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Quicken Willmaker Plus 2009 Edition: Estate Planning Essentials (Book With Software)



Synopsis

Nearly 60 percent of Americans lack a legal will - and Quicken WillMaker: Estate Planning Essentials is the simple estate-planning solution they need! Step by step, it provides readers with a straightforward path through the complexities of ensuring their families' futures. Best of all, your readers will not only understand wills, living trusts and financial powers of attorney - they'll also create them, quickly and easily. The interactive CD-ROM helps them to make their own: legal wills; living trusts; living wills; health care powers of attorney; financial powers of attorney; final arrangements documents and forms for executors. Plus, Quicken WillMaker provides other financial and legal documents that help protect their families and property, such as authorizations, agreements and promissory notes - over 50 forms in all. What's new? The 5th edition is completely updated to provide the latest state and federal laws, and all documents are revised to reflect each state's specifications. In addition, Quicken WillMaker now makes it much easier to arrange for pet care - and much more. Many companies publish books about estate planning, but Nolo is the only publisher to provide a complete solution to your readers' needs! Good in every state except Louisiana.

Book Information

Paperback: 600 pages

Publisher: NOLO; 2009 Edition edition (October 29, 2008)

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Average Customer Review: 4.3 out of 5 stars 131 customer reviews

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Customer Reviews

"From a group of tough critics, Nolo's WillMaker got the most praise... superior on every front." -- Kiplinger's Personal Finance Magazine "Quicken WillMaker Plus... was easy to install from a CD, and we found the interview-style format intuitive. We found it the most complete of the five products we tried." -- The Wall Street Journal "Walks you through making a will and provisions you need to

consider for your situation." -- CBS News "Which software did I like the best? No contest.... If you're looking to write a will, I highly recommend WillMaker." -- Eric Tyson, author of Personal Finance for Dummies "WillMaker is such an easy-to-use program that users may never need to look at the manual... refreshingly painless." -- Fortune

System Requirements CD-ROM enclosed Computer: Pentium 133 (Pentium II 300 recommended) Operating System: Windows 2000 / XP / Vista Memory: 32 MB RAM (64 MB RAM recommended) Hard Disk Space: 19 MB (26 MB to install) Monitor: Super VGA (800x600) with 256 colors (16-bit color recommended) CD-ROM drive: 2X Speed Internet Connection: 14.4 Kbps modem required to access online features (56 Kbps or higher recommended) Printer: Any printer supported by Windows 2000 / XP / Vista Software: Microsoft Internet Explorer 5.0 or higher. Adobe Acrobat Reader (optional). --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

I originally wrote the following review for the Quicken WillMaker Plus 2007 software, which actually costs more than this book-CD-ROM bundle. This book-CD-ROM combo **DOES** include the full version of Quicken WillMaker Plus 2007; see my picture posted above. I highly recommend this book-CD bundle as it's both cheaper and more helpful. The book is a very good primer on the topic of estate planning. Original review of the software, which mentions this Essentials kit: I'm a fan of Nolo's Quicken Willmaker product. It helps you create your own estate planning documents as well as a few simple general legal documents. It's very easy to use, and works in all states (except Louisiana, where the estate planning documents created in this software won't be legal due to that state's specific drafting requirements). There are a few things you should know, however, before purchasing the software. First, also sells a book-CD version called Quicken Willmaker Estate Planning Essentials which combines a full book on estate planning with a full version of the Willmaker Plus software, and it sells for much less than the software alone! It's just a much better deal. Just search for "willmaker" in the Book section. (Note: the 2007 version, which is the one you **should** buy, is slated for release Oct. 30, according to the product page on .) Second, the 2007 edition of the software gives you updates and tech support through the end of 2007. While you can create and modify and print and export documents created in Willmaker 2007 for as long as you own the software, you won't receive any updates beyond December 2007. If your state's estate planning law changes in January 2008, for instance, your will and other Willmaker-created documents **might** become outdated and no longer of legal value. Herein lies an interesting question, almost a catch-22: you bought this software to avoid the service of a lawyer, but in order

to ascertain whether your documents will remain in legal force in the future, you may need to consult a lawyer! Of course, you can always opt to get the 2008 (and 2009 and 2010 and so on) versions. If Nolo continues to market the Estate Planning Essentials bundle for thirty bucks each year, you may still end up saving money upgrading each year rather going to a lawyer. (E.g., \$30 a year times 30 years comes to less than \$1000, cheaper than engaging a New York City or San Francisco lawyer for three hours!) My take: unless you live in a state that constantly alters its estate planning laws, you will probably be safe with just Willmaker 2007 and upgrade occasionally in the future, especially when your life situation experiences a big change. (For example, if you are married and, God forbid, divorce in 2011, you can skip editions 2008-2010 but do upgrade to the 2011 edition when you re-plan your estate.) Third, while the software itself is easy to use with its step-by-step guide (and if you get the cheaper book version mentioned above, it's even better!), getting all the information you need about yourself (assets, beneficiaries, etc.) is actually quite a time-consuming process. That's why again I recommend the book-software bundle; it tells you what you need to do before running the software to write your will. Otherwise you'd be surprised at how much prep work you'll actually have to do before finishing even a simple will! One last thought: because this is self-help software, while many people will find it adequate, you may still want to talk to an estate attorney. For one thing, a legal will requires witnesses, and you might just as well pay your attorney and his assistant to act as your witnesses, if you don't want your friends or relatives to know what's in your will! For another, estate laws are getting more and more complicated, and vary by state, so a local attorney is still BY FAR the best and most reliable source and a competent attorney will provide invaluable services that no self-help software can offer. That said, I do recommend this excellent program (esp. the cheaper kit) for those obsessed with self-help and/or those looking to save money. (Yours truly belong to both types!) Besides, the Estate Planning Essential Kit, which I think is just GREAT, can educate you on the various topics in estate planning, so even if you choose to hire a lawyer, you'll talk smart and know what he or she is doing with your will and your trust. (Again, Louisiana residents should seek an attorney's help. This software, or any other estate planning software I know of, won't work in your state.) No adult with children or property is too young to start estate planning. However you choose to proceed, good luck! [Disclaimer: This review, originally written Sept. 18, 2006, was updated on Oct. 9 after a Nolo representative e-mailed me about my misunderstanding of the software's update/upgrade policy. Also, please note that I'm *not* a lawyer (not even a law student!) and cannot offer any legal advice; please do not e-mail me with your legal questions.]

Since the more comprehensive reviewers here have already covered the features of Willmaker Plus

2007, I will only add a little opinion and a heap of praise to Quicken, for teaming up with Nolo in making this incredibly easy to use yet powerful program. I must admit that I am not the sharpest tool in the shed, but I was able to create a simple Will without even opening the book because of the very easy to use step by step format. Legal jargon is explained brilliantly in laymans terms. This program is truly idiot proof! Wills, Powers of Attorney for health care & finances along with other legal documents are the most important yet often neglected documents a person must deal with in life. Becoming incapacitated or dying without these documents in place can leave your loved ones with a real legal nightmare. Completing my Will & Powers of Attorney and putting all of my important papers like deeds, titles, financial statements and insurance policies, in one place (known to loved ones) has given me tremendous peace of mind in knowing that my loved ones will have a much easier time resolving all of the legal matters if I become incapacitated or when I die.

Few obsess, or even like to think about their own death. But it will happen, and generally not at a time of our own choosing. So why leave a legal mess for your family to clean up when you can spend thirty bucks and change for this software, and in less than an hour bang out a serviceable will? The software is interview-based, tailored to your State law, has a full range of forms and considerations, and is user-friendly. This small expenditure can save your heirs the cost and delays of probate court, and put your estate in the hands of an executor of your choice rather than one appointed by the court. And the exercise of making your will is a remarkable starting point for contemplation of the fleeting nature of life, and what you value in life. At least it was for me - and, full disclosure, I am not a lawyer, so I am blissfully ignorant of any of the software's flaws in this regard. A final note - buy the book+software combo - it's cheaper than the software alone. And live long and prosper.

After looking at all possible options for creating wills for my husband and myself, I decided to give Willmaker a try. I'm very happy I did! The software not only gives you options, but also suggestions as to where to begin, and what is most important to people at the same age and status in life. While you are filling out the forms, each page has concise definitions and explanations for all options on the right of the page. Making informed choices is easy and effortless. My mother just revised her will, using a lawyer. The process was tedious and time consuming. Her resulting will and other documents are remarkably similar to mine. Her cost \$1200.00. Using Willmaker, my husband and I created all the required documents in a few evenings, and took them to our bank for a notary and witness signatures. Our cost, under \$40. A perfect solution to a stressful and necessary task.

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