

## Success Story

# Developing workforce skills to overcome employment barriers

## Towards Employment

“As CFO, part of my job is resource development—helping write grant applications and meeting with funders. Sage Intacct helps me spend less time on accounting and reporting, so I can do that.”

### Faith Noble

CFO, Towards Employment

### Company overview

Towards Employment is a nonprofit, workforce development agency in Cleveland, Ohio that provides job readiness training, skills training, case management, and career coaching, and other services to people in Northeast Ohio with significant barriers to employment. The organization also runs a social enterprise, Bloom Artisan Bakery and Café, to provide real-world job experience for its participants.



### Executive summary

Previous software:

- QuickBooks

### Results with Sage Intacct

- Reduced the time required for monthly billing to government contracts by 50%.
- Cut the time needed to import employee payroll data by 80%.
- Avoided having to add another FTE—a savings of approximately \$45,000 per year.
- Enabled the CFO to spend more time on strategic fundraising priorities.

# Sage

**Company**  
Towards Employment

**Location**  
Ohio, US

**Industry**  
Nonprofit

**Sage Products**  
Sage Intacct



**Towards Employment**



Faith selected Sage Intacct because it is a true cloud solution that delivered strong internal controls and an audit trail.

## Developing workforce skills to overcome employment barriers

Towards Employment is a nonprofit workforce development agency with a mission to help people facing significant barriers to employment to enter the workforce. The organization provides job readiness and soft skills training, career planning, coaching, and case management to help individuals find jobs. Towards Employment also hires individuals through its social enterprise, the Bloom Artisan Bakery and Café. The organization supports approximately 3,000 individuals and stewards about \$6 million annually.

In 2017, Towards Employment decided it was time to replace their QuickBooks accounting software. CFO Faith Noble said a lack of internal controls in QuickBooks meant the organization lacked the ability to approve payables before they were posted or paid and did not have an adequate audit trail. “Because we have government grants and contracts that fund our program, Towards Employment receives an annual audit. In order to be able to pass our audit comfortably, we felt we needed to have a system that provided better internal controls and a better audit trail,” recalled Faith.

Faith also wants a solution that could automate cost allocation between programs and projects, because QuickBooks did not offer allocation functionality. Faith and her team had to use a spreadsheet to calculate allocations and then re-type each line into QuickBooks. It was a time-intensive process that was prone to errors.

Towards Employment preferred to replace QuickBooks with a cloud-based solution. “Some of our staff works from home, so we wanted to be able to access the data anywhere and to receive automatic updates and new releases,” Faith said. “When we used QuickBooks on our server, our IT department had to stay pretty involved,” added Faith.

## Strengthening internal controls with a true cloud solution

Working with technology partner, RSM, Faith selected Sage Intacct because it is a true cloud solution that delivered strong internal controls and an audit trail.

Faith chose RSM because they understood nonprofit accounting and were experienced with cost allocation for grants and contracts. Deployment began in mid-October and Towards Employment was live with Sage Intacct by New Year’s Day. She said, “RSM talked to everybody on my team—the AP clerk, the staff accountant—with great respect for their work and their perspective, and I appreciated it.”



### **Real-time financial insight improves budget compliance**

Due to the efficiency of Sage Intacct, Towards Employment has managed the extra accounting work created by the opening of the Bloom Artisan Bakery and Café while only adding one part-time employee in the finance team. Faith estimates that “if we weren’t using Sage Intacct, we would need another half-time person at least, if not another full-time person.”

With the automated cost allocation in Sage Intacct, “It takes me half as much time to do my monthly billing for government contracts, because I don’t have to double check the allocations,” Faith said. And the efficiency improvements didn’t end there. “We can import payroll data as a journal entry in 10 minutes where it used to take an hour to code in the payroll,” said Faith.

Improved internal controls, including an automated AP approval process and audit trail, help Faith achieve a high standard of accuracy and accountability. “Sage Intacct is very helpful in meeting the compliance requirements of public funding grants. Our donors want to see that we receive a clean audit opinion. The internal controls in Sage Intacct are critical,” she explained. “The entire AP and AR cycles are now paperless with an audit trail and an automated approval process built right in,” said Faith.


Sage Intacct has improved financial visibility throughout the organization. Faith uses multi-entity accounting to keep separate books for the bakery and the organization. She provides a rolled up P&L to her executive director but gives operational managers more detailed P&L’s specific to their projects.

“It’s helpful to be able to run the P&L by project versus program. In our organization some people manage quality from the perspective of a particular contract, and they need to focus on project expenses. Other people need to look at the organization as a whole and a rolled-up P&L allows the board and our leadership team to look at the bigger picture,” said Faith.

The time saved by Sage Intacct enables Faith to pursue more strategic priorities that further Towards Employment’s mission. She conducts more time training her staff about accounting processes and supporting executive fundraising efforts.

“As CFO, part of my job is resource development—helping write grant applications and meeting with funders,” explained Faith. “Sage Intacct helps me spend less time on accounting and reporting, so I can do that,” concluded Faith.



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