

CUSTOMER SUCCESS



Union Payroll Brings It All Together With Sage MAS 90

Union Payroll Agency (UPA) provides set-up and production crews for Elton John, Paul McCartney and Cirque du Soleil shows, requiring them to run a professional-quality financial system. Since 2000, UPA has relied on Sage MAS 90 ERP to manage its accounting and diverse payroll requirements.

“Before, we were struggling with a DOS-based system and papers in binders to process employee compensation information,” explains Gary Wright, president and CEO. “This not only hampered our accuracy, but also limited our expansion outside of California.”

Sage MAS 90 in the Spotlight

Growth is an important concern to UPA, a provider of production labor for entertainment and trade shows. It ranked as #19 in the Silicon Valley list of 100 Fastest Growing Companies in 1999 and #41 in 2000, and has also been in Inc Magazine’s Top 500 list. As recently as 1995, the firm worked only in the Bay Area and earned revenues of \$900,000 a year. Today it operates in 20 states and two Canadian provinces, serves almost every major metro area in North America, and grosses upwards of \$15 million. “We desperately needed a more powerful accounting software package to continue our growth and sustain the integrity of our service,” notes Wright.

With its big-name client list, UPA had to be very careful when selecting a replacement for its accounting software. “We surveyed a host of possible solutions before finding Sage MAS 90,” says Wright. “It stood out as the most desirable package for a complicated operation like ours.”

Thousands of Codes

By complicated, Wright means the 23,000 employees his firm pays. One week he might be cutting checks for stage hands in Chicago and Philadelphia. The next week it could be lighting and set-up crews in Atlanta and Denver. Most of his employees belong to labor unions. UPA therefore copes with 128 different union codes, 1,200 labor codes, and 432 deduction codes.

Today, UPA uses Sage MAS 90 to run all its accounting operations. The software prepares weekly, biweekly and monthly paychecks, depending on the union contract, and also calculates health and welfare, pension, training and annuity benefits. “We no longer have to calculate paychecks

Customer:

Union Payroll Agency, Inc.

Industry:

Production labor for entertainment and trade shows

Location:

Rocklin, California

Number of Locations: One

Number of Employees: Nine

System:

Sage MAS 90

- Library Master
- Cash Management
- General Ledger
- Accounts Payable
- Accounts Receivable
- Bank Reconciliation
- Payroll
- Job Cost
- Timecard

CHALLENGE

DOS-based accounting software with paper-based binders hindered company’s growth, and prevented expansion to other states

SOLUTION

Sage MAS 90 with full complement of financial modules, for complete automation of complex state-specific reimbursement packages

RESULTS

Before, 2 people processed \$1M in payroll a year; now 3 people process \$1M in payroll every month; system paid for itself in 6 months

and deductions based on multiple parameters. Once we've set up bargaining agreement information within Sage MAS 90, the system does everything for us," Wright notes.

Short Learning Curve

Wright has found the software to be very easy to use. "We can bring new people up to speed in just three months, rather than the twelve it was taking us before," he says. "This is because we no longer have to teach people how to transfer data off of time sheets onto the time card, then check in paper manuals for correct procedures. The result is that the company is less impacted when we experience inevitable turnover."

The initial transition to Sage MAS 90 was relatively easy, too. "Our Sage business partner helped us by locating a union payroll module to automate a lot of our paperwork. They also assisted us with writing specialty reports, such as the new-hire and W-2 documentation required by each state, in the specific format that each state wants," says Wright.

Amazed Auditors

UPA frequently is visited by union auditors. "They call and tell us they'll be here for a week. We reply that we'll be surprised if they stay even half a day. That's how great the reporting capabilities are within Sage MAS 90," says Wright.

"Whenever auditors see what our system can do, they're totally amazed," he continues. "Our reports eliminate all the heartache of audits by providing detailed reports. As long as we put in the data correctly, we're going to pay people correctly—guaranteed."

Real-World Results

Sage MAS 90 has reduced paper, too. "We probably have 30 file cabinets with personnel folders that we're required to maintain, taking up two storage locations plus a full room on site. Sage MAS 90 allows us to do paperless printing, so we can keep electronic files. We project we'll be able to eliminate three or four filing cabinets of data every year, thanks to electronic recordkeeping."

UPA has been pleased with the service it receives from its Sage Business Partner. "They listened to our story, and really understood what we were trying to do with the business," says Wright. "That

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good advice helped us grow to fifteen times our previous size. And even though we've moved out of the area and have people all around the country, they are always there when we need them."

Wright estimates that Sage MAS 90 paid for itself in just six months. "Sometimes we're just blown away when we realize how powerful Sage MAS 90 is, and what it allows us to do with a small, but mighty staff. Ten years ago, we had two people processing payroll of \$1 million a year. When we switched to Sage MAS 90, we had three people doing about \$6 million a year. Now we have three people processing \$1 million every month. That's a huge improvement in efficiency," he says. "Next to our people themselves, Sage MAS 90 is the most valuable asset we have."

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