



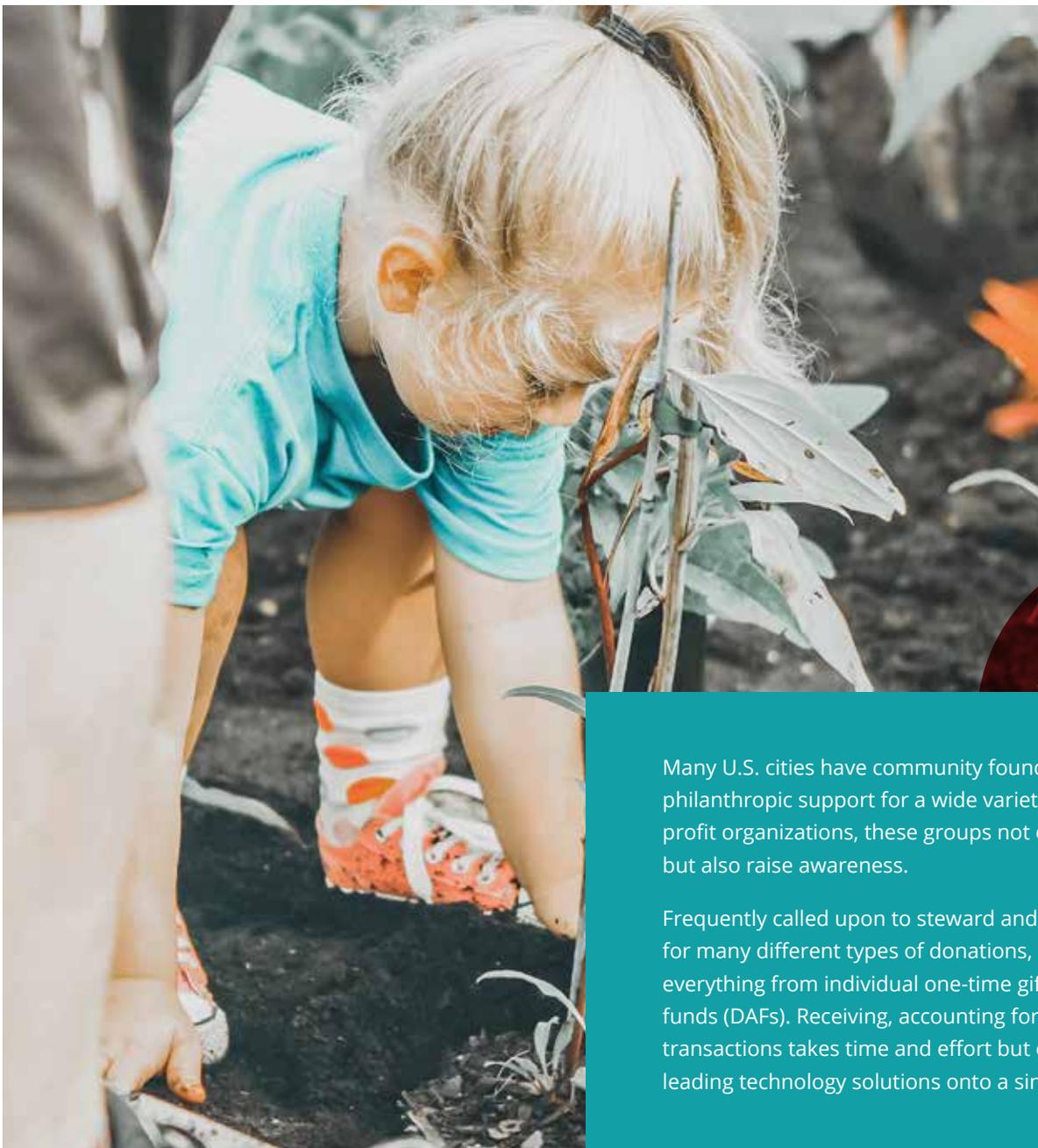
# NETSUITE & SALESFORCE INTEGRATION FOR GROWING COMMUNITY FOUNDATIONS.

*By leveraging NetSuite and Salesforce, community foundations can more easily manage complex gifts, innovate, scale, and break free of the constraints of their existing, on-premises software systems.*

ORACLE  
NETSUITE



# COMMUNITY.



Many U.S. cities have community foundations that provide overarching philanthropic support for a wide variety of local causes. Operating as not-for-profit organizations, these groups not only amass donations for those causes but also raise awareness.

Frequently called upon to steward and serve as organizational partners for many different types of donations, community foundations manage everything from individual one-time gifts to complex donor-advised funds (DAFs). Receiving, accounting for, and reporting on these financial transactions takes time and effort but can be made simpler by bringing leading technology solutions onto a single platform.



However, most organizations use a combination of Blackbaud's Raiser's Edge & Financial Edge, Sage Intacct, Microsoft Dynamics, and/or Microsoft Great Plains, none of which integrate well with other technologies. "As a result, growth opportunities are often limited to the functionality of the platform," said Damian Le Brocque, Senior Client Partner, NonProfit, at Plative, a NetSuite Alliance Partner. "Without strong integrations, community foundations have to create clunky workarounds that put additional administrative burdens on their staff."

This paper discusses some of the top technology challenges that community foundations are facing right now and explores how direct integrations between NetSuite and Salesforce can help them overcome these issues while also more efficiently serving the causes that they support.

## FURTHERING THE ORGANIZATIONAL MISSION

In the U.S., there are 700 community organizations that address local needs in their respective cities, counties, states, or regions. These groups are supported both by donations designated for immediate distribution and by endowed funds (i.e., permanent sources of funds invested for long-term growth).

Most of these organizations provide a variety of programs that support those communities and address issues like education, human services programs, literacy, or aid for the homeless.

Operating in specific geographical areas, they facilitate and pool donations that are then used to address community needs. For local nonprofits, for instance, community organizations may offer grantmaking programs that include endowments, scholarships, field-of-interest funds, giving circles, and donor-advised funds (DAFs), among others.<sup>1</sup>

A popular way for donors to make a charitable impact in exchange for tax advantages, DAFs are similar to dedicated accounts for charitable giving. Sponsored by the community foundation, DAFs allow donors to contribute to the fund and allocate that money to an IRS-qualified charity of choice. The funds can be invested tax-free, thus creating additional funds for the organization (which, in turn, donates that money to the charities of choice).<sup>2</sup>

With the use of DAFs quadrupling over the last five years<sup>3</sup>, community foundations have been more closely examining their business management tools and looking for new ways to handle these and other financial complexities. Those that have relied on disjointed legacy systems, have been forced to bolt on

programs like Salesforce CRM to help manage their financial supporters and get a clearer view of their donors.



**Given these complexities, and the need to empower their staff with real-time financial investment information, having an integrated business platform is essential, Le Brocque explained. "Employees need the information at their fingertips that helps inform strategic conversations and maintain a superior level of customer service."**

## TRUSTED CUSTODIANS

As the custodians of complex gifts and assets (i.e., stock, cryptocurrency, LLCs, real estate, etc.), community foundations need sophisticated financial accounting systems to track cash and fixed assets in a single fund, view financial reports by multiple dimensions, and trigger rebalancing, fees, and journal entries on a scheduled basis.

By automating these processes and daily activities, these organizations can give their staff more time to focus on strategic initiatives, meet with supporters, connect with grant recipients, and advance the organization's mission.

Sources: <sup>1</sup><https://www.fidelitycharitable.org/guidance/philanthropy/community-foundations.html#:~:text=Today%2C%20there%20are%20about%20700,%2C%20county%2C%20state%20or%20region> | <sup>2</sup><https://www.fidelitycharitable.org/guidance/philanthropy/community-foundations.html>  
<sup>3</sup><https://www.nptrust.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/2020-Donor-Advised-Fund-Report-NPT.pdf>

Of course, none of these goals are achievable using outdated systems and add-on applications—none of which talk or interact with one another. For example, Plative has worked with numerous foundations that have patched together separate customer relationship management (CRM) software, accounting systems, and donor/grant portals to unify their business management processes.

Many of these organizations have replaced their Blackbaud CRM systems with Salesforce to create a more stable, secure donor management platform. This presents a clear opportunity for the groups to move away from their aging systems and over to the NetSuite cloud enterprise resource planning (ERP) system and integrate directly with Salesforce.

“These two platforms not only go well with one another, but they’re also the software leaders when it comes to cloud-based technology,” said Le Brocq. “For any organization that’s still tied to on-premises systems, NetSuite and Salesforce provide a platform for planning and administering the way people like to give.”

For example, the group that receives \$10,000 in cryptocurrency for a specific cause needs to be able to connect to the cryptocurrency marketplace, allocate the funds, and record the value of the assets in the donor’s portfolio. The same organization may receive a home as a donation the following day, or an LLC. These varied contributions all must be accounted for and allocated properly both from the foundation and the donor perspective.

“Managing these complexities takes a unified business platform, which is why we connect NetSuite with Salesforce,” said Plative Client Partner, Chris Bondi. “By tying together all of the foundation’s systems in one place, versus having data residing on multiple



**“There are a lot of moving parts,” said Bondi, “and a focus on ensuring that money can be properly exchanged internally, and the funds will ultimately balance in an efficient way that doesn’t require a lot of manual effort.”**

different technology platforms, we’re helping community foundations receive gifts from anyone and in any form.”

#### **MANAGING MANY DIFFERENT MOVING PARTS**

The way community foundations handle donations, transfer money between funds, balance those funds, and ensure proper internal operations has become extremely complex. “There are a lot of moving parts,” said Bondi, “and a focus on ensuring that money can be properly exchanged internally, and the funds will

ultimately balance in an efficient way that doesn’t require a lot of manual effort.”

Using true fund-based accounting, for example, organizations need tools that allow them to manage and track funds, view financial reports by multiple dimensions in real-time, and automate rebalancing funds on a scheduled basis. They also need workflow automation that can effectively remove bottlenecks by automating common tasks and eliminating redundant workflows.

With NetSuite's auto-balancing functionality, Plative helps community foundations manage and track activity across all of their funds, report across those funds, and manage the segmentation within each of those funds.



**“We help them keep all of their financial ducks in a row in a very neat, transparent manner,” said Bondi, “and better understand where the money is, and which fund it belongs in.”**

Historically, many organizations have used Blackbaud Financial Edge to manage these complexities. Since this on-premises platform operates in a silo, it makes it nearly impossible to give staff a complete view of the foundation's financial activity. To solve the problem, organizations are forced to use myriad spreadsheets and disparate applications to track interactions and transactions. Even when paired with Blackbaud's cloud option, the vendor's two separate systems do not readily share data with one another. “It comes down to a question of data access and data reliability,” said Bondi.

With a typical implementation time of 6-18 months, Plative helps community foundations overcome these challenges and leverage the power of market-leading, cloud-based ERP and CRM platforms. For these organizations, NetSuite manages:

- Revenue management
- Complex billing management
- Vendors and purchase order management
- Financial reporting
- In-depth accounting records
- Fixed asset management
- Project management

While Salesforce provides:

- General CRM
- Relationship management
- Complex gift management
- Donation management
- Donor portal
- Activity management
- Marketing automation
- Artificial intelligence (AI) insights and reporting

By integrating these two powerful platforms, Plative gives community foundations a purpose-built solution and unparalleled control over their operations. Plative has developed a simple, multipurpose solution with minimal code needed.

With NetSuite and Salesforce in place, it doesn't take long for foundations to see the benefits of integrating all of their operations. For starters, they can more readily integrate third-party applications with NetSuite, thus eliminating the need for spreadsheets and manual work. They get a complete view of their operations and can share those views with donors who, in turn, gain greater trust in the foundation's ability to steward their funds.

NetSuite and Salesforce also help organizations manage their complex gifts, including stocks, cryptocurrency, real estate, and LLCs, all of which can be cumbersome to orchestrate using disparate



solutions and spreadsheets. Using NetSuite, foundations can manage and track funds, view financial reports in real-time, and automatically rebalance funds on a schedule. Finally, the combined solution helps foundations eliminate bottlenecks by automating common tasks and removing redundancies.

"It's abundantly clear that NetSuite is the #1 cloud ERP and Salesforce is the top cloud CRM, but very few implementation partners understand both solutions, as well as Plative, does," said Le Brocque. "Based on years of working with both platforms, we're effectively bringing both under one roof for the community foundations that need it."

#### DOING WHAT THEY DO BEST

With donors getting more creative about how they disperse funds, community foundations need robust, unified technology tools that can manage these complexities without the need for additional manpower. With these applications in place, foundations can also compete more effectively for grants, entice more donors to invest in their organizations, and maintain accurate data about their operations in a single repository.

Combined, these "wins" support the community foundations' ongoing need to do more with less in a world where more groups are competing for charitable donations. A sector that can't readily hire new workers or recruit volunteers to run their backends, community foundations are increasingly looking to technology to help fill those gaps. Using NetSuite and Salesforce, these organizations can focus their energies on what they do best: effectively serving donors, communities, and those in need.

# SUPPORT.





**At Plative, our mission is to make a global impact by improving our client's performance.**

Plative is a digital-first management consulting firm with a global footprint that offers advisory, professional services, and project implementation to some of the world's leading companies across Financial Services, Nonprofit, Technology, and Consumer industries. Plative has been recognized on the Inc-5000 list of fastest-growing companies, as well as Consulting Magazine's list of fastest-growing firms.

**Plative is a Salesforce.com Gold partner, Salesforce.org Premium partner, Oracle NetSuite Alliance partner, and Amazon Web Services Consulting Network partner.**

