



## Foundation Cuts Costs by More than \$200,000 with New Financial Management

### Overview

**Country or Region:** United States

**Industry:** Nonprofit

### Customer Profile

With 40 years of experience providing services and acting as a national advocate, Seattle-based Casey Family Programs is the largest foundation focused solely on improving the lives of children and youth in foster care.

### Business Situation

Casey Family Programs found its PeopleSoft financial management software costly to maintain and difficult to use. Forced to upgrade or lose technical support, the organization sought other options.

### Solution

With the help of The Resource Group, Casey Family Programs deployed Microsoft® Business Solutions–Great Plains® and Microsoft reporting software to streamline the organization's financial and reporting functions.

### Benefits

- Reduced IT costs by U.S.\$180,000 annually
- Trimmed maintenance fees by \$25,000
- Cut check processing by 25 to 30 hours monthly
- Improved reporting
- Enhanced security

“It was amazing what we achieved in five months. And it actually cost us less to implement our Microsoft Great Plains solution than it would have to upgrade to the next version of PeopleSoft.”

*Jim Fimiani, Director of Accounting Operations, Casey Family Programs*

A not-for-profit private operating foundation, Casey Family Programs is dedicated to improving the lives of children and youth in foster care. The foundation aims to be a good steward of its resources by managing its finances wisely. But the PeopleSoft financial software that Casey used hindered that objective. The 35 accounting staffers found the application difficult to use, and it was expensive to maintain. When Casey was forced to make a costly upgrade or lose technical support for its aging software, the foundation explored other options and chose Microsoft® Business Solutions–Great Plains® for its financial management. As a result of the deployment, in just the first year the foundation saved U.S.\$25,000 in maintenance agreement fees, \$180,000 in information technology expenses, and 25 to 30 staff hours each month by streamlining a complex recurring process.



“The transition went so smoothly that it was anticlimactic. There were no critical issues. After their past experience with the other solution, people were surprised.”

Clayton King, Manager of Business Solutions,  
Casey Family Programs

## Situation

Casey Family Programs is the largest national foundation whose sole mission is to provide and improve—and ultimately prevent the need for—foster care. The foundation draws on its 40 years of experience and expert research and analysis to improve the lives of children and youth in foster care in two important ways: by providing direct services and support to foster families, and by promoting improvements in child welfare practice and policy. With a current endowment of U.S.\$2 billion, the Seattle-based foundation was established in 1966 by UPS Founder Jim Casey.

Unlike many not-for-profit organizations, Casey Family Programs operates almost exclusively on its investment earnings. Although financial activity is recorded in one fund, the organization has sophisticated internal and external reporting requirements. “In some of the states where we provide direct services, the foundation is required to submit routine cost reports on each youth served,” says Jim Fimiani, Director of Accounting Operations, Casey Family Programs. “It is a critical business requirement that we track and report financial activity for every individual youth in our direct care.”

As a result of this requirement, Casey Family Programs has a complex chart of accounts, and the majority of the transactions that accounting personnel enter into the financial system are associated with unique youth identification numbers known as youth IDs.

The PeopleSoft financial management software that the organization had implemented in 1999 handled the detailed tracking requirements, but it was not very efficient. For example, accounting staff found it time-consuming to process checks. On a monthly basis, the organization processes approximately 1,000 recurring payments to service

providers, vendors, and foster parents. But when changes occurred, the staff struggled with the software’s multistep process for making revisions to amounts, payees, and expense coding.

Casey Family Programs found the costs of upgrades and maintenance fees mounting, too. In 2002, PeopleSoft informed the foundation that it would have to upgrade to a new software version before long because the company would soon cease to support the version of the software that the foundation used.

Forced to upgrade its software or find another financial management solution, the management at Casey Family Programs decided to look for alternatives. Reviewing its business requirements, the foundation’s management concluded that it needed a solution that would help:

- Manage the foundation’s financial data more efficiently.
- Streamline accounting processes.
- Reduce the support costs of the financial management and reporting systems.

Another challenge that management faced was convincing staff of the need for a new financial system. With memories of the long, arduous, and frustrating implementation of the PeopleSoft software in 1999, several staff members approached management with serious concerns about another large deployment. “It was plain to all of us that, in addition to our other considerations, employee morale was riding on our decision,” says Fimiani.

## Solution

After comparing different solutions including an offering from Hyperion, Casey Family Programs chose The Resource Group (TRG), a Microsoft® Gold Certified Partner based in Seattle, to help implement Microsoft

“To migrate that much data and keep the relationships intact was an incredible challenge. But Microsoft Great Plains managed it.”

Marty Schillaci, President,  
The Resource Group

Business Solutions–Great Plains® version 7.5. Microsoft Great Plains appeared to fit the organization’s needs and fit well within the organization’s Microsoft Windows Server System™–based infrastructure, which includes the Microsoft Windows® 2000 Server operating system and SQL Server™ 2000 database. The infrastructure includes two Dell 4400 PowerEdge server computers to support 35 users of the accounting software.

Beginning in April 2003, seven IT professionals at TRG worked with six staff members from Casey Family Programs to put the solution in place. The group held weekly status meetings and communicated by e-mail and phone to keep its members informed and working together throughout the process.

The group formed a tight bond that contributed to the success of the implementation. “We worked together really well. Local support was important to us—and with TRG and Microsoft, we got both personalized service and a solution from a company that we had confidence in,” says Clayton King, Manager of Business Solutions at Casey Family Programs.

#### **Identifying Processes to Migrate**

First, the implementation group evaluated the business rules that would be carried over into Microsoft Great Plains. Because Casey Family Programs requires that financial transactions be tracked on an individual or youth-specific basis, the group had to ensure that the new solution could effectively and efficiently handle that requirement.

Instead of incorporating the youth ID in the account segment of the general ledger chart of accounts—as the foundation had done with its PeopleSoft software—TRG decided to use Dexterity® software for Microsoft Great Plains, available separately, to create a subsidiary ledger that would contain youth-

specific financial transactions. By providing this separate but integrated ledger database, Casey Family Programs eliminated the need to include the youth ID in the chart of accounts, which allowed for greater flexibility in the use of account segments. The foundation achieved these efficiencies without compromising the detailed reporting functionality.

#### **Developing Customizations and Migrating Data**

The second phase of the implementation, from April to August 2003, involved the most technical challenges. Casey Family Programs wanted to extract the records from all the modules in its PeopleSoft software and migrate that data to Microsoft Great Plains. Yet there are many more tables, or structures for sets of data, available in PeopleSoft than in Microsoft Great Plains. Consequently, the implementation group could not simply transfer data directly from PeopleSoft to a corresponding structure in the new solution. The data had to be entered into an entirely different database structure.

Casey Family Programs needed to maintain relationships between data in Microsoft Great Plains, as well. For example, if a staff person wanted to review a posted accounts payable (AP) transaction in PeopleSoft, he or she could view the general ledger and drill down to see the original AP transaction. The implementation group had to maintain similar relationships and functions within Microsoft Great Plains for a history of transactions dating back to 1994.

“To migrate that much data and keep the relationships intact was an incredible challenge,” says Marty Schillaci, President of The Resource Group. “But Microsoft Great Plains managed it.”

Maintaining the foundation’s accounting system security requirements presented

other challenges. For example, Casey Family Programs did not want an accountant who creates a journal entry for a financial transaction to have the clearance to post it to the general ledger. Therefore, the implementation group incorporated different levels of access into the new solution to maintain appropriate separation of duties.

#### **Testing in a Pilot Environment**

Casey Family Programs set up a pilot environment to test the Microsoft Great Plains solution. The joint implementation group from Casey Family Programs and TRG tested various functions by setting up different areas of the organization as individual companies in the software, and then merged the test databases into a single database—with all the security levels intact. The group tested three full data migrations to ensure that everything worked well before deploying the solution in the production environment.

#### **Providing Reporting Capabilities**

Casey Family Programs needed to provide for its extensive reporting requirements. The foundation deployed Microsoft Business Solutions for Analytics—FRx® Professional for its standard financial reporting and Microsoft Business Solutions for Analytics—Enterprise Reporting for budgeting and other management reports. Casey Family Programs also took advantage of the SmartList feature in Microsoft Great Plains, enabling staff to query the foundation's databases and save the extracted data to Microsoft Excel 2002 or Word 2002. A third-party reporting program, XL Reporter, was also deployed that works with Microsoft Great Plains and Excel so staff can manipulate data to see the impact of program changes.

As deployment proceeded, Casey Family Programs established a two-step budgeting process, using the Web Extension component of Microsoft Enterprise Reporting to give one person in each department access to a Web

form to input budget data. The Budget and Planning division then can run reports in Excel for such purposes as comparing budgeted numbers to actual expenses for a variety of specific budget items like youth-specific expenses, program expenses, and project expenses. Department personnel can view their data in a Web browser or run reports in Excel to work with the data.

#### **Completing the Deployment**

Casey Family Programs changed over to the new financial management system on September 2, 2003. "The transition went so smoothly that it was anticlimactic," says King. "There were no critical issues. After their past experience with the other solution, people were surprised."

#### **Benefits**

The day of the transition to the Microsoft Business Solutions software was just the first of many good days that Casey Family Programs experienced with its new financial management system. As the staff and management began to use the new software, the organization found that the solution required less training, substantially reduced support costs, streamlined accounting processes, and provided improved reporting.

#### **Ease of Use and Management**

Employees find the new financial management system easy to use and maintain. Users of Microsoft Great Plains can easily view transaction details and research accounting information. And because the software is easy to use, training time is less. With PeopleSoft, several employees had to repeatedly travel elsewhere to receive the training. With Microsoft Great Plains, training took place on site, reducing travel expenses and costs for training sessions.

The new solution's ease of use and management contributed to these additional savings and improvements:

- **Reduced IT costs by \$180,000 annually.**

Microsoft Great Plains requires fewer resources to maintain than PeopleSoft did. With the flexibility to customize the software as needs change, the foundation has pared the time and expense for managing the financial system.

- **Trimmed maintenance agreement fees by \$25,000.** By implementing Microsoft Great Plains, Casey Family Programs saved \$25,000 on maintenance agreement fees in just the first year.

- **Cut recurring check processing time by 25 to 30 hours per month.** Casey Family Programs now finds it easier to make changes such as adding or deleting payees or modifying distributions to recurring payments.

- **Reporting made easier—and more accurate.** By using Microsoft FRx and Microsoft Enterprise Reporting, which work efficiently with Microsoft Great Plains, Casey Family Programs can get the detailed information that it needs. And by using the SmartList feature, employees can easily and quickly create custom reports. XL Reporter helps field personnel view data in several ways to see how program changes made during the year will affect budgets, down to the level of each individual served. Because the raw data used in all reports is the same, the organization sees consistent, accurate information, no matter which reporting method is used.

- **Enhanced security with controlled access.** Because Casey Family Programs can easily control the levels of access for employees, limiting them to the areas directly related to their jobs, the foundation has improved security. Staffers work with and view only the data that is relevant to their positions.

### **Successful Implementation at Reasonable Cost**

With easy access to information and an implementation that was far more successful than anticipated, employee morale remains strong, and Casey Family Programs has improved its ability to perform. “It was amazing what we achieved in five months,” says Fimiani. “And it actually cost us less to implement our Microsoft Great Plains solution than it would have to upgrade to the next version of PeopleSoft. The cost savings that we experienced with the Microsoft Great Plains implementation helps us direct more resources to youth and families.”

## For More Information

For more information about Microsoft products and services, call the Microsoft Sales Information Center at (800) 426-9400. In Canada, call the Microsoft Canada Information Centre at (877) 568-2495. Customers who are deaf or hard-of-hearing can reach Microsoft text telephone (TTY/TDD) services at (800) 892-5234 in the United States or (905) 568-9641 in Canada. Outside the 50 United States and Canada, please contact your local Microsoft subsidiary. To access information using the World Wide Web, go to: [www.microsoft.com](http://www.microsoft.com)

For more information about The Resource Group products and services, call (425) 277-4760 or visit the Web site at: [www.resgroup.com](http://www.resgroup.com)

For more information about Casey Family Programs, call (206) 282-7300 or visit the Web site at: [www.casey.org](http://www.casey.org)

## Microsoft Business Solutions

Microsoft Business Solutions offer integrated business applications and services that allow small and midsize organizations and divisions of large enterprises to connect employees, customers, and suppliers for improved efficiency. The financial management, customer relationship management, supply chain management, and analytics applications work with other Microsoft software, including the Microsoft Office System and the Windows operating system, to streamline processes across an entire organization. This gives businesses insight to respond rapidly, plan strategically, and execute quickly. Microsoft Business Solutions are delivered through a worldwide network of channel partners that provide specialized services and local support tailored to a company's needs.

For more information about Microsoft Business Solutions, go to: [www.microsoft.com/businesssolutions](http://www.microsoft.com/businesssolutions)

### Software and Services

- Microsoft Business Solutions
  - Microsoft Business Solutions–Great Plains 7.5
  - Microsoft Business Solutions for Analytics–FRx Professional
  - Microsoft Business Solutions for Analytics–Enterprise Reporting
- Microsoft Excel 2002
- Microsoft Word 2002

- Microsoft Windows Server System
  - Microsoft Windows 2000 Server
  - Microsoft SQL Server 2000

### Hardware

Dell PowerEdge server computers

### Partner

- The Resource Group

© 2005 Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved. This case study is for informational purposes only. MICROSOFT MAKES NO WARRANTIES, EXPRESS OR IMPLIED, IN THIS SUMMARY.

Microsoft, Dexterity, FRx, Great Plains, Windows, and Windows Server System are either registered trademarks or trademarks of Microsoft Corporation, Microsoft Business Solutions ApS, or FRx Software Corporation or their affiliates in the United States and/or other countries. Microsoft Business Solutions ApS and FRx Software Corporation are subsidiaries of Microsoft Corporation. All other trademarks are property of their respective owners.