

## Santa Catalina Island Company Streamlines Budgeting with Sage PFW Premier Budgeting

Santa Catalina Island is part of the Channel Islands off California's southern coast, just 22 miles from Los Angeles. About 3,500 people call the 22-mile long island home, and one million more visit the picturesque location every year. Santa Catalina Island Company is host to many of those visitors. Its hotels, restaurants, golf course, Casino Ballroom, and tour operations lure tourists of every age and every nationality. The company has roots on the island that go back more than 100 years, and it is committed to preserving the unique qualities of the island. With three separate companies and 58 lines of business, Santa Catalina Island Company has a busy accounting office that requires a robust budgeting tool—that tool is Sage PFW Premier Budgeting.

### Move Beyond Spreadsheets

Just four years ago, Santa Catalina Island Company tackled its budget cycle as the majority of small and medium-sized businesses do—using spreadsheets. While spreadsheets handle the formulas needed for budgeting, they were inadequate to meet Santa Catalina Island Company's complex budgeting requirements. Nancy Delehant, director of strategic information for the company, explains. "If we never had to make a change to our budget or consolidate budget data across departments or companies, I suppose Excel would work just fine. But we do make changes and do require consolidation, so we needed a tool better suited for the job."

Because Santa Catalina Island Company was already using Sage PFW ERP, it was logical to add the Sage PFW Premier Budgeting module. "We looked at other solutions, but Premier Budgeting is very powerful, very flexible, and integrates directly with our General Ledger module. The interface is very similar to a spreadsheet, so it was easy for us to master," says Delehant.

### Share Budget-Driving Information

Before Premier Budgeting, Delehant would distribute a spreadsheet to each department head. After completing the budget, Delehant imported the data into Sage PFW, worked to make it balance, and hoped for no changes. As the inevitable changes occurred, though, Delehant had to back out the previous information, update the spreadsheet, and perform the import again. "It was a very laborious process," she recalls.

Now, Delehant distributes a neatly organized form generated by Premier Budgeting that shows last year's budget figures. To help department heads develop accurate, meaningful

### Customer

**Santa Catalina Island Company**

### Industry

Tourism & Recreation

### Location

Avalon, California

### Number of Locations

1

### Number of Employees

150

### System

- Sage PFW ERP
- Sage Premier Budgeting

### Challenge

Santa Catalina Island Company was relying on spreadsheets to manage its large and complex corporate budget; changes to the budgets were time consuming and prone to errors.

### Solution

The company selected Sage PFW Premier Budgeting for its power, security, flexibility, and its ability to interface with the company's ERP system.

### Results

Santa Catalina Island Company has cut two full months off its budget cycle. Adjustments to the budgets are easy to incorporate. Department heads can securely access and view their own budgets.

budgets, the form also includes budget-driving information such as the average daily room rate, average pay rates, and passenger counts on the island ferry.

The department heads annotate the document with their updates to the forecast and then return it to Delehant. "I often enter the data while they wait and hand them a printed budget right away," she says. "Before Premier Budgeting it was weeks before we could get their budgets back to them."

When budget changes come in throughout the quarter, Delehant simply updates the number, and the budget recalculates and updates the general ledger automatically.

### Provide Secure Access

When the company was using spreadsheets, Delehant felt she had to check every number, every time, because it was possible that formulas had been changed. In Premier Budgeting, the formulas do not change; only the results do.

"I run spot checks for accuracy, and it's correct every time," she says. "We've configured the module's security so that authorized users can see and print their department's budgets but cannot change the underlying formulas."

### Organize and Consolidate

With three corporate entities and 58 lines of business, Santa Catalina Island Company's budget is large and complex, yet Premier Budgeting allows management to view and interact with the budget in straightforward, meaningful ways.

"Before I had folders on my computer for each department with the spreadsheets inside. I would have to open up each one individually to review it. The tree view in Premier Budgeting makes it easy to see the structure of the entire company. I can click and open any of the budgets easily," Delehant explains.

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Generating a consolidated budget across the three companies used to involve adding them all together manually. "It took us weeks to merge the data together and compile the budget," Delehant says. "Now we can generate a consolidated budget in a few hours."

### Streamline a Vital Process

Sage PFW Premier Budgeting streamlines and improves the budget process for Santa Catalina Island Company. "Our budgets are our road maps—they help define a clear direction for the company," explains Delehant. "Department heads use them as an indicator of what they can spend and what their goals are. Management uses them to project cash flow for the coming months and year ahead."

Santa Catalina Island Company's budget cycle used to begin in September and wrap up in December. Thanks to the streamlined functionality Premier Budgeting delivers, the company now starts in October and is done by Thanksgiving. "Premier Budgeting has made such a difference in our budget process. It's shaved two full months off the cycle," concludes Delehant.