Pizza Pilgrims adds flavour to its finances with Sage

The brand's collection of pizzerias freshens up its financial reporting with graduation from Xero to Sage Intacct

"It's so impactful for the business in making the right decisions, I'd 100% recommend Sage Intacct."

Sophie Gilchriest
Finance Director, Pizza Pilgrims

The Challenge
As the brand opened more pizzerias, the existing accounting software Xero could not handle multi-entry reporting easily and was creating limitations. At the same time, Pizza Pilgrims wanted to switch to a 4-4-5 calendar which its current software could not support.

The Solution
Sage Intacct had the power and capabilities to scale with the brand as it grew, support multi-site operations, streamline reporting processes and cleverly integrate with the POS till systems located within the individual pizzerias branches.

The Result
Sage Intacct has improved the creation of board reports with more accurate, real time data, saving at least half a day a month. Other time savings are freeing up the finance team to provide more value to the brand through analysis of the figures, elevating their position.

- Helped reduce month-end close from 10 days to 5 days.
- Ability to integrate POS system will create rich sales data.
- Data access in real-time informs better decision making.

Company
Pizza Pilgrims

Location
United Kingdom

Industry
Food and beverage

Sage Products
Sage Intacct

Sage Partner
PwC

PIZZA PİLGRİMS

About Pizza Pilgrims
Founded in 2011, Pizza Pilgrims has grown from a travelling pizza van to a group of 20 pizzerias in London, Oxford, Cambridge and Brighton.

Sage

Switching to a retail calendar month required the right software

Due to the nature of how each pizzeria reported its figures, the Pizza Pilgrims finance team decided to move from working in traditional calendar months, to what is known as a 4-4-5 calendar. Commonly used in retail, the 4-4-5 calendar divides the year into four quarters of three months; the first month has four weeks, the second has four weeks, and the last has five weeks. Occasionally the twelfth month has an additional week. However, Pizza Pilgrims' existing accounting system Xero could not adapt to the new reporting periods.

"It was the right choice for the brand to make the switch to a 4-4-5 reporting style because we work in defined weeks and having a month end in the middle of a week was a nightmare," explains Pizza Pilgrims' Finance Director Sophie Gilchriest. "But all of a sudden, our Xero software just didn't catch up. It was never designed for 4-4-5."

At the same time, Pizza Pilgrims was expanding and opening more pizzerias – both in London and beyond - but its existing Xero software was unable to handle multi-site scaling. "There were limitations on what we were able to report, and month end became very cumbersome," recalls Sophie. "Xero just couldn't handle the volume of data we now had, and downloading everything into a spreadsheet was painful," Sophie adds.

Powerful accounting solution with all the right ingredients

Sophie knew that month end did not have to be a laborious two-week process so was keen to migrate to a new financial management system that could help shorten their month end. She also needed it to be a cloud-based system as the finance team work on Apple Macs and a lot of desktop accounting software is originally built for PC users.

"We had a combination of requirements but cost was also a consideration as we were stepping up to a whole new level of accounting to match the scaling up of the company," says Sophie.

Researching the available options, Sophie came across Sage Intacct and knew it was the perfect recipe for success. Partnered with Sage implementation partner PwC, the transition from Xero to Sage Intacct went smoothly and on time. "We had weekly meetings and PwC set us actions to do each week, which really kept the project moving," says Pizza Pilgrims Financial Controller Laura Burns.

She adds that PwC really helped hold the Pizza Pilgrims team accountable and minimised the transition period. "It meant we didn't need to run both the old and new system side by side; we were able to reach a point where we switched straight over to Sage Intacct," says Laura.

Sage

The time savings created by the automation of reports within Sage Intacct has allowed Pizza Pilgrims to add more value to the brand.

Faster and more detailed board reports

Since upgrading to Sage Intacct, weekly management reports are more detailed and up-to-the-minute because Sage Intacct updates in real time, unlike the previous static data that was generated from spreadsheets. It's also streamlined the whole process of creating board packs, saving at least half a day.

"Laura creates our board packs and I review them," explains Sophie. "Previously, if I found an error or something that wasn't aligned, it would take Laura at least half a day to rerun the figures; now, with Sage Intacct, Laura can simply press a button to rerun the numbers and update the board pack within five minutes," says Sophie.

From Laura's perspective, Sage Intacct has provided her with more confidence that the figures are correct. "Using Excel there was more room for human error; now I'm much more confident in sending the reports," says Laura.

She also adds that the time savings created by the automation of reports within Sage Intacct will allow her to add more value to the brand going forwards. "As we develop the reporting that we do I will be able to take the time to analyse the data more and provide narrative around the figures for other people in the business who don't necessarily enjoy looking at figures," Laura explains.

Exciting API connectivity from the pizzerias will be a game changer

Through an API, Sage Intacct will allow all of the POS till systems located in the 20 Pizza Pilgrims branches to integrate with Sage Intacct, meaning that live sales data from each branch will be easily accessible in practically real time. This is the biggest enhancement that Sage Intacct makes possible and although yet to be implemented, both Sophie and Laura are excited for what it means once it is in place.

"Having the API will create endless possibilities," says Sophie. "Currently we only receive the sales data from each branch on a weekly basis; with the integration to Sage Intacct it will pull data every hour so managers will be able to see how the day's business is going and react to make informed decisions," Sophie adds.

Sophie believes it will also elevate the finance team in the eyes of the rest of the business, turning them from purely a processing function to a "value adding, strategic part of the business that can help shape decision making".

"As the finance team, we'll be able to add much more value to the reports we send out with live sales trends and will be able to provide commentary on the figures," she adds.

Sage

> "The quality of information we're giving our teams is so much higher and more reliable since we switched to Sage Intacct."

Laura Burns
Financial Controller, Pizza Pilgrims

The right choice at the right time

Asked what they would do if Sage Intacct was taken away from them tomorrow, Laura says "I'd cry" and Sophie says they simply "couldn't live without it now".

"The quality of the information we're giving our teams is so much higher and more reliable since we switched to Sage Intacct," says Sophie. "It also enables the business to make really informed decisions without the fear of any inaccuracies in the data," Sophie continues.

For Laura, one of the biggest benefits has been the time savings or as she describes it, "removing a lot of the clicks". "Everything is so much quicker as there's no more manual inputting and downloading of spreadsheets, it's all handled in one easy to use system that updates in real time," says Laura.

Being able to see reliable information in real time has made a huge difference to everyone from the finance team to the directors and the branch managers. "It's so impactful for the business in making the right choices and the right decisions," adds Sophie, "we would 100% recommend Sage Intacct."

Sage