Sage Helps Goodwill Omaha Help Others through Empowering People with Disabilities

Since the early 1930s, Goodwill Industries Inc. Serving Eastern Nebraska and Southwest Iowa, or Goodwill Omaha, has provided "a hand up, not a hand out" to people with special needs and barriers to self-sufficiency.

Last year alone, Goodwill's Employment First program provided job training and case management to more than 5,400 individuals, placing more than 1,100 in active employment. Its Work Experience program provided 106 special education high school students with job training and paychecks while working in a variety of Goodwill settings. At-risk youth participating in the Youthbuild Omaha program earned their GEDs and built houses for low-income families. And nearly 550 young adults turned to Goodwill's Partnership for Youth Development program for education, training, work experience, and job search assistance. And Outsource Solutions continued to offer supplemental contract labor to local businesses, with work done by individuals with vocational barriers.

Financial stability with Sage MIP Fund Accounting

Goodwill Omaha is a thriving agency, with more than 500 employees, 11 retail stores and various programs at locations throughout the Omaha-Metro area. Knowing that financial accountability is critical to delivering their mission, the agency automated its financial operations several decades ago with Sage MIP Fund Accounting, and has been a loyal user of the software ever since.

"Sage MIP Fund Accounting does everything here at Goodwill Omaha," says Karen Hosier, finance director. "It's our primary financial accounting system, detailing the information we need by department and location. We use it to track revenue and expenses, payables and receivables, and to cut payroll checks. If one of our employees mows a client's lawn, the hours are recorded and the invoice is generated by our software, and tracked until payment is received."

CUSTOMER

Goodwill Industries Inc. Serving Eastern Nebraska and Southwest Iowa, also known as Goodwill Omaha

INDUSTRY

Nonprofit Human Services

LOCATION

Omaha, Nebraska

Number of Locations:
11 retail stores, programs at 6 locations

Number of Employees: 500+

SYSTEM

Sage MIP Fund Accounting
Sage Abra HRMS
Sage FAS

MODULES

- Accounts Payable
- Accounts Receivable Billing
- Accounts Receivable Reporting
- Budget
- Data Import & Export
- Direct Deposit
- Fixed Assets
- Forms Designer
- General Ledger
- Payroll

Challenge
Goodwill Omaha needed an end-to-end management system to automate everything from payables and receivables to payroll and fixed assets.

Solution
Sage MIP Fund Accounting, along with Sage Abra HRMS and Sage FAS, provide a seamless solution, eliminating duplicate data entry.

Results
Payroll duties can be handled by one person rather than two; the diverse agency has centralized reporting to break data down to the individual store or program level; reports that took days can now be prepared in hours.

Reliable reporting for a strong bottom line

The agency uses Sage MIP Fund Accounting to create all of its reports, including break-outs by segment that are viewable by account. For example, each retail department receives its own report, showing data by individual store. This gives each store manager insight into profitability, and the ability to make changes as needed.

It's not just the finance office or retail departments that benefit, it's the entire organization. Rita Hamele, marketing director, uses the software's reports extensively. "I can stay on top of my advertising budget and expenditures through reports generated by Sage MIP Fund Accounting software," she says

Linda Kizzier, vice president of employment and training, agrees. "I am able to precisely track the bottom-line cost of Goodwill's Youthbuild and Partnership for Youth programs through reports generated in Sage MIP Fund Accounting."

"Each year we perform an economic impact statement for our programs, using data from Sage MIP Fund Accounting. The report shows expenditures for the year, tracking each dollar to its respective program. Thanks to reports like these, we can prove that for each grant dollar received, we create $15.03 of potential purchasing power back into the marketplace—which helps a great deal in documenting our fiscal responsibility," notes Hosier.

"Sage MIP Fund Accounting also creates monthly financials for the board of directors," she continues. "This task, which once took many days, can now be done in a matter of hours."

Streamlined employee management

As recently as 2005, Goodwill Omaha did not have integrated human resources, payroll and timekeeping systems, and was forced to perform duplicate data entry. So it linked Sage Abra HRMS to Sage MIP Fund Accounting.

"We now have one seamless system. Sage Abra is our HR database, storing everything from personnel information, demographics, training, job changes, and salary updates, to emergency contacts and all benefits information. Sage Abra data feeds directly into our payroll and timekeeping systems, so we enter data only once," explains Hosier.

"Because of how well our Sage solutions work together, we are able to prepare checks for more than 500 employees with only one payroll person in the office—about half of what an agency our size would typically need. That's something I'm very proud of," she adds.

"Sage Abra HRMS allows me the ability to produce various monthly benefit reports related to all employee benefits and all types of required federal reporting," says La Ronda Birch, human resources director.

Mick Connolly, chief financial officer, appreciates how well the various Sage products work together. "The integration between Sage Abra and Sage MIP Fund Accounting's Payroll module for populating employee demographics has reduced the paper flow between the HR and payroll departments, and has eliminated dual data entry along with transposition errors of vital employee information," he notes.

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> —Karen Hosier
> Finance director
> Goodwill Omaha

> "Sage MIP Fund Accounting helps us answer tough questions ... with trustworthy data, and helps me manage an efficient organization that prepares individuals with special needs for the world of work."
>
> —Frank McGree
>   President and CEO
>   Goodwill Omaha

Photo by Bob Ervin

Getting up to speed quickly

Learning to use Sage MIP Fund Accounting has been a relatively simple task for Goodwill Omaha. "The software is very user friendly, allowing me to easily train staff," says Hosier.

Implementing Sage FAS to manage the agency's fixed assets was equally easy. "Because our store inventory consists of donated items, our accounting for fixed assets is less complicated," notes Hosier. "On the other hand, the value of our fixed assets is substantial. We use Sage MIP Fund Accounting to track all of our capital purchases, such as computers, cars, trucks, building and land. Right now, as a matter of fact, I'm preparing for our insurance renewal, and am producing a list of all of our assets with the click of a button."

Design with a difference

What would Goodwill Omaha do without their software? "I can't even imagine running our agency without Sage MIP Fund Accounting. It's the first program I open every morning. Frankly, I'd be lost without it," says Hosier.

"Although we're a nonprofit, we still need to be fiscally responsible, so we can provide better help to people with disabilities," she continues. "That means we must run our agency like a business. Sage MIP Fund Accounting gives us the tools to do just that. I've worked at many places previously, and have encountered accounting systems that were garbage—so I know the difference. I'm probably one of the most satisfied customers that Sage has!"

View from the top

"Sage MIP Fund Accounting is such a great system that we don't even entertain calls from other providers wanting us to try their software," says Hosier. "Accounting is a service department, here to support the other departments with timely, accurate data prepared as quickly as possible. Sage MIP Fund Accounting allows us to do this, which translates into better service for our entire organization."

Her boss agrees. "Sage helps us to see the organization's profitability, and the success rate of our work experience efforts and other programs," says Frank McGree, president and CEO. "Should we renew a certain government contract? Should we continue our grounds maintenance program? Sage MIP Fund Accounting helps us answer tough questions like these with trustworthy data, and helps me manage an efficient organization that prepares individuals with special needs for the world of work."

Making a difference in the lives of others—Goodwill Omaha Client Success

"Goodwill is my life"

Bob May was living under a bridge when a veterans organization referred him to Goodwill Specialty Services. A divorce had triggered severe depression, and he had stopped taking medication, was drinking heavily, and abusing drugs. He felt uneasy around people and kept to himself.

Goodwill gave him a job as a custodian. He attributes the stability to helping him remain sober for more than 11 years. He often says that he is one drink away from being back under the bridge, and credits his Goodwill supervisors for keeping him grounded. Today he works as an equipment technician, restoring and repairing janitorial equipment at Offutt Air Force Base.

"Goodwill has given me the opportunity to be all that I can be," May says. "Goodwill is my life. All of my friends are here."

First paycheck

David Roarty's story is a bit different. As a child, Roarty struggled to sit still, had a short attention span, and lagged in social skills. Countless doctors misdiagnosed him. Finally, in high school, he was diagnosed with a developmental disorder related to autism.

The school told Roarty's mother about Goodwill's Work Experience Program, where he experienced a variety of job duties including retail, clerical, production and custodial. He learned how to work independently and communicate effectively.

Shortly before graduating from the program, Goodwill helped Roarty look for a job and prepare for the interview. He was hired at a cinema—a perfect match, given his passion for films—and has been working there ever since. "David earned his very first paycheck from Goodwill," say Roarty's parents. "He was taught the difference between school and work. He also learned how to interact with others with disabilities." Roarty himself says that he learned about responsibility, and earned money while doing it.

Photos by Bob Ervin

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