

## ERP Consultancy Gains Powerful Scenario Modeling with Move from NetSuite to Sage Intacct Budgeting and Planning

The Answer Company

### Challenges

#### New Efficiency Frees Up 80% of Time at The Answer Company

Since 1995, The Answer Company has helped nearly 1,700 organizations in Canada deploy and optimize financial management solutions. The ERP consulting firm is a longtime partner of Sage Group plc, and a reseller partner of Sage Intacct since 2018. These relationships have fueled rapid growth in revenue — roughly doubling in each of the past five years. Based in Vancouver, The Answer Company has been expanding eastward, with offices in Edmonton, Calgary, Winnipeg, and Toronto. A growing lineup of partner products, services, and customers brought new financial complexity to the professional services firm.

The Answer Company faced multiple challenges in its previous environment of Oracle NetSuite solutions — including the core NetSuite product for accounting, NetSuite Planning and Budgeting, and NetSuite's OpenAir professional services automation (PSA) solution. User acceptance was poor, and the CFO, George Lawton, found himself spending 80% of his time pulling raw data from the various NetSuite modules and combining it in Excel. The Answer Company was briefly a NetSuite partner, but that relationship ended in part because the consultancy found that other cloud ERP solutions offered better ROI to customers — in particular, Sage Intacct.

Building on its longtime Sage partnership, The Answer Company became both a Sage Intacct customer and reseller partner. "I felt Sage Intacct was a better product than NetSuite," Lawton said. "Sage Intacct has everything we needed from an accounting perspective, and it's purely focused on financials." Lawton eliminated that manual NetSuite drain of 80% of his time when The Answer Company replaced its NetSuite lineup with the Sage Intacct GL and its Projects module to take over project accounting from OpenAir, as well as Sage Intacct Budgeting and Planning. The firm is now thriving with more flexible and insightful budgeting, streamlined financials, and new data-driven business insights.

### Solutions

#### Slashing Admin Effort in Half for Strategic Scalability

With more than two decades of financial leadership experience, Lawton has used a variety of budgeting tools, from complex systems like Oracle Hyperion to basic Excel budgeting. Sage Intacct Budgeting and Planning stands out to him with its exceptional ease of use and robust scenario modeling capabilities. Lawton uses a range of flexible models to forecast revenue, accounting for consulting hours by implementation projects, post-go live support, and overhead. Applying utilization percentages enables Lawton to easily separate implementation and support hours.

Budget planning is now much easier. For example, when reviewing a recent budget draft, the CEO felt estimated revenue was too high. Lawton simply dialed back utilization rate assumptions to



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### Company Overview

With nearly 90 team members, The Answer Company offers a full range of advisory, implementation, and support services that help its Canadian clients transform financial management. Learn more at [www.theanswerco.com](http://www.theanswerco.com).

### Executive Summary

#### Previous Budgeting Software:

- Oracle NetSuite Planning and Budgeting

#### Results with Sage Intacct:

- On track for 90% faster budget creation
- Flexibility to easily build and adapt scenario models
- More timely and insightful budget vs. actuals reporting
- Eliminated manual work that consumed 80% of time

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revise total revenue projections into an agreed upon level. "What's different from the past is that I can run scenarios, change the utilization factor, and see in real time what the differences are," Lawton said. "All you have to do is tweak your assumptions and it rolls all the way through. It's very cool."

The ease of use in scenario planning is seen throughout Sage Intacct Budgeting and Planning, said Lawton, who self-taught himself the system relying solely on its Help files. "I found Sage Intacct Budgeting and Planning to be extremely easy to get up to speed with, very intuitive, and very easy to use," the CFO said.

The Answer Company has new ability for monthly budget vs. actuals reporting, versus the annual reporting of the past, with its combination of Sage Intacct Budgeting and Planning, and the core Sage Intacct for the GL, project accounting, and reporting. That allows for more in-stream agility based on timely data, better reforecasting, and closer collaboration with leaders across the company. New insights also stand to help The Answer Company optimize resource allocations and adapt as conditions change. "The combined Sage Intacct solution equips us to better support the business with strategic thinking and decision making," Lawton said. "From a strategic information point of view, we're in a better position to manage through something like a pandemic."

### Results

#### Gaining Pinpoint Predictability for Improved Decision-Making

The Sage Intacct budgeting solution also proved far more flexible and granular in handling multiple products and groups, as well as breakdowns of consulting staff time. That agility was missing in NetSuite Planning and Budgeting, which limited Lawton to high-level percentage changes in annual budget preparation without ability to adjust at line-item levels. Meanwhile, building The Answer Company budgets in Excel was difficult and time consuming, and produced oversimplified budgets. Wizard-driven budget creation in Sage Intacct Budgeting and Planning got Lawton off to a fast start, and data exchange between the Sage Intacct GL and budgeting module was quick and seamless.

"Any time I approached a budget or forecast in the past, I felt like I was at the bottom of a mountain looking at a long, tough hike to the top," Lawton said. "I feel like I'm at the top of the mountain already with Sage Intacct Budgeting and Planning. All I need to do is tweak a few things and I've finished the task." Having built the 2021 budget in his first use of Sage Intacct Budgeting and Planning, Lawton expects that future budgeting will be 80% to 90% faster than was possible in NetSuite or Excel.

The Answer Company's use of Sage Intacct Budgeting and Planning extends its success with Sage Intacct for GL and project accounting, rolled out several months earlier. An upcoming integration between Sage Intacct and a payments processing solution from Sage Intacct partner 2CP is expected to eliminate an additional eight hours of manual data entry each week. And the core Sage Intacct platform gives Lawton a dashboard with bank balances, AR/AP, revenue trends, and hours billed and utilized. That adds up to better insights across the business. "The reporting in Sage Intacct on budgeted vs. actual time is a lot easier than it was in NetSuite," Lawton said. "It's also easier to track both software and services revenue in Intacct Projects, whereas with NetSuite we could only track the services piece. So we get a much better picture of project profitability."

*"Sage Intacct Budgeting and Planning makes it very easy to add a product, update a budget, or push budget details to Sage Intacct for reporting. The combined Sage Intacct solution equips us to better support the business with strategic thinking and decision making."*



George Lawton,  
CFO, The Answer  
Company



THE ANSWER COMPANY

## About The Answer Co

The Answer Company is a leading supplier of business management software and technology consulting services. Since 1994, it has been helping businesses answer the difficult questions with regards to investments in technology and information systems. Working from offices across Canada, they serve national & international clients with a wide range of ERP solutions and numerous complimentary solutions that are powerful & flexible, and backed by industry expertise. The Answer Company's goal is to make businesses more successful at what they do and gain confidence to make profitable moves in their respective industries.

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For more info, visit: [www.theanswerco.com/](http://www.theanswerco.com/)

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