



NEXTSTEP Proves Its Worth To Bird-In-Hand Corporation

A Sage MAS 200 Solution

"NextStep has saved this company an enormous amount of time and money through process improvements both major and minor."

Client Profile

Wearry travelers on the Old Philadelphia Pike, moving west on horseback or in Conestoga wagons knew they had arrived at the Bird-In-Hand Inn when they saw the brightly painted sign featuring, not surprisingly, a man with one bird in his hand and a bush where two birds perched. Today's Bird-In-Hand Village Inn is beautifully restored and offers modern conveniences inconceivable in the 1700's, but the warm hospitality, homegrown foods, and restful lodging remain unchanged. The family-owned Bird-In-Hand Corporation now encompasses several inns and motels, as well as a restaurant, bakery and campground, all located in beautiful Lancaster County.

One Worthy Partner

"We fired at least four other resellers before we found NextStep," recounts Toni Tice, controller at Bird-In-Hand for the past 24 years. "I began to think we were just expecting too much from a business partner."

Exasperated by the lack of professional and personalized support from her company's Sage MAS 200 reseller, Tice began attending Sage MAS 200 user group meetings offered by NextStep Technology Advisors, one of Lancaster County's prominent Sage Software Business Partners. At one of the user group meetings, Tice mentioned a nagging printing issue to one of NextStep's consultants. The consultant offered to visit Bird-In-Hand the following day to diagnose and address the problem.

During the site visit, NextStep's consultant not only resolved the printing issue but also suggested

solutions for several other problems the company was experiencing with its software. NextStep's approach thoroughly impressed Tice, "I hadn't realized how much we'd been missing. No one had ever taken the time to understand our business and provide concrete recommendations about how we could improve our processes." Bird-In-Hand hired NextStep on the spot.

Improvements That Pay Off

For almost two decades, Bird-In-Hand has been using Sage MAS 200 to manage more than a dozen separate business operations and nine separate payrolls with nearly 450 employees. Payroll processing had always been time consuming. Each month, Tice used to spend over eight hours creating a consolidated 401(k) report for submittal to the company's retirement plan administrator. She had asked previous resellers for options to streamline the process, but all returned empty handed. When Tice presented the problem to NextStep they rose to the challenge.

NextStep developed a Microsoft Access database that consolidates payroll data from each of the nine separate Sage MAS 200 companies, creating a single file in the

precise format required by the 401(k) administrator. A tedious chore that once took eight hours to complete now takes about 20 minutes.

Another payroll issue Tice faced involved custom check history and labor distribution reports, used extensively to analyze and forecast labor requirements. The reports were hard-coded by a previous reseller, meaning that each time the company installed a new



NextStep provided Bird-In-Hand several time-saving solutions to long standing problems.

version of Sage MAS 200, the reports had to be manually revised for the new version. Bird-In-Hand had to pay for and wait for the report upgrades before installing the new version of Sage MAS 200.

NextStep took a decidedly different approach and rewrote the reports using Crystal Reports®. They now require only minimal attention during upgrades of the accounting software, saving Bird-In-Hand time, money, and frustration.

Bird-In-Hand uses Microsoft Excel to plan and prepare financial budgets for each of its companies. Using an import utility written by a previous reseller, Tice would import those budget numbers into the corresponding Sage MAS 200 companies. Frustrated by a flaw in the import program that prevented certain general ledger accounts from being imported, Tice asked NextStep for assistance.

NextStep's consultants designed a new import process that performs flawlessly. One click within Excel exports the data and another quick step in the Sage MAS 200 General Ledger module validates and imports the data rapidly and accurately. The import can be run at any time, making budget adjustments quick and easy to accomplish.

Over the course of many years of utilizing Sage MAS 200, Bird-In-Hand's invoice and payroll history files had grown to be huge and cumbersome. Some reports literally took hours to compile and print. NextStep's consultants strategically purged obsolete data from the burgeoning data files, retaining pertinent history while streamlining report generation. Now the longest report is ready in just a few moments.

Tice is constantly impressed by the professionalism and genuine interest NextStep's consultants exhibit, "I feel like NextStep truly cares about our business. They recognize that we've made a big investment in the software and infrastructure and they work to ensure that our investment pays off."

Conscientious Support

Year end is a busy time for most companies, and Bird-In-Hand is no exception. The fiscal year of five of its subsidiaries is based on the calendar year, while its other companies use different fiscal calendars. In addition, all nine companies need to print W-2 forms. Tice clearly recalls her exasperation one year as she scrambled to make the form changes required by the IRS to all nine of her payroll companies.

"I just couldn't get all of them to look the same," she recalls, "and I was running out of time." One call to NextStep resulted in a consultant on site who quickly and expertly laid out each company's W-2 form in the required layout. "NextStep responded immediately to my call for help."

While NextStep's hourly consulting and support rates may be higher than some of the other resellers Bird-In-Hand has employed, Tice insists that she ends up incurring lower overall costs since NextStep is the most efficient and capable organization of any she has



Bird-In-Hand Corporation has found a business partner to suit its needs with NextStep.

worked with.

"NextStep is worth paying for," says Tice, "Their work is done right the first time, every time."

Reaping The Benefits

To help Bird-In-Hand address its current needs and achieve its strategic goals, NextStep has unleashed the power of Sage MAS 200 through additional user training. Additionally, NextStep expanded the system's functionality beyond its original design by making extensive use of reporting and integration tools.

Bird-In-Hand Corporation is very pleased to have NextStep as a business partner. Tice believes that NextStep is truly committed to her company's success, "NextStep has saved this company an enormous amount of time and money through process improvements,

Headquartered in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, our firm has specialized in Sage MAS 90 and Sage MAS 200 by Sage Software since 1989.

Our extensive experience, exceptional service, and broad expertise assure you of our ability to harness information technology to help your business.

If you would like to streamline your operation, we would like to talk to you. Maybe you will be our next success story!



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