KCSM Promotes Lifelong Learning With Sage Fundraising 50

The San Francisco Bay Area is the fifth largest television and radio market in the United States. One of its major broadcasters is KCSM, licensed to the San Mateo County Community College District. KCSM TV offers public television to all six counties in the area, 24 hours a day, broadcast through a massive 1.5 million watt signal and carried on 60 cable systems. KCSM FM, a PRI and NPR affiliate with an emphasis on jazz, has more than 200,000 listeners and is ranked one of the top 35 "most listened to" noncommercial stations in the nation.

When it came time to automate fundraising data management, KCSM opted for eTapestry, an application service provider (ASP). The move seemed to make sense, since the ASP would be responsible for hardware and upgrades. But the station's vast volume—about 3,000 contributions every month—quickly swamped its Internet connections. Before they knew it, KCSM had a four-month backlog of donors to be entered into the system, and no way of extracting gift information.

Jazzed About Sage Fundraising 50

"We scrapped eTapestry and implemented Sage Fundraising 50 six months ago," says Beth Colbert, development officer. "What a difference! Sage Fundraising 50 has the membership functionality we desperately need, and it's robust enough to handle an organization of our size. We liked the intuitive way Sage Fundraising 50 is set up, its open database elements, and its import capabilities. And because Sage Fundraising 50 resides on our in-house system, we're no longer at the mercy of Internet connections."

Sage Fundraising 50 now manages the entire fundraising process for KCSM, and is used by the development group and the business office. The software handles gift processing, consolidates donor lists, monitors campaign progress, and stores general demographics, donor names, addresses, and renewal dates.

CUSTOMER

KCSM TV and FM

INDUSTRY

Nonprofit
Public Television and Radio

LOCATION

San Mateo, California

Number of Locations: One

Number of Employees: 35

SYSTEM

Sage Fundraising 50

Challenge

Slow ASP system resulted in four-month processing backlog for membership and gift information, which led to donor complaints and overall inefficiencies.

Solution

Sage Fundraising 50 implemented in both the development department and the business office, to manage all membership data.

Results

Time to enter batches of memberships reduced by 33%; data processing backlog eliminated; major improvements in customer satisfaction; data processors delighted with system speed and functionality.

Tuning In to Donor Data

"When a donor sends us a gift, we use Sage Fundraising 50 to conduct a name search, to make sure they're not already in the system," Colbert explains. "We input the donor's contact information, and use this data for creating labels for gift acknowledgements and mailing our monthly program guides."

Before implementing Sage Fundraising 50, KCSM staffers had to manually enter membership renewal dates. "Active supporters often got ticked off when we solicited them to be new members, or when we couldn't tell them when their membership expired," says Colbert. "With Sage Fundraising 50, we have automatic renewal date tracking, and can approach people in a timely manner. This has been a huge boon for us in donor relations and overall stewardship."

The library of reports that came with Sage Fundraising 50 meets most of Colbert's needs. She runs donor counts, measures progress of various solicitations, and will soon be creating donor statements to summarize contributions for tax purposes.

Sage Fundraising 50 is so much faster than eTapestry that KCSM has trimmed one third of the time it takes to process a batch of 50 gift transactions. The backlog of unprocessed memberships has vanished.

Broad Audience Appeal

KCSM's data entry folks are big fans of the new software. "Our processors tend to be very bright college students, and they quickly become impatient with inadequate or clumsy software," Colbert notes. "They love Sage Fundraising 50. It's powerful, easy to use, and makes their jobs more satisfying."

On the few occasions when Colbert needed technical assistance, she received speedy resolution through her Sage support plan. "The other day I tried the online support option, and it worked great too."

KCSM is still learning to use the software to its fullest potential. "We're just scratching the surface of Sage Fundraising 50, and that's terrific," Colbert says. "We have plenty of room to grow, and we won't max out the system any time soon. And when we're ready to launch some of our more ambitious projects, like an e-mail newsletter, our Sage Fundraising 50 database will be right there to support us."

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> – Beth Colbert
> Development Officer
> KCSM TV and FM

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