



AAFCPAs

great minds | great hearts



Client Success Story:

Systematic Success: Selecting the Right Accounting System to Support the Mission

Systemic Success: How AAFCPAs helped the National Brain Tumor Society select the right accounting system to support the mission



When AAFCPAs learned that one of its nonprofit audit clients sought to create efficiencies in producing meaningful and timely reports, the team recognized that the solution would require an objective look at processes and systems.

AAFCPAs' Business & IT Consulting practice conducted a business process and IT systems assessment to set the foundation for the analysis. The goal was to identify operations that may be improved to ensure smoother procedures, more efficient workflow and improved operational performance—and if appropriate, to set requirements to select a new information system that would aid the organization in their desired advancements without sacrificing internal controls.

About AAFCPAs' Business Process & IT Consulting Practice:

AAFCPAs' Business Process & IT Consulting Services advisors are technologists with a broad understanding of business, making us uniquely qualified to advise clients in making sound business decisions regarding business processes, IT systems performance, and internal controls.

AAF has a comprehensive understanding of how all the pieces of infrastructure, development, data processing, security, and regulatory compliance should best fit together. Our impact has been known to make innovation real, raise the return on investment of technology, and expand IT's impact on the performance of your business.

AAFCPAs' integrated Business & IT Consulting practice strengthens the links between technology, processes and finance, and drives sustainable change and valuable process improvements. AAF applies a pragmatic, business perspective to every IT investment, and focuses on making a competitive difference, increasing productivity, generating new revenue, and reducing costs.

Background

The National Brain Tumor Society (NBTS) is tackling a significant and complicated health issue on several fronts. The organization's efforts are complex, with a multi-faceted and thoughtful approach to aggressively influence and fund strategic research and discovery, as well as advocate for public policy changes to achieve the greatest impact, results, and progress for brain tumor patients.

Money is raised through direct donations and through more than 20 signature walks, races, rides and other community and scientific events. These efforts directly fund groundbreaking discoveries, programs, clinical trials and policy initiatives.

Such an ambitious effort requires a keen focus on operations and finance. NBTS recognized there could be a great opportunity to improve cross-department efficiency by analyzing current systems and communications.

They aimed at moving to more automated processes in day-to-day account maintenance, as well as automating the month-end process through a more user-friendly platform.



Mission

National Brain Tumor Society (NBTS) unrelentingly invests in, mobilizes, and unites their community to discover a cure, deliver effective treatments, and advocate for patients and care partners.

Values

- Patients First
- Best-In-Class Science and Service to Their Community
- Constructive, Candid and Transparent
- Relentlessly Results Driven
- Committed to Public Trust
- Collaborative and Inclusive
- Positive (Can-Do) Attitude

<https://braintumor.org>

Background

AAFCPAs partnered with NBTS to assist in documenting current processes and identifying system and efficiency gaps in areas such as:

- General Ledger and chart of accounts
- Event/Project management
- Expense reimbursement tracking
- Financial reporting
- Accounts receivable and revenue (recording and reconciling with Salesforce)
- Accounts payable and PO routing



Impact

Money raised by the generous donations of supporters has specifically funded groundbreaking discoveries & programs including:

- Funding & leading research initiatives with the foremost brain tumor experts in the world,
- Treatment discovery & development initiatives,
- Clinical trials with leading biopharmaceuticals companies to increase drug development & create new options for treatment,
- Critical platforms & processes for sharing cutting-edge medical & research information,
- Advocacy & public policy initiatives to influence government legislation, regulations, and policy,
- Driving research & public policy advancements.

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Obstacles and Challenges

The NBTS and AAFCPAs teams both recognized how important it was to create an environment that would support the organization's mission. They enthusiastically collaborated to identify the obstacles and clear a path to increased efficiency.

The first task was to walk through the steps of the process—which spanned multiple departments. The key to NBTS's success was that everyone involved had an open mind and was willing to think about new solutions and change their practices.

Specific issues that came to light included:

- The current GL system was not structured to adapt to planned organizational growth;
- The need to close the monthly books faster, report more quickly, and ensure coordination among team members;
- The need to allow for real-time interim reporting by linking the GL system with the donation processing system; and
- The need to ensure that critical data and files were kept in a central location and that updates were immediately available to all.

“AAF has a genuine appreciation for what it means to be a nonprofit, and they fully understand us as an organization. They are great listeners and easy to work with. AAFCPAs’ system selection consulting is an extraordinary value and I highly recommend their services.”

— Steve Gallucci, Chief Financial Officer, National Brain Tumor Society

Solutions

Once AAFCPAs developed a full understanding of the NBTS's objectives and challenges, the team began researching systems that would provide the efficiencies NBTS was seeking.

The goal was to implement a robust cloud-based accounting software solution providing efficiency in processes and reliable, on-demand access to information for cross-functional team members.

The AAFCPAs solution:

- Allowed for a redesigned chart of accounts that is clean, intuitive to read, and easy to communicate—including complex transactions—that tracked, presented, and exported information in a meaningful way.
- Incorporated electronic workflows so information could be entered once and flow through approvals and receipts across departments
- Allowed for inherent integration with the donor system, creating efficiency in reconciliation of data
- Generated analytics
- Centralized permanent and transactional information

AAFCPAs identified functional requirements for a new system, drafted a request for information (RFI), explored potential software solutions, and delivered the RFI to vendors that could be a fit based on price point, timetable, and strength in the industry.

AAFCPAs pared the list of qualifying vendors down, and invited the most qualified to demonstrate their solutions and share use cases, applications specific to NBTS, and a clear picture of how they would create a more efficient solution for the organization.

Outcome

There were a number of selection criteria that helped determine which software was the right fit. The team assessed considerations such as the quantity of information flow a system could handle, the ideal number of users, reporting capabilities, and scalability of the platform.

AAFCPAs helped NBTS identify a platform that made a significant impact in a short amount of time. NBTS benefited from:

- Automated workflows
- Integration with the donor system
- Easy reporting directly from the system
- Analytics and dashboarding
- A more efficient month end close and annual audit
- Scalable platform for future organizational growth
- More time for employees to focus on the mission of the organization instead of maintaining the books!

“Our work with AAFCPAs quickly proved its value. Ultimately, their perspective led us to select the best system. We enjoyed our interactions with the AAFCPAs system selection advisors throughout the process. It truly could not have gone any better.”

– Steve Gallucci, Chief Financial Officer,
National Brain Tumor Society

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About AAFCPAs

AAFCPAs is the premier CPA and consulting firm based in New England and considered an attractive alternative to national CPA firms by discerning clients who appreciate exceptional value. We provide audit, tax, accounting, and advisory solutions to nonprofit organizations, commercial companies, and wealthy individuals/estates. Since 1973, our sincere approach to business and service excellence has built a thriving 200+ member firm driven by an altruistic mission to improve the economic well-being and quality of life for all our constituents. AAFCPAs donates 10% of its net profits annually to nonprofit organizations.

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