

Success Story

Looking for features and flexibility to support future growth



The Great Books Foundation is a nonprofit educational organisation that promotes literature as a lifelong source of enjoyment and personal growth. Today, the Foundation does more than \$10 million in business annually, serving K-12 schools in the United States and English-language schools throughout Europe, the Middle East, Korea, and China, as well as supporting post-secondary and lifelong learning programmes and book clubs.

Key outcomes

- Streamlined financial processes and improved inventory management
- Developed a fast and integrated order-to-cash process
- Halved monthly close process to one week
- Reduced demands on IT staff

Sage

Company
The Great Books Foundation

Location
Chicago, Illinois

Industry
Nonprofit

Sage Products
Sage Intacct



About The Great Books Foundation

The Great Books Foundation is an independent nonprofit educational organisation established to promote liberal education for the general public. Since its inception, the Foundation has helped thousands of people throughout the United States and in other countries begin their own discussion groups in schools, libraries, and community centres.



“It’s remarkable how much better we now operate, and I would recommend Sage Intacct to any organisation. Having a cloud-based financial management system delivers more benefits than we expected while reducing the demand on our IT team.”

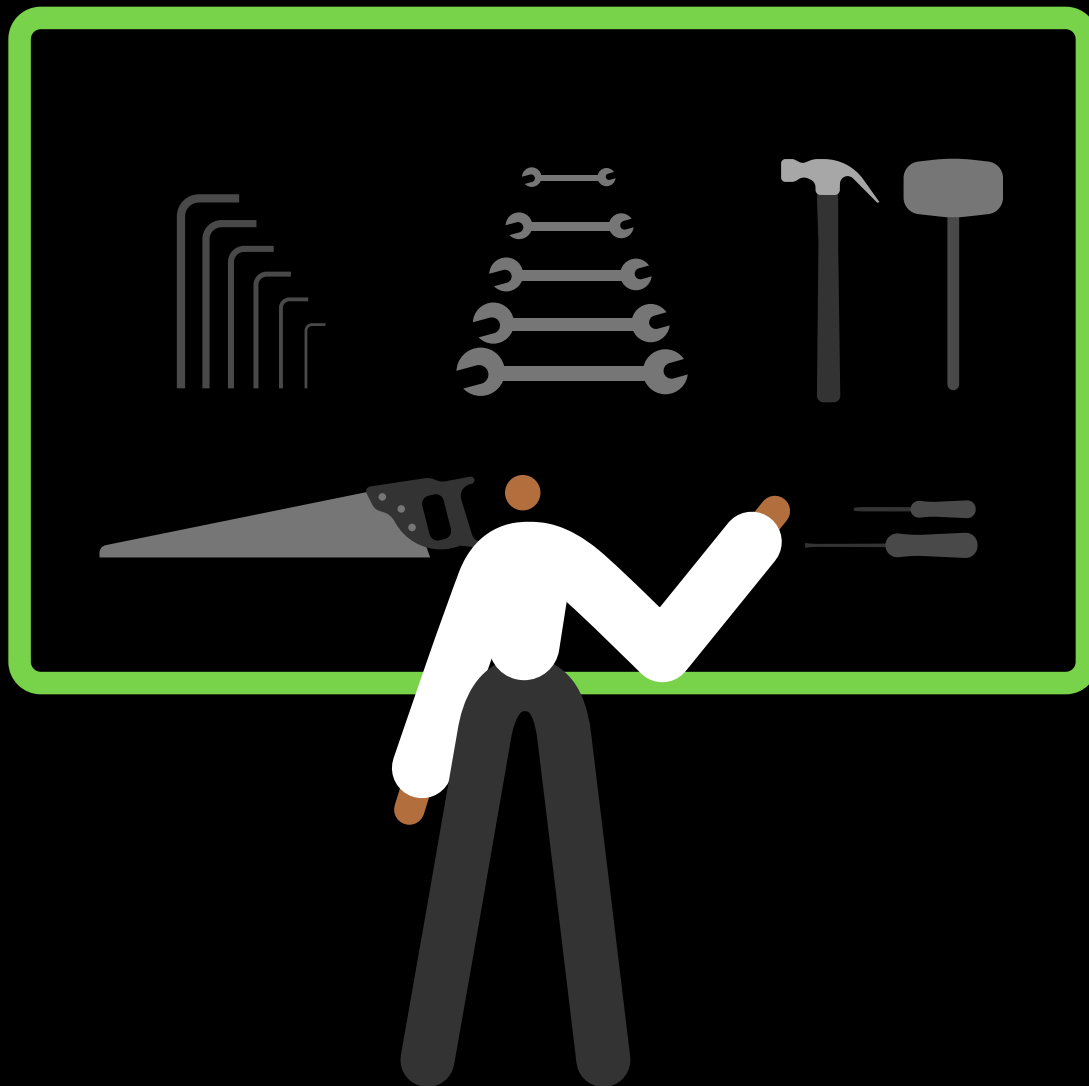
James Lindsay

CFO, The Great Books Foundation

Growing pains

Great Books had been using a legacy Cobol-based system designed specifically for the publishing industry to track inventory in its multiple warehouses, coordinate professional development programmes, and manage deferred billing. The system was outdated and lacked the capabilities and flexibility to support the growth of the organisation. Great Books wanted a solution that would allow the team to operate the way they wanted rather than within the confines of its software.

After evaluating multiple options in the market, Great Books chose Sage Intacct’s cloud-based ERP system. “Our main priority was a rich and flexible financial management system that supported overall operational needs; but we also liked the idea of a cloud-based solution that wasn’t tied to the legacy platforms so we could avoid ongoing IT maintenance costs,” explains James Lindsay, vice president and CFO of the Great Books Foundation. “Sage Intacct outpaced its competitors on all counts.”



Going beyond managing finances to improve operations

Sage Intacct provides Great Books with powerful applications that improve financial processes as well as give the organisation greater insight into operations. One of the most significant benefits came from the ability to easily integrate Sage Intacct with other company systems, such as its existing Sugar CRM and osCommerce e-commerce applications. Now Great Books staff has a unified view into its overall business and a streamlined order-to-cash process. Great Books also uses Sage Intacct to create PDF invoices for customers, saving the organisation thousands of dollars in postage and processing costs.

Beyond financial management, Sage Intacct also helps the organisation better manage inventory and coordinate ongoing educational programmes. With 14 jurisdictions, Great Books previously faced laborious internal audits to ensure that it was meeting various sales tax requirements. Sage Intacct enables the company to now track inventory by source and destination, as well as automate how sales tax is calculated, billed, paid, and filed using Avatax for Sage Intacct.

“The magic of Sage Intacct is its flexibility. We were able to easily customise standard features to meet the unique needs of our business,” said Lindsay. “We now have a solution to improve not only financial management, but also our inventory management and professional development programmes. Sage Intacct helps us save both time and money through automated and stream-lined processes; we now devote those resources to expanding the success of the Great Books Foundation.”

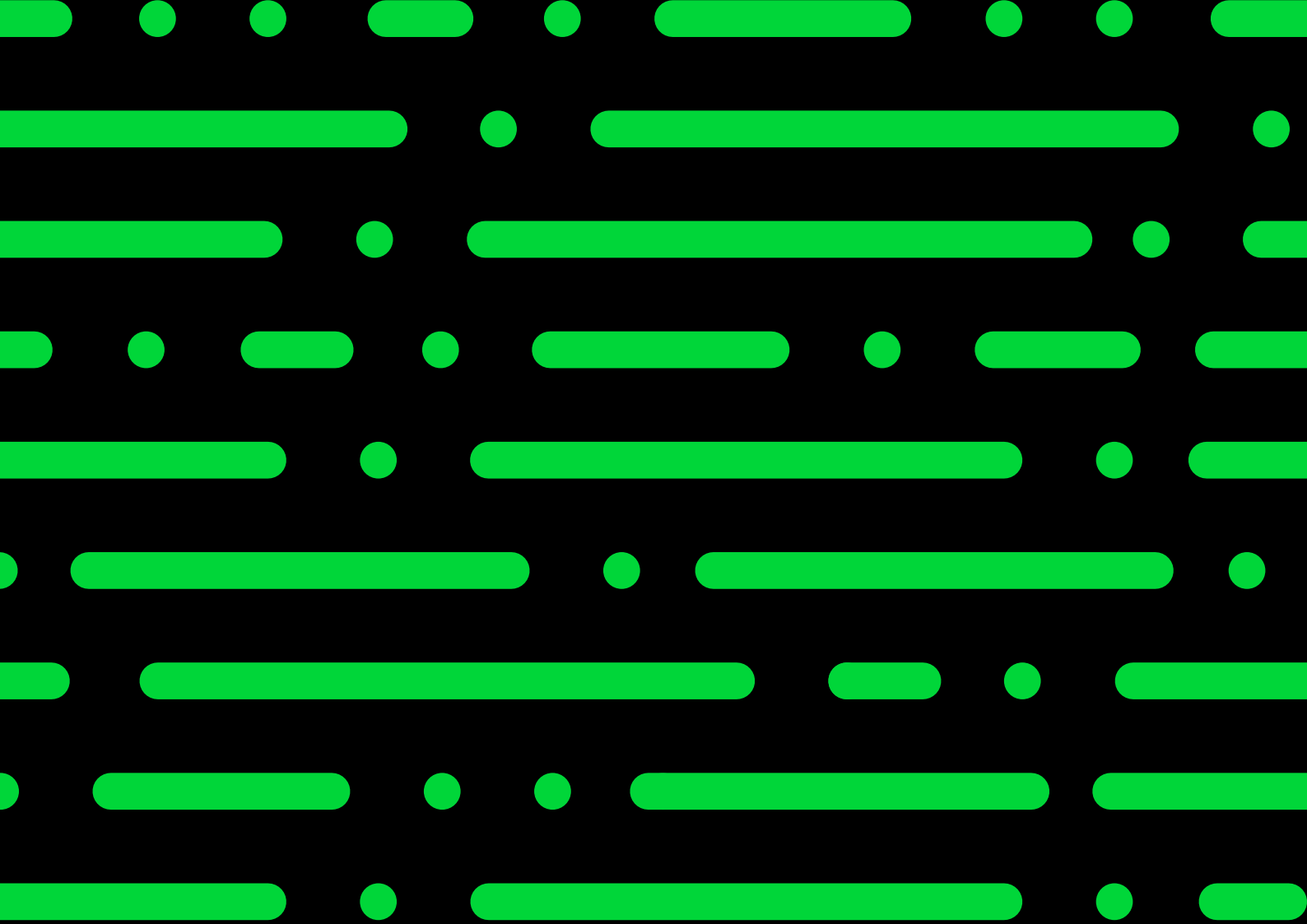


Improved, intuitive reporting and dashboards

Great Books is also enjoying the rich reporting features within Sage Intacct, which provide fast and easy access to critical information. In addition, the monthly close process has been cut in half – from two weeks to one. Outside auditors are able to complete the year-end close far more quickly because data can be viewed and manipulated much more easily, resulting in reduced auditor fees.

Great Books uses Sage Intacct's dashboards to provide instant summary profit and loss data, a quick view into expenses, and analysis of on-demand sales data. Real-time access to financial and operational data allows Great Books to make faster, more strategic business decisions so the organisation is continually operating at its optimal ability.

Looking forward, Great Books is anticipating as much as a 25 percent increase in business and believes the overall process improvements afforded by Sage Intacct will allow it to manage the business without adding staff. Linday remarked, "We already know Sage Intacct has helped us greatly improve our current business; it's gratifying to know we have the right solution in place for the long term."



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