

Best Western Premier Resort Cuts Monthly Close in Half, Saves 20 Hours a Week

CASE STUDY



armanino 

At A Glance

Customer Profile:

Best Western Premier Grand Canyon Squire Inn is a privately owned resort-style hotel with multiple revenue centers, including restaurants, bars, a bowling center, a gift shop and more. Because of the shortcomings of its legacy accounting system, the accounting team at the resort had to use manual, repetitive processes and spreadsheets. The result was a monthly close that took 10 days, leaving no time for other important activities such as planning, internal controls and audits. Armanino helped the resort streamline and automate its financial processes with Sage Intacct and BlackLine.

Software & Services

- Sage Intacct
- BlackLine
- Armanino Sage Intacct-BlackLine Integration Pack
- Armanino consulting, implementation, integration, and training services

Benefits

- Reduces the time to close by 50 percent
- Saves 20 hours per week by eliminating repetitive, manual work
- Gives department leaders access to real-time financial performance data

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-Marti Olson

Challenge

The BW Premier Collection by Best Western is a group of carefully curated hotels with identities tied to the unique personality of each hotel's location. For the Best Western Premier Grand Canyon Squire Inn, that location is a World Heritage site with more than 6 million visitors annually. Located near the Grand Canyon National Park, the Grand Canyon Squire Inn is a resort-style hotel with 318 rooms, three restaurants, bars, lounges, indoor and outdoor pools, a bowling center, a coffee shop, a gift shop and more.

Managing and reporting on the accounting and financial processes for a property of the Grand Canyon Squire Inn's size and complexity is no small task, especially without the right technology to automate and streamline the effort. Working with a legacy accounting system and relying on spreadsheets and manual reconciliations, it would take the resort's accounting team as many as 10 days each month to close the books.

"We had to re-enter data multiple times into multiple systems as part of the close," says Marti Olson, director of finance at the Grand Canyon Squire Inn. "The repetitive processes, and lack of automation and integration meant that we were wasting as much as two weeks of the team's time each month." Because the resort's accounting staff couldn't begin processing the current month until the previous one was closed, they began each month already two weeks behind schedule.

"It took me an entire day just to handle the income journals and revenue transfers," says Alicia Sheppard, accounting department manager at the Grand Canyon Squire Inn. "Payroll journal entry took another four hours of work."

Solution

After evaluating accounting software solutions, the accounting team chose Sage Intacct, a cloud-based financial management solution. "Sage Intacct was the best choice for us because of its robust purchasing platform, analytics and dashboards with real-time data to help us run the business, and a centralized place for all of our financial information," says Olson.

To implement its new financial system, the resort turned to Armanino. One of the 25 largest independent accounting and consulting firms in the U.S., the firm is an end-to-end Sage Intacct implementation, customization and integration consulting provider.

"My team and I had never implemented new software before and didn't know what to expect," says Olson. "But Armanino was amazing to work with. They were extremely patient with us, helped us learn along the way, and used their deep knowledge of both accounting practices and the software to help us realize our vision of what the system could do for us."

"If you're not using Sage Intacct and BlackLine, you should be. It's ideal for full-service hotels with multiple revenue centers. Our only regret is that we waited so long to implement it."

-Marti Olson

When the Armanino team realized that the Grand Canyon Squire Inn's monthly close was mostly manual and painfully inefficient, they suggested that the resort consider implementing BlackLine, a software platform that helps companies automate their financial close. Olson and her team agreed, and Armanino implemented both Sage Intacct and BlackLine, as well as custom integrations and the Armanino Sage Intacct-BlackLine Integration Pack.

Olson had three main goals for the new software implementation and integration:

- Reduce the time and effort to complete the month-end financial close
- Eliminate redundant work by automating as much as possible
- Become as paperless as possible, significantly reducing the amount of paper the accounting team needs to generate and handle each month

Results

Armanino helped the resort meet all of its goals and deliver wide-reaching benefits that help the company run its business more effectively. "With our streamlined and automated financial processes, we're saving 20 hours of work every week," says Olson. "Now our financial close is finished in just four or five days, without our team working weekends."

Armanino integrated Sage Intacct with the resort's property management system, Oracle OPERA, which eliminated the need to use spreadsheets to transfer journal entries. "Our journal entries from OPERA are added to Sage Intacct with the push of a button," says Sheppard. "It's all handled automatically now."

In addition to the massive time savings, resort executives and managers now have access to real-time data and dashboards. "Armanino understood exactly what I wanted and created our dashboards to deliver what our department heads need," says Olson. "For the first time, directors can see their profit and loss in real time and make informed business decisions on a daily basis instead of waiting for a paper report three weeks later."

Olson and her team now have the time for critical work such as improving internal controls, implementing and conducting audits, training, and planning for projects. "Now that everything is automated, we can be proactive instead of reactive," she says.

Next Steps

With a modern technology stack in place for the finance function, Olson and her group can now support future business growth, be it new revenue centers or additional hotels. She's turning her attention to continued improvement of the company's purchasing processes.

Looking back on the implementation project, Olson gives this advice to other hospitality companies: "If you're not using Sage Intacct and BlackLine, you should be. It's ideal for full-service hotels with multiple revenue centers. Our only regret is that we waited so long to implement 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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