SAGE MAS 90

CUSTOMER SUCCESS

SSAN Premier Advisor Reveals Better Job Cost Tracking Accounting Practices

Automotive Investment Group is an internal advertising group supporting more than 20 automotive dealerships throughout Arizona, Texas, Georgia and California. Its project load is enormous—at least 1,000 different jobs every month, from mammoth tent sales for multiple dealerships to single-spot newspaper placements.

To obtain pricing discounts, Automotive Investment Group purchases newspaper, television, radio, and special promotional ads in volume, allocating costs to individual dealerships. Sales managers submit monthly advertising requests to Automotive Investment Group on Excel spreadsheets. Internal graphic artists also use Excel to track accrued expenses. Each ad is treated as a separate project and identified by a unique job number, against which costs are accumulated and billed back to the correct dealership.

The company's parent uses Sage MAS 90 ERP as its accounting system for more than 50 accounting entities. Automotive Investment Group converted to Sage MAS 90 in early 2002 for consistency, and implemented the Sage MAS 90 Job Cost module for better cost tracking, billing, and project management.

When Cindy Sneden, Automotive Investment Group's controller, tried to accrue costs for a job that had been estimated but not yet incurred, the numbers kept coming out wrong. She discovered that a former employee had not configured Job Cost correctly. Fortunately, training needs led her to an accounting firm affiliated with the Sage Software Accountants Network (SSAN) Premier Advisor Program.

The SSAN Premier Advisor program provides accounting and business management software and support to public accounting professionals. Advisors receive practice development resources, access to training, and reference materials to better manage their practice and serve their clients. The program helps practitioners build alliances as "recommenders" with local Sage Software technology partners, who in turn provide superior services and assist with Sage Software solutions for advisors' clients.

Customer:

Automotive Investment Group

Industry:

Advertising for automotive dealerships

Location:

Phoenix, Arizona

Number of Locations: One

Number of Employees: 10

System:

Sage MAS 90

- Accounts Payable
- Accounts Receivable
- General Ledger
- Job Cost
- Purchase Order
- Visual Integrator

Blytheco LLC

The Premier Provider of Effective Business Software Solutions ◦ National Presence, Local Touch ◦ 1.800.4.BLYTHE ◦ www.blytheco.com

CHALLENGE

Automate data entry and job cost processing for 1,000+ advertising promotions every month and enhance overall project management capabilities.

SOLUTION

Sage MAS 90 Accounts Receivable, Job Cost and Visual Integrator modules with consultant expertise from a SSAN Premier Advisor and their authorized business partner.

RESULTS

Saving 40 hours per month with automated advertising data transfer to Job Cost application, and another 40 hours from seamless job invoice imports into Accounts Receivable.

SSAN Consultant Sees a Solution

The years of accounting and Sage MAS 90 expertise that Automotive Investment Group's SSAN advisor brought to the table resulted in speedy insights. "Our advisor saw right away that reimplementing Job Cost would be better than tweaking what we had," Sneden explains. "As a result of her recommendations, we developed a system that would bring us into alignment with standard accepted accounting practices, and at the same time improve revenue recognition and cost tracking."

The new system includes additional fields for accounting, plus spreadsheets that pull data directly from the designers' budgets. The Visual Integrator module was deployed to automate information transfer from the spreadsheets to both the Accounts Receivable (AR) and Job Cost modules. Multiple layers were necessary to accommodate Automotive Investment Group's complicated data import requirements. The savings have been dramatic.

"We used to spend 40 hours a month on data entry for Job Cost," says Sneden. "Those tasks have been eliminated by the new accounting and system changes. Now we just spend one day a month doing manual verification of balances. This has freed up staff time for other important tasks."

Automotive Investment Group had never used an AR module for billing. Now, however, the business process system changes makes it possible to pull every job into the AR system, resulting in more accurate billing statements and greater accountability overall. Splits for multiple dealerships are handled with ease, and costs for production, photos, editing, typing, and processing can be broken out for special reports. "I estimate we're saving another 40 hours a month not having to manually input invoices into the AR module," Sneden says.

"The beauty of our new system is that we don't have to change anything, whether it's requests from our dealers or budgets from our design team," Sneden notes. "Everything is imported and calculated automatically. We just check final figures at the end of the month."

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Sneden praises her SSAN Advisor for creativity as well as product expertise, using ingenuity to adapt existing software features to meet an unusual accounting challenge. "Our SSAN Advisor has been a godsend for us," she says. "Her accounting abilities and product knowledge really saved us time and money. We could never have done all this without her."

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Sage Software supports the needs, challenges, and dreams of more than 2.7 million small and midsized business customers in North America through easy-to-use, scalable, and customizable software and services. Our products help manage a complete range of business functions including: accounting, operations, customer relationship management, human resources, time tracking, merchant services and the specialized needs of the construction, distribution, healthcare, manufacturing, nonprofit, and real estate industries.

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