

Better Bang for Hebrew University's Bucks

Like many non-profit organizations, American Friends of Hebrew University (AFHU) found itself stuck with unusable accounting and fundraising software. So clumsy that it was never fully implemented, AFHU's legacy system could not even track donations effectively. As a result, the organization had to hire more people than necessary, a waste of precious resources that donors expected to go to Hebrew University.

Jim Wilson, Director IT/IS, did an exhaustive search for the best system on the market, analyzing both up-front and hidden long-term costs. "Sage Fundraising 100 emerged as a front-runner from the start," he says Wilson. "Most of its competitors relied on technology and hardware that would be expensive to install, and even more expensive to maintain. Sage Fundraising, on the other hand, is based on systems that are industry-standard. Any IT professional with a basic knowledge can install or maintain it. When I compared total costs, going with Sage Fundraising obviously gave us a much greater ROI and better bang for the buck."

Things looked even better when Wilson considered Sage Fund Accounting for the financials. "Very few vendors offer a fundraising system that integrates tightly with a financial package," he says. "With Sage software, you get the whole package, for the most reasonable investment. Our choice was obvious."

Streamlined Data Entry

Once AFHU implemented Sage Fund Accounting and Sage Fundraising 100, savings showed up immediately. "We were able to scale down our gift processing group by three employees who formerly only did data entry, and move them to more productive tasks," says Wilson. "This is because the two programs work together so smoothly, and data only needs to be entered once."

Automated imports of donations helped a lot too. "More and more donors are choosing to give via credit and debit card these days," he explains. "With our new systems, we can electronically tie-in credit card donations and import them in bulk, a huge time saver."

Time Saved in Training

Learning AFHU's legacy system used to be a major headache, taking as long as two entire days. "We often use temporary help," explains



Jim Wilson, Director IT/IS

CUSTOMER

American Friends of the Hebrew University

INDUSTRY

Higher Education

LOCATION

New York, New York

Number of Locations: 6

Number of Employees: 155

Users on Sage Fundraising 100: 65

Users on Sage Fund Accounting: 25

SYSTEM

Sage Fundraising 100

Sage Fund Accounting

- General Ledger
- Executive View
- Budgeting
- PO's & Encumbrances
- AP, FA, Allocations Management
- Forms Designer
- Bank Reconciliation
- Import/Export

Challenge

Legacy system was so difficult to use that it was never implemented fully, and AFHU required staff for manual administration

Solution

Implement state-of-the-art Sage Fundraising Solutions suite, including automatic credit and debit card giving

Benefits

Training time reduced from 16 hours to 1; eliminated need for 3 FTEs in data entry; can now target appeals by donor patterns, trimming total costs by 68%

Wilson. “If they’re only coming in for four days, and half of that time is spent learning the system, you’ve got major problems.”

Since implementing the new system, training is quick and easy. “We can teach someone our Sage solution in just an hour,” he reports. “Obviously, that means a lot more productive time for each temporary employee. But it also gives us more flexibility to bring in extra help only when we need it, rather than keeping people on staff because we’ve invested so much in training them.”

Smarter Campaigns

Lacking appropriate analytical tools, most nonprofit organizations have difficulties detecting trends in their donors. They therefore waste money on buckshot-type campaigns rather than adopting a sharp-shooter approach. Sage software solutions have changed all that for AFHU.

“With Sage’s suite of fundraising solutions, we can easily report on the giving patterns of all our donors, from the smallest donation to the occasional phone call,” says Wilson. “Then we can analyze exactly how and when they like to give, and which appeals work best. Studying these preferences, we can zero in on people with the greatest propensity to give, and who will give if they are reached out to. This has increased the effectiveness of our campaigns by 28%.”

As an example, Wilson mentions donors who only give during the last quarter of the year. “So instead of bombarding them with 15 mailings during the year, which are extremely costly, we only solicit them at year-end. They’re happier not being pestered, and we’ve saved money on direct mail. It’s a definite win-win.”

Moving Up to Sage Millennium

Sage will be phasing out its current Sage Fundraising 100 offering. “Microsoft is discontinuing support of the database environment upon which Sage Fundraising 100 is built,” explains Krista Endsley, Sr. Vice President and General Manager at Sage Nonprofit Solutions. “So we are proactively encouraging users to plan for migration now, in order to ensure that they continue to have the best experience possible with our software.”

Users will migrate to Sage Millennium, an award-winning solution that is fully Web-based. Rather than seeing this as an inconvenience, Wilson says that he is looking forward to the upgrade.

“I like what I see,” he says. “Sage is on top of things. They are clearly investing in their technology and that’s what we like. Rather than just dumping the old product, they’re going to great pains to give us specific transition options and data transfer plans. Based on my experience so far, I’m confident that the migration to Sage Millennium will be a smooth one.”

“We were able to scale down our gift processing group by three employees who formerly only did data entry, and move them to more productive tasks.”

– Jim Wilson, Director IT/IS

In fact, AFHU is so pleased with their suite of Sage fundraising and accounting solutions and the support they receive that they are looking into investing in Sage’s human resources products as well. With a fully-integrated system at their fingertips, the dedicated staff at AFHU can spend less time on administrative busy-work, and more time on their mission of education and enrichment.

About AFHU

American Friends of The Hebrew University (AFHU) is a national, not-for-profit organization in support of The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel’s foremost center of higher education and research. Forging a meaningful partnership between American Jewry and the people of Israel, AFHU helps to ensure Israel’s well-being by nurturing its greatest asset: the intellectual strength of its people. Its programs promote greater understanding of the University’s contributions in fields ranging from technology, medicine and law to agriculture, public policy and Jewish Studies.

About Sage Nonprofit Solutions

Sage Nonprofit Solutions has been serving nonprofit and governmental organizations for more than 30 years. Sage helps more than 32,000 unique not-for-profit organizations increase efficiency and more easily manage their operations through the use of technology. From fund accounting, donor and fundraising management, and fixed asset management, to online donation processing, human resources (HR), payroll, and health care, Sage offers a software product or service to meet the organization’s need.