



# When Cheap Accounting Software Stops Being Cheaper

Sage Intacct costs more than QuickBooks or legacy systems. But most companies stop their analysis at the invoice - missing the real cost hidden in how the business operates around the software. Read on to understand some of the hidden costs and when it's time to think about a change.



FTR	179	220	317	188
0.09	280	575	80	100
0.55	257	250	124	155

9.5	2	160	281	470	466
4.1.2	3	280	300	174	624
4.2.4	98	177	171	487	688

# The Real Cost Isn't on the Invoice



Accounting systems rarely cost only what the invoice says. The real cost shows up in manual processes, spreadsheet-heavy reporting, longer closes, and additional headcount that becomes "necessary" to keep up.

A \$5,000 annual subscription feels prudent next to \$20,000. But if your team exports data, reconciles in spreadsheets, and posts manual allocations, those hours don't disappear - they become someone's job.

# Manual Work Compounds Over Time

## 10 Extra Hours Weekly

Turns into hundreds of hours annually across your team

## 2 Extra Days Per Close

Absorbs weeks of staff capacity each year

## Eventually Converts

Into additional headcount or senior oversight

Much of this work isn't value-added. It doesn't improve forecasting or sharpen decision-making - it's administrative effort required to compensate for system limitations.

# The Hidden Cost Shows Up in Headcount

What begins as a few extra hours for one finance professional can quickly snowball. As the company scales, the same manual processes multiply, forcing businesses to hire more staff just to keep up with administrative tasks.



## Manual Reconciliation

Adding headcount to sift through discrepancies between systems.



## Spreadsheet Management

Hiring analysts primarily for data export, manipulation, and consolidation.



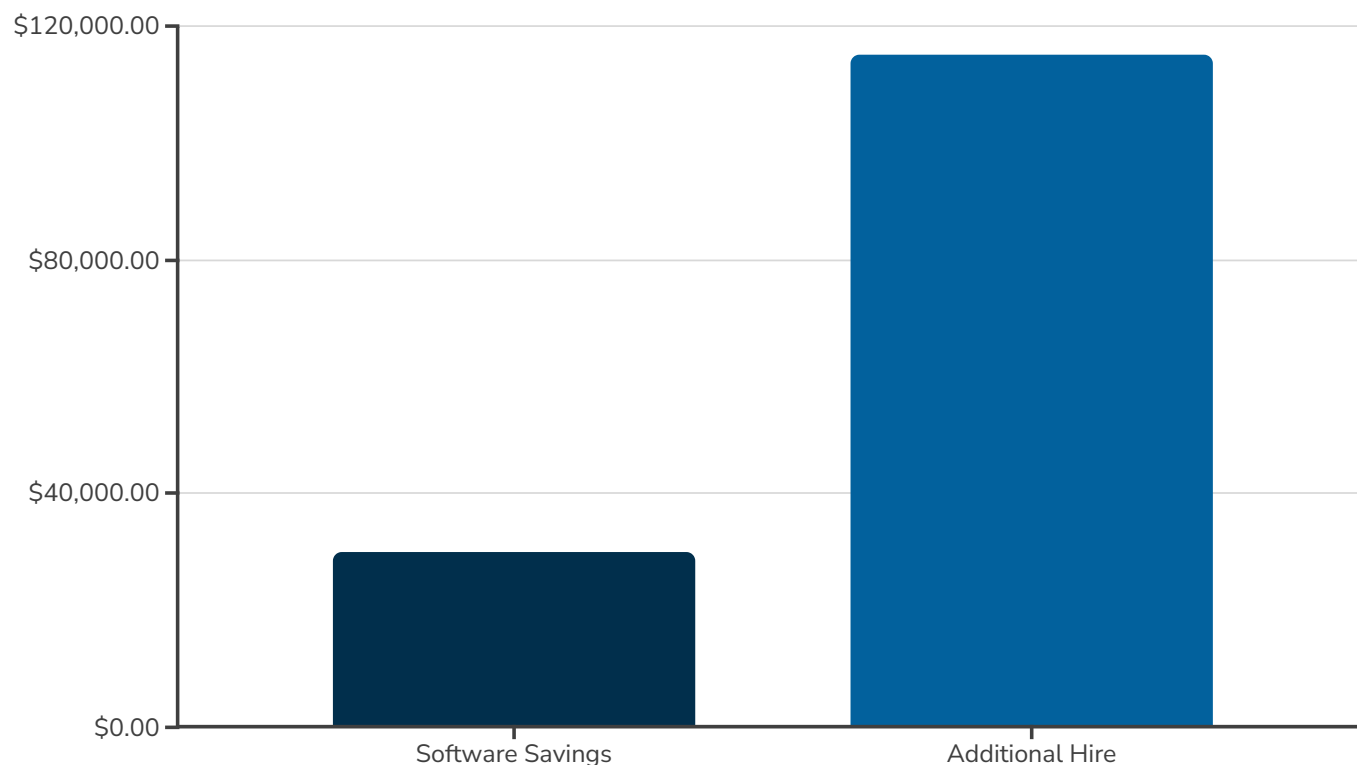
## Increased Oversight

Senior team members dedicate more time to reviewing prone-to-error processes.

This isn't productive growth; it's compensatory hiring, diverting valuable budget from strategic initiatives to maintain the status quo.



# The Hidden Cost Shows Up in Headcount



Finance teams adapt by building workarounds and creating spreadsheets. Eventually, they hit a breaking point and hire.

Save \$20K-\$40K on software, then hire an accountant for \$90K-\$140K fully loaded. The "cheap system" shifts its costs into payroll.

**Most common pattern:** Companies don't outgrow systems because they stop functioning - they outgrow them because they require more human effort to produce clean numbers.

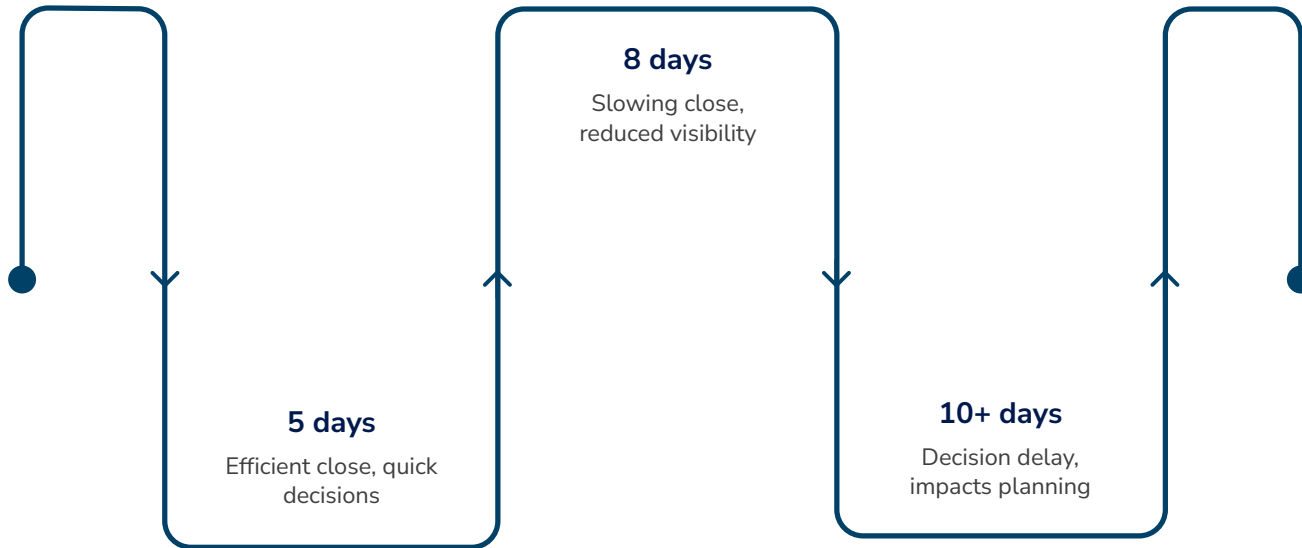


# Reporting Becomes a Project, Not a Process

Entry-level systems produce basic statements. The challenge comes when leadership wants performance by department, location, entity, or project - consistently.

If the system can't support dimensional reporting, teams export data, manipulate it, reconcile it, and build reporting packages outside the system. This approach doesn't scale gracefully and increases error risk.

# The Close Gets Longer, Decisions Get Slower



## The Visibility Gap

A longer close is often the byproduct of manual reconciliations and spreadsheet-driven reporting. When finance spends more time producing numbers than interpreting them, the business loses visibility - one of the most expensive outcomes.

# Waiting Too Long Makes Migration More Expensive



## Workarounds Entrench

Chart of accounts expands inconsistently, reporting definitions drift



## Data Gets Harder to Clean

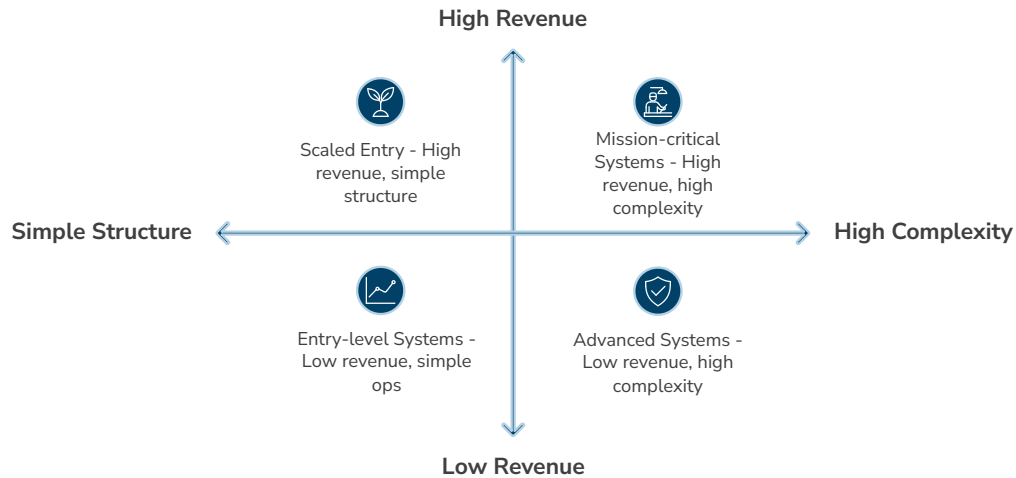
Add-ons pile up, knowledge embeds in spreadsheets



## Migration Becomes Cleanup

No longer a simple upgrade - now a process redesign

# Revenue Thresholds Aren't Universal



One metric used to decide if it's time for an upgrade is Revenue. This can be a useful signal, but complexity also drives the decision. A \$4M business with multiple entities can outgrow entry-level platforms quickly, while a \$20M business with simple structure may stay longer.

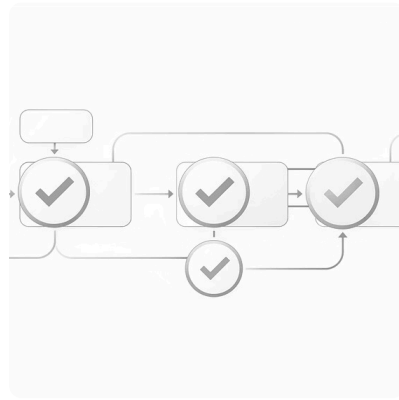
**General rule:** Under \$5M works for entry-level system if structurally simple. Between \$5M-\$15M, the conversation shifts from affordability to scalability.

# What You're Really Buying with Sage Intacct



## Built for Complexity

Multi-entity structures and scalable reporting from the start



## Workflow-Driven

Approvals and automation that reduce manual processes



## Prevents Operational Drag

Designed assuming complexity is coming as you grow

For businesses that need these capabilities, the cost isn't just software - it's preventing labor costs from growing alongside the company.

# A Better Way to Evaluate the Decision

The right question isn't whether Sage Intacct costs more than QuickBooks - we know it does. The better question is what your current system will cost over the next 3-5 years.

## If Your System Supports

Fast closes, consistent reporting, clean audit trails, and scalable processes without workarounds - staying put may be right.

## If Your System Forces

Heavy spreadsheet reliance, manual processes, and incremental headcount - the cost is already higher than it appears.

**The truth:** The most expensive accounting system many businesses ever used was the one that looked cheapest at the beginning.





## Ready to Explore Your Options?

If you're curious whether it's time to upgrade your accounting system, we'd love to continue the conversation. Reach out to discuss your specific situation and explore whether it might be the right time to take the next step for your business.

[Contact Us](#)