HAI Group
www.housingcenter.com

COMPANY
- Location: Headquarters in Connecticut; serving public and affordable housing agencies throughout the U.S.
- Industry: Insurance, training, and software to support housing agencies

OVERVIEW
HAI Group utilizes the Acumatica Cloud xRP Platform to offer a new software solution for housing agencies, integrating their property and client management systems with their financial systems.

KEY RESULTS
- Ease of customizations with Acumatica benefits both the company and its clients
- Customers gain seamless integration of all systems and enhanced reporting capability
- Acumatica Cloud xRP Platform's flexibility and extensibility will allow expansion of services for a growing customer base

HAI Group teams with Acumatica to empower public housing agencies, cuts implementation time in half

HAI Group signed on with Acumatica in December 2013 and went live with their HousingHub® solution in April 2015. With another platform, COO Dave Sagers believes, the implementation could have taken twice as long.

SITUATION

For 28 years, the HAI Group family of companies has offered specialized services to its member organizations that manage public and affordable housing agencies throughout the U.S. A few years ago, the software division of HAI Group, Housing Systems Solutions, Inc. (HSS), started hearing from some of the 1,000 HAI Group Members about software challenges they struggled with.

Dave Sagers, Chief Operating Officer (COO) of HSS, says, "The challenges rose to a level where we felt it was worth doing the research to determine if there was a market for a comprehensive software solution for our Members." After market research to determine the gap between what housing agencies were working with and what their ideal solution would be, HSS concluded that they could indeed develop a solution that would benefit their customers.

Mr. Sagers says housing agencies have three main concerns: "managing properties, managing clients, and managing financials." To address all three, he says, it was a priority for the customers that the software be easy-to-use: "We heard that our competitors had long learning curves on their products and difficulty in supporting

and training. We felt this was a big gap where we could make an improvement— ease-of-use for everyone."

SOLUTION

Creating their software solution involved a charter group of customers for about a year, says COO Sagers, "The group that helped us shape what the product would look like was comprised of six housing agencies of different sizes, diversity, and types of assistance programs they manage. And we probably talked with 40 housing agencies to develop the requirements for it." He adds HSS also had their own requirements for what would be needed in a financial system.

Extensive research also led HSS to choose Acumatica, according to HSS's Financial Solution Architect, Francesca Buonocore: "We did a full, in-depth process—this is not something we took lightly." She reports, "We started out with five or six ERP systems and narrowed it down to three.

We compared the offerings of these businesses to our requirements and how well we felt these products would integrate into our operational system."

Acumatica stood out for a number of reasons. First, COO Sagers says, "We were really looking for a company that was around for the long-term, that had a commitment to being in business, and was substantial enough in size that we knew that we would have a partner that wouldn't be bought out."

Also, with Acumatica, he says, "There was a lot of flexibility. We have to service all of our Members—there's very small organizations with five people all the way up to organizations with a thousand—so we needed to have a cost structure that was scaled accordingly."

Additionally, Financial Solution Architect Buonocore says, "We wanted a cloud-based application that aligned well with our technology and our operational system, because we knew it would help us more easily integrate the two systems."

Ms. Buonocore also praises "the people and the culture of Acumatica," saying, "They are all deeply committed and do whatever they can for the client. That's consistent. We really felt as though we could work well as partners and get the attention we needed."

HAI Group signed on with Acumatica in December 2013 and went live with their HousingHub® solution in April 2015. If they'd gone with another platform, Mr. Sagers believes, the implementation could have taken twice as long: "It would be years, at least three years, I would imagine."

As part of the implementation, HSS worked with software developer Itransition to integrate HousingHub® with HousingHub® Finance. Ivan Fomin, Chief ECM Advisor at Itransition, reports, "We have worked with different ERPs (Itransition is a Microsoft and SAP partner), but we are especially impressed with Acumatica because the system is easy to configure and customize, while also boasting scalable architecture

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> **Francesca Buonocore, Financial Solution Architect**
> **Housing System Solutions (a dvision of HAI Group)**

and great developer API and support. With such partners as HAI Group and Acumatica, the project was destined to be a big success, and we are appreciative of having an opportunity to work with such strong players in the business."

BENEFITS

Having HousingHub® on Acumatica helps HAI Group Members tackle the challenges of doing reports, says Mr. Sagers: "That's a big thing that Acumatica brings, that we have throughout our solution ... Ad hoc reporting is a specific issue for housing agencies. It will be so valuable to have standard reports that are specific to their industry, and their requirements for reporting back to their funders like the federal government."

Ms. Buonocore adds, "We were able to extend the chart of accounts to support two different chart numbers. That's been a big positive for them, to report to more than one agency under separate requirements." She credits Acumatica's "ease of customization to accommodate our industry-specific needs."

Ms. Buonocore has built financial systems before, and values the "quality of the application design" in Acumatica: "It has a

great deal of in-depth and well-thought-out functionality that allows you to accomplish whatever it is you need to do."

She says Acumatica's web services also proved a huge benefit: "It allowed us to integrate the data from the operational side into the financial side. It also gives us transparency between the two systems."

Ms. Buonocore expects future benefits for their customers: "As we move forward, and are able to take greater advantage of Acumatica's dashboard capabilities, that will help them even more, because at a glance they'll get an indication of how things are going."

COO Sagers adds, "Our Members' businesses are changing, and they don't all do things the same way, so we need a platform that can be configured to match their business processes and practices. And they'll be changing still more in the future, so we need a platform that's flexible, to handle the directions in which they're moving."

Because of its flexibility, he says, Acumatica "will be an integral part of our future roadmap. As we look at adding capabilities, based on customer feedback, we'll be looking at Acumatica to provide that."