

## Hilton Foundation Scales Operations with Intacct's Best-in-Class Cloud Financial Management and Accounting Software

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– Monica Emerson, Controller at the Hilton Foundation

### Gaining Flexible, Cloud-Based Accounting

The Conrad N. Hilton Foundation manages over \$2.4 billion in total assets and pays out around \$100 million a year in grants to nonprofits. This family foundation now employs over fifty people, having grown dramatically in the past five years as it hired an investment team, grew its program group, and more than doubled overall headcount.

Previously, the Hilton Foundation used a legacy version of Sage 100 ERP (MAS 90) to manage its financials. However, that system lacked the ability to slice and dice financial data by different departments or programs. Because of this, the organization's finance team resorted to Excel workarounds for financial reporting, as well as for several tax return and audit schedules. MAS 90 also lacked financial controls or an audit trail, creating a compliance burden that drained the team's already limited bandwidth.

The foundation sought ways to overcome these shortcomings and streamline other financial processes that had become cumbersome as it grew. For example, its accounting team was spending more than a day every month manually entering journal entries from investment reports

(which were two binders thick), as well as several hours inputting data from the payroll vendor's reports.

As the organization moved towards paperless operations, it identified accounts payable as another area ripe for modernization, and sought to eliminate tasks like filing paper invoices and check stubs and physically signing checks. In addition, the foundation wanted to automate the tracking and approving of employee expenses, which it had previously accomplished via tedious spreadsheets and receipt attachments. To address these challenges and help the organization scale, the Hilton Foundation implemented Intacct's sophisticated cloud accounting and financial management system.

### Increasing Productivity with Modern Financial Processes

Intacct has significantly streamlined the foundation's accounts payables, grant payment, time and expense, and financial reporting processes across the organization. With a robust cloud-based financial system in place, the Hilton Foundation's finance team can now pay out funds more efficiently and easily keep up with expense tracking and financial reporting.

Conrad N. Hilton  
FOUNDATION

### CHALLENGES

- Needed a modern financial management solution to improve financial reporting and controls
- Wanted to automate paper-based AP and time and expense processes, gain remote access, improve data accuracy, and minimize reliance on Excel
- Needed to share data between financial management system and investment and payroll vendors
- Looking for robust reporting and dashboard capabilities to provide visibility into financial data across multiple departments and programs

### PREVIOUS SOLUTION

Sage 100 ERP (MAS 90)

### RESULTS WITH INTACCT

- Modernized and streamlined its finance department, enabled paperless operations, and improved financial controls
- Automated processes increased data accuracy and cut days of data entry each month
- Productivity freed finance team to more deeply analyze financial information and increase workload
- Gained ability to track, manage, and report on budgets and other financial trends in real-time across departments and programs

The organization's accounts payable process has been automated by Intacct, allowing the accounting team to scan bills and attach them to payment entries before shredding each document in order to maintain a paperless office. And with Intacct's digital signatures, managers just approve bill payments and then the system can cut the checks immediately. Since everything is saved in the system, the team can access check stubs as needed later on.

Employee time and expense tracking is also greatly improved and more accurate with Intacct. All Hilton Foundation employees simply log in to Intacct to enter their expenses and upload scanned receipts, further reducing the use of paper. And with Automated Clearing House (ACH) payments, the process is as efficient as possible, so employees get reimbursed much faster.

Another benefit of the best-in-class Intacct solution is its flexibility when it comes to sharing data with other systems. "One of our favorite things about Intacct is that we can quickly import files and journal entries from outside vendors like ADP for payroll and State Street for investment accounting," said Monica Emerson, controller at the Hilton Foundation. "Now, we just upload our State Street report or ADP payroll file right into the system in minutes, saving days that we used to spend tediously creating journal entries every month."

"Intacct also cuts days from the time we spend preparing our financial reports,

and often saves weeks in the process of preparing schedules for our audits and tax returns," continued Emerson. "Because of Intacct's multi-dimensional approach and its great report writing system, it's so easy to instantly pull up the exact reports or specific expenses we need. We no longer have to rely on Excel to track and calculate expenses for individual departments or program areas when we want to make comparisons."

With this increased productivity, the foundation's finance team is able to take on additional projects. They now spend more time creating strategic reports that deliver immediate financial insight, rather than chasing down specific information each time the management or board requests it.

#### Improving Financial Visibility via Intuitive Reporting and Dashboards

The Hilton Foundation uses Intacct to run separate financials and provide real-time financial information for each of its six departments. The system's ability to apply various dimensions – such as department or program area – to each transaction allows the organization to slice and dice its financial data however it needs.

"Intacct gives us the flexibility to quickly deliver visibility into any specific metric we require at any given time," noted Emerson. "For example, we originally organized our budget reports by expense category, until one of our board members wanted to monitor budgets by department.

With Intacct's department dimension, we were able to easily create a report that provided actuals versus budget by department, and then by expense line."

And Intacct's personalized dashboards give Hilton Foundation directors, vice presidents and other executives direct access to the reports and key performance indicators that are relevant for their group. As a result, the accounting staff no longer has to create reports in Excel and then email them around every time managers need to review actual expenses against their department or program budget, or even the foundation-wide budget.

Another advantage of Intacct is its financial controls and detailed audit trail functionality. These sophisticated tools, along with the team's time savings, have allowed the foundation to focus on implementing better controls and segregation of duties. For example, every journal entry now requires approval, and the organization can track the history of each transaction with user-specific information – greatly easing the Hilton Foundation's compliance burden.

"It's also a great perk that all of our accounting work can be done from anywhere now because Intacct is cloud-based," added Emerson. "Given the long commutes in Southern California and the worldwide travel required of many foundation employees, being able to log on from home or anywhere in the world is a significant driver of our productivity."

## About The Conrad N. Hilton Foundation

### Industry

Foundations

### Headquarters

Agoura Hills, California

### Overview

The Conrad N. Hilton Foundation is a family foundation established in 1944 by the man who started Hilton Hotels. It provides funds to nonprofit organizations working to improve the lives of disadvantaged and vulnerable people throughout the world. The foundation maintains approximately \$2.4 billion in assets, has awarded more than \$1 billion in grants since its inception, and distributed \$92 million around the world in 2013 alone.

