NetSuite | ScaleNorth
Business Process Outsourcing Case Study

"We looked at the cost benefit of bringing someone onboard and building an internal team versus leveraging a company like ScaleNorth, and decided to take the BPO path."

Willan Johnson/ VivoAquatics, CEO

Making the Switch to Cloud ERP and Business Process Outsourcing

When a new private equity investor suggested VivoAquatics rethink its QuickBooks Enterprise-based finance and accounting approach, the company implemented NetSuite Cloud ERP and established a BPO relationship with ScaleNorth.

Keeping commercial pools, spas, fountains, streams, and lakes clean, safe compliant with government health standards, and environmentally sustainable is a big challenge for the resorts, hotels, multi-family property managers, fitness clubs, and municipalities. To help its customers overcome these obstacles, VivoAquatics developed an application that connects pools, spas, and other water features to chemical automation and real-time monitoring.

VIVOAQUATICS

Company: VivoAquatics

Industry Solutions: NetSuite for Software and Technology companies, BPO, NetSuite for Private Equity

Location: Monrovia, Calif.

scalenorth

Company: ScaleNorth

Location: Santa Ana, Calif.

Based in Monrovia, Calif., and founded in 2015, the company now supports many of the world's leading brands and facilities from Hawaii to Florida. VivoAquatics automates its customers' operations while providing a software platform to assist with daily workflow, record keeping and preventative maintenance. The automation and software are complemented by 24/7 monitoring services, similar to those provided by alarm companies. This packaged solution was recently recognized by the CDC for its innovative approach to water safety and has received certification for its proprietary "water safety score" and safety standards.

The system's key capabilities include chemical automation; real-time monitoring and resolution; electronic readings housed in a centralized database; and cost and usage analytics including those of water chemistry, chemical levels, energy and water usage. Whether they have a single property or 1,000 properties nationwide, companies use VivoAquatics' platform to save money, maintain the safest water while providing guests a great experience, improve sustainability, implement brand standards, and reduce the amount of time it takes to run their water-based recreational assets.

"Our mission is to become the standard in both sustainability and safety as it relates to water management. Any hotel, multi-family apartment building, fitness club, or municipality has a lot to take care of, including the safety and sustainability of water."

–Willan Johnson
VivoAquatics, CEO

Making its Move

With 60 employees and customers across the U.S., VivoAquatics' team includes engineers, aquatics management experts, application developers, sales and marketing professionals, and operations managers. A leader within its respective market, the company helps its customers move the highly manual, offline process of aquatics management onto its online platform. "Many of our competitors are still doing things manually," said Johnson, "but we strive to bring our customers' process flows and workflows online."

As VivoAquatics has grown, so have the company's technology's needs. With QuickBooks Enterprise as its accounting platform and Salesforce for customer relationship management (CRM), the company also relied on several other "one-off applications," according to Johnson. Combined, these systems didn't offer much in terms of analytics, data, or insights, all of which VivoAquatics would need to be able to maintain growth and make good business decisions.

The technology tipping point came when the company obtained a Series A round of funding from Level Equity. "They told us that we were doing a great job of managing client relationships and building out applications for those clients," Johnson recalled, "but that our accounting and financial infrastructure wasn't where it needed to be, nor was it going to be able to handle future growth."

Tactical and Transactional Support

In need of a more robust enterprise solution, Johnson called on NetSuite Partner ScaleNorth for help. In reviewing the options, he learned that through a business process outsourcing (BPO) arrangement, VivoAquatics would get the unified financial system that it needed plus a team that could also provide both tactical and transactional support.

"ScaleNorth had a strong background in systems and an understanding of how systems and people must work together to ultimately be successful," said Johnson, who realized that instead of bringing in new, internal resources to run VivoAquatics' modernized accounting approach, ScaleNorth could manage that and more using a BPO arrangement.

By outsourcing its accounting and financial processes, VivoAquatics would also be able to tap into more robust approaches to common functions like monthly close, tax management, A/R and A/P, and collections.

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Leveraging Cloud ERP

For Johnson, the biggest benefit of using NetSuite Cloud ERP lies in the financial dashboards and reporting that he didn't have with QuickBooks Enterprise or any of VivoAquatics' other software applications. "We now have great insights into profitability by department, territory, and product line," said Johnson. "NetSuite also gives us in-depth insights into recurring revenue versus transactional revenue, and profit margin."

VivoAquatics also uses NetSuite for scheduling field personnel as they call on customers nationwide. The ERP also integrate directly with systems like Coupa, a procurement platform used by many organizations in the hospitality industry. Now, when a customer enters an order in the procurement platform, that information flows directly into VivoAquatics' ERP, which in turn immediately generates an invoice.

"Our team is using NetSuite from a transactional point of view to drive improvement of operating processes and lower the amount of time we're spending on tasks," said Johnson, "while I rely on it for analytics and insights that help us make better decisions going forward."

Solving Key Challenges

A multifaceted business, VivoAquatics is a software company that sells both products and services, which means its ERP needed to be able to handle both types of transactions. And because it also holds product inventory, the company also needed an enterprise system that offered robust inventory management capabilities.

"The nice thing about NetSuite is that it's modular," said Johnson. "We're able to use it In a way that really meets our needs, which I think would have been hard to do with some of the other platforms that are out there."

Reflecting on VivoAquatics' decision to build a BPO relationship with Scale North, Johnson said the move has helped his company save money, time, and headcount. It's also given VivoAquatics access to outside financial expertise and allowed it to focus on what it does best: building products, technology, and software that helps its customers operate more profitably, safely, and sustainably.

"ScaleNorth has done a tremendous job of thinking through how it matches their team members up with our own team members. We not only have a dedicated account manager, but there are also point people at ScaleNorth that we can call on at any time to help solve specific challenges."

Willan Johnson
VivoAquatics, CEO