Success Story

Marguerite Casey Foundation boosts accounting efficiency 50%

A private grantmaking foundation transforms financial management with an upgrade to Sage Intacct



"Visibility through Sage Intacct is helping us spend in the right way, on the right things. We've been able to direct more funds to grantmaking, which is ultimately our mission."

Daniel Gould
Vice President of Investments and Operations, Marguerite Casey Foundation

The challenge
MCF faced multiple challenges with a legacy on-premises Microsoft Dynamics GP application, including extensive manual spreadsheet work, limited reporting and visibility, and inability to readily integrate third-party applications.

The solution
The foundation turned to Sage Intacct to modernize accounting and finance, utilizing expert implementation and support services from Clark Nuber PS, a top Sage Intacct partner also serving as MCF's audit firm.

Results with Sage Intacct
MCF has dramatically improved efficiency and visibility with Sage Intacct, gaining insights for informed decisions that help it better fulfill its social mission. Data accessibility, security, and quality have increased markedly.

- Improved overall accounting efficiency by 50%
- Sped the close nearly 3x while eliminating 34 hours of manual work
- Identified a $150,000 annual savings with budget analysis

Company
Marguerite Casey Foundation

Location
Seattle, WA

Industry
Nonprofit

Sage Products
Sage Intacct

Sage Partner
Clark Nuber PS

Marguerite Casey Foundation
Shifting Power. Powering Freedom.

About Marguerite Casey Foundation
Founded in 2001, MCF is a private grant making foundation working towards a country in which government prioritizes the needs of excluded and underrepresented people, families, and communities.

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Empowering accounting and finance

The Marguerite Casey Foundation (MCF) describes its philanthropic focus as "shifting power, powering freedom" — awarding grants to leaders, scholars, and organizations aimed at large-scale societal transformation that empowers and liberates excluded communities.

In the past, the finance team was limited by shortcomings of an aging on-premises Microsoft Dynamics GP application. Extensive manual work in spreadsheets and inflexible reporting compromised efficiency and visibility for MCF, which made $50 million in grants in 2022 from an endowment of nearly $1 billion.

An upgrade to Sage Intacct has empowered the finance team to dramatically improve its effectiveness. With Sage Intacct, the private grantmaking foundation has improved accounting efficiency 50%, accelerated the monthly close nearly 3x, and eliminated more than 34 hours a month of manual data work.

Plus, breakthrough data visibility is delivering insights that help MCF better fulfill its mission while eliminating unnecessary costs. The team has freedom to customize reports to organizational needs, while data confidence and security has soared.

"Our migration to Sage Intacct has been a crucial step in our digital transformation efforts," says Kaitlin Frick, operations specialist. "With Sage Intacct, we have set the tone for our operational systems to be more efficient and effective, and to ensure compliance and security while prioritizing transparency and ease of access for staff."

Founded in 2001, MCF realized it needed to step up from Microsoft Dynamics GP as challenges multiplied. AP and expense management workflow processes were highly manual and inefficient, dragging out the monthly close. MCF couldn't readily integrate Microsoft Dynamics GP with best-of-breed applications, while reporting was accessible to just two users. The team resorted to Excel for standard processes like reporting, AP, and expense management.

"The leadership team had limited visibility into the financials of the organization given that we had only two people on reporting," says Daniel Gould, vice president of investments and operations. "It was difficult to run timely reports, and they were clunky and not intuitive for leadership."



Sage Intacct saves MCF valuable time to spend where it really matters.

An upgrade from Microsoft Dynamics GP

After sizing up Abila MIP, MCF turned to Sage Intacct on the recommendation of Clark Nuber PS, a CPA and consulting firm that handles tax preparation and audit for MCF. Clark Nuber is also a Sage Intacct partner that offers implementation and optimization services.

"We found Sage Intacct to have a very intuitive configuration and user interface, and it could integrate with other applications through its open API," Gould says.

"We liked the ability to customize fields for reporting, and knew that Sage Intacct invested in new features and functionality with its frequent updates to the platform."

Clark Nuber has been a "fantastic partner" for tax and audit, Gould says, so the opportunity to engage the firm for a Sage Intacct implementation was attractive.

"Clark Nuber has strong technical expertise with Sage Intacct, and brought management expertise that frankly we were lacking," Gould says.

"Clark Nuber has been an excellent implementation and support partner, and really went the extra mile when some issues arose with third-party applications we were using."

Speeding the close by nearly 3x

Live on Sage Intacct in early 2022, MCF has quickly achieved dramatic gains across accounting and finance. For example, integrating Sage Intacct with a Nexonia expense management application has eliminated 24 hours a month of manual data entry.

Bank reconciliations take eight fewer hours each month, while MCF has shaved two hours a month from AP processes. Gould expects AP savings to soar once integration between Sage Intacct and a Stampli AP automation application is complete.

Those efficiency gains allow Gould's team to close the books in just seven business days, much faster than 15 or 20 days in the past. Overall, Gould says accounting and finance efficiency is up 50% with Sage Intacct.

"Our core processes have become incredibly efficient," Gould says. "I believe we'll be closer to 100% more efficient once we integrate Sage Intacct with Stampli and SmartSimple, our grant management platform."

Along with time, MCF is saving on costs, too. Moving to cloud-based Sage Intacct allowed the nonprofit to avoid a new $30,000 server that would have been needed for Microsoft Dynamics GP, plus $24,000 a year in server maintenance costs.



Better visibility supports mission objectives
Robust and sophisticated reporting in Sage Intacct is unearthing insights not possible in the past. Gould's team provides leadership with monthly budget reports, instead of periodic spreadsheets that were difficult to understand.

"We now can review the budget each month with the leadership team and provide the budget data they need to make decisions that advance our mission," Gould says. "We're more confident in our forecasting because we can look at monthly patterns in Sage Intacct. We're able to make more informed, more confident financial decisions from a strategic perspective."

As a result, MCF spotted opportunities to reallocate operational spend to grantmaking, benefiting its recipient organizations. And analysis highlighted an opportunity to consolidate public relations spending with one agency, instead of three. That alone is saving MCF about $150,000 a year.

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Dashboards 'a very valuable tool'
MCF now has six reporting users, versus. two in the past. Role-based dashboards for finance, operational, and executive staff are providing real-time up-to-date metrics to better monitor and adapt as conditions change.

"Sage Intacct dashboards at our fingertips are a very valuable tool," Gould says. "In finance, we can monitor cash levels and the upcoming payables workload. Our operations specialist created a dashboard for vendor review processes, where we keep the vendor data clean, up to date, and in one place."

Gould is gratified that MCF has strengthened data controls through Sage Intacct customizable role-based access for authorized users and other security features, while improving data quality and timeliness. Efficiency gains have freed staff to focus on higher-level strategic initiatives and build their own skill sets.

"Our team has been able to reshuffle hours once spent on manual work into professional development that benefits them and ultimately the organization," Gould says. "Accounting and operations specialists can pursue continuing professional education and develop project management skills as we evolve our technology roadmap."



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