



“If I took Excel spreadsheets back to the managers and said, we’re going back, they would not be happy.”

Beyond Excel: Accuracy, Ownership, and Forward-Looking Finance

Founded in the early 1980s, Broken Sound Club is a premier private club located in Boca Raton, Florida, in the heart of Palm Beach County. Exceptional service quality throughout the Club is a core value—supported by transparent leadership, data-driven decision-making, and fiscally accountable management.

CFO Pat Sorensen has spent more than 30 years as a CFO

in the club industry and has a strategic, operations-focused view of finance. Although she holds a master’s degree in accounting, Pat describes herself as more interested in helping non-financial people understand their operations rather than simply presenting numbers. Controller Carrie Fox plays a central role in the detailed budget process and the financial mechanics behind the Club’s planning, reporting, and analysis.

The Problem - Excel Could Not Keep Pace with Size, Complexity & On-the-Fly Planning

Before BudgetPak, Broken Sound’s budget process was strictly Excel-based. Carrie would distribute spreadsheets to all 30 department heads, collect them back, manually roll them up, and verify no formulas had been overwritten. Any change from a budget review meeting meant returning to the spreadsheet, updating it, re-rolling up the data, and reporting back — a slow, error-prone cycle.

That structure also made it difficult for non-financial managers to understand their own budgets — or see where they were headed.

Payroll created the biggest challenge. With more than 500 employees — including seasonal staff and international visa workers — benefits were estimated using blended percentage assumptions rather than actual per-employee elections, leaving department heads with little visibility into the true cost of their teams.

Food and beverage added another layer of complexity with multiple venues including banquets and events, and labor driven by service requirements. The Club needed a process that could reduce spreadsheet risk, allow immediate rollups and what-if changes, and give non-financial managers — and finance — greater confidence in the final budget.

“If you’re just giving them Excel spreadsheets and asking why something happened, they are always digging into the past. They need something that helps them see where they are going.”

“Finance people can figure out almost any system. The real question is whether a chef, a golf course superintendent, or a F&B leader can see what is happening in their operation.”

The Evaluation - A Financial Tool for Non-Financial Minds

The CFO had seen BudgetPak at trade shows and felt an immediate connection. What stood out was that it did not look like Excel — instead of confronting managers with a multi-tab spreadsheet, it offered a guided, visual structure that could walk budget holders through the process without intimidation. *“I looked at it from the eyes of a non-financial person. It did not look as threatening as a 16-tab worksheet.”*

With a large, complex operating structure, Broken Sound

requires budgeting processes that can support both financial discipline and operational ownership. The system aligned with the Club’s budgeting philosophy: department heads must own their budgets.

BudgetPak’s employee-level headcount and benefits planning was also a critical differentiator. With 500 employees, each with individual benefit elections and 401(k) percentages, a blended fringe rate was no longer precise enough.

“If finance makes their budget for them, they have every opportunity to say, ‘That’s not my budget.’ The budget holder has to put the budget forward.”

“We wanted our people using everything available in BudgetPak because we are trying to get away from as much Excel as we can.”

The Solution - Department Ownership, Payroll Detail & Immediate Rollups

Broken Sound implemented BudgetPak with a clear philosophy: department heads own their budgets, and finance provides the structure to support that ownership — while retaining control over payroll increases, new FTEs, and final approvals. BudgetPak provided accountability without sacrificing governance. “We did not want to take our budget, add a percentage, and tell them to go with it. We wanted them to think about every single line.”

“It’s a financial tool for non-financial driven minds.”

The payroll and benefits detail created a new level of awareness. Managers who had never seen benefit costs in Excel were surprised to learn what a full-time employee actually costs.

“The big eye-opener was the benefits piece. Managers could finally see that a full-time employee comes with benefits, vacation, and real cost.”

BudgetPak also changed how budget meetings worked. Rather than collecting changes and rebuilding the rollup in Excel, the finance team could make updates on the fly and see the bottom-line impact immediately — including in food and beverage, where adjusting revenue, rolling up venues, and comparing against actuals in real time was a significant shift.

“Now when we are sitting with the GM and someone wants to change something, we change it on the fly and see the rollup immediately.”

The Results - Speed, Accuracy, and a Team That Owns Its Numbers

The impact of moving to BudgetPak has been tangible and immediate across the organization. In its first year, from the start of the budget cycle to approval by the board, BudgetPak cut the timeline by almost 40%, shaving over a month off the process. Overwritten formulas, misaligned rollups, and delayed revisions are gone. Changes made during budget meetings are reflected instantly.

“We do the whole budget, from start to approval, much more quickly now, and it is more accurate.”

Department head engagement has increased markedly. Budget holders are completing their budgets independently, understanding their numbers more deeply, and taking greater ownership.

“The best benefit I see from using BudgetPak is that my non-financially inclined budget holders now have a user-friendly, essentially error-free tool for budgeting and forecasting. As they make changes to their budgets, they see the impact instantly. This is why they take more ownership of their numbers.”

Broken Sound is also using BudgetPak for forecasting. With a fiscal year ending September 30 and a budget due in June, Broken Sound is effectively mid-year before next year’s plan is approved. As soon as each month closes, actuals are uploaded and department heads reforecast — with finance meeting each of them monthly. For a club where dues must cover operations dollar-for-dollar, early course correction is essential.

“I need to know where my cash is today, what I am spending today, what my revenue is today, and where we are going tomorrow.”

For Broken Sound, the move from Excel to BudgetPak was about more than efficiency. It was about putting the right tools in front of the right people, and trusting them to do their jobs. By replacing fragile spreadsheets with a purpose-built system, the finance team could turn its attention to insight, accountability, and forward-looking strategy. As Pat puts it simply: “Buy it.”

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