

## How QuickBooks' Custom Fields Can Provide Better Business Insight

QuickBooks' customizability makes it flexible enough for countless business types. Custom fields are a big part of that.

QuickBooks makes it possible for your business to create very detailed records for customers, vendors, employees, and items. In fact, you may find that you rarely make use of every field each contains.

But you may also find that there are additional fields that you'd like to see in your predefined record formats. That's where custom fields come in. QuickBooks lets you add extra fields and specify what their labels should be.

You can define up to 12 *total* fields for use in customer, vendor, and/or employee records. QuickBooks treats these just as it treats your built-in fields. They appear in the records themselves, of course, and are included when you export a file containing them. You can also search for them in reports.

### People Records

There are separate processes for defining fields for your individual and company contacts and your items. Let's look at how you can set up custom fields for customers, vendors, and employees first.

Go to your **Customer Center** and open a blank **Customer** record (in newer versions of **QuickBooks**, you'll click on **New Customer & Job** in the upper left corner, and then click **New Customer**). Then click the **Additional Info** tab in the left vertical pane of the **New Customer** window, then click on the **Define Fields** button in the lower right. This window will open (with blank fields):



Figure1: You can create up to 12 **total** custom fields that will be shared by customers, vendors, and employees.

It's easy to create your custom field labels. Simply type a word or short phrase on a line under **Label**, and then click in the box(es) on the same line in the appropriate column(s).

While it's possible that you would want to include the same field in multiple record types, you'll most likely have separate labels for each.

Consider carefully before creating custom field labels. Ask yourself questions like:

- What do I want to know about customers/vendors/employees that isn't already covered in the pre-built record formats?
- What kinds of information will I want to make available in report filters?
- How will I want to separate out individuals for communications like emails, memos, special sale invitations, etc.

Remember that you'll have to go back into existing records and fill in these blanks in order to be consistent. You're not *required* to complete them, but your searches, reports, etc. will not be comprehensive if you don't.

As always, you can consult with us if you want some suggestions.

### Item Records

The custom fields we just created are generally only used internally. That is, they won't automatically appear on sales forms, purchase orders, etc.

You may decide that some custom fields in item records, on the other hand, do need to be available on some forms. For example, you might sell shirts in multiple sizes, colors, and styles.

To start creating them, open the **Lists** menu and select **Item List**. Click the down arrow on the **Item** menu in the lower left, then click **New**. Since you will be selling similar items that you'll be keeping in stock, select **Inventory Part** under **TYPE**. Then click on the **Custom Fields** button over on the right and then **Define Fields**.

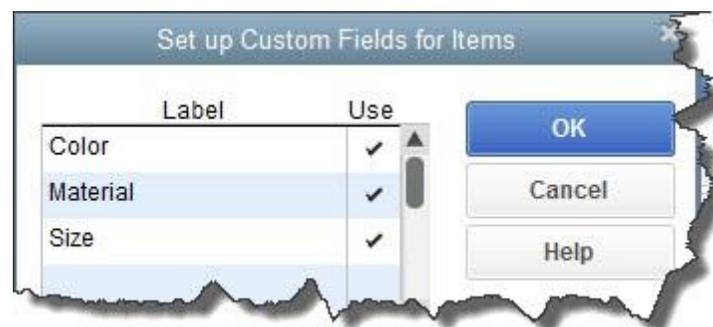


Figure 2: If you sell similar items that are available with different characteristics, you'll want to create custom fields.

As you did with the earlier custom fields, enter a word or phrase under **Label** and then click in the **Use** column. After you've entered up to five fields, click **OK**.

### A Complicated Process

This is where the simplicity of creating and using custom fields for items in reports and transaction forms ends. If you sell t-shirts in various sizes and colors, you're going to need

our help in order to see true inventory levels in reports and add those custom fields to sales and purchase transaction forms.



P.O. NUMBER	TERMS	REF	SHIP	VIA	P.O.B.			
TS-0909	Net 15	ENM	12/15/2019	UPS				
QTY	ITEM CODE	DESCRIPTION	PRICE EACH	COLOR	MATERIAL	SIZE	AMOUNT	TAX
1	T-10155	Short-sleeved t-shirt	17.99	Blue	Pima cotton	XL	17.99	Tax

*Figure 3: Adding custom fields to QuickBooks' standard transaction forms is possible, but you'll need our assistance to make sure inventory tracking is set up right.*

It may be that you need more inventory-tracking tools than are offered in your version of QuickBooks. If that's the case, we can help you either add an application that will meet your needs or suggest an upgrade.