CUSTOMER SUCCESS STORY

MAS 500

CUSTOMER

San Francisco Opera
www.sfopera.com

CORPORATE PROFILE

Headquarters
San Francisco, California

Type of Business
Non-profit arts organization

Number of Locations
One

Number of Employees
125 full time year round
1,000 seasonal

Operating Budget
$56.5 million

SYSTEM PROFILE

Computer System
Microsoft Windows NT
Users on system: approx. 150

MAS 500 Modules in Operation
- Accounts Payable
- Cash Management
- eExecutive
- General Ledger

Applause for MAS 500 at San Francisco Opera

Carmen. Aida. The Magic Flute. Over the years, millions of music aficionados have enjoyed masterpieces like these at the San Francisco Opera, one of the world's most acclaimed and best-loved opera companies.

San Francisco Opera prides itself on a rich and varied repertoire, with 10 to 11 different productions and over 80 performances on its main stage every season. Because opera is such a complex art form, each performance requires mind-boggling logistics. Star singers, orchestra, chorus, dancers, lighting, scenery, costumes, publicity and ticket sales are all carefully coordinated, so that multiple productions can be running and in rehearsal phases at any given time. The result of meticulous organization is evident when the curtain goes up, and the audience is spellbound by the company's illustrious performers and the power of their artistry.

Behind the Curtains

The Finance Department within the San Francisco Opera faces a monumental task every season, tracking and reporting revenues and costs of mainstage productions, documenting costs of educational and other programs, and accounting for ticket sales, contributions and other sources of revenue. Forecasting is a crucial task, as individual line items for each of 18 departments, 82 sub-departments, and 11 productions must be budgeted at least three years in advance.

The opera's accounting structure reflects the diversity of the company itself, with vastly different requirements for each department, and hundreds of separate accounts for specialized needs. The Technical Department may track carpentry, electronics, sound and painting costs, for instance, while the Costume, Wardrobe and Wig Department tracks

CHALLENGE
Replace old system with a sophisticated business solution that can provide advanced reporting, forecasting and revenue and cost tracking for a complex $56 million operation.

SOLUTION
MAS 500 financial modules.

RESULTS
Comprehensive reporting, auditing and analysis; Flexible and easy customization; Complete management of 20,000+ active accounts; Precise cost and revenue tracking; Improved forecasting; More strategic management.

costume design, production and fittings. Departments must budget and assign costs to numerous productions in current and future fiscal years. A sophisticated system is needed to organize this tremendous volume of complex information.

World Class Performance

Mark Gorman, controller for the San Francisco Opera, led an interdisciplinary team in investigating several business management systems to replace an outdated accounting package. They selected MAS 500 for its overall flexibility and comprehensive reporting features, and went live with the new system on the first day of the new fiscal year.

"MAS 500 gives our accounting staff a user-friendly means of producing high-quality work quickly and efficiently," notes Gorman. "It provides sophisticated reporting tools that allows us to develop meaningful management reports on a timely basis."

Gorman cites the design of MAS 500 accounting structure as one of the key features that distinguish it from many other software packages in its price range. "We can define various segments for our departments, subdepartments, accounts and productions, and combine values from each segment to create individual accounts. This table-driven structure greatly reduces the likelihood of creating erroneous accounts. We can accurately maintain more than 20,000 active accounts. Using this large and highly organized account structure, we are able to develop a wide variety of financial reporting models."

Before the advent of MAS 500 at the Opera, financial statements derived directly from the accounting system were limited to a few basic reports. More complex analyses had to be done manually or through spreadsheets.

"Now we are able to design special reports as needed," explains Gorman. "We can now track costs for each department by opera production. Any anomalous information jumps right out at us. If an account has a large balance when it shouldn't at a particular time of the production cycle, we can check into the matter and take immediate action."

Before acquiring MAS 500, the Opera prepared financial statements in an audited format only once a year. Now an automatic report is generated every month. The result is a high-level financial overview available throughout the year. Gorman says that this will improve management of the organization's financial resources, and help prepare for the annual year-end audit.

"I'm definitely happy with the choice to go with MAS 500," Gorman notes. "A world-class opera company must maintain a high level of excellence and sophistication in every aspect of its operations. Best helps us achieve that goal."