QUICKBOOKS REPORTS FOR MONTHS OR QUARTERS IN MULTIPLE YEARS

Sometimes you’ll be asked for a comparison of months or quarters from different years. For example, you might be asked for the balance sheets or P&Ls for the month of April for the past 5 years. Here’s how it’s done, using the P&L for April of the years 2010 through 2014:

- Create a P&L for the period 1/1/2010 through 12/31/2014.
- Click on Customize Report and change Display columns to read, “Display columns by Month across the top” and click OK
- Export this report to Excel
- Insert a new blank row above the row with the month names and years (“Jan 10,” “Feb 10,” etc.)
- You need to fill in this new blank row with the month names (but NOT the years). “Jan” will appear above “Jan 10,” “Feb” will appear above “Feb 10,” etc. You can type these in, but an easier way is to type Jan and Feb in the first two cells, then select both cells and drag them across to the right. Either way will work.
- Select the data portion of the spreadsheet (don’t select the columns at the very left that have the names of the various accounts). In this example, you’d start selecting with “Jan” and end at last row at the last column.
- Click on “Data” in the menu bar at the very top
- Click on the Sort icon and then click on the Options button
- Select “Sort left to right”
- Uncheck the box that says “My data has headers”
- In the Sort by field, select the row that has the month only
- Click on “Add Level” and select the next row—the one with the month AND year
- You may get a warning, “The following sort key may not sort as expected because it contains some numbers formatted as text. Choose “Sort anything that looks like a number, as a number”
- This will give you a spreadsheet that’s sorted first by the name of the month. Then each month list is sorted by year. The sorting is alphabetical, by the name of the month. That is, April will appear first, August next, then December, etc.
- Don’t panic—you’re only looking for one month. Select the columns you don’t want and delete them.

Pretty cool, huh? And you can do the same thing for quarters, or even weeks. That will require a change in the line you insert for sorting, but you’ll figure it out.