

Fueling the Creative Process Through Data-Driven Financial Insight

Mob Scene



Challenges

Switching from the Rear-View to a Proactive Mindset

Mob Scene is an award-winning Hollywood marketing agency with over 120 talented “Mobsters,” who create bold and innovative advertising and promotions for the entertainment industry. The full-service firm produces trailers, creative content, digital and social campaigns, original programming, special shoots, and motion graphics for television networks, streaming services, major motion pictures, and brands. As a professional services organization, Mob Scene’s creative teams juggle 400 concurrent projects in any given month, and need to efficiently track and bill their time alongside project budgets and milestones.

A few years ago, this was a tedious process that required separate project creation, data entry, monitoring, and reconciliations in the company’s proprietary timekeeping solution and archaic on-premises accounting software. Mob Scene was spending over \$200,000 a year on consulting services just to extract data from these systems for basic financial statements. In order to become more data-driven and forward-looking, the finance team went in search of a robust ERP solution that would free them up by automating manual tasks and providing granular visibility into the business.

They evaluated, selected, and implemented Sage Intacct with the help of consulting partner RKL eSolutions. Thanks to the system’s integrated project accounting and time tracking workflows, the team went from dedicating around 90% of their time to administrative work down to only 40%, accelerated the financial close by 60%, and dramatically improved forecast accuracy.

Solutions

Slashing Admin Effort in Half for Strategic Scalability

By upgrading to Sage Intacct’s cloud-based financial management and project accounting solution, Mob Scene’s five-person accounting team gained agility and productivity amidst ever-changing customer expectations. “Our small team has room to scale with the business and is shifting energy into value-added activities, versus spending 90% of their time working through accounting checklist items. With Sage Intacct alleviating much of the administrative effort, we’re spending half the time on those processes and becoming strategic advisors,” noted Brett Abbey, Mob Scene’s CFO.

MOBSCENE

Company Overview

Mob Scene is a 140-employee, full-service creative agency that produces trailers, creative content, digital and social campaigns, original programming, special shoots, and motion graphics for major motion pictures, television networks, streaming services, and brands. The agency recently received 23 Clio Entertainment awards, including the Best Home Entertainment Campaign Grand Clio for its work on Bohemian Rhapsody, and was named a 2019 “Agency of the Year” finalist.

Executive Summary

Results with Sage Intacct:

- Reduced accounting administrative burden by 50%
- Embraced self-service reporting, avoiding \$200,000 in consulting costs
- Shortened month-end close by 60%
- Dropped cash forecasting variance to <3%

Sage Intacct's data and capabilities allow the agency to manage a very complex revenue landscape, spanning a mix of dynamic pricing models (fixed fee, time and materials, cost-plus, and retainer contracts), billing schedules (single payments, up-front deposits, deliverables-based, and percentage completion-based), project scopes and budgets, as well as revenue recognition requirements. Now the client billing team can manage all of these with one-third less staff, and the rest are freed up to support other areas of finance. The system gives Mob Scene the advantage of effortlessly adapting to each of these fluid, unique client demands as the business grows.

The finance team also benefits from Sage Intacct's integration with Concur for expense management, Nexonia for timekeeping, and a host of other specialized tools they plan to add in the years to come. These seamless, automated workflows helped them collapse the company's monthly close from 25 days to ten, so they're no longer waiting until the end of the following month to produce financials, or report out to the board and banks.

Results

Gaining Pinpoint Predictability for Improved Decision-Making

Abbey shared, "Now that our estimates are usually done within two days of the month-end, we can review various aspects of the business and fine-tune the details in department and producer meetings. Sage Intacct let us flip the deck from 'this is what happened' to 'we knew what was going to happen because we saw it happening,' and 'here are the decisions that will impact what's going to happen next.' That's been a big change for the organization."

As the team further explores Sage Intacct's capabilities, they are diving into its comprehensive view of company-wide performance across several dimensions. For example, Mob Scene's leaders can analyze financials by department, service line, or industry, and compare profitability across different project or client types, such as film studios, independents, telcos, streaming services, cable, parent companies, and more. And because they can do this quickly and easily, they're getting valuable intelligence into the hands of producers, regional managers, creative directors, and executives to make decisions that boost profit margins and resource utilization, for instance by decreasing focus on underperforming clients or services and reallocating resources elsewhere.

Luis Castaner, Mob Scene's controller, pointed out, "Sage Intacct lets us segment our numbers into P&Ls for each department and client, so we can provide all sorts of departmental reports and see which customers are growing, what their margins are, and which ones are coming back to us more often. Our managers simply click a report on their personalized Sage Intacct dashboard and have the information they need." As a result of this increased transparency, the finance team narrowed their forecasting variance dramatically, with actuals now coming in just a few points off initial expectations. This cash flow predictability not only ensures peace of mind, it helps department heads become more financially minded and make informed operational decisions about when to speed up or delay CapEx purchases.

“With our old system, it was cumbersome and slow to report out how the business performed in a prior period. Using Sage Intacct, we can dissect the data and roll it up in different ways, so we better understand dynamics surrounding our profit models, customer or project margins, project genres, and team resources. Today, finance leads the business with timely, pertinent insight into where we're going, and we have strategic conversations that drive a more efficient and collaborative organization.”



Brett Abbey,
CFO, Mob Scene

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