

## Success Story

# The Royal Foundation of St Katharine gains financial serenity with Sage

Nonprofit retreat, hospitality and Christian charity saves time with Sage Intacct

“Sage Intacct is easily saving us two days a month in generating reports.”

**The Reverend John Irwin, FCA**

Finance Director, The Royal Foundation of St Katharine



### The Challenge

An urgent need to replace its server meant The Foundation needed to upgrade to cloud-based finance software; however, it had to be powerful enough to manage multiple revenue streams and easy to use for the charity's small finance team.



### The Solution

Sage Intacct met the criteria for being a powerful finance system and having an intuitive interface, as well as offering value for money through the [Sage Foundation Product discount](#).



### The Result

The finance team are saving time through faster, more accurate reporting and the ability to drill down into the data more easily. Managers and trustees are also better able to understand the new style of reports.

- Faster financial reporting saves two days a month.
- Greater confidence in data through improved accuracy.
- Easier interpretation of figures through more detailed reporting.

Sage

#### Company

The Royal Foundation of St Katharine

#### Location

UK

#### Industry

Nonprofit

#### Sage Products

Sage Intacct



**The Royal Foundation of St Katharine**

#### About The Royal Foundation of St Katharine

The Royal Foundation of St Katharine is a retreat centre, conference venue, and Christian charity in East London, with its origins dating back to 1147.



### **Server upgrade required cloud-only software**

The Royal Foundation of St Katharine is a 900-year-old non-profit on a mission to support their community with service. Historically a hospital, they supported non-covid NHS patients through 2020 and today host foodbanks distributing to vulnerable families, whilst their newer facilities provide an oasis of calm for visitors to stay, reflect, and retreat. An urgent need to upgrade an out-of-date server led to the discovery that The Royal Foundation of St Katharine's existing finance software would not migrate easily. Although its Sage 50 desktop software had served the charity well for many years, it was time to upgrade to a cloud-based solution.

“Unfortunately, the cloud version of Sage 50 didn't offer the functionality we needed. However, I was keen to stay within the Sage suite of software as I felt it would be an easier migration, plus we already used Sage Payroll and Sage HR,” explains The Reverend John Irwin, FCA, Finance Director at The Royal Foundation of St Katharine.

With annual turnover of £2.5m and a small finance team of three (two of which are part-time), John needed to choose a

powerful yet user friendly financial management platform, and one that would easily integrate with its existing systems. Plus, as a fully independent charity, managing its multiple income streams - which include hotel, conference, and retreat bookings, along with revenue from its onsite café – is vital.

### **Sage Intacct wins hands-down**

The choice came down to Sage 200 or Sage Intacct, and John says Intacct was the outright winner. “It's the more flexible and powerful of the two and is a proper ERM system. Sage also offers a generous discount for charities, so it was extremely good value for such a robust solution,” adds John.

Going live in April 2022, John says the migration process from Sage 50 to Sage Intacct went very well, describing Sage's implementation partner PwC as “awesome”. “The PwC team were responsive and provided a lot of assistance. Bearing in mind that we're a small organisation with a very lean finance department, they got us up and running with relatively few hiccups,” John comments.

Sage Intacct also lived up to its promise of being user friendly with John and his colleagues having just the bare minimum of training. “Due to the intuitive interface and ease of use of Sage Intacct, I feel I've become a competent user in a short space of time. The same goes for a lot of our team members; they had relatively short training sessions and are easily able to do what they need to do within the system,” adds John.



Because figures are more readily accessible and up to date, the organisation is better able to react to them.

### **Faster and more detailed reporting saves time**

A big win for John and his team has been the smarter, more sophisticated reporting capabilities Sage Intacct has enabled for The Foundation. Previously, the old software required financial data to be downloaded into spreadsheets and a lot of time spent manipulating figures within Excel; now reports for managers and trustees can be created with just a few clicks.

“Sage Intacct is easily saving us two days a month in generating reports,” says John happily. “Not only that, but the senior managers have a drill down functionality that they never had before, so they are much more autonomous and don’t have to rely on my team and I to provide them with the figures they need,” John adds.

He adds that the way Sage Intacct slices and dices the information makes it “easier to interpret” and the managers and trustees are receiving reports that are “more understandable”. With a rather prestigious collective of trustees, including bishops, CBEs, and a royal patronage, being able to generate financial reports in a more easily digestible format is another little win for John and his team.

### **Delivering operational value**

Asked if Sage Intacct is already making a difference operationally to the Foundation, John says absolutely. “Firstly, the figures are much more trustworthy, we have greater confidence in them. Secondly, they’re much clearer; people have a better understanding of the figures.”

In addition, because figures are more readily accessible and up to date, the organisation is better able to react to them. “Since migrating to Sage Intacct, we’re actually getting better engagement from our management team with the finances. They understand their cost base and can manage it better,” explains John, which is crucial for an independent charity that generates its own funding.

John believes there is further operational value to be achieved from Sage Intacct as The Foundation looks to integrate some of its existing systems – such as its booking system – with the finance platform, and also automate certain tasks such as the sending out of reports.

“We only went live a few months ago, and because we are a small team, I didn’t want to change all our processes overnight. Now we have got to grips with the basic processing of transactions such as purchase orders and bank reconciliations using sage Intacct, we can start to move towards phase two and streamline some of our workflows,” John adds.



“The ease at which we can drill down into the numbers within Sage Intacct makes it so much faster to uncover any problems and better support the senior managers.”

**The Reverend John Irwin, FCA**

Finance Director, The Royal Foundation of St Katharine

#### **Smarter working and future proofed financial management**

Opting to upgrade to Sage Intacct has been the right move for The Foundation, both for current and future needs. “Prior to switching to Sage Intacct we were stretched and pretty much at capacity in the finance team,” John admits. “Now, we are saving so much time, which in the end will save cost because it means that we are freed up to do other more strategic work, while keeping our finance department at its current headcount rather than expanding it,” John adds.

Asked if he would recommend Sage Intacct, John gives a resounding yes, largely because of the intuitive nature of the platform and the quality and sophistication of the reporting. “Previously, if a manager queried some of the figures it would take a lot of digging and looking back through Excel to find the discrepancy; now, the ease at which we can drill down into the numbers within Sage Intacct makes it so much faster to uncover any problems and better support the senior managers,” John concludes.



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