

Success Story

MemberClicks cuts budget workload by 60%, reforecasts for COVID-19 in just 2.5 weeks

MemberClicks

“When COVID-19 hit, Sage Intacct Planning gave us the ability to model in real time and reforecast the entire business in just two and a half weeks. It was invaluable. I couldn't have done it in Excel, even if I worked 12 hours a day.”

Brent Stringer

Senior Director of Finance and Accounting, MemberClicks



Company overview

MemberClicks provides software solutions for more than 3,000 small to mid-sized member-based organizations throughout North America.

Executive summary

Previous software:

- Excel

Results with Sage Intacct Planning

- Reforecast the entire business for COVID-19 in just 2.5 weeks.
- Quickly modeled dozens of cost/revenue scenarios.
- Eliminated 60% of budget preparation workload.
- Improved insights and agility with monthly reforecasting.

Sage

Company
MemberClicks

Location
Georgia, US

Industry
Technology & Software

Sage Products
Sage Intacct + Intacct Planning





SaaS vendor builds on success with Sage Intacct Planning

In early 2018, software vendor MemberClicks transformed its accounting function by adopting Sage Intacct to replace a hodgepodge of six disparate systems, several of them the result of acquisitions a year earlier. With Sage Intacct, MemberClicks eliminated tedious, error-prone manual work on consolidations, revenue recognition, bank reconciliations, and currency conversions. The Atlanta-based SaaS vendor cut its monthly close time from up to 20 days to just four, freeing time for higher-value analytics and reporting. All told, the move to Sage Intacct is saving \$200,000 a year in time, effort, and resources at MemberClicks, which provides administrative software to more than 3,000 professional and trade associations, chambers of commerce, nonprofits, and other member-based groups across North America.

Building on that success, MemberClicks wanted to streamline the problematic area of planning and budgeting, done exclusively in Excel. It meant countless hours of painstaking work in spreadsheet with 16 tabs, some with up to 300 rows. Brett Stringer, director of finance and accounting, was uneasy over the potential for error in Excel, and the challenges of updating the budget for periodic forecasting. “We had a lot of eyes on the budget, but when you put that much energy, time, and data into one file that’s all manually built, it’s very, very difficult to have it be perfect,” Brent said. “Updating a 16-tab Excel file for forecasting purposes is extremely difficult and cumbersome — it’s like going through a budget process all over again,” Brent said.

Brent was intrigued when he learned of Sage Intacct Planning, offering native integration with the Sage Intacct general ledger and rich functionality for forecasting, scenario modeling, and collaboration. A demo by rinehimbaker, a CPA firm and Sage Intacct partner that led MemberClicks’ GL implementation, showed Brent everything he needed to know. “I liked what I saw from the standpoint of ease of use and integration with Sage Intacct accounting,” Brent said. “The ability to share information in real time and build scenarios was really key for us,” Brent said. Live in 2019, Sage Intacct Planning has given MemberClicks new efficiency, insights, and forecasting flexibility that would prove invaluable amid the COVID-19 crisis.



The combination of Sage Intacct Accounting and Planning gave MemberClicks data-driven insights for informed decisions.

COVID-19 reforecasting complete in just over 2 weeks

Like virtually every company, MemberClicks needed to adapt as the COVID-19 pandemic deepened in spring 2020. Sage Intacct Planning gave MemberClicks the ability to adjust swiftly and with confidence. In just 2.5 weeks, Brent was able to reforecast the entire business by meeting with function leads, modeling dozens of potential cost and revenue scenarios, and accounting for employer payroll tax deferrals offered by the U.S. government, all in granular detail. “When COVID-19 hit, Sage Intacct Planning gave us the ability to model in real time and reforecast the entire business in just two and a half weeks,” Brent said. “It was invaluable. I couldn’t have done it in Excel, even if I worked 12 hours a day,” Brent said.

The combination of Sage Intacct accounting and Planning gave MemberClicks data-driven insights for informed decisions, such as putting certain investments on a temporary hold. When the reforecast was finalized, MemberClicks had actually forecast an increase in EBITDA. MemberClicks’ reforecasting presentation at the subsequent board meeting was “very well received” in terms of both the package presented and the ability to address questions based on trusted data. “We were able to present a conservative forecast based on reasonably expected scenarios,” Brent said. “The board meeting went very well — uneventful, which is what you want,” Brent said.

The COVID-driven reforecasting reflects heightened collaboration between finance and function lead stakeholders made possible with Sage Intacct Planning. For example, Brent has worked closely with MemberClicks’ VP of engineering on cost line items such as spending on third-party vendor software and services. With timely data, MemberClicks is able to assess cost vs. benefits of a given software application, identify cost trends, and potentially explore more cost-effective options. “It’s helping us bridge the operational part of the business and the financial impact of those operations,” Brent said. “If a cost is increasing 10% a month, we can identify that trend and size up whether we’re getting 10% more operational benefit from that vendor,” Brent said.



Eliminating 60% of the budget preparation workload

Brent estimates he eliminated 60% of his previous budget preparation workload when using Sage Intacct Planning for the first time, to prepare the 2020 budget. For example, automated currency conversions in Sage Intacct relieved Brent of the chore of manually converting between Canadian and U.S. dollars for a Canadian subsidiary. “Sage Intacct Planning has allowed me to move more quickly, be more efficient with my time, and turn around deliverables much faster,” Brent said. “I’m able to put my time to use within the analytical functions of the organization, helping to make sure we’re making the right decisions and driving the best results we can,” Brent said.

On top of that, Brent didn’t need to spend four to six weeks preparing an Excel template file before kicking off the official budget process in early October with function leads. With the improved efficiency, Brent had roughly twice as many meetings with function leads to finetune the budget to a degree not possible in the Excel days. For instance, MemberClicks uses the headcount feature in Sage Intacct Planning to more precisely calculate costs, salary increases, bonuses, and more based on an employee’s date of hiring — critical detail that’s impractical to incorporate into Excel. “It’s more than just time savings — it’s also greater accuracy,” Brent said. Going forward, MemberClicks is moving from annual to monthly reforecasting, meaning closer communications between finance and function leads that benefit the business.

Seamless integration across Sage Intacct has made budget vs. actuals reporting more efficient and effective for Brent and function leads. “It’s a lot easier for me because I don’t have to jump between Excel tabs and files when doing variance analysis — it’s all there in one place,” Brent said. “It’s better for our function leads as well because we can easily drill down into the details behind a GL line item,” Brent said. And Brent won’t need to repeat an ordeal that he experienced a few years ago, when he spent most of a seven hour drive from Atlanta to Florida for a Thanksgiving getaway reworking an Excel budget file to accommodate late changes while still delivering on a Monday deadline. “If I’d had Sage Intacct Planning, I could have enjoyed my ride in the car rather than working in Excel,” Brent said. “That’s one of those things that you never forget,” Brent concluded.

