

City of Fort Worth

CaseWare Delivers a Rapid Return on Investment for the City

Challenge

A large annual operating budget funds overwhelmed the City of Fort Worth's spreadsheet and document-based system for preparing its Comprehensive Annual Financial Report.

Solution

The City of Fort Worth implemented CaseWare while implementing a new ERP solution, bringing its technology firmly into the modern age.

Results

Spreadsheets, documents and the opportunity for error they introduce have been eliminated. Hours of report printing time have been saved. Annual Reports are produced ahead of schedule.



Customer
City of Fort Worth

Headquarters
Fort Worth, Texas

CaseWare Solutions
Working Papers

Certified CaseWare Consultant



Gray CPA Consulting, PC
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“With CaseWare, the Comprehensive Annual Financial Report was completed on time to achieve the GFOA Certificate of Excellence in Reporting. It looks almost flawless, and the people of Fort Worth can have confidence and pride in it.”

Brian Hickman, CPA, CGFO | Financial Reporting Coordinator

Fort Worth began as a tiny outpost on a lonely frontier and still embraces its rich Western heritage. Today, this metropolitan area of more than 800,000 people blends its frontier heritage seamlessly with an ever-growing and diverse array of new businesses and industries.

The City of Fort Worth is charged with the delivery and oversight of a vast array of vital programs, including emergency services, municipal courts, parks and recreation, water, sewer, and transportation. With over 200 separate funds and a combined annual operating budget of more than one billion dollars, the City has an enormously complex set of financial statements. To tame the complexity and ensure its Comprehensive Annual Financial Report is completed on time and with the utmost accuracy, the City of Fort Worth relies on CaseWare.

A Vision to be the Best

“The City and our City Manager, David Cooke, have a shared vision to be the most livable and best-managed city in the country,” says Brian Hickman, CPA/CGFO, one of the Financial Reporting Coordinators for the City of Fort Worth. “Realizing that vision means producing our Annual Report in an accurate and timely manner. However, because of the enormous complexity and intricacy of the reporting required, we have sometimes fallen behind schedule in the past.”

Producing its Annual Report using Excel spreadsheets and Word documents was simply too onerous and time-consuming to effectively manage, and the disconnected systems introduced too many opportunities for error.

Hickman describes the process: “We had more than 25 Excel workbooks, plus multiple Excel spreadsheets embedded as tables in Word documents. If a single sum needed correction, we might have to manually update that number across dozens of files. And printing the report took us ten hours, as each individual page was converted to a PDF file. It had simply become unworkable.”

Which Comes First - CaseWare or ERP?

When Hickman joined the City, it was going through a large transition, migrating to PeopleSoft from a 25-year-old mainframe application. The City’s finance department had also researched and selected CaseWare, but initially planned to wait until after the ERP go-live to implement it.

“Our CaseWare consultant encouraged us to move ahead with the CaseWare implementation,” recalls Hickman. “The consultant believed that having CaseWare in place and operational would help as a validation tool of the ERP conversion, and they were right.”

CaseWare Identifies Data Anomalies

“We started by recreating our prior year’s Annual Report in CaseWare as a proof of concept, and then planned to roll the files forward for the current year,” explains Hickman. “It was during this process that CaseWare helped us identify some data issues that arose during the ERP conversion – issues that we might not have caught without CaseWare.”

Transformational Changes

The move to CaseWare has been transformational, says Hickman. “CaseWare automated the Annual Report production. We eliminated all of the Word and Excel documents, and all of the duplicate data entry associated with them. Printing the Annual Report, a process that previously took us 10 hours, now takes two minutes.

He adds, “Without CaseWare, it is probable that we would not have completed our Annual Report before the deadline and would have had to apply for an extension. With CaseWare, the Annual Report was completed on time to achieve the GFOA Certificate of Excellence in Reporting. It looks almost flawless, and the people of Fort Worth can have confidence and pride in it.”

Monthly Management Reports

The City of Fort Worth is currently working with its consultants and CaseWare to extend the use of the solution to the production of monthly management reports. “For the past few years, the City has been producing quarterly management reports, but in a not-so-timely manner,” Hickman says. “It will be of tremendous benefit to the City’s department heads, our council, and the mayor. We will be able to identify areas of concern a few months earlier than we could have previously.”

The City is also considering utilizing CaseWare to prepare its Single Audit Report in the future. “It just makes good sense to use CaseWare in any way possible,” says Hickman. “At its heart, CaseWare is a powerful financial report writing tool, so it’s a natural fit for all of these types of reports.”

Ongoing Return on Investment

With one successful reporting season behind them, Hickman is confident that the time and labor savings realized with CaseWare will begin delivering a rapid and ongoing return on the City’s investment. “The finance department would like to formally thank the Mayor and City Council for their support in funding CaseWare,” he concludes. “We believe that through the ease of data exchange with our auditors, and the accessibility and visibility they have into our trial balance and supporting documents, we will be able to minimize the audit fees and save the City money.”

About CaseWare International Inc.

Accountants and auditors in accounting firms and government recognize CaseWare International as the premier creator of assurance, reporting, and analysis tools. In over 130 countries, the CaseWare family of products helps accounting professionals perform their work more easily and efficiently.

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