

Success Story

Sage Intacct helps Operation HOPE drive greater impact

“Sage Intacct definitely has a part in helping us deliver on our mission...to grow efficiently without adding headcount in the accounting department, while improving accountability and transparency.”

Brian Betts

President and Chief Financial Officer, Operation HOPE



The challenge

Operation HOPE needed to upgrade from the limitations of an on-premises legacy accounting platform to alleviate extensive manual work and meet funding partner expectations for in-depth reporting.



The solution

Sage Intacct is proving to be the ideal solution, offering ease of use, valuable AI capabilities that are improving speed and accuracy, and flexibility to scale with rapid growth objectives.



Results with Sage Intacct

Though revenue doubled in recent years, Operation HOPE has avoided hiring additional accounting staff by utilizing automation and AI-powered capabilities in Sage Intacct. The nonprofit has gained breakthrough efficiency and insights, and new ability to:

- Quickly deliver in-depth grant reports to funding partners
- Make data-driven decisions on programs and strategy
- Dramatically improve financial management efficiency



Company
Operation HOPE

Location
Georgia, US

Industry
Nonprofit

Sage Product
Sage Intacct



About Operation HOPE

With the mission of making free enterprise and capitalism work for the underserved, Operation HOPE has since 1992 served more than 4 million individuals and directed more than \$4 billion in economic activity into disenfranchised communities.



A virtuous circle of financial well-being

As the largest U.S. nonprofit focused on financial literacy and empowerment, Operation HOPE helps underserved individuals improve their money and credit management skills through skilled coaching, while aiding in home ownership, small business development, and financial disaster recovery.

“We’re helping to increase credit scores by 41 points, reduce household debt by \$1,800, and improve savings by \$1,200,” says Brian Betts, president and CFO at Operation HOPE. “If we can improve the financial well-being of an individual, that helps improve the financial health of an entire community and the whole U.S. economy.”

Operation HOPE, founded in 1992 with more than 300 locations across 37 states, relies on Sage Intacct to help drive its outstanding accomplishments. The nonprofit has achieved a top 4-star rating from Charity Navigator for 10 years, and has increased revenue more than 2x to nearly \$70 million in the past couple of years through corporate and governmental partnerships.

Michael Smith, senior vice president of finance and accounting, says Sage Intacct plays a pivotal role in a virtuous circle of economic improvement in disadvantaged communities.

“Sage Intacct helps our accounting department, which then helps our coaches and our entire organization, which ultimately helps individuals and their communities,” Michael says. “It’s really a full circle in which Sage Intacct supports our mission of teaching financial literacy to everyone.”

An upgrade to modern accounting automation

Operation HOPE’s own financial management practices took a leap forward when the nonprofit upgraded from an older Sage 100 system to Sage Intacct in early 2020, later leveraging several Sage Intacct artificial intelligence (AI) capabilities.

The on-premises legacy system ran on multiple servers, complicating access for staff in Atlanta and Los Angeles offices, while basic accounting demanded extensive manual data entry and paper documentation. Visibility and insights were constrained by spreadsheet-based reporting. However, fast forward to today, Operation HOPE has witnessed a dramatic improvement in efficiency across accounting and reporting. It has gained the flexibility to swiftly deliver comprehensive grant usage reports to funders and has managed to avoid the need to expand its accounting team. A tremendous cost savings for the organization. Additionally, it has seen enhancements in employee acquisition, satisfaction, and retention. Moreover, Operation HOPE has added flexibility and scalability into its operations, enabling it to adapt to rapid growth easily.





Sage Intacct AP Automation reduced invoice input time by 99% for Operation HOPE

“Sage Intacct automation and its AI capabilities free up time, and gives us easy access to data that lets us be more proactive instead of reactive,” Michael says. “We can be very smart and sophisticated in spending and forecasting, which allows us to do a better job writing grants and reporting back to our funding partners.”

Sage Intacct AI boosts speed and accuracy

Operation HOPE is an early adopter of AI in several business areas, including accounting. It's using Sage Intacct AI-powered AP Automation to enhance speed, efficiency, and accuracy of what used to be highly manual bill paying processes.

“AP Automation can scan an invoice and automatically fill in information based on historical data,” says Mark Knowles, accounting manager. “It's reduced our input time by about 99% because all we have to do is check the information for accuracy, then submit.”

The AI-powered GL Outlier Detection capability in Sage Intacct is delivering similar payback. The capability can scan thousands of general ledger journal entries in seconds, highlighting potential anomalies for human review.

“GL Outlier Detection definitely helps with accuracy because it catches mistakes,” says Michael. “It also gives us time back, because we don't need to cycle multiple times between data entry and reviews. It makes review and approval much easier because it catches outliers at the beginning.”

Smith notes that staff had understandable concerns that AI would result in job losses, but those worries disappeared as AI's role in accounting became clear.

“Everyone's loved it,” Michael says. “AI's not taking your job. What it does is free up time so we can do more valuable work like financial modeling and using our data to support continued growth.”

Data-driven reports build funder trust

Enriching data with dimensions such as funder, location, and program type for slice-and-dice analytics is helping Operation HOPE improve its transparency and accountability with funding partners while guiding internal operational and spending decisions.

“We're currently tracking about 60 grants, so being able to present data-driven numbers that show partners exactly how we're spending a grant builds trust,” Michael says. “The way Sage Intacct captures data allows us to easily report back to partners in dashboards, all in real-time.”

Mark says that reporting via Sage Intacct is a huge step forward from the limitations of the previous legacy system. Budget owners have new insights into spending, and the organization can now make data-driven decisions.

“We're able to drill down into data at a deeper level using Sage Intacct Dimensions,” Mark says. “Since we have visibility into each of our 300 locations, we can determine how a location is performing and whether changes should be made. It allows us to strategize and shape our future.”



“Sage Intacct allows us to grow and it grows with us. It gives us that flexibility to pivot quickly when we hit a high growth spurt, while also making sure we have reliable financial data to make important decisions as we’re growing.”

Brian Betts

President and Chief Financial Officer, Operation HOPE

Scalability to sustain rapid growth

Operation HOPE leaders are finding their Sage Intacct platform aligns well with organizational growth objectives, such as adding hundreds of new locations and growing from 37 to more than 40 states.

New features in quarterly Sage Intacct updates are giving Operation HOPE ever-evolving improvements while reflecting that Sage listens closely to customer feedback.

“Though Sage is a large organization, they really listen to and think about their clients’ needs,” Mark says. “We always look forward to the quarterly releases, and we use the learning center to explore a particular capability or issue. There’s also the Sage Intacct community, where we can reach out to other nonprofits for tips or provide feedback on things that have helped us.”

Michael agrees. “Sage Intacct actually takes customer feedback and implements it, which most vendors say they do, but don’t,” Michael says. “They take your feedback, push it to their development team and sure enough, in a release or two, an improvement or fix is in there.”



Sage



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