

Project for Pride in Living



Abdo

Sage Business Partner

How one nonprofit addressed their unique financial challenges.

Project for Pride in Living (PPL) is a nonprofit specializing in creating stability through affordable housing and skills training to encourage long-term employment in the Twin Cities area.

Implementing life-changing programs of this caliber requires systems that can handle shifting and changing circumstances in every area of the organization.

Nonprofits like PPL need specialized accounting software capable of addressing the distinctive challenges of their industry.

THE PROBLEM

“It was an open question: ‘When will we transition to a more robust financial system for our operations?’” That was one of the first things that Scott Cordes, the CFO and VP of Operations for Project for Pride in Living, heard when he arrived at the nonprofit five years ago.

PPL came from a system called Sage 100. It worked for a while but was built for a smaller, less complex organization than PPL had become.

A nonprofit has many financial components that a government agency or corporation doesn’t, and it requires an accounting system that can process these idiosyncrasies efficiently and effectively.

Scott comments, “Sustaining support is sometimes difficult, and the multi-faceted solutions to sustain the support in all areas are complex. Therefore, finances are complex and require the best financial tools.” He goes on to say: “We work with over 20 different sub-entities. All of that has to be managed in one finance system.”

PPL needed an accounting platform that met the needs of its organization and the people they serve. Scott says, “We have to make sense of it for ourselves, but also for our stakeholders, developers, our supporters, the community, and other partners.”

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Company Overview

Project for Pride in Living (PPL) is a nonprofit organization serving low-income communities in Minneapolis and St Paul, Minnesota. PPL focuses on providing families with affordable housing by building, renovating, and managing housing units.

PPL offers training programs, community-building projects, immigrant-focused workshops, academic youth programming, personal coaching, and intensive supportive housing. PPL is a cornerstone for moving individuals out of poverty into a more stable and sustainable life.

Previous Software:

Sage 100

Results with Abdo and Sage Intacct:

- Electronic routing through accounts payable
- Flexible reporting/adjusting standard reports to their special needs in nonprofit
- The ability to handle the unique components found in a nonprofit

Getting a cloud-based accounting platform was the highest priority. “One that could handle the multiple entities that we inherently live with each day in our financial system,” commented Scott.

Finally, the pandemic burst upon the scene and accelerated the decision to change their accounting software. Sage 100 couldn’t support remote employees, so some people had to return to work onsite.

Scott remarked, “In transitioning to an entirely remote virtual workforce for over two years, we needed something that was going to be web-based so our staff could access the tools they needed from anywhere. That was the big driver when we went to the remote environment, and Sage 100 wasn’t built for that.”

SOLUTION

Scott Cordes and his team searched for an overall accounting solution that would meet the needs of their organization. But just as important, they wanted to work with a provider that would support them with the software implementation and beyond.

They were convinced that the three other software companies they were looking at could accomplish the subtleties PPL needed, but they also wanted a true partner to help them throughout the entire process.

Scott remarked, “The implementation program is extraordinarily important, and we wanted to make sure that the company we chose had our best interest in mind and would work with us in a holistic way and not get the system to go live and disappear. We were looking for a partner for the long haul.”

During their discussion with PPL, Abdo showed PPL that they were the company that would provide the long-term support they expected and chose Abdo to administer the implementation of Sage Intacct and assist PPL’s accounting team in taking the software live.

Electronic routing through accounts payable

One of the critical areas of change or process redesign they accomplished was related to accounts payable. Scott said of the previous system, “It was very manual, and we didn’t have much visibility of where our invoices were.” PPL’s account payable clerks had to be highly attentive to ensure that nothing got misplaced in the system. The ability to streamline processes through electronic routing was critical. Cordes adds, “We now have the visibility of where invoices are and whose inbox they are in. It’s allowed us to be more efficient in the process.”

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Scott Cordes
CFO and Senior VP
of Operations, PPL

Key areas that PPL expected from Sage Intacct:

- ✓ Electronic routing through their accounts payable system
- ✓ A robust budget and planning tool
- ✓ Flexible reporting/ adjusting standard reports to their unique needs in the non-profit
- ✓ Able to handle the unique components found in a non-profit – that are not necessarily true for government or the corporate sector – and make sure that any system could handle that level of nuance
- ✓ Seamless implementation and long-term support of the software

The ability to report more effectively

Non-profits have an accounting concept called “temporarily restricted assets,” which is one of the unique components of a non-profit. It’s a technical way of saying that some contributions or gifts are given over several years, and the non-profit has to save those resources for future years, which gets complicated. Scott comments, “We had to create a separate report, merge those and create a third report that was custom and off to the side of the spreadsheets. Now we can do it all through the system, and it’s less confusing, easier, and less prone to error.”

Data entry

“We used to have one person who knew how to enter information en masse; now anybody can do it. Our employees can now work more efficiently and have ownership of their work, which is an added bonus.”

The ease of getting data into the system has improved. The ability to edit entries rather than back entries out and redo them is a big time-saver. Scott says, “It’s a little thing, but it’s a big thing.”

IMPLEMENTATION

Asked about the implementation process, Scott replied, “We felt really great about working with the Abdo team is the short answer. For us, picking the implementation program was just as important as picking the software. We thought we had found a good partner in Abdo and found that to be true completely in every step along the way.”

“Abdo brought a really robust team to us. We were often surprised at how many resources were at our disposal from the Abdo team throughout the process: Different types of expertise we could draw on and multiple people supporting our work; quick responsiveness and the trainings were clear.”

Scott and his team wanted to take ownership of the software and the PPL team’s decisions. He said, “PPL needed to own everything we were doing, relying on our implementation partner for guidance and advice, but ultimately, we were the owners of the decisions we were making. Abdo understood that which was really important in getting reinforcement from both directions. They got us to the finish line on time and ensured we were ready without any hiccups.”

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The ability to streamline processes through electronic routing was **critical** to PPL’s success.

RESULTS

Scott has been pleased with the implementation already. “We know it’s helping us,” he said, “The ability to work from anywhere in the world and work more efficiently; reporting is saving us time; electronic routing is saving time. We know that the ability to enter data and upload it seamlessly saves us time.”

Other benefits from Sage Intacct that are now available specifically for PPL’s unique accounting needs are:

Grant Management: Before Abdo and Sage Intacct, PPL manually tracked 20-40 grants. Now, grant information such as type, status, and key dates can be tracked along with all financial information—revenue and expenditures.

Sage Intacct Planning: PPL can eliminate budgeting and forecasting on Excel spreadsheets. With the Sage Intacct Planning module, PPL can accomplish its budgeting and planning within the system itself.

Approvals: The Abdo team took PPL from a manual approval process and developed a solution to provide automated approval workflows with key approvers.

With Abdo’s technical support and the Sage Intacct financial management platform, the Project for Pride in Living organization can produce custom financial and operational reports and grant reports and conduct budgeting and forecasting within Sage Intacct without outside products or relying on manual spreadsheets.

The cloud allows for real-time information access reducing errors, increasing efficiency, and freeing valuable time for PPL to concentrate on what they do best—serve their community with affordable housing and job skills training.

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If a problem comes up, we know Abdo is here to support us as we continue to move forward.

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Scott Cordes
CFO and Senior VP
of Operations, PPL



ABOUT

Abdo

Sage Business Partner



Who we are

At Abdo, our staff of over 180 professionals goes beyond the numbers on a page to become holistic partners in your financial and operational goals. Our teams are crafted to create powerful working relationships, both internally and externally—solving your challenges through close collaboration and a broad scope of expertise.



Services we provide

Consulting & Advisory
HR & Payroll
Technology & Data
Compliance



Industries we serve

Nonprofit
Construction / Real Estate
Professional Services
Government
Manufacturing

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