

RBP Methods Helps Walla Walla's YWCA Help Others

SUCCESS STORY

The Challenge

YWCA Walla Walla had a business of many faces and a business system of limited helpfulness. They struggled to track grants and deal with Accounts Receivable in a system that simply was not designed to accommodate a business such as theirs.

The Solution

RBP Methods implemented Sage MIP Fund Accounting. With a careful eye for what their organization was about, they organized all the different aspects of the YWCA's organization into a single cohesive system.

The Result

Grant-tracking is simple and user-friendly, external spreadsheet work was eliminated, and data is streamlined now thanks to the work of RBP Methods. YWCA is saving incredible amounts of time—translating to over \$25,000 saved since the software implementation.

The Young Women's Christian Association is a women's membership movement that strives to create opportunities for women's growth, leadership, and power. The YWCA branch of Walla Walla, Washington is no exception. Running a violence shelter, a rape crisis line, counseling opportunities, and numerous other facets—including an ice skating rink—YWCA Walla Walla works to attain a vision of peace, justice, freedom, and dignity for all.



The Business of Helping Others Grows Difficult

The constant effort of doing so much good in so many different ways is unfortunately, not an easily-sustained ideal. Any organization running the sort of multi-faceted functionality of Walla Walla's YWCA would need to run a tight ship. Add to that the challenges of grants and restricted funds making up their sustenance, and things become even more difficult to manage. Anne-Marie Schwerin, of the YWCA, calls the business side of their organization "challenging." Even being a financial expert herself, the intricacies were a lot to deal with—and the business software they were using to manage those intricacies was less than ideal.

They were running a version of Peachtree that simply was not suited for their needs. In fact, the program was not even specific to nonprofit organizations. Anne-Marie and the YWCA were forced to perform financial acrobatics to make everything fall into the system correctly. Tracking grants was extremely difficult, and keeping record of donations and restricted funds was a constant struggle in a system that simply was not designed to accommodate their kind of business. They were reduced to working on external spreadsheets to reconcile everything together. These difficulties took away from the actual aim of the organization—helping women in the community.

RBP Methods Simplifies Business for YWCA

Obviously, YWCA needed to do something to change the state they were in. Business had to be taken care of efficiently so they could focus on their real purpose. As Kent Arnold of RBP Methods puts it, "they needed to see everything from a business standpoint." Anne-Marie began researching new systems through nonprofit publications, accountants, and even other YWCAs without finding anything that looked like the ideal solution. Finally, in an article featuring a side-by-side comparison of business software, she was introduced to Sage MIP Fund Accounting. She then contacted Sage, who introduced her to Kent Arnold and RBP Methods—and things began to fall into place. Kent was, as Anne-Marie remembers, "very intelligent and a great communicator—exactly what we were looking for."

The biggest reason that YWCA needed RBP Methods and Sage MIP Fund Accounting was simplicity and user-friendliness. They had gone through a change in business systems once

RBP METHODS

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Company Profile

Type of Organization

Nonprofit Organization
Eliminating Racism and
Empowering Women

Headquarters

Walla Walla, Washington

System Profile

Sage MIP Fund

Accounting

General Ledger
Accounts Payable
Accounts Receivable
Billing
Bank Reconciliation
Payroll
Data Import/Export

before and employees had been unhappy about learning something new. Anne-Marie did not want to put them through the same situation again, so her primary goal was to make not only the program, but also its adoption, user-friendly. “We needed a system that didn’t require an accounting degree,” she recalls.

Kent and RBP quickly put those worries to rest. He stunned the people of YWCA by spending more than two days learning their organization and mapping it to get the best results out of the program. From that point forward, all decisions and questions referred back to the map he had drawn, making the entire project clear, organized and straightforward. He was also very intentional about training, heading up all of it himself, to guarantee that their staff understood the new program and had an easy transition from the old system.

Most importantly, however, was the level of expertise that RBP brought. Kent worked to bring together all the various parts of their organization within one program, as each facet needed to function differently depending on the individual income and spending allotments. In the end, he was able to completely automate all of the Accounts Receivable functionality. Of this Anne-Marie reflects, “The great thing about Kent is that he’s not only highly proficient, but he can also communicate on a level everyone can understand. This made the entire process and installation a smooth one.”

YWCA Focuses on Work Rather than Business

As it turns out, Sage MIP Fund Accounting was exactly what YWCA of Walla Walla needed to streamline their multi-faceted business. Thanks to RBP Methods, they were able to eliminate their spreadsheet use, thereby cutting back on labor and lowering the possibility of error, and they were finally able to effortlessly track their grants—all with extreme ease for all users. Kent himself was most pleased at the opportunity to “help them get hold of their tasks, learn new things, and structure their data in a more beneficial way.”

Now YWCA is saving time and effort that can be put back into the programs they run for the women of their community. Anne-Marie remembers spending two and a half days reconciling accounting spreadsheets every month. Now the whole process takes her less than half a day! She estimates saving \$25,000 in that area alone since the implementation in 2001. The level of improvement was a shock to everybody, remembers Anne-Marie, “We knew RBP Methods would help us save time—we just didn’t realize we would save *so much* of it.”

RBP Methods is a consulting company helping nonprofit and governmental agencies sort through complex technical decisions by providing quality services and products either directly or through our wide network of associated firms. We offer a variety of services for organizations facing technology changes.

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