

Success Story

Dazed saves a day a week with AP Automation

Dazed Media boosted its finance function with Sage Intacct, Sage Intelligent Time, and AP Automation.

“Sage AI has brought a huge amount of value to our team over the last two years, namely the AP automation been a real game changer for us.”

Lucy Build,
Global Finance Director, Dazed Media



The challenge

Dazed had grown far beyond its origins as a magazine publisher. Multiple entities, currencies, revenue streams and reporting requirements created increasing complexity for a small central finance team.



The solution

Dazed remapped Sage Intacct with new reporting goals, creating a foundation for better visibility, improved processes, and higher confidence in financial information.



Results

- ~1 day a week saved through AP automation
- 95% accuracy rate on vendor identification
- Improved access to financial data across the business through dashboards
- Reduced reliance on manual invoice processing
- Increased confidence that financial information is available in real time



Sage

Company

Dazed Media Group

Location

London, United Kingdom

Industry

Global Media & Publishing

Sage Products

Sage Intacct (AP Automation,
Sage Intelligent Time)

DAZED

About Dazed Media

Dazed Media Group is a global, multi-entity media and publishing brand with offices in London and New York. It employs nearly 150 people across multiple locations, including its core 6-person finance team.



Manual invoices, many errors

How does Dazed Media, cultural touchpoint for millions, manage a complex multi-entity model successfully? It keeps things fresh. Three years into her tenure, Lucy Build, Global Finance Director, recognised the business was outpacing existing solutions. Describing the challenge vividly: “it’s a bit of a Russian doll of a business, and it means that the reporting that we’re asked to do is relatively complex.”

Founded in 1991 around its Dazed & Confused magazine, it’s now expanded into production, digital, and creative studios. The group operates across five legal entities, multiple currencies, locations, and a web of verticals.

For Lucy, the key issue was data confidence, both for her Finance team and other senior stakeholders. Getting that complexity right, quickly, was non-negotiable, according to Lucy, “there’s a real requirement for our reporting to be really agile, but also to be able to be created quickly... to make decisions in a timely manner.”

Although cash flow and treasury management were not as streamlined as Lucy knew they could be, a more pressing problem was sitting in the team’s inboxes.

Dazed receives hundreds of multi-currency invoices every week. From £100 contributor payouts to \$200,000 production costs, every single one was being processed by hand.

With a lean team of six servicing all UK, US, and international license partners, they were constantly under pressure. Staff had to juggle regular AP payments with changeable global production and freelance invoices, and get everyone paid on time. The manual work took up a lot of time.

Errors would creep in and stack up. For example, the creditors ledger had accumulated thousands of duplicate suppliers, due to the sheer volume of activity across the entities.



Why Sage?

Implementation partners, PwC stepped in to help Dazed understand its end-goals and assess other software options. Switching platforms entirely would have been a significant risk. “I needed to make sure that the business kept running simultaneously whilst we were running the implementation, we were also mid audit at the time,” Lucy explains.

Lucy wanted intuitive revenue recognition, strong dashboards, and a user experience that the creative teams could engage with it. “I was really looking for something with a UX that wasn’t going to scare off our creative director.”

Around the same time Dazed was expanding, Sage Intacct was also growing. While using Sage, Dazed already had financial insight, but, there were new features that would help build true confidence in the data: new dashboard capabilities, Sage Intelligent Time and, most importantly, AP Automation.

Dazed became early adopters of the AP module, even before it was officially launched in the UK. “We’ve been guinea pigs,” says Lucy, “the AI learning is getting better, and we’ve definitely seen that the longer we’ve been using.”

“[Sage Intacct] accurately codes to the correct GL. It 95% of the time will pick up the right vendor, it will always pick up the right currency in the right value, and it will always pick up the right VAT”

Lucy Build,

Global Finance Director, Dazed Media

AP Automation: from inbox to ledger, automatically

This fresh approach to tech adoption yielded many benefits including much-improved financial confidence, better visibility, and time savings.

The system now reliably picks up the correct vendor 95% of the time and consistently captures the right currency, value, VAT treatment, memo, and date. For a business operating across multiple entities and currencies, that consistency is vital. According to Lucy it “gives us more time to ensure that the data that’s going into the system is correct.”



Sage Intelligent Time: timesheets that fit the flow

Dazed uses Sage Intelligent Time to help track projects across departments. While office-based teams log in their regular hours, those on location use the mobile app to log time. The flexibility has driven adoption across a workforce of 150 people.

Dashboards: breaking finance out of its silo

With more accurate data, the revitalised dashboards have allowed heads of department to drill down into reports without waiting on a Finance export. According to Lucy it gives “access to our project performance in real time,” and the most important thing: confidence. “It helps us save time and help us with the accuracy that costs go into the system.”

Real time data for stakeholder insights

On the team’s new-found confidence, Lucy remarks “it’s night and day.” The volume of missed invoices has dropped sharply. The time reclaimed from manual processing has created breathing room for the staff which can be redirected into higher-value activities.

The most unexpected outcome has been the effect on morale. “Everyone in my team is a study-er,” says Lucy. “Any data entry or transactional work that can be taken off their plate is very, very welcome.” The prospect of AI replacing roles simply isn’t a concern as the team is now invested in more interesting and valuable strategic work. Lucy explains, “If you’ve got your team’s retention and development at the forefront of your mind, surely you would want them to be doing something more interesting and valuable to the business than entering something manually?”

“What excites Lucy the most about AI is the removing of the bottlenecks and the time that it’s going to save us, not only on the data entry itself, but on picking up the errors and the anomalies, and being able to get that real-time data to our non-financial stakeholders within the business.”

“We just know that we’ve got real time data on the system all of the time.”

Lucy Build,
Global Finance Director, Dazed Media



A buildable future

Dazed's Sage Intacct use is accelerating. Lucy and her team are focused on the next level of capability.

Adding purchase orders is next. After that, Lucy is exploring early access to Sage Intacct Copilot, its natural language interface for financial data.

Confidence through data accuracy continues to be a central demand and the team hope to save close to another day per week by flagging anomalies in real time rather than surfacing them at month-end review.

The team's broader vision remains its focus: making accurate finance data available to the people who need it, wherever they are and whichever team they're on.

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