

Sisters of Saint Dominic: Sage MIP Fund Accounting is an Answer to Prayer

In 1853, four religious women from Germany found themselves stranded on a dock in New York City. Befriended by a Brooklyn pastor, they were given shelter in his rectory's basement. Within a week, they had taken charge of the parish school. Thus began an era of Catholic education in the Dominican tradition.

Today the Sisters of the Order of Saint Dominic (SSD) minister throughout the country and the world, with schools, literacy and language programs, senior housing, family services and social justice ministries.

Information Overload

With each year that passed, the sheer volume of financial data made accounting more difficult for SSD. Its existing software, Fundware, slowed to a glacial crawl. "We would wait five minutes or more for the system to provide data on stipends," says Charlotte Burko, comptroller. "You'd type in a query, and go down the hall to get coffee while you waited. It got so bad that we dedicated one entire computer to just processing financial reports."

Although the sisters were justifiably nervous about a software conversion, it was decided to switch to Sage MIP Fund Accounting – in part because of the Sage Business Partner. "Our consultant knew us very well from previous projects, and was able to set up a system that matched our unique operations," Charlotte says. "And they taught us how to do everything from the ground up, even with data imports, so we could be independent on the system."

Sweet Simplicity

Today the Sisters of the Order of Saint Dominic has automated almost all aspects of its finances with Sage MIP Fund Accounting. The software manages accounts payable, accounts receivable, the general ledger, allocations, budgeting, cash receipts, and sophisticated reporting.

"What I like best about our Sage solution is the way it integrates and streamlines everything," says Charlotte. "An example would be statements we prepare for each sister on her portion of an account. Before, we had to do four separate steps: export to spreadsheet, then to a database for mailing addresses, then back to spreadsheets and finally to the accounting software. With each export, possibilities for error were introduced. I dreaded the task. Now we just click a button, and the report generates automatically from the general ledger, with greatly improved accuracy. What a relief!"



CUSTOMER

Sisters of the Order of Saint Dominic

INDUSTRY

Congregation of women religious

LOCATION

Amityville, New York

Number of Locations: 100+

Number of Employees: 150+

SYSTEM

Sage MIP Fund Accounting

MODULES

- Accounts Payable
- Accounts Receivable Billing
- Accounts Receivable Reporting
- Advanced Security
- Allocation Management
- Bank Reconciliation
- Budgeting
- Data Consolidation
- Data Import & Export
- Electronic Funds Transfer
- Executive View Licensing
- Fixed Assets
- Forms Designer
- General Ledger

Challenge

SSD outgrew its Fundware software, which took 5+ minutes to bring up a report, creating bottlenecks and serious inefficiencies

Solution

Sage MIP Fund Accounting, with a full suite of financial and reporting modules

Results

New system freed up 20% of comptroller's time for other projects; requires 50% less maintenance than legacy software

IT Improvements

Rosemary Olivari, IT director, sees benefits from another angle. “The problem with our old software was that it was not native to Microsoft Windows. This made it slow, requiring multiple and frequent patches. Sage MIP Fund Accounting, however, is designed for a Windows environment, which makes it powerful and robust.”

Rosemary has experienced dramatic improvements in her work load. “Maintenance is so much easier with Sage MIP Fund Accounting. We don’t have error messages to correct, or corrupted files. It just works the way it’s supposed to. Our maintenance issues have dropped by at least half since we moved to Sage MIP Fund Accounting. In fact, you could almost say that I’ve been taken out of the equation for day-to-day maintenance.”

Rapid Reports

Charlotte is able to run all the reports she needs, which are different than most nonprofits’. SSD reports on the financing for approximately 525 sisters, who live in over 125 different locations. Reporting must be flexible enough to accommodate unusual categories.

“We don’t have a typical revenue stream, most comes from stipends and salaries” she explains. “Most of our income comes from the sisters’. We also have a large volume of medical costs to track. We track expenses down to the individual sister level. With numerous departments, we create one consolidated report that we call ‘Our Parts Equal Our Whole,’ combining eight distinct reporting groups. Sage MIP Fund Accounting handles the job with ease.”

“Sage MIP Fund Accounting eliminated tedious tasks that once took up about 20 percent of my time. Projects that required many hours can be done in an instant.”

—Charlotte Burko
Sisters of the Order
of Saint Dominic

Impressive Results

Switching software systems involved a big leap of faith, but Charlotte is glad that SSD made the transition. “Sage MIP Fund Accounting eliminated tedious tasks that once took up about 20 percent of my time,” she says. “Projects that required many hours can be done in an instant. The auditors complimented us on our first paperless audit, passing us with flying colors. And the system is easy enough to use that we rarely need to ask either Sage or our business partner for assistance.”