

Sage 500 ERP | Customer Success

Sage 500 ERP Puts Childcare Network at the Top of the Class

Education, not babysitting, is what parents want these days, even for very young children. Childcare Network is committed to providing the finest learning environment in each of its 100-plus schools, serving children ranging in age from six weeks to 12 years. Its teachers, all well-trained, follow a structured program called “High Reach,” a patterned curriculum to ensure consistency and superior test results at all levels.

Childcare Network’s business plan has been amazingly successful. Since its inception in 1988, the network of private schools has grown to be the eighth-largest childcare provider in North America. Further growth through acquisition is planned throughout the foreseeable future.

No Longer Making the Grade

By late 1998, Childcare Network had been adding new schools so quickly that it outgrew its accounting package, Sage 100 ERP. The company discovered it needed an expanded chart of accounts, plus the ability to import transactions from the front-office systems at its various locations. Payroll had become unwieldy, too, due to the influx of new employees. It was clearly time to migrate to a larger, more sophisticated business system, preferably one that leveraged the power of SQL database technology—like Sage 500 ERP* enterprise edition.

Sage 500 ERP Gets Straight A’s

The new system has now been operational at Childcare Network for several years and gets straight A’s from Britt Hayes, controller. “Sage 500 ERP is well-designed for a company in a sustained growth mode like ours,” Hayes says. “When we acquire a new school, I simply clone all the GL accounts for an existing school and rename them. I don’t have to re-create 100 different accounts by hand. Similarly, I use the upload feature for processing several large journal transactions, so I no longer have to spend a substantial amount of time entering the data manually. This is crucial in helping us to complete financial reporting in what is already a very hectic close week.”

*Sage 500 ERP was named Sage ERP MAS 500 when Childcare Network initially implemented this solution. The product names have been updated in this case study to reflect current naming.

Customer

Childcare Network

Industry

Education and childcare

Location

Columbus, Georgia

Number of Locations

109

Number of Employees

1,900

System

Sage 500 ERP

- Accounts Payable
- Accounts Receivable
- Cash Management
- SAP® Crystal Reports for Sage 500 ERP
- Business Insights Dashboard
- Sage Fixed Assets
- General Ledger

Challenge

Replace outgrown system with a larger, more advanced, fully integrated business solution that will help maximize efficiency and profitability and manage sustained growth.

Solution

Sage 500 ERP financial, reporting, and Sage Fixed Assets modules.

Results

Streamlined integration from A to Z; instant setup of new GL accounts; journal transactions in minutes, not hours; improved data integrity; easy fixed asset depreciation; systemwide analysis and reporting.

Hayes says the company previously spent hours every week inputting journal entries for each of 109 schools. Now, the system does this work automatically in minutes, resulting in considerable savings in time and expense.

He likes the System Manager, which lets him restrict the data fields available to employees by title. "I can set up a job title as 'Accountant I' and only permit access to the General Ledger. But for a 'Staff Accountant' I might add access to Cash Management or Accounts Payable. This feature is very important to the integrity of our reporting."

The Sage Fixed Assets module has proved to be a valuable tool for tracking the company's fixed assets. Hayes set up general ledger codes for each type of asset, such as buildings, land, leasehold improvements, fleet vehicles, equipment, computers, copiers, and playground equipment. Every month the Sage Fixed Assets module depreciates assets for various tax lives by location, for clear allocation to individual schools. This information is then integrated for systemwide analysis.

Childcare Network relies on the Cash Management module to manage the firm's various bank accounts. The system processes about 3,500 checks a month and tracks many direct withdrawals such as utility bills. The module prepares a journal entry with the credit side as a clearing account. The module also manages corporate deposits through a deposit import program, and is used to monitor fluctuations in the credit line.

"I'm very pleased with Sage 500 ERP, especially its ease of use and flexibility," Hayes says. "It gives me a great deal of control and guides me when I need to drill down to a trial balance or transaction report. We can find information by subtotal only or by detail, if necessary. This is exactly what we need for planning and managing rapid growth."

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**Britt Hayes, controller
Childcare Network**

About Sage

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