

Success Story

Supporting Nonprofits with Confidence

Solo consultant uses Sage 50 to simplify nonprofit accounting and strengthen compliance.

“When I give reports, I’m very confident that I can back up every number—that they reconcile and comply with regulations. And that’s because of Sage 50.”

Alice Eddings

Founder of Pepper Business Consulting



The challenge

When Alice Eddings founded Pepper Business Consulting in 1999, she needed a reliable accounting system that could manage multiple client entities, require minimal setup, and offer complete financial control. Plus, she needed an affordable solution—one that would allow her to accommodate nonprofit clients with limited financial resources.



The solution

After using Sage 50 in a previous role, Alice immediately thought to source it for her solo ventures. With an existing familiarity and trust in the system, she knew it'd provide the affordability, usability, and reporting functions needed to run her business.



Results with Sage 50

- Ability to manage 7–10 clients as a solo consultant
- Month-end reporting reduced to ~15–30 minutes
- Year-end close completed in under 1 hour
- Significant reduction in reporting preparation time vs. alternative systems
- Improved fund tracking for restricted/unrestricted grants

Sage

Company
Pepper Business Consulting

Location
Columbia, SC

Industry
Professional Services

Sage Products
Sage 50



Pepper Business Consulting

About Pepper Business Consulting

Pepper Business Consulting is a South Carolina-based, solo consulting firm offering full-service accounting, payroll, financial reporting, and audit preparation services. Focused on community impact, the firm exclusively serves nonprofit organizations that lack the financial bandwidth to hire in-house accountants.



Helping nonprofits do more with less

For over 40 years, Alice Eddings has dedicated her career to supporting nonprofit organizations. With an extensive accounting background and devotion to community impact, she's made it her mission to help nonprofits navigate one of their most persistent challenges: managing their finances effectively.

By 1999, Alice reached a turning point. Throughout her career, she noticed a consistent gap across the nonprofit sector. While most mission-driven organizations have complex financial needs, they rarely can afford the resources to manage them efficiently.

"[Many nonprofits] can't afford to hire someone, and that creates a problem," Alice said. "Because if you can't show your financials and the money you've raised, donors won't give, and neither will federal or state programs."

This realization is what drove Alice to start Pepper Business Consulting, a solo practice built to deliver affordable, reliable financial management to nonprofits. But before she could support her clients' financial needs, she first needed an accounting system she could depend on.

One system, multiple clients, complete control

Having previously worked with Sage 50 (formerly Peachtree), Alice didn't have to look far for a solution. Her earlier encounters with the software were enough for her to make a fast, confident decision.

"I've used other systems before—they weren't bad, but they weren't like Sage," Alice said. "I feel like Sage products were developed with accounting professionals' knowledge and input, not just programmers building something."

At the time of starting her business, Alice said nonprofits faced the same financial pressures they do today. Funding from state and federal entities was limited, donor contributions were few and far between, and organizations couldn't afford professional financial support.

For Alice, that made her choice of accounting software even more critical. With Sage 50, she could not only deliver accurate, up-to-date financial reporting, but do so in a way that remained affordable for clients with limited financial resources.



In addition, Alice also needed a system fit for a one-person business. Given she'd be juggling several clients at once, her accounting platform needed to be organized, intuitive, and capable of streamlining her day-to-day workload without adding complexity.

"[With Sage 50], I can put all my clients in there under separate company names, with all their information, and easily switch between them," Alice said. "How can you ask for more than that? It's a great value for the cost."

Reliable reporting when it matters most

To secure and maintain funding, nonprofits must adhere to strict audit and compliance requirements, making accuracy a non-negotiable part of Alice's work. With Sage 50's job-tracking functionality, that responsibility is far more manageable.

Alice uses the job function feature to track restricted and unrestricted funds by grant or project, ensuring accurate reporting and ongoing compliance. When it's time to prepare reports for auditors, she's confident everything is clear, reconciled, and ready for review.

With other systems, Alice said it could take an hour just to sift through spreadsheets and find the right information—a "total nightmare," as she described it. With Sage 50, monthly reporting is streamlined and typically completed in under 30 minutes.

"I can't remember the last time I had any kind of problem being ready for month-end or year-end close," Alice said. "I input data throughout the month, then I just push the report button. And there it is—everything I need."

Raising the bar for software expectations

While Sage 50 is the foundation for Alice's workflow, not all her clients operate on the same system. With an average client base of 7-10 organizations, she sometimes must adapt to client-preferred platforms.

In these instances, she said the alternatives always fail to meet the mark. Alice has successfully transitioned clients to Sage 50 with clear, immediate benefits. She recalled a client whose outdated system required a fully manual conversion, yet the process was still fast and seamless thanks to Sage 50.

"I had the books completely converted within an hour, and I felt really good about them," Alice said. "Now, their [audit and reporting process] is much easier than it had been for years with [their old platform]."

Since starting her business, Alice has actively encouraged clients to move onto Sage 50 whenever possible. Not all have transitioned, but she continues to champion the system.



“[Sage 50] really makes life a lot easier,” Alice said. “If I had to do everything in the other systems, I probably wouldn’t be an accountant now because it’d be too frustrating.”

A system built on long-term trust and resilience

Nearly 30 years since she implemented Sage 50, Alice says she has no plans to change course. When reflecting on her experience, including pre-Pepper Business Consulting, she said the system has remained consistent and reliable.

“I’ve used [Sage 50] for so long that I anticipate what it’s gonna show me,” Alice said. “And interestingly, I’ve never had to call support to fix the software. That’s remarkable for how long I’ve used it.”

In instances where she does have questions or roadblocks, she counts on the Sage knowledge base. Additionally, she also relies on the system’s automatic updates, ensuring she’s current and compliant with industry standards.

Looking ahead, Alice anticipates continued economic challenges for nonprofits, with many organizations facing reduced support from federal, state, and donor funding sources.

No matter the circumstances, Alice is determined to help mission-driven organizations in any way she can. Even as budgets tighten, she’s remains committed to delivering financial guidance to her clients and push their missions forward.



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