

Success Story

Financial visibility boosts Seacoast Church's mission impact through better decisions with Sage Intacct

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Glenn Wood

Pastor of Church Administration, Seacoast Church

Seacoast Church started out with 65 people in a South Carolina apartment clubhouse in 1988. Since then, it has grown to more than 15,000 weekly churchgoers across fourteen campuses. With an over-arching vision to reach people by speaking the language of modern culture, it is not surprising that the church's back office administrators want to use systems that 'speak the language' of modern financials to keep the organization efficient and informed. After nearly 20 years on legacy church management and accounting software from Shelby Systems, Seacoast decided to upgrade to a new cloud-based solution that could better handle the needs of an expanding multi-campus church.

Glenn Wood, the pastor of church administration at Seacoast, shared, "Our chart of accounts got very complex and as we added more locations, we faced a number of data management challenges with our old system."

Key Outcomes

- Increased donor confidence through greater financial transparency and accuracy
- Informed strategic decision-making to drive future expansion
- Sped report preparation
- Boosted finance team efficiency
- Scaled back office easily despite growth



Organization
Seacoast Church

Location
South Carolina, US

Industry
Nonprofit

Sage Products
Sage Intacct



About Seacoast Church

Seacoast Church is a 15,000-member church with a mission to help people find God, grow their faith, discover their purpose, and make a difference. Its ministries go beyond the weekend experience to programs that impact the church, local communities, and the world.



Modernizing multi-site church financials for greater flexibility

He continued, “We did an extensive evaluation of our options and had a lot of conversations with other churches. Although we considered Blackbaud, the name Sage Intacct kept surfacing again and again. Other churches would share long, flowing descriptions about how great Sage Intacct was and how flexible its reporting was, all of which has been reinforced by the company’s deep commitment to the nonprofit segment.”

Supercharging productivity with best-in-class cloud financial management

Seacoast signed on with Sage Intacct and turned to consulting partner AcctTwo for the initial implementation. The organization quickly saw huge improvements in all of its financial processes—shortening their financial close by over 40 hours per month while adding a new campus. One of the biggest changes was to their complex financial report preparation, which used to take days of combining and manipulating data in Excel and was sometimes error-prone. Sage Intacct’s report writer eliminated these issues by handling all of the necessary calculations right within the system, which saves at least 15 hours each month. This delivers major efficiency gains, since the finance team produces 50-60 income and expense statements every month for different campuses and ministries.

“Because of the way it was designed, our old system couldn’t create a financial report that had all of the data we needed in one place, so we ended up having to build a number of reports manually,” said Wood. “Now with Sage Intacct, we can generate a single report with a one-page recap of our financials, a second page for campus-level consolidations, and then additional pages for individual campus or ministry reports. Having this kind of flexible and robust reporting helps us be more productive, while making sure all our data ties together correctly.”

The team also streamlined donation processing with Sage Intacct’s seamless integration into Ministry Platform, Seacoast’s donor management system. By automatically pulling data on cash contributions directly into Sage Intacct, this cuts bank reconciliation time by two days every month. In addition, Joseph Eve’s integrated AssetEdge solution decreases the team’s time spent on managing fixed assets, and synchronization between Sage Intacct and MartusTools streamlines their budgeting process and improves visibility across campuses.

Evolving the role of finance to advance a faith-based mission

Overall, Sage Intacct makes it easier to support the church’s finances and report them effectively, giving Seacoast’s donors and auditors confidence that the organization is managing its finances well. And thanks to Sage Intacct’s dimension structure, which captures the context of each transaction, along with its ability to track non-financial metrics and ratios, Seacoast now has greater operational visibility than ever before.

These powerful capabilities—from easily including graphs with financial statements, to integrating statistical data on church attendance and displaying all of this key performance information together via intuitive dashboards—allow the organization’s leaders to look at their data in a whole new way. As a result of this transparency, the role of finance at the church has transformed to focus less on bookkeeping and more on strategic decision support.

Wood shared, “We have a phenomenal leadership team, but they’re people and ministry-oriented. Our job is to help them understand ‘What would happen if...?’ With Sage Intacct, we’re able to look at various scenarios and know what the impact of certain decisions would be.” For instance, by allowing Seacoast to slice and dice its data by individual campuses, ministries, vendors, employees, and more, Sage Intacct provides valuable decision-making insights into what the cost of building a new sanctuary would be, its likely attendance, potential finances, and how long it would take to pay off any debt related to that investment.

“When I first started in church accounting 25 years ago, our job was basically to cut checks. Despite the church growing larger and more complex over the years, our systems have helped finance get a seat at the table.”

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