



CASE STUDY: KQED



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Director of Financial Solutions,
KQED

KQED AMPLIFIES EFFICIENCIES AND DIALS IN SAVINGS WITH SWITCH TO SAGE INTACCT

A force for good

KQED provides the people of Northern California with the news and information they need to stay informed, inspired and involved. Its television, radio, digital media and educational services make up one of the largest public media organizations in the nation, with a weekly audience of more than 2.5 million listeners, 500 employees and \$90 million in annual revenues.

As the media industry changes, KQED is changing with it, investing in the technologies that allow it to continue to be a force for good in the community. When the limitations of its older accounting solution began constricting its mission, KQED made the switch to Sage Intacct.

“We were using Microsoft Navision for core accounting, but it didn’t integrate with the other business applications we rely on,” recalls Sara Williams, director of financial solutions for KQED. “With separate, siloed systems, we couldn’t draw out the reports we needed and everything took too much time and too many steps. We knew there was a better way forward.”

Choosing best-in-class

KQED engaged the professional team at RSM US LLP to help the organization select its next-generation business management solution. Together, RSM and KQED evaluated the leading ERP software vendors on the market—ultimately selecting Sage Intacct. “The best-of-breed approach is very appealing to us,” says Williams. “We have already invested in other best-in-class applications, such as HRMS, budgeting and planning, and grants

management, so we wanted a financial management application that would integrate with those and serve as the central data hub. Through its import options and APIs, Sage Intacct is designed for this, so it was our top choice."

Efficiencies save 40 hours each week

The transition to Sage Intacct means automated workflows and approvals have replaced manual processes, bringing improved accuracy and efficiency. For example, KQED now pays all its vendors through direct ACH payments, eliminating the time required to print and mail paper checks. Additionally, integration with the organization's bank speeds and simplifies bank reconciliation tasks, further freeing staff time and delivering real-time information surrounding cash flow.

Overall, the efficiencies gained save the organization 40 hours a week. "We were actually able to eliminate one FTE (full-time equivalent) thanks to the efficiencies we've realized using Sage Intacct," Williams says.

Changing the channel from spreadsheets to automation

KQED is also tapping Sage Intacct to help eliminate mountains of spreadsheets and hours of duplicate data entry.

For example, the organization used to calculate and store its asset amortization schedules in spreadsheets and then manually enter the results into its accounting application. Now, Sage Intacct calculates the schedules automatically during invoicing. And the software's Dynamic Allocations feature makes short work of year-end allocations of KQED's general and administrative expenses—which were also previously calculated offline and manually entered. "Eliminating these manual tasks not only gives us more time for critical thinking and planning, but it also shows a respect for the skills and talents of our team," Williams says.

Dimensions simplify and elevate reporting

KQED leverages the dimensional capabilities of Sage Intacct to simplify its chart of accounts while elevating its reporting capabilities. "We make extensive use of dimensions to allow us to gain visibility into our various business lines, like TV and radio, and by project and fund," Williams explains. "In our old system, we had to maintain separate GL account numbers for every combination—which led to a bloated, complex chart of accounts. Dimensions eliminate that complexity and allow us to filter, group and sort our financial and operational data more easily and more flexibly."

As KQED plans its future, data surrounding membership revenue and subscriber retention rates becomes invaluable. "This type of reporting and data analysis is crucial to us, and it used to be done entirely in spreadsheets," says Williams. "RSM helped us build reports in Sage Intacct that combine operational and financial data to deliver real-time insights without all the manual effort."

Capturing and sharing strategic insights

Through improved access to data, KQED can involve more stakeholders in strategic planning efforts. Finance managers, for example, now have self-service access to budget figures and other data that relates to their area of influence.

"It's empowering to our staff and beneficial for the organization to share data this easily. We're continually launching new projects and new initiatives, and Sage Intacct provides critical insight into the success of those projects. As a result, we have a deeper understanding of what is working and resonating with our audiences and can provide more of it."

– Sara Williams,
Director of Financial Solutions, KQED

Another way Sage Intacct boosts communication at KQED is through the Collaborate feature. "It's a chat function within Sage Intacct," explains Williams. "We can add notes of explanation or ask questions surrounding a transaction. Other users reply, and all the messages are saved to provide complete context. We're taking these kinds of conversation out of emails and putting them right where they're needed."

Williams believes it is this easy access to actionable data that offers the most significant benefit to KQED. "We're able to look across the organization and identify trends and opportunities over time," she says. "We use that data during our strategic planning sessions—and are finding levers we can pull to effect positive changes."

KQED gives much of the credit to RSM for the organization's successful transition to its new accounting solution. "We consider them part of our team," Williams says. "They have an ideal combination of professionalism, business acumen and product expertise that really helped us draw the most value out of Sage Intacct."

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