

JOB FUTURES HIRES ADAPTIVE PLANNING TO REDUCE OPERATIONAL COSTS



Job Futures
Sydney, Australia
Non-Profit

Challenges:

- Run a far-reaching non-profit organization on a lean budget
- Increase efficiency and cut costs through shared services arrangements
- Eliminate reporting delays caused by spreadsheets

Why Adaptive Planning:

- Provides the flexibility to run multiple forecasts and budgets and to upload data from a Sage financial system
- Offers fast, easy implementation and end-user training
- Combines an online delivery model with the robustness to handle complex business models and a geographically dispersed network organization

Results:

- Streamlined quarterly forecasting process from 300 hours to 60, and from 10 days of preparation to 5
- Established a single version of the budget, replacing four different spreadsheet-based versions
- Eliminated numerous manual steps from the budgeting process

Introduction

Job Futures is Australia's only national network of community-based and not-for-profit organizations that provide employment, training and related services. With a goal of helping disadvantaged job seekers across Australia achieve lasting and meaningful employment, Job Futures subcontracts out to 54 member organizations. Through these organizations, Job Futures operates from more than 160 locations across Australia.

Established in 1997, Job Futures has 65 employees and an operating budget of \$60 million. The national office is located in Sydney, with additional locations in Melbourne, Brisbane, Perth and Canberra.

The Challenge

When members of Australia's disabled and disadvantaged community need help finding work, Job Futures aims to deliver. The organization offers local employment expertise through its many member organizations—a structure that provides a distinct competitive advantage but also presents budgetary challenges.

"Although our annual budget is \$60 million, we pay out 95 percent of that to our members," says Stuart Tabrett, CFO, Job Futures. "So, while we're handling 5,000 transactions per month, we have to run our business on the resources of a \$3 million organization."

Seeking to improve efficiency and cut costs, Job Futures set out to consolidate common purchasing and shared services arrangements. In particular, Job Futures wanted to minimize manual data entry and streamline its reporting process.

"Our members are small organizations that often lack the ability to improve their own cost structures," Tabrett explains. "Our goal was to develop a suite of products and shared services arrangements that could benefit all of them. In the process, we hoped to get away from spreadsheets and eliminate the one-week wait for reports to be produced."

"Adaptive Planning makes it easier to drill into information and see what went wrong or right. Managers can log in to see how their numbers will be reported. It's always a revelation when they see that information come up on screen."

— Stuart Tabrett, CFO, Job Futures

“With Adaptive Planning, we load the forecast data and start reporting against it right away. We’ve dropped from 300 hours spent reforecasting to 60 hours. That frees up a lot of time for analyzing numbers.”

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“There’s nothing worse than going into a board meeting and having everyone comment on the copy-and-paste mistakes you made. With Adaptive Planning, there’s no longer any question that our numbers will be accurate. We make changes in one place—not in four different spreadsheets.”

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The Solution

Job Futures began to look for an online budgeting, forecasting and reporting solution that would be easy to use across its many locations. The system needed to be highly secure, yet also flexible enough to allow multiple forecasts and budgets and integrate with a Sage ACCPAC finance system. Job Futures turned to Knowledge Solutions, an independent reseller and implementation consultant, for help and found that only Adaptive Planning fit the bill.

“Adaptive Planning met all of our requirements,” says Tabrett. “Although it is delivered online and is highly flexible, it’s not a lightweight product by any means. Even in our complex business model, it does everything we need it to do.”

With the help of Knowledge Solutions, Job Futures went live on Adaptive Planning in under two months. The system’s intuitive Excel-style interface allowed employees to quickly adopt the application through online training.

“I’ve never come across another budgeting system that’s flexible enough to let you do system training over the Web,” says Tabrett. “I’ve been really impressed with the training, the software and the speed of implementation. Normally, you have to chase people for help, but with Adaptive Planning, I’ve never had to do that.”

The Results

The Adaptive Planning implementation came at a time when Job Futures was transitioning from biweekly to semiweekly payments to its member organizations. Job Futures needed a system that would make it easier to record these changes in the budget and enable quarterly forecasting across its 160 member sites.

“Compared to spreadsheets, Adaptive Planning saves a lot of unnecessary steps in updating the budget,” says Tabrett. “Once you’ve set up your template, there’s no need to create new files, copy data and reformat everything.”

Adaptive Planning has also helped Job Futures establish a single version of the financial truth. The organization used to maintain several versions of its spreadsheet-based budget, and had to spend considerable time checking links.

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“With Adaptive Planning, we load the forecast data and start reporting against it right away,” says Tabrett. “It used to take me three weeks-- 300 hours—to reforecast. Now we do it in 60 hours. That frees up a lot of time for analyzing numbers.”

“Adaptive Planning makes it easier to drill into information and see what went wrong or right,” says Tabrett. “Our information is no longer locked in 15-megabyte files that are too big to email. Managers can log in to see how their numbers will be reported. It’s always a revelation when they see that information come up on screen.”



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