

Case Study



"It saves so much time. And the accuracy improvement is just tremendous."



Transforming Budgeting from Spreadsheets to Strategic Insight

Founded in 1854, the **Philadelphia Cricket Club** is one of the most historic private clubs in the United States. Operating across two campuses, the Club includes multiple golf courses, racquet facilities, dining outlets, banquet operations, pool facilities, and trap shooting grounds.

With approximately 1,865 memberships—representing nearly 4,500 individual members—they are a top 50 platinum club and have an iconic status with the Distinguished Clubs of America.

Since 2012, CFO Linda Cozzi has led financial operations with a focus on accountability, operational efficiency, and empowering department heads as business leaders. Among her many honors, she was named Sports and Leisure CFO of the Year in 2024, and one of the top 50 women leaders in Pennsylvania. She is both passionate about creating an employee-centric culture and strives to implement more effective policies and procedures.

The Problem – Departmental Complexity & Headcount Planning in Excel

For more than 15 years, budgeting at the club relied entirely on custom-built Excel spreadsheets. Each department operated within its own worksheet, tailored specifically to its structure and expense patterns. The accounting team manually maintained 3 years of historical data, updated actuals every month, and linked all departmental sheets into a consolidated master report. The process was time-intensive and fragile. Linda noted, "We spent probably just as much time making sure that everything was tying together as we did updating actuals."

Payroll accounts for over half of the Club's operating expenses, yet Excel couldn't reliably manage employee-level headcount forecasts. Benefits were based on percentage assumptions instead of individual data, made more complicated with

fluctuating seasonal hours for many of the 500 staff, benefit eligibility changes, and varying pay structures.

Operational diversity compounded the challenge. Food and beverage outlets and associated service charges operated differently across campuses and seasons. Maintenance, housekeeping, golf, and grounds all followed unique expense cycles and staffing models. Linda recalls reaching a breaking point, "I have always thought there has to be a better way. . . and I just wasn't finding it." And eventually, "I just can't do this anymore."

The Club needed a system that could handle departmental complexity, support non-financial managers, and provide finance with greater accuracy and insight.

The Evaluation – Configurability, Headcount Accuracy & Support

Having previously experienced an over-promised and under-delivered software purchase, Linda approached the evaluation process carefully. Transparency, functionality, and peer validation were non-negotiable.

After seeing a demonstration at a conference, she requested a deeper look. What stood out immediately was its guided approach and graphical interface, which differed dramatically from Excel's row-and-column structure. This was not just automation—it was configurability. The system could reflect how departments actually operated, rather than forcing a one-size-fits-all structure.

Unlike Excel templates, BudgetPak offered department-level account mapping aligned to the Club's general ledger, driver values, such as service charges, unique to a department that

update associated revenue and expenses automatically, and employee-level headcount planning. It supported both bottom-up line-item budgeting and high-level strategic modeling. Approval workflows and flexible reporting ensured finance maintained control while department leaders maintained ownership.

Finally, post-implementation support is often overlooked. How available is the team, how fast do they respond, and are they U.S.-based? These details matter—especially when board members expect quick answers.

Linda emphasized that evaluation should focus on improvement, not replacement, "What do you want to improve? And how is this system going to make it better for you?"

The Solution – Purposeful Implementation & Automated Accuracy

Philadelphia Cricket Club implemented BudgetPak deliberately and strategically. Rather than duplicating existing spreadsheet processes, leadership used implementation as an opportunity to reassess workflows and eliminate inefficiencies. Linda strongly believes implementation should be transformative, not transactional, "Spending time on the front end and building it correctly is going to just benefit you tremendously down the road and be a system that you can continue to grow and use for years to come."

The transformation was most evident in four areas. First, department-specific mapping ensured that each department only budgeted for accounts relevant to its function. Food and beverage, golf, maintenance, and housekeeping all operate differently, and the system mirrors those distinctions.

Second, automated drivers and calculations eliminated fragile spreadsheet formulas. When revenue projections

change, all downstream calculations update automatically. This dramatically reduced error risk and increased confidence in financial projections.

Third, managers now plan compensation by individual employee, including hourly rates, hours worked, benefit eligibility, and projected changes throughout the year. The system spreads payroll automatically across months, reflecting seasonality.

Linda describes this as the most significant improvement,

“ This is definitely something you just can't do well in Excel... it's just not possible. ”

Finally, departments gained the ability to build budgets using monthly line-item detail, improving variance accuracy and reducing surprise fluctuations during the year.

The Results

The impact was immediate and measurable. During the first budgeting cycle in BudgetPak, department heads adopted the system with remarkable ease. After live training sessions and recorded follow-ups, managers completed their budgets independently. Department heads are now more engaged and accountable.

Service charge calculations became automatic and reliable.

“ Not having to deal with all of the issues with Excel, gave us more time to just sit and analyze the budget. I think as we go along, we're going to get deeper and deeper into it and see even more value than we already do. ”

Payroll forecasting achieved a level of granularity that was previously unattainable. Monthly budget spreading improved variance tracking and reduced noise in financial reports.

The accounting team now produces financial results in approximately one-third of the previous time. Perhaps most importantly, finance shifted from maintaining a process to delivering insight.

Looking Ahead – Forecasting & Scenario Modeling

As the Club enters its second budget season, leadership is expanding use of BudgetPak into forecasting and scenario modeling. With upcoming capital projects that will affect labor models, the ability to simulate financial impacts is especially valuable.

Linda believes the Club has only begun to unlock the system's full potential,

“ I feel like we have just scratched the surface of what BudgetPak is capable of. ”

Conclusion

For the Philadelphia Cricket Club, moving from Excel to BudgetPak was more than a technology change. It was a strategic shift toward greater accuracy, accountability, and financial insight. By empowering department heads, automating complexity, and elevating financial visibility, the Club transformed budgeting from a manual consolidation exercise into a strategic decision-making platform.

And in Linda's words,

“ Now I couldn't be happier. ”

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