

C A S E S T U D Y

Payroll Budgeting “An Accountant’s Dream” in Budget Maestro

The Brattleboro Retreat is a regional mental health and addictions treatment center in Brattleboro, Vermont. Recognized nationally for its psychiatric and addictions treatment, the Brattleboro Retreat offers an individualized, comprehensive continuum of care that can include inpatient stays, outpatient treatment, partial hospitalization, and child and adolescent residential programs.



FAST FACTS

INDUSTRY: **Not-for-Profit Healthcare**

LOCATION: **Brattleboro, VT**

REVENUE: **Private**

EMPLOYEES: **500**

ERP SYSTEM: **Microsoft Dynamics GP[®]**

Business Challenge: Planning Payroll Problematic

As with many not-for-profits, payroll and personnel costs represent the lion’s share of The Brattleboro Retreat’s total expenses. Budgeting for 500 employees that work full-time and part-time, salaried and per diem, five or seven days a week, was too complicated to manage effectively in multiple Microsoft Excel spreadsheets. “We were never 100% sure of the accuracy of the numbers. There was always the potential for underestimating expenses and coming up short,” said Financial Analyst II Anne Fecto.

Incorrect numbers could lead to variances that affect the bottom line and handicap the organization’s ability to fund other revenue-generating programs. For example, a mis-calculation could lead to over budgeting of payroll taxes such as FICA, or an underestimation of how next year’s raises will really impact finances.

When The Brattleboro Retreat decided to replace its manual, spreadsheet-based budgeting and forecasting system, it sought first and foremost a budgeting application with strong payroll planning capabilities. But they also needed something cost-effective that supported

revenue planning, operating expense budgeting, and the generation of financial statements and management reports; and that ideally integrated with their G/L package Microsoft Dynamics GP.

Budget Maestro was chosen for its strong payroll planning features and its ability to meet the other criteria as well.

Getting Started

“The implementation of Budget Maestro just flew by. I was pretty amazed what it could do and how quickly. I found that by taking the time to do the initial company set-up properly, the rest of

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the implementation flowed like butter off a warm knife. Proofing the load took longer than loading the G/L accounts and history into Budget Maestro. Budget Maestro gives us real confidence in our budgeted numbers."

Quick Connectivity with MS Dynamics GP[®]

The Centage Link Maestro[®] tool, which provides two-way connectivity, allowed Fecto to load the budget into Microsoft Dynamics GP in hours versus the three to four days it used to take The Brattleboro's IT department. "The linking this software does is a huge time saver, but also the linking is accurate every time — it sends the data where you ask it to! An accountant's dream," said Fecto.

Payroll Planning & Analysis Virtually Automatic

Once up and running, Fecto tackled the payroll planning. Budget Maestro is flexible enough to let The Brattleboro Retreat budget "by position". Because the organization's staffing requirements vary throughout the year based on the

demands of the programs they offer, Fecto plans payroll expenses around generic positions rather than individual jobs.

"We build our budget by projecting the 'census' (the number of patients we expect to service) multiplied by the rate for each of our programs," explained Fecto. "That in turn drives our staffing requirements; we adjust staffing as needed to support each program."

Fecto works with department managers to understand their staffing requirements, vacancies, new hires and projected raises. Those variables, along with fringe benefits, are plugged into Budget Maestro which automatically generates payroll expenditures in the appropriate periods. "Now I can account for all our payroll and related expenses and know we haven't missed anything that may impact the departments' expenses," she said.

Fecto also uses Budget Maestro to forecast personnel expenses and revenue. "I just enter information from the managers' meetings into Budget Maestro and select the spread; the software does the rest."

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