

Success Story

FoodCorps improves budgeting efficiency by 85% with Sage Intacct Planning



FoodCorps

“We’re able to budget more efficiently with Sage Intacct Planning and invest our time savings into analytics and strategy so senior management can make more informed decisions. The improved transparency and collaboration we have across the organization is proving to be extremely valuable.”

Michelle Emeh

Senior Director of Finance, FoodCorps

Company overview

Founded in 2010, FoodCorps connects about 170,000 youngsters across 373 schools with healthy foods. A variety of hands-on educational programs help kids cultivate healthy eating habits that help them grow and thrive well into adulthood.

Results with Sage Intacct Planning

- Increased efficiency by 85% in budgeting, forecasting, reporting.
- Live in weeks with swift, smooth self-implementation.
- Gained new insights for informed management decisions.
- Heightened collaboration between finance and 30 budget owners.

Company
FoodCorps

Location
New York, US

Industry
Nonprofit

Sage Products
Sage Intacct Planning



Sage



Nonprofit loses its appetite for manual budgeting in excel

For more than a decade, FoodCorps has been connecting school children to healthy foods to help youngsters grow, learn, and thrive in school and into adulthood. The nonprofit delivers a variety of hands-on educational programs, such as community gardening, student-led cafeteria menus, and cooking to cultivate healthy eating habits that kids will carry for a lifetime. Based in Portland, Oregon, FoodCorps has steadily expanded to work with more than 373 schools across 17 states and the District of Columbia, touching the lives of 170,000 children a year.

Backed by nearly \$18 million in yearly revenue through government, corporate, philanthropic, and individual donor funding, along with program service fees, FoodCorps employs 87 full-time staff. It's also aided by 5,300 volunteers — 250 of them members of AmeriCorps, a nationwide community service program, who receive a stipend. The organization's growth prompted an upgrade from QuickBooks and Excel to Sage Intacct for general ledger accounting in 2016, improving efficiency across the small accounting team by eliminating tedious manual work. FoodCorps also gained new visibility into its financial data that supported more effective program management.

Yet FoodCorps continued to struggle with Excel budgeting, with spreadsheets used by both the budgeting team and 30 budget owners at departmental and state levels. "It was a manual process and took a great deal of time," said Michelle Emeh, who joined FoodCorps in summer 2019 as senior director of finance. "It wasn't a transparent process because budgets were being built in silos, and that led to gaps in communication and a lot of follow-up time. When I came on board, one of my goals was to streamline and automate the budgeting process and as a result, I immediately started exploring budget software vendors," Michelle said.



FoodCorps has improved efficiency by 85%.

Budgeting becomes a ‘wonderful experience’ with Sage Intacct Planning

Michelle, who joined FoodCorps after a 25-year career in finance at HBO in New York City, led an evaluation of budgeting solutions including Sage Intacct Planning, Workday Adaptive Planning, and Vena Solutions. Sage Intacct won out based in part on offering FoodCorps a single, integrated platform for both accounting and budgeting. “There was a perfect alignment between our Sage Intacct accounting software and Sage Intacct Planning, and that was a huge benefit and deciding factor for us,” Michelle said.

With some support from Sage Intacct, Michelle and her team self-implemented Sage Intacct Planning over several weeks in a “very quick and seamless” process, thanks in part to familiarity with the Sage Intacct accounting interface. “It went very smoothly,” Michelle said. “We did a few workarounds and customizations to our unique metrics, but then we were able to immediately start building the budget even as we were learning and training on the platform. It was amazing,” Michelle added.

Since going live in early 2020, Michelle estimates that FoodCorps has improved efficiency by 85% across budget creation, forecasting, and budget vs. actuals reporting. For example, the nonprofit eliminated 40 to 50 hours of manually consolidating 30 Excel budgets that budget owners had updated. Then, it needed just a half-hour to move budget data into the Sage Intacct general ledger, compared to a six-hour upload via macro that was prone to error. “Building our budget in Sage Intacct was a wonderful experience,” Michelle said. “I had an idea what the process was like in previous years using Excel, and I couldn’t imagine doing that going forward due to the many challenges,” Michelle commented.



A new focus on analytics, transparency, and collaboration

Across-the-board efficiency gains have given Michelle's team new time to focus on strategic analytics and data delivery for senior management and budget owners. "The ability we have in Sage Intacct Planning to really analyze the budget to support decisions, and build scenarios on top of that, has been excellent," Michelle said. "When presenting to the board, I can easily drill down into the financial data and provide further details when questions are asked, instantaneously. That's a beautiful thing that we couldn't do in the past," Michelle added.

And the FoodCorps finance team has improved collaboration and transparency with the 30 budget owners. Michelle has been able to work more closely with budget owners on both budget creation and ongoing budget vs. actuals reporting as the organization adapted during COVID-19. "In the past, people felt detached from their budgets," Michelle said. "Since moving to Sage Intacct Planning, we've been able to spend quality time with budget owners to provide clarity and context. They're more empowered and comfortable with the numbers, and that's very gratifying to see," Michelle commented.

Michelle has found the headcount modeling feature in Sage Intacct Planning to be especially useful. Now, she can drill down into service member stipends by states, departments, and hire dates, and examine employee salaries, expenses, payroll taxes, 401K contributions, and more. Ultimately, greater productivity and insights through the combined Sage Intacct solution are helping FoodCorps better fulfill its social mission. "FoodCorps is focused on sustaining its work for a healthier nation in the years to come, so having software in place like Sage Intacct Planning to support this mission is definitely beneficial to managing expenses, financial planning, and charting a clear path forward," Michelle said.

