

Myanmar's Premier Security Services Firm Picks Acumatica to Scale with its Growing Business



"We wanted a scalable solution with modules that let us plug in human resource capabilities and others. With Acumatica, the implementation was simpler."

– Geoffrey Hamilton, CEO, Exera Ltd.

OVERVIEW

Founded in 2012 in Myanmar, Exera is the country's first internationally managed security company, providing protective services, transportation, training and risk consulting. As it expanded and hired more than 1,000 employees, it outgrew manually created spreadsheets and turned to Acumatica to manage its accounting, payroll and more.

SITUATION

When Exera opened shop in Myanmar in 2012, the security services company was focused on its main job—providing security to many new clients that were coming into the country to do business for the first time.

It had not planned to scale up its IT and accounting capabilities as fast as it eventually did. After just two years in the country, it would see its staff strength expand from 150 to more than 1,000 in 2017. These included employees guarding facilities as well as providing security services and training to clients.

What Exera realized quickly was the need for a new way to manage its human resources and finances. It had to have a partner onboard that could reliably automate the businesses processes that were recorded manually on spreadsheets.

"When we had 15 employees at the start, we had the core finance team do this and it was still manageable," says Geoffrey Hamilton, Chief Executive Officer of Exera.

"However, we were growing so fast we really needed a system to increase our capabilities without adding more employees in finance department," he adds.

SOLUTION

Exera looked to automate some processes while still ensuring that local requirements, such as tax and labor guidelines, were integrated in a new system. It also had to be flexible enough for the company to add more functionalities as it grew.

Exera did not consider SAP because its needs were best served by Acumatica's customizable and adaptable solutions. Being on the cloud also enabled the system to be easily accessible and scalable when needed.

"We have 1,000 employees but we don't have thousands of retail points, so we don't need the logistics or warehouse management where SAP is strongest in," says Hamilton, who served in the Royal Canadian Navy for 20 years and has a degree in computer science and a Master's degree in law.

"We wanted a scalable solution with modules that let us plug in human resource capabilities and others," he adds. "With Acumatica, the implementation was simpler."

COMPANY

- **Location:** Yangon, Myanmar
- **Industry:** Security

KEY RESULTS

- Automated business workflows that used to be done manually
- Enabled real-time insights into company's financial performance and cashflow
- Enabled staff across the country to access the system and connect seamlessly with custom reporting

The solution was based on Acumatica's cloud ERP platform, with integration with Cadena's HRM (human resource management) tools. Exera also made sure to have a training module in the system, as people were its most important resource.

Working with NetSmart, the local provider for cloud-based business management solutions and Acumatica partner, meant that Exera could roll out the solution with the customizations required to meet the country's local regulations.

For example, the tax implementations and invoicing had to follow the reporting that was required in Myanmar, something that NetSmart worked closely with Exera to include in the new system.

BENEFITS

Moving to Acumatica's cloud ERP system immediately meant that Exera could do away with much of its manual processing of HR processes of the past.

For example, it did not have to look to spreadsheets generated manually to track the resources on hand in the day-to-day operations. Besides managing payroll, Acumatica's system could enable it to track the personnel in the company better and the roles they were involved in.

"Our job is to take an ambiguous environment and make it more certain to our clients. A tool like Acumatica that helps us do that and better manage our business will help us greatly."

– Geoffrey Hamilton, CEO, Exera Ltd.

Since Exera provides security services to clients across the country, it had to have a way to access its information in a distributed manner, rather than have it in silos. The cloud thus provided a friendly and powerful extension to what Exera used to run.

Most importantly, Acumatica's solution has enabled Exera to cope with its rapid growth. Year on year, Exera has boosted revenue by 35 per cent as it grew its staff strength, says Hamilton. "We are glad that the system we have been putting together has helped us stay on top of things."

"We had to customize the admin and management interfaces for diverse and distributed workloads that needed custom reporting because of requirements with local laws," he notes. "Now, it's really helpful to have that captured in the system."

One particular feature that will make even more of a difference in future is the realtime financial reports generated by the system. Exera is able to pull financial data for each month, rather than wait 30 to 45 days, like in the past. The result: Better visibility and improved decision making.

"As the company got larger, we needed to manage cashflow more intelligently," says Hamilton. "The real-time reports on cashflow and on P&L really help me look at things more holistically."

Exera is working closely with NetSmart to roll out more modules that support its claims management and expenditure tracking processes. The local knowledge and close coaching that Acumatica's partner provides have enabled the rollout to be up and running quickly, says Hamilton.

The technology rollout has gone well, he notes. "We too need to transform, especially with staff who are not so familiar with computers, to get the system to work for us."