

Sage MIP Fund Accounting is a grown-up solution for Children’s Museum of Pittsburgh

The Children’s Museum of Pittsburgh provides an innovative museum experience that inspires joy, creativity, and curiosity. The museum recently completed a \$29 million expansion—joining its original home in a vintage 1897 post office to an adjacent planetarium that had long stood vacant. The result is a generous 80,000 square feet of exhibition, storage, and office space. The expansion project was awarded the 2006 American Institute of Architects Honor Award for Architecture, and received the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Silver certification from the U.S. Green Building Council. The museum hosts more than 200,000 visitors every year, and reaches another 100,000 individuals through its school and community outreach programs.

Search for a Serious Solution

More than 50 percent of the organization’s revenue comes through donations from individuals, corporations, foundations, and government sources. With Sage MIP Fund Accounting, tracking revenue sources and the funds used to enhance the museum is decidedly easier than it was in the past.

“Previously, we were using regular commercial accounting software,” recalls Rebecca McNeil, director of finance for the Children’s Museum of Pittsburgh, “but it gave us very little reporting flexibility, and simply wasn’t designed to handle nonprofit accounting.” After analyzing the available options, the Children’s Museum of Pittsburgh selected Sage MIP Fund Accounting. “The reporting

capabilities in Sage MIP Fund Accounting made it the winner,” says McNeil. “It’s crucial for us to know where we stand financially, and reports are the tools we use. We make important decisions based on our financial position, so the data has to be current and easily accessible—with Sage MIP Fund Accounting it is.”

Discover Reporting Flexibility

McNeil uses the integrated financial report writer, included with Sage MIP Fund Accounting, to easily generate presentation quality financial statements and detailed analysis reports. She appreciates the ability to report on data in several different ways. For example, the museum’s Early Childhood Education program incorporates classes, exhibits, and educational programs. McNeil can generate reports on the financial health of the entire program or break the details down to see how much revenue the program’s classes are generating.



CUSTOMER

Children’s Museum of Pittsburgh

INDUSTRY

Arts, Culture, and Humanities

LOCATION

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Number of Locations: One

Number of Employees: 107

SYSTEM

Sage MIP Fund Accounting

- Accounts Payable
- Accounts Receivable
- Bank Reconciliation
- Data Import/Export
- Fixed Assets
- General Ledger

Challenge

Children’s Museum of Pittsburgh’s commercial accounting software did not provide the reporting flexibility required to meet the needs of its many constituents.

Solution

Sage MIP Fund Accounting provides a powerful, scalable accounting solution designed to meet the needs of nonprofit organizations like the Children’s Museum of Pittsburgh.

Results

Built-in, flexible reporting allows Children’s Museum of Pittsburgh to easily create reports to meet the varying requirements of funding sources, internal clients, and the organization’s board of directors.

"As the finance director, I need to know the ongoing costs involved in running our exhibits and offering our courses, plus how much revenue each is generating. I find that easy to do in Sage MIP Fund Accounting."

Budget Accountability

Revenue and expense reports are also shared with the museum's department heads, each of whom is accountable for working within the program's budget. To help the department heads better prepare and manage their budgets, McNeil exports pertinent data to Excel spreadsheets and then sends the spreadsheets by e-mail to each department head.

"At any time, we have over 100 different active projects," explains McNeil. "I'm able to isolate the details about each project in a report to share with the individuals responsible for the project."

A Report To Please Everyone

The Children's Museum of Pittsburgh reporting audience includes major donors, the museum's board of directors, the general public, and its own staff. "I hate to think how much time it would take me to produce the various reports without Sage MIP Fund Accounting," says McNeil.

During the museum's recent expansion project, McNeil had more reason to appreciate the reporting flexibility within Sage MIP Fund Accounting. "To fund the expansion, we borrowed money from the bank and also received a state grant," McNeil explains. "I needed to produce three very different views of how the funds were being spent—one for the bank, one for the state, and one for our internal use. Sage MIP Fund Accounting made it easy for me to produce the reports from each different perspective. With the old software, I would have had to pick through a general ledger report line by line."

Track the Details

The software's inherent ability to code each transaction helps McNeil track the Children's Museum of Pittsburgh's revenue and expenses with remarkable granularity. "We code transactions by department, category, general ledger account, project code, and grant code," says McNeil. "By doing so, we have an exceptional level of detail about what areas are doing well, and which may not be."

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– Rebecca McNeil
Director of Finance
Children's Museum of Pittsburgh

Make the Auditor Happy

With the old system, McNeil had plenty of homework in advance of the museum's annual audit, poring over transactions and producing financial statements from scratch. The Sage MIP Fund Accounting solution produces audit-ready financial statements right out of the box. McNeil says the auditor praises the clear audit trail Sage MIP Fund Accounting produces, which makes it easy to verify financial statement accuracy.

The Children's Museum of Pittsburgh has found a solution capable of managing its needs today and into its future. "We were one-fourth the size we are now when we purchased Sage MIP Fund Accounting," concludes McNeil. "Through that rapid growth, we haven't had any growing pains with the software—Sage MIP Fund Accounting handles it easily."