

CUSTOMER SUCCESS



Cajun Can-Do: Workforce Center Benefits From Sage MAS 500

Need help finding a job? Childcare during an interview? Transportation to work? Or even educational expenses for learning new skills?

Job-seekers in southeastern Louisiana count on the Workforce Center for these and other related services. The center is a non-profit government agency administering a \$5 million federal back-to-work program, serving as a one-stop resource for comprehensive job placement, training, testing, and assessment services. It also helps employers find good workers with labor market information, tools for skill improvement, and hiring incentives.

Old System Not Working Out

For years, the Workforce Center had used a “homegrown” computer system to handle its accounting processes. But the system had serious flaws. It required manual data entry for each of 10 different cost centers, and could not produce the various reports required by funding agencies. It was so unreliable that staff members added up columns of figures on paper to verify accuracy.

The Workforce Center spent six months evaluating products and vendors, looking for a solution that could be easily maintained by in-house staff. They found one product that stood out head and shoulders above the rest—Sage MAS 500 ERP, including the Abra Payroll module.

Out Performing Expectations

Since implementation, Sage MAS 500 has permitted a quantum leap in accounting sophistication at the Workforce Center. Nowhere is this more evident than in cost accounting, a key requirement with the agency’s complicated structure. Separate segments are maintained for adults, dislocated workers, youth in school, and youth out of school. Allocations must be made within segments, depending on where funds originated, as well as by parish, year, class code, and object.

“With Sage MAS 500, we now have full-featured cost accounting with just a few clicks of the mouse, and improved accuracy of all expense data for each of our cost centers,” says Yvonne Ricks, contract accountant. “We can define each of the account segments we need, and pull items by activity code or object for targeted tracking however we like.”

Customer:

The Workforce Center

Industry:

Non-profit government agency

Location:

Southeastern Louisiana

Number of Locations

10

Number of Employees

60

System:

Sage MAS 500

- Abra Payroll
- General Ledger
- Accounts Payable
- Crystal Reports
- Cash Management
- FAS Fixed Assets
- Purchase Order



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CHALLENGE

Obtain a business system with extensive costing and reporting capabilities that can manage the complexities of a nonprofit charged with administering a \$5 million program.

SOLUTION

Sage MAS 500 financial, Abra Payroll, and Crystal Reports, modules.

RESULTS

Full-featured cost accounting; improved accuracy; sophisticated reporting and customization; reduced document prep time from 14 days to 2; easy data export; eliminated hundreds of manual entry hours; cut costs.

Reporting capabilities have improved dramatically too. Like other non-profits and government organizations, the Workforce Center must comply with many reporting structures with unique formatting requirements. The center uses Crystal Reports® for customization. For instance, Ricks can pull data from the GL system and print it as a state expenditure report, or automatically prepare 941s for payroll tax liabilities. “Documents that used to take up to two weeks can now be run in just two days,” she says.

Ricks says she likes the flexibility she now has with the Sage MAS 500 system. She can put more details on invoices, charge items directly to line items, and allocate items on purchase orders to individual funds or parishes. It’s also easy to export data to Excel spreadsheets for in-depth analysis.

The Abra Payroll module within Sage MAS 500 plays an important role in the system. The module can create special payroll runs, evaluate data, and reconcile payrolls and quarter-ends with online analyses, generate cost accounting and labor distribution reports, secure sensitive payroll information, and prepare payroll taxes. The Workforce Center uses Abra Payroll in a creative manner—to account for money spent on individual job seekers.

“We track total dollars spent on upgrading job seeker skills, and we limit the total amounts paid to each person,” explains Ricks. “I set up an earnings code that matches to our general ledger, and establish an earnings goal at the job seeker’s level as an upper limit. This has really cut down on errors in disbursement.”

The Workforce Center also uses the labor distribution codes in Abra Payroll to account for staff time by fund area. The codes automatically map data to the Sage MAS 500 general ledger, eliminating hundreds of hours previously required for manual entries.

“Sage MAS 500 and Abra Payroll have automated even the most complex accounting tasks for us,” Ricks says. “We are very pleased with the system’s performance.”

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Orange County, California 23161 Mill Creek Drive Laguna Hills, California 92653 Phone: (949) 583.9500 Toll Free: (800) 425.9843 Fax: (949) 583.0649	Atlanta, Georgia 1100 Johnson Ferry Road, Ste. 450 Atlanta, Georgia 30342 Phone: (404) 841.6240 Toll Free: (800) 455.1368 Fax: (404) 841.6243
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www.blytheco.com **solutions@blytheco.com**

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