

California University Reduces Reporting from Weeks to Minutes with Adaptive Insights and Armanino

CASE STUDY

armanino 

At A Glance

Customer Profile:

Facilities Management Department manages, operates, maintains, and repairs the buildings, systems, equipment, and vehicles at the center of the school's more than 5000-acre campus. By relying on Armanino to customize and deploy the cloud-based Adaptive Insights within the department, the organization has greatly accelerated the financial reporting process and freed up staff to perform key analytical and strategic tasks.

Software & Services

- Adaptive Insights
- Armanino consulting and training services

Benefits

- Decreased time and effort spent on monthly reporting from weeks to minutes
- Gained more time for analysis of financial data
- Extended financial forecasting from four or five months out to between 18 months and two years; now using Adaptive Insights to facilitate long-range (five-year) forecasting

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-Finance Department Leadership

Challenge

The task of managing the operation, maintenance, and repair of the buildings, systems, equipment, and vehicles at the core of campus falls to the Facilities Management Department at this California University.

Not surprisingly, budgeting, forecasting, and reporting for that organization—which consists of separate operating departments for operations, custodial, and fleet services—require a gargantuan effort. Until recently that effort was carried out largely on Excel spreadsheets—a process that had become more and more cumbersome over time. According to leadership within the finance department, it took two weeks to produce reports, which meant that management wasn't seeing the previous month's report until the end of the subsequent month.

“We're a combined \$52 million dollar organization, and we didn't have time to analyze anything. We were just producing reports,” says department leadership. “We'd lose sleep before a big meeting worrying that we'd transposed a number. There were so many chances for error, it was terrifying.”

Solution

The finance team knew that the only way to have time to actually analyze financial and operational data rather than just report on it was to automate the reporting process. Thus began the search for a budgeting and forecasting tool that could integrate with the organization's existing applications, including Quali for their ERP system and be used without constantly involving IT.

The selection process was simple. “We had already come across Adaptive Insights in our preliminary research, and it sounded like exactly what we wanted. The RFP process confirmed that Adaptive Insights provided what we wanted at the price we needed,” says department leadership. “Best of all, it's a cloud-based solution—meaning no IT work or updates.”

To make the most out of the highly flexible Adaptive Insights, though, Facilities needed to configure the solution to the department's unique needs. For that, it partnered with Armanino, the largest independent accounting and business and technology consulting firm in California and one of the largest firms in the U.S., with deep finance and accounting expertise. “Armanino set up an initial face-to-face meeting, and we knew from the start that the Armanino consultants had the expertise and experience we needed,” says department leadership. “Armanino made a concerted effort to understand our business. They questioned our processes, gave advice, and got the solution to work the way we needed it to.”

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**-Finance Department
Leadership**

Results

Today, when department leaders describe the Adaptive Insights/Armanino solution to their peers, they readily admit that it’s been nothing short of life changing for the team. “Before, we were glorified report writers,” says department leadership. “Now we’re analysts—and that’s all thanks to Adaptive Insights and Armanino. While it used to take weeks to complete our monthly financial reporting, it now takes just minutes.”

The Facilities Management Department has also been using the Adaptive Insights to update its internal chargeback rates—another time-consuming process previously performed with spreadsheets. Says department leadership, “With the rates coming directly out of the Adaptive Insights solution, it’s now just a matter of extracting them and putting them into the rate system. Now, we can perform what-if scenarios while we’re working on annual rate changes—which means that what used to be a couple-month process can now be performed with the push of a button when we get close to the new fiscal year.”

Now it’s a matter of discovering all of the other things the organization can do with the solution. Says department leadership, “We initially thought we would use Adaptive Insights for budgeting, updating forecasts, and reporting. However, once Armanino customized it to our needs, all sorts of light bulbs began to go off. Thanks to the training Armanino provided and the flexibility of the solution, we’ve become self-sufficient enough to start building our own reports.”

Next Steps

While the Facilities Management Department was the first organization on campus to begin using Adaptive Insights, the solution is now starting to catch on in other departments as well.

As for the finance department, next up is building a long-range plan using Adaptive Insights. “We’re currently forecasting out between 18 months and two years,” says department leadership. “Whereas before we could only forecast four or five months out. Now, the assistant vice chancellor wants a five-year plan, and we’re going to use Adaptive Insights to provide it.”

About Armanino

Armanino provides an integrated set of accounting services—audit, tax, consulting and technology solutions—to a wide range of organizations operating both in the US and globally. You can count on Armanino to think strategically, to provide the sound insights that lead to positive action. We address not just your compliance issues, but your underlying business challenges, as well—assessing opportunities, weighing risks, and exploring the practical implications of both your short- and long-term

decisions. When you work with us, we give you options that are fully aligned with your business strategy. If you need to do more with less, we will implement the technology to automate your business processes. If it's financial, we can show you proven benchmarks and best practices that can add value company-wide. If the issue is operational, we'll consult with your people about workflow efficiencies. If it's compliance, we'll ensure you meet the requirements and proactively plan to take full advantage of the changes at hand. At every stage in your company's lifecycle, we'll help you find the right balance of people, processes, and technology.

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