



# The Journey to Scalable SaaS Finance Operations: SaaSOptics Gives MasteryConnect Visibility into Metrics that Drive Future Growth



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**Mark Pocock,**  
CFO, Mastery Connect



In 2015, a SaaS business with a fresh approach to education captured the attention of Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg and his wife, Priscilla Chan, ultimately scoring the company \$5M in funding from the couple. In the years since, MasteryConnect has continued to expand its reach. Today over 2.5 million educators in 170 countries rely on MasteryConnect to assess student mastery of learning standards and provide the real-time insight they need to identify learning gaps, target students for intervention and personalize learning.

In 2013, Mark Pocock joined MasteryConnect as CFO. The company was still small but on the verge of a high growth phase. Pocock was only the 13th employee and excited about the opportunity to take part in something big. “I have a soft spot for the exciting, challenging nature of start-ups,” said Pocock. “I knew from experience that being the only person in finance would mean doing everything from managing the books to assessing financial risks and opportunities. I was ready to roll up my sleeves.”

## Scalable Finance Operations: A Must Have

MasteryConnect was working with an outside CPA firm that used QuickBooks to manage the company's finance operations but shortly after joining the company, it was clear to Pocock that this setup wouldn't work for long.

"We were outgrowing QuickBooks," said Pocock.

*"We needed accurate revenue recognition and metrics that would only get more complex as we added more customers. Although it was good when we first started, QuickBooks wasn't created to do heavy lifting."*

Shortly after, he invested in a cloud-based accounting software that promised more features, better reporting and Salesforce integration. But, as MasteryConnect continued to grow, Pocock and his team once again felt the pains of managing finance operations with software that isn't tailored to a SaaS business. In addition, accessing the advanced revenue recognition features that he needed came at a premium price tag and would have doubled the software's annual cost.

Generating basic SaaS metrics was a manual process in which Pocock exported data into a spreadsheet, created pivot tables and generated extra formulas, all of which were time consuming and caused errors. Pocock shared, "We wanted a solution that would natively capture the SaaS metrics that we were generating from manual processes. If we could find a solution that was better tailored to our business and saved us time, it would be a game changer."

As Pocock and his team began to fully recognize the shortcomings of its accounting software, someone from SaaSOptics reached out to MasteryConnect.

"The gaps were becoming more obvious and difficult to fill," said Pocock. "Our investors were asking for metrics, such as ARR, LTV and churn, that we couldn't produce quickly. The accounting software we relied on was created for a traditional business model and wasn't SaaS specific, so it couldn't provide advanced metrics that were becoming increasingly critical each month."

Pocock decided to learn more about SaaSOptics. "Switching seemed like a lot of work, but I thought if SaaSOptics could do what it claimed to do, it would make a tremendous impact on our business," he said. "When you're rationalizing a voluntary change, you've got to feel like there is a lot of strong short- and long-term value," said Pocock.



## One, Accurate View of the Customer

After a demo, Pocock was impressed with SaaSOptics' ability to automate many of the manual processes that were taking up too much of his team's time. SaaSOptics would give them quick, easy access to basic and advanced metrics, and ease the pressure of providing timely updates the company's key SaaS metrics each month. And while these benefits were all critical, it was the single source of truth that SaaSOptics could provide about MasteryConnect customers that sealed the deal.

SaaSOptics' direct integrations with Salesforce and QuickBooks would give Pocock and his team a single source of truth and one accurate view of customer finance data for insight into the entire subscription lifecycle across the company.

"Neither Salesforce nor the accounting solution we used prior to SaaSOptics could provide us with a single view of the customer," said Pocock. "In Salesforce, we had a customer account record, but if we wanted to look at each of the individual contracts, we had to look in each opportunity individually. We quickly saw that SaaSOptics could provide that visibility in a single view – it's just another way SaaSOptics is customized for our SaaS business."

## Automating Invoicing and Payments

With SaaSOptics, MasteryConnect easily invoices customers and accurately forecasts cash flow by building complete schedules for the entire subscription term. "Our previous solution had invoicing and payment capabilities, but SaaSOptics is more efficient and does a much better job of sending invoices to customers and getting them paid," said Pocock.

SaaSOptics simplifies payment by embedding "pay by" links directly into invoices through direct integrations with Stripe and Recurly. When a customer pays, their receipt is generated automatically and payments, deposits and fees sync all the way to QuickBooks. This saves time and keeps data up-to-date so it's always accurate

## Saying Goodbye to Spreadsheets

With SaaSOptics in place, Pocock and his team finally ditched the spreadsheets and manual processes. SaaSOptics' analytics engine provides all the subscription analytics they need, from GAAP-compliant financials to real-time insight into important metrics like ARR and general business momentum. "All the metrics we need are automated, easy to access and in one place," he added.

SaaSOptics automatically records and reports on key revenue numbers for MasteryConnect, from reportable revenue to deferred and unbilled accrued revenue. "Before SaaSOptics, we pulled data from of our accounting software and imported it into a revenue recognition spreadsheet," said Mindy Hardisty, senior accountant for MasteryConnect.



"The spreadsheets and the complex manual calculations we kept piling on top of them couldn't reliably account for the various nuances around contracts, such as discounts and professional services, which resulted in inconsistency and errors. Today, SaaSOptics handles it all so we don't have to worry about spreadsheet accuracy or wasted time."

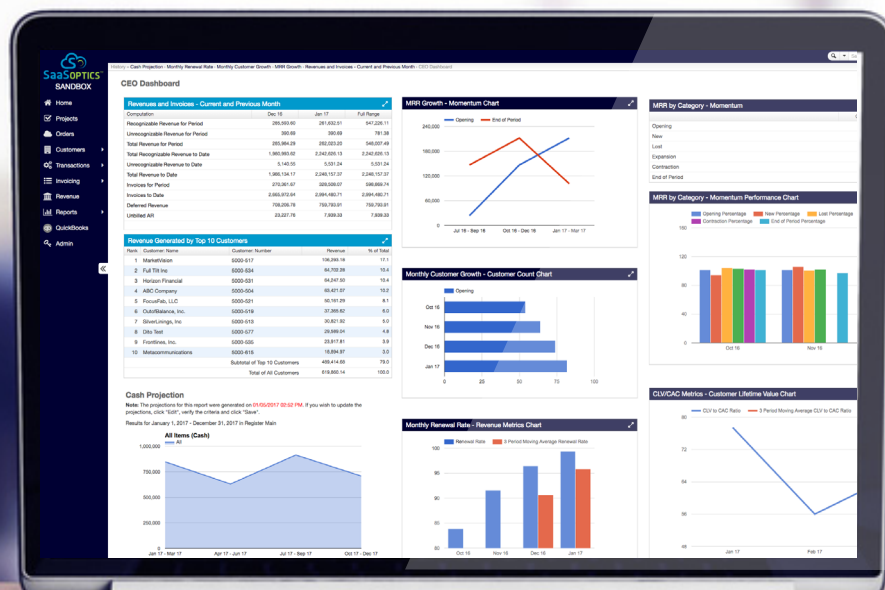
SaaSOptics has also assisted in reducing the time MasteryConnect's finance team spends on month-end reports.

*"Pulling the month-end reports without needing to manually manipulate data saves an entire day in month-end processing," said Hardisty."*

"Before SaaSOptics, we started month-end as of day one and were still struggling to finish by day eight or nine. Now, we are more efficient in our process because SaaSOptics does all the heavy lifting for us."

## A Trusted Partner

With only a small finance team, MasteryConnect leverages technology to help maximize personnel resources. "We want to scale with technology, rather than hire more employees," said Pocock. "One of the most important things we've done is take a strategic, long-term view of our finance operations to ensure the technology we put in place can meet our needs both today and tomorrow. SaaSOptics has taken the headache out of running much of the finance operations of our SaaS business and will be an important part of our future growth and success."



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