us/quickbooks/online/) checked 2026-11-02
Annual lock-in	Unknown. The pricing page shows monthly prices; we found no annual commitment terms there.	Source (https://quickbooks.intuit.com/pricing/) checked 2026-11-02
Auto-renew	"Your payment to Intuit will automatically renew at the end of the applicable subscription period but you can cancel a subscription at any time."	Source (https://www.intuit.com/legal/terms/en-us/quickbooks/online/) checked 2026-11-02
Trial	The pricing page offers a 30-day free trial (shown as an alternative to the 50% off for 3 months offer).	Source (https://quickbooks.intuit.com/pricing/) checked 2026-11-02

Term	What the vendor says	Source
Refunds	"We do not provide refunds or credits for any cancellations or partial subscription period."	Source (https://www.intuit.com/legal/terms/en-us/quickbooks/online/) checked 2026-11-02
Price-change notice	"Intuit may change the price for recurring subscription fees from time to time with notice to you." Changes start with the next subscription period. For terms that end, Intuit says it sends a reminder 30 to 60 days before. No fixed notice length for price changes is stated.	Source (https://www.intuit.com/legal/terms/en-us/quickbooks/online/) checked 2026-11-02

Square Appointments

Term	What the vendor says	Source
Cancellation	"Square Plus and Square Premium each offer a free 30-day trial, and you can cancel or switch plans anytime." Square Free has no monthly fee. After cancelling, access lasts "through the end of your then-current billing period."	Source (https://squareup.com/us/en/appointments/pricing) checked 2026-11-02
Annual lock-in	Unknown. We found no annual commitment on the Appointments pricing page.	Source (https://squareup.com/us/en/appointments/pricing) checked 2026-11-02
Auto-renew	Subscriptions are billed on "a recurring basis" per the General Terms. The terms do not use the words auto-renew.	Source (https://squareup.com/us/en/legal/general/ua) checked 2026-11-02
Trial	Free 30-day trial on Square Plus and Square Premium.	Source (https://squareup.com/us/en/appointments/pricing) checked 2026-11-02
Refunds	"you will not be entitled to a refund or credit for any Subscription Fee already due or paid."	Source (https://squareup.com/us/en/legal/general/ua) checked 2026-11-02
Price-change notice	"We'll give you reasonable advance notice if we change our subscription fees." No number of days is stated.	Source (https://squareup.com/us/en/legal/general/ua) checked 2026-11-02

Podium

Term	What the vendor says	Source
Cancellation	Podium’s pricing page does not publish prices or cancellation steps. The terms say non-renewal notice goes by email to support@podium.com.	Source (https://legal.podium.com/) checked 2026-11-02
Annual lock-in	"Unless otherwise stated in Client’s Subscription Documentation, the initial term for any Subscription to the Services is twelve (12) months." Subscription fees "will be paid annually in advance."	Source (https://legal.podium.com/) checked 2026-11-02
Auto-renew	Renews "for subsequent periods of equal duration ... unless either party gives written notice of non-renewal at least thirty (30) days before the end" of the term.	Source (https://legal.podium.com/) checked 2026-11-02
Trial	Unknown. The terms mention free or trial access only as set in your order paperwork; no standard trial is published.	Source (https://legal.podium.com/) checked 2026-11-02
Refunds	"All Fees are non-refundable and non-creditable," except two narrow cases in the terms (a feature change with a material adverse effect, and termination for cause).	Source (https://legal.podium.com/) checked 2026-11-02
Price-change notice	Podium "may increase Fees applicable to you upon forty-five (45) days’ prior written notice," starting with your next subscription term. Usage rates can be updated separately.	Source (https://legal.podium.com/) checked 2026-11-02

More tools, full monthly cost math and updates: https://integratedowner.com/cost/ and https://integratedowner.com/checklist/