

14 WEST DRIVES GROWTH WITH FINANCIAL TRANSFORMATION

Oracle NetSuite streamlines processes and delivers tools for international expansion

14 West is a Baltimore-based business-services firm that supports media and publishing businesses with a global mindset. It helps to protect, guide, and grow businesses and the people behind them. It aims to build lasting solutions based on authentic relationships, innovate with intention, and promote perpetual and meaningful change for clients.

Its services span human resources, talent acquisition, facilities and maintenance, financial strategy, and support – from business intelligence to systems literacy, from legal counsel to strategic communications – and just about anything in between.

Media and publishing companies are known for rapid growth, high energy, and constant evolution, so 14 West needs to move with them. As an industry driven by change, customer experience and the distribution of content remain keys.

“If you think about how we started in direct mail and evolved into the early adoption of email when the internet began to be more available, and now we are into video streaming, broadcasting, and SMS text messages, we are always trying to meet the customers where they live,” explains Pat Brannan, Chief Accounting Officer, 14 West. “Competitors are constantly in our space but we embrace competition because we learn from it.”

FINANCIAL TRANSFORMATION

14 West had been using the same accounting platform for more than 20 years and it served its needs when it was a small domestic business but, as the company's network of clients grew and expanded into other countries, its legacy system was challenged.

14 West prides itself on its ability to provide clients trusted, valued information in a short timeframe, but its accounting system was increasingly holding it back. For example, 14 West manually compiled entities in Excel and then used the program to prepare consolidation reports for clients. It needed to prepare these consolidations with a push of a button.

"We do not fall into the typical client-provider relationship," he explains. "We strive to be a valued advisor to our clients instead of someone they look to as an obligation to meet with. We want to be someone they call for information, advice, support, or guidance on business decisions. We help navigate those waters with our clients so they can make the best decisions possible."

After assessing the situation, 14 West determined it needed to embark on a financial transformation project. It underwent an extensive RFP process and then decided Oracle NetSuite was the best fit for the business. The company executives chose to work with Capgemini based on an Oracle NetSuite recommendation for a partner that could deliver an international project with white-glove service.

"After interviewing Capgemini, we knew they fit the bill," he says. "We were looking for someone who had successfully delivered international projects of our scope and complexity while providing support for our internal team during the project."



BEGINNING WITH TEAM BUILDING

To kick off the process in 2019, 14 West gathered the project team at a resort in Nicaragua. Attendees included the global operations team, accounting, and finance, as well as Capgemini consultants to brainstorm, map out, and develop a plan that included the "nuts and bolts" of the project as well as high-level goals.

"It was a tremendous bonding time and team-building activity for both domestic and international resources," he says. "Being able to meet people in-person and work together just helped us grow closer as a team."

Throughout the course of the project, 14 West met with Capgemini as well as its internal team and subject matter experts who would support, train, and work side-by-side with their international counterparts.

"It was great to see the global team working as one unit since we were embarking on a significant investment," he says. "Now, we are seeing the tangible impacts in both the numbers as well as our teams growing closer."



ROLLING OUT ORACLE NETSUITE

The project was implemented in two phases in 2019. The first was domestically, which took seven months, followed by two additional months to get international operations up and running.

“Moving to NetSuite helped us in a number of ways,” he says. “As we look to grow, we needed a software platform that could help us both domestically and internationally with multi-currency and multi-lingual capabilities, as well as the flexibility for localization for clients outside of the US. We also needed to eliminate some of our manual processes that had been developed over the years. NetSuite provided solutions to help us automate those processes and make them more efficient.”

The result was a global solution that could grow with the business. 14 West reduced its monthly close time by 40 percent, delivering financial information to clients more quickly and with more transparency into the underlying data. These were two key wins for the project. It also simplified the intricacies and nuances of the international tax space and, with the help of Capgemini’s experience, delivered configurations to address any concerns.

With the old system, it took employees hours to run the necessary client reports. NetSuite’s partner network allowed 14 West to find a financial reporting solution that is much more efficient and saves a tremendous amount of time for the accountants and team members. In addition, there is much greater transparency into vendor spend and details regarding intercompany processes.



My advice for a new ERP implementation is to choose a trusted partner who has done a project of a similar size, scope, and complexity. You also need a provider who is going to bring enough resources to the table to help your internal team, because an implementation is a significant workload for your internal team to manage in addition to their existing responsibilities. Capgemini was able to help us with that.”

Pat Brannan

Chief Accounting Officer
14 West



DELIVERING A **BETTER** **CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE**

"NetSuite has been able to deliver consistency in the data across the organization," he says. "In the past, we had various different charts of accounts that our clients would use and we had to do a mapping process. Now, we have one chart of accounts that we can all use and understand. It has made it so much easier."

Employees also have greater transparency into vendor spend and intercompany processes. Customer feedback has been positive about the quicker reports as well as the ability to pull data faster from the system. It also allowed 14 West to remove its IT support team for financial applications, and the move to the cloud has enhanced security and reduced the amount of IT support needed.

"We continue to use Capgemini for technical software issue and troubleshooting, and they have been integral in our integrations with some of NetSuite's partners," he says. "We have been able to integrate our time and expense and procure-to-pay tools as well as our financial reporting tools with Capgemini's support."



About Capgemini

Capgemini is a global leader in partnering with companies to transform and manage their business by harnessing the power of technology. The Group is guided everyday by its purpose of unleashing human energy through technology for an inclusive and sustainable future. It is a responsible and diverse organization of 325,000 team members in more than 50 countries. With its strong 55-year heritage and deep industry expertise, Capgemini is trusted by its clients to address the entire breadth of their business needs, from strategy and design to operations, fueled by the fast evolving and innovative world of cloud, data, AI, connectivity, software, digital engineering and platforms. The Group reported in 2021 global revenues of €18 billion (about \$21 billion USD at 2021 average rate).

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