

Bob Scott's

2021 VAR STARS

**Reselling in
the Era of
COVID**



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Reselling in the Era of COVID

VARs move towards the new normal

People always want to know what the future will look like. But as the COVID-19 pandemic eases, that question has become more baffling and more urgent as long-time practices in business and the midmarket have been upset.

COVID gave impetus to sale of cloud applications and what appeared to be a necessary move to working at home that is reshaping society.

The migration to the cloud is the easier story to tell because it can be measured in the reported financials of cloud ERP vendors. "We had our best third quarter ever in the history of the company," says Geoff Ashley, for Acumatica "We are accelerating through Covid"

While privately held Acumatica does not report numbers, financial reports from public companies show there are other businesses who are also doing quite well.

Strong growth continued in cloud computing as revenue from software licenses continued to decline. Microsoft reported Dynamics 365 revenue was up 31 percent for the first quarter ended September 30 and up 33 percent for the fourth quarter ended June 30. Oracle NetSuite had a 28-percent increase for the first quarter ended August 31 and 26 percent for fiscal 2021.

The story was the same with companies that operate largely outside the United States

IFS, a sister company to Acumatica, said cloud revenue grew 104 percent year-over-year for the nine months ended September. The Sweden and London, U.K.-based company said 2021 software revenue for the nine months was roughly \$394 million, an increase of 17 percent over last year's corresponding period.

Norway-based Visma also had strong growth, reporting a 24.5-percent rise in revenue for the second quarter ended June 30.

The pace for an individual reseller was noted by Dynamics reseller, Archerpoint, based in Atlanta. "Cloud adoption has accelerated with 90 percent of new sales opting for SaaS over on-prem software, which has temporarily impacted revenue growth," the company wrote in its VAR Star submission.

And the strong NetSuite performance was reflected in its channel. Carlsbad, Calif.-based SuiteCentric noted its NetSuite revenue increased by the 26 percent in the fourth quarter of its fiscal 2021.

It's not just the COVID-19 outbreak, but natural disasters such as fires, earthquakes and floods that are proving to businesses the advantages of the cloud, according to Ashley

"We have a long way to go to get people to the cloud," says Matt Kenney, the principal who leads the technology consulting business at RSM US.

Among the largest pools of prospects are the largest of the on-premises accounting installations, in particular Dynamics GP and Sage 100.

"We are still actively supporting Dynamics GP, but many of our GP clients have moved or are moving to Sage Intacct and Business Central and we are not actively selling it anymore," Maner Costerisan wrote in its VAR Star submission.

Crestwood Associates also reported "Quite a few of our legacy Dynamics GP and SL clients have elected to migrate to a true cloud solution such as, Microsoft Business Central or Acumatica" Those remaining on-premise are accessing the Crestwood Cloud on the Azure platform.

People Issues

Beyond pure technology and selling issues, the pandemic has made people issues of a far greater concern than ever. Those include the proper mixture of remote and on-premise work, along with the shortage of qualified personnel.

However, reselling and consulting firms have had an advantage in adapting—many already had remote workers before the pandemic.

Firms that operated in areas in which there is a great distance between cities tended more to move remote work before the pandemic and con-

sulting generally leant itself to the remote work.

The Answer Co., an Acumatica and Sage reseller based in Westminster, B.C., says it "was lucky to have offices across Canada and have fostered a Work-from-Home culture for many years, meaning we retained almost full functionality with little to no downtime during the shutdown."

Firms are still grappling with remote work questions.

"Remote work has proven to be very easy for us, but we are missing client and colleague interaction and are looking forward to returning to the office and resuming "normal" activities," Deerfield, Ill.-based Business Technology Partners, wrote in its VAR Stars submission.

Leaders who think they can simply tell employees to return to offices will probably find themselves at a competitive disadvantage, given the number of organizations that are providing more liberal options.

That was pointed out by Velosio in its VAR Star submission. "New work-from-home and hybrid policies in other industries who were not historically amenable has also changed the recruiting dynamic," the reseller wrote. "With so many remote positions opening up, new candidates have more options available which makes recruiting and hiring much more competitive."

Employees are saying "I want to work where I when to work when I want to work," notes Eric Cassazza, CEO of FMT Consultants, based in Carlsbad, Calif., in an interview from October's SuiteWorld conference "They also are taking the position, 'If you force me to come back, I will think about whether I want to stay here.'"

Cassazza believes his company has been about 10-to-15 percent-less productive based on tracking of sales quotas and billable hours, as a result of remote work. But the opposite view was expressed by Blytheco, which was fifty-percent remote before the pandemic, and is now nearly 100-percent remote now. "Given our high employee engagement, internal cloud infrastruc-



Geoff Ashley, Acumatica

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Company	Headquarters	Product Line	Employees	Revenue \$M
Accordant Co.	Florham Park, N.J.	Acumatica, Sage 100, Contractor/300 CRE, Intacct	35	11
Ace Microtechnology	Atlanta, Ga.	Dynamics BC/GP	32	7.2
Acumen Information Systems	Orlando, Fla.	Sage Intacct, 300	21	5.5
ADSS Global	Miami, Fla.; Exton, Pa.	Sage Intacct, 100c/300c	190	41.5
Aktion Associates	Maumee, Ohio	Acumatica; Deltek Vantagepoint, Infor CloudSuite Distribution, SXe, FACTS; A+; Intacct	200	44
Alithya	Montreal, Que.	Dynamics AX/365, Oracle Cloud	3000	282.98
Alta Vista Technology	Royal Oak, Mich.	Dynamics BC/ GP, Intacct	27	8.63
Answer Company	New Westminster, B.C.	Acumatica, Sage Intacct, 100/300/500, X3	120	20C
Archerpoint	Atlanta, Ga.	Dynamics BC/NAV, LS Retail	135	23.3
Armanino	San Ramon, Calif.	Dynamics AX/FO/GP, Sage Intacct, Intacct CRE	356	123.95
BAASS Business Solutions	Toronto, Ont.	Dynamics BC/F&SCM, Sage 100, Intacct, X3	151	23T
BCS/ProSoft	San Antonio, Texas	Deltek Vision, Deltek for Professional Services NetSuite, Sage Intacct, 100	36	8.8
Bennett Porter & Associates	Tigard, Ore.	Acumatica, Sage 100	24	5
Big Bang ERP	Montreal, Que.	FinancialForce, Intacct, NetSuite, Rootstock	150	9.1C
BKD Technologies	Springfield, Mo.	Dynamics AX/BC/GP/F&SCM, Sage Intacct 100/300/500	52	16
Blytheco	Laguna Hills, Calif	Acumatica, NetSuite, Sage 100c, X3	105	34.4
Boyer & Associates	Minneapolis, Minn.	Dynamics BC/GP/SL	30	6.1
BrainSell Technologies	Topsfield, Mass.	QBE, Sage Intacct, 100c/300c/500	60	9.7
Business Solutions Partners	New York, N.Y.	NetSuite	38	10.6
Business Technology Partners	Deerfield, Ill.	Infor CloudSuite Industrial, Sage Intacct, Syspro	54	14.3
CAL Business Solutions	Harwinton, Conn.	Acumatica, Dynamics GP	25	6.5
Cargas Systems	Lancaster, Pa.	Dynamics GP/BC, Sage Intacct	161	25.5
CliftonLarsonAllen	None	QB, Sage Intacct, 100/500, X3	NA	42
Collins Computing	Mission Viejo, Calif.	Acumatica, Dynamics GP	38	12.3E
CompuData	Philadelphia, Pa.	Epicor, Sage Intacct, 100c	53	13.3

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Company	Headquarters	Product Line	Employees	Revenue \$M
ComTec Solutions	Rochester, N.Y.	Epicor	46	7
Cre8tive Technology and Design	San Diego, Calif.	Epicor	75	12.2
Crestwood Associates	Schaumburg, Ill.	Acumatica, Dynamics BC/GP/SL, Greentree	55	16.5
Crowe	Chicago, Ill.	Dynamics AX/BC/F&SCM, NetSuite	580	93.3
CS3 Technology	Tulsa, Okla.	Acumatica	17	2.5
Dean Dorton Allen Ford	Lexington, Ky.	Dynamics GP, Sage Intacct, QB	49	13.8
DeRosa Mangold Consulting	Waco, Texas	Sage 100, Intacct	9	0.97
DSD Business Systems	San Diego, Calif.	Acumatica, Dynamics 365, Intacct Sage 50/100/300/500	150	15.8
DSWi	Houston, Texas	Dynamics BC, NetSuite	25	4.5
DWD Technology Group	Fort Wayne, Ind.	Acumatica, BusinessWorks, MIP, Sage 50,/100, Intacct	26	6.3
Eide Bailly	Fargo, N.D.	NetSuite, Sage 100/500	225	40
Enavate	Denver, Colo.	Dynamics AX/BC/F&SCM/GP/NAV/SL, NetSuite	400	63.4
Encore Business Solutions	Winnipeg, Man.	Dynamics AX/GP/NAV, 365 BC/F&SCM	116	29C
Equation Technologies	Encinita, Calif.	Sage 300, Sage Intacct	12	4.2
EthoSystems	Scottsdale, Ariz., Chicago, Ill.	Sage 100CRE/300CRE, Intacct	23	7
Express Information Systems	San Antonio, Texas	Dynamics BC/GP, Sage Intacct	16	6.2
Faye Business Solutons	Woodland Hills, Calif.	QB, Sage 100	80	12.2
FMT Consultants	Carlsbad, Calif.	Dynamics BC/GP, NetSuite	78	17.3
Fourlane	Austin, Texas	Acumatica, QBE. QBO	75	13.5
Godlan	Clinton Township, Mich.	Infor CloudSuite Industrial (SyteLine)	75	16.4
govirtualoffice	Waunakee, Wis.	NetSuite	38	5.2
Guide Technologies	Cincinnati, Ohio	Infor CloudSuite Automotive/Aerospace & Defense/Industrial, Infor LN, Infor XA	33	7.5
Gurus Solutions	Montreal, Que.	NetSuite	90	15C
HSO	New York, N.Y.	Dynamics F&SCM	375	96E
Innovia Consulting	Onalaska, Wis.	Dynamics BC/NAV	74	13



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Company	Headquarters	Product Line	Employees	Revenue \$M
Intellitec Solutions	Wilmington, Del.	Dynamics BC/GP/SL, Sage Intacct	24	6.3
I-tech Support	Ocoee, Fla.	Acumatica	33	6.6
JourneyTeam	Draper, Utah	Dynamics 365 BC/F&SCM	120	16.2
Kerr Consulting & Support	The Woodlands, Texas	Sage 100/300/500, 100 Const/ 300CRE, Intacct, Intacct Construction, X-3	125	13.2
Kopis	Greenville, S.C.	Dynamics BC/GP	46	8.3
LBMC Technology Solutions	Nashville, Tenn.	Dynamics BC/GP/SL, Sage Intacct	105	31.3
Logan Consulting	Chicago, Ill.	Acumatica, Dynamics AX/BC/F&SCM/GP/NAV, QAD	40	20.1
Maner Costerisan	Lansing, Mich.	Dynamics BC/GP, Intacct	23	6.1
Martin & Associates	Cincinnati, Ohio	Acumatica, Dynamics GP, Sage 100/500	21	5.7
mcaConnect	Denver, Colo.	Dynamics 365 F&SCM	200	57
Mendelson Consulting	Ft. Lauderdale, Fla.	Dynamics BC, QBE, QBO Advanced	14	1.3
Mibar.net	New York, N.Y.	Acumatica, Dynamics GP/365, NetSuite	28	9.7
Navigator Business Solutions	Salt Lake City, Utah	SAP Business 1, Business ByDesign	45	17.2
Net at Work	New York, N.Y.	Acumatica, MIP, NetSuite, Sage 100/300/500, X3	200	60
NexLan	Danville, Ill.	AccountMate, Acumatica	10	2.4
NexTec Group	Seattle, Wash.	Acumatica, Dynamics GP/SL, Sage 500, X-3	131	24
Oasis Solutions	Louisville, Ky.	NetSuite, Sage 100	25	8.1
Out of the Box Technology	Tigard, Ore.	Acumatica, QB Enterprise, Online, Pro, Premier	63	7
Paradigm Technology Consulting	Allentown, N.J.	Dynamics BC/GP	68	11.8
Postlethwaite & Netterville	Baton Rouge, La.	Sage Intacct, 100	6	0.743
Practical Software Solutions	Concord, N.C.	Sage Intacct, CRE 100/300, X3	25	4.9
Protelo	Folsom, Calif.	NetSuite	39	10.9
Quisitive Technology Solutions	Toronto, Canada	Dynamics 365	NA	49.8 C
Rand Group	Houston, Texas	Dynamics AX/BC/F&SCM/GP/NAV/PO, NetSuite	63	14.6
Rhodium Digital	Calgary, Alberta	Acumatica, Deltek	6	1.2C

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Company	Headquarters	Product Line	Employees	Revenue \$M
RKL eSolutons	Lancaster, Pa.	Sage 100c/500, Intacct X3	92	27
RSM US	Minneapolis, Minn.	Dynamics BC/F&SCM/GP/NAV, NetSuite, Sage Intacct	1500	464.5
Sikich	Naperville, Ill.	Dynamics AX//BC/F&SCM/GP/NAV, Sage Intacct, NetSuite, OpenAir	274	105
SIS	Duluth, Ga.	Dynamics F&SCM	180	26.5
Six S Partners	Waterloo, Ont.	Epicor	56	10.1C
Sockeye	Anchorage, Alaska	Dynamics BC/GP, Sage Intacct, 100CRE, 300CRE	33	8.2
Stambaugh Ness Business Solutions	York, Pa.	Deltek Vantagepoint, Vision	41	12.4
Stoneridge Software	Barnesville, Minn.	Dynamics AX/BC/F&SCM/GP/NAV	265	40.5
SuiteCentric	Carlsbad, Calif.	NetSuite	16	2.4
Sunrise Technologies	Winston-Salem, N.C.	Dynamics F&SCM	254	53.5
SWK Technologies	East Hanover, N.J.	Acumatica, Sage BusinessWorks, 50/100c/300c	170	38.5
Synergy Resources	Central Islip, N.Y.	Acumatica, Infor Cloud Industrial, Visual ERP, Protected Flow Mfg	95	17.5
Tamlin Software Developers	Grapevine, Texas	AccountMate	14	5.2
Technology Management Concepts	Los Angeles, Calif.	Dynamics BC/GP/NAV	47	8.3
TM Group	Farmington Hills, Mich.	Dynamics BC/GP/SL	39	8.2
VARC Solutions	Friendswood, Texas	QuickBooks	13	2.8
Velosio	Dublin, Ohio	Dynamics BC/F&SCM/GP/NAV/SL, NetSuite, Sage 100	400	106.4
Vested Group	Plano, Texas	NetSuite	65	11
Vision33	Irvine, Calif.	Business One, Business One Cloud, Business One Hana, Sage Intacct	498	83.8
WAC Solution Partners	Northborough, Mass.	Acumatica, Alere, MIP, Sage 50/100c/300c, Sage Pro, XE, NetSuite, QBE	25	4
Warren Averett Technology Group	Montgomery, Ala.	Dynamics GP/365 BC, QBE, Sage 100/100c	37	10.2
Websan Solutions	Toronto, Ont.	Dynamics BC/GP	45	10C
Western Computer	Oxnard, Calif.	Dynamics BC/F&SCM	140	31
Wipfli	Milwaukee, Wis.	Dynamics AX/BC/GP/SL, QuickBooks, Sage Intacct	296	55

Notes: **C** Canadian \$; **E** BSI Estimate; **T**, Translated from Canadian dollars



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ture, and company-wide focus on metrics, we have seen an increase in team member productivity this past year," it wrote.

The Winners

VARs and the high and low ends of the channel are doing very well, according to Acumatica's Ashley.

On the low end, life-style VARs saw a jump in businesses as COVID woke up their customers and prospects. "Partners that hadn't done deals have suddenly done deals, plural," Ashley says. It was VARs in the middle that tended to freeze in place because they lack the structures to support business development, he says. The larger organizations have the resources to grow their business.

"We have had very few partners go out of business," Ashley says. For those who remain, "We have partners making a lot of money," he says.

Even before the pandemic, Ashley pushed the message that having content on the web is critical to sales success. "All research houses have found 70 percent of buying decisions have been made before they [prospects] engage with a human," he says.

Resellers must provide content on their website, including videos and blogs and these must be self-service. Prospects download content and share it so that a buying decision can include from 11 to 20 individuals, Ashley says.

With business strong, the channel's biggest need is people. Acumatica offers a certification to hire, a methodology by which people looking for jobs can work with an Acumatica Specific Agency. "They can get access to our partner portal and can

get badged even before being hired," Ashley says.

VARs are looking at any method that might work. Houston, Texas-based, DWSI, which started searching for two experienced consultants, took nine months to fill the positions. The dearth of candidates forced the VAR to change its recruiting approach.

"Until this year, our talent acquisition had been a by-committee effort, relying on our network to find the right people. This year, we had to give in and collaborate with a talent recruiter to find the right people," the firm wrote. Comtec Solutions, based on Rochester, N.Y. also hired a corporate recruiter which has allowed it to grow, the firm says.

SuiteCentric opened a subsidiary in Canada to tap a different market. "We are now actively hiring NetSuite consultants in Canada, and we have also started prospecting for new customers," the company wrote.

Alex Solomon, co-president of Net at Work of New York City, notes the steps outlined by the other VARs, "We have done all that and more," he says. The "more" is establishing a business the Philippines with a staff of about 14. Despite that, "We probably have 50 open recs right now," he says.

The talent shortage is bad enough that instead of buying firms to acquire customers, resellers are buying them to find talent, according to Solomon.

Net at Work's business is much broader than reselling ERP applications. It started its Managed Services Provider business this year. The pandemic has also spurred organizations to outsource and those resellers that are also MSPs are doing well.

Net at Work also reached an agreement with Sage to provide hosting of Sage on-premise applications through its Cloud at Work which is both for end user

companies and other resellers and is currently hosting more than 300 companies "A lot of customers in the SMB space are not going to be forced to a cloud product," Solomon says. "They don't want infrastructure or to host internally."

He says the advantage of Cloud at Work's private cloud hosting over public cloud hosting is that third-party add-ons work, and customizations don't break. Plus, dealing with one service provider means customers don't endure a lot of finger-pointing between parties involved in public cloud installations.

Going Vertical

One trend predates the pandemic continues to be important—the drive continues to move resellers towards niche markets and Oracle NetSuite is well along is program of getting VARs to develop microverticals.

NetSuite says firms should be committed to building a specialized practice. "We recommend our partners don't dabble in vertical markets," says Craig West, GVP of channel sales and alliances at Oracle NetSuite.

More than 40 microvertical applications are at some stage of go-to-market and West says investing in such niche products pays off for dealers. "Partners with microverticals are growing faster than others," says West. He says niches products also involve shorter sales cycles and more rapid implementations. The key to that is utilizing reusable code.

Of course, there is a caveat to the promise very narrow markets as has been found during the pandemic. "If you were in a disrupted industry, you were in trouble," West says.

FMT's Cassazza says his firm's microvertical is Wayfair suppliers, especially furniture distributors that requires "KPIs that are critical to Wayfair".

Clients in this arena "import goods. They manage inventory warehouses, and utilize EDI," says Cassazza. Many businesses in this area are seeing rapidly growth and need software to keep up with it.

One tool that has helped FMT more is that NetSuite has improved its warehouse management capabilities, Cassazza says. He says the product used to be "NetSuite plus something else. Now, it's NetSuite WMS".

Cassazza's company carries both Dynamics and NetSuite software but has switched its emphasis to NetSuite. "We are winning a lot more in NetSuite," he says.

One problem was Dynamics 365 Business Central plays lower in the market than expected and the amount to be made from services was



Eric Casazza, FMT Consultants



Andrew King, Websan



Mathew Kenney, RSM US

Guide to Software Products Listed

Here are the products listed in this chart by vendor. When abbreviated, the abbreviations are listed first and the fuller name is in parenthesis. In many cases, the name of the company is also shown as the name of the product.

AccountMate

Acumatica

Community Brands: MIP

Delttek: CostPoint, GCS, Premier, Vantagepoint, Vision

Epicor

FinancialForce

Infor: Infor Distribution SX.e Infor CloudSuite Industrial

Intuit: QBES (QuickBooks Enterprise Solutions) Pro (QuickBooks Pro), Advanced

Microsoft: Dynamics AX, Dynamics GP, Dynamics NAV, Dynamics SL, Dynamics 365 BC (Business Centra) and

365 F&SCM (Finance and Supply Chain Management),

PO (Project Operations).

MYOB: Greentree

Oracle NetSuite: NetSuite

Rootstock

SAP: B1 (Business One), ByD (Business ByDesign)

Sage North America: BWorks (BusinessWorks) Intacct

Sage 50, Sage 100, Sage 300, Sage 500, Sage 100 Contractor, Sage 300 CRE (Construction & Real Estate); X-3

Syspro

Unanet

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Answering the “Where to work?” Question

Given the opportunity to comment on pandemic-related issues that are still have an impact on business, the remote work was the one that that drew the most frequent and longest comments from resellers submitting VAR Stars applications.

The question is broader than simply about where employees work. Some commented that going virtual enabled them to extend their geographical reach and also expand the areas in which they could prospect for employees.

Comments from several reseller submissions follow:

Acumen Information Systems Due to our continued success, we have implemented a hybrid workplace which allows our employees to work in the office or from a remote location. We understand that creating a work/life balance culture generates better productivity and happiness.

Alta Vista Technology One of our larger issues is the lack of in-person interaction with our customers and prospects. This diminishes the personal touch you can give to a client. We have tried to remedy this by being on camera as much as possible on calls. This has made a huge difference and customers love.

Big Bang ERP We needed to ensure communication was consistent across all offices despite any physical distance. We introduced Big Bang LIVE to share all the information and are reworking the backend to have easier contribution by all. There were increased costs in cleaning and equipment to support a clean workspace—signage, check-in books, thermometers and new ID Scanners.

Blytheco Our team was equipped to easily make the shift to full-remote in 2020. Given our strong national presence, our consulting team has continued to offer outstanding virtual support for all clients as well as travel to clients who still prefer an on-site presence. Go-forward, we plan to continue to build our internal tool kit and infrastructure to strengthen the work-from-home environment for our team as well as automate, digitalize, and enhance the customer experience.

Business Technology Partners Currently, 80 percent of our work force is still working remotely and will continue to do so until they are individually comfortable returning to the office and client sites. We do not have an anticipated timeline any longer as we are leaving this up to the individual employees. Remote work has proven to be very easy for us, but we are missing client and colleague interaction and are looking forward to returning to the office.

Cargas Systems With more than 160 employees as part of the Cargas team,

it’s reasonable that some would be more open to returning to in-person work than others. Cargas prides itself on flexibility and sustainability as part of our employee-owned business model, and we have structured events and meetings to accommodate in-person and remote attendees. Tools like Microsoft Teams have helped us to stay connected, whether in an all-hands employee meeting, a team huddle, or a company-wide events.

Crowe Crowe’s transformation to remote work was already underway via our “Where To Work” initiative, established in 2016. This allowed us to pivot

the US, Europe, and LATAM. A handful of people come into the corporate HQ to work from time to time, but it is not a requirement.

Innovia Consulting Our current plan requires vaccination for our employees to work from an Innovia office or to go on customer/prospect visits. Any Innovia staff member who does not feel comfortable traveling is welcome to stay at their remote office. This plan is revisited every month and continues to be updated based on the CDC’s latest recommendations and local guidelines in each office’s city.

the office, but we have taken this challenge and turned it into an opportunity. In 2019, we successfully deployed a remote workforce and in 2020 we grew our remote team. Having the infrastructure to scale a remote team gave us a competitive advantage to recruit top talent regardless of location.

Rand Group Due to the continuing impact of the pandemic much of our workforce and client base is still working remotely. This has turned into an opportunity as we have been able to expand our geographic reach – recruiting talent and acquiring new clients nationwide.

SIS We have reorganized our services delivery team to provide our services virtually. We had to modify our implementation methodology to do so. We relied on our super talented teams in the US, Ukraine and India and they came through with flying colors. By working remotely, we were able to increase efficiency by reducing non-value add activities like travel times, not to mention the positive impact on environment.

Velosio For those that primarily worked from an office, the transition was clearly easier than for others less familiar with remote working or unable to do so. Our HR and communications teams created a variety of “how to” and other helpful content for employees and clients. One of our larger issues is the lack of inperson interaction with our customers and prospects. This diminishes the personal touch you can give to a client. We have tried to remedy this by being on camera as much as possible on calls. This has made a huge difference and customers love

Vested Group We have about 60 percent of our employees back to working in the office daily. We create FOMO (fear of missing out) by having special events and incentives at the office to entice more people to come back in and remember what they are missing when they work remotely. Remote meetings and Zoom calls have become the new norm, so it isn’t impacting us as much as it did last year.



quickly at the onset of the pandemic. Like most organizations, this included technologies to scale video conferencing, virtual work areas, and other collaboration tools. In many cases, we leveraged our own capabilities to build new market-facing solutions to track pandemic related risks and progress toward office re-opening. In several areas, we proactively purchased collaboration equipment for clients to keep large implementation projects, which typically rely heavily on in-person work, moving forward. As the pandemic continued, employee health initiatives aimed at the mental stress of extended isolation, the loss of family members, and parenting through remote school were pivotal in supporting our teams during the most difficult times.

Faye Business Solutions Group. We have our corporate headquarters in Woodland Hills, Calif, but 100 percent of our workforce is remote. We’ve always had a distributed work environment across

I-Tech Support We are back to meeting in person with prospects and clients and holding onsite trainings, except those in regions with entry restrictions. While we have been able to provide quality support and partnership from afar, we look forward to visiting onsite as soon as restrictions relax.

Martin & Associates The main lingering challenge resulting from the pandemic is employee productivity while working remotely varies widely from person to person. This makes it hard to develop company policies for working from home vs. the office. We’re attempting to address this by establishing a “hybrid” remote vs. office policy (minimum three-days working in the office for local employees). But certain employees will be asked to work in the office more based on their productivity, or lack thereof.

Out of the Box The COVID-19 pandemic has prevented us from fully returning to



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much lower than expected. Cassazza says that the higher-end Dynamics Finance and Supply Chain management moved down market.

Triple Threat

RSM US remains unusual in carrying three cloud product lines—Dynamics 365, NetSuite and Sage Intacct. It also remains unusual in the level of recognition it has received from multiple vendors.



Alex Solomon, Net at Work

RSM has been NetSuite's Worldwide Solution Provider of the year from 2016 through 2021. It repeated this year as a member of Microsoft's Inner Circle and Sage NetSuite picked the firm as Growth Partner of the Year for Deals and as a member of its President's Club.

Overall, business has been good. "I am surprised at how steady and that that it isn't more volatile," says Kenney.

Intacct continues to do well in specific markets, particularly nonprofit and specialty finance. In general, Intacct is favored "Anywhere where the focus is finance and accounting and it is finance and accounting professionals making the decisions," Kenney says.

Microsoft often attracts those who are loyal to the Microsoft brand and want to buy the company's broad technology stack. NetSuite appeals to new companies who aspire to growth and end up as repeat buyers and has also had strength in selling to software vendors.

In general, RSM has concentrated a greater focus on industries as prospects have become more sophisticated about cloud technology.

"We are forming specialized teams around medical applications and the healthcare space, nonprofit and association management markets," Kenney says. The shift to an industry-approach also increased the push to sell a complete technology stack, including both ERP and CRM.

Kenney notes business is well beyond "When cloud was brand new and just being able to say, 'We are in the cloud' was enough to make clients move," he says.

Transparent Information

When Websan received a notice from Microsoft that it had chosen the Toronto, Ont.-based reseller as Partner of the Year for Dynamics 365 Business Central Andrew King, the firm's managing partner, suspected the email was spam.

"We were debating who was going click on it," he says. But Websan, with annual revenue of \$7.6 million (\$9.5 million Canadian), ended up on a list dominated by far larger organizations.

Websan's BC business focuses on prospects "well south of \$100 million in revenue" with

Selecting the 2021 VAR Stars

The selection of mid-market accounting software resellers for Bob Scott's VAR Stars rests on quality, not revenue, as the deciding factor in picking the 100 businesses that are selected for this honor. VARs from very small shops to the largest participants in the business have been selected as VAR Stars.

Criteria for selection include vendor resellers have received, such as the Microsoft Dynamics Inner Circle and the Sage Intacct President's Circle, leadership in the industry and development and

acceptance of important software products by the resellers are all factors in the selection. There is also an effort to represent as many software publishers as possible. There is no ranking within these 100 firms.

Firms were asked to provide the number of employees and revenue. In cases in which businesses did not provide revenue, it was estimated. In some cases, numbers submitted for Bob Scott's Top 100 VARs were used.



Nancy Teixeira, Sage

the average deal ranging between five and 15 seats. It focuses on professional services, distribution and manufacturing and within those a concentration on automation such as barcode, scanning and international ship tracking.

Like Acumatica's Ashley, King believes that provided information on social media is very important. The company has a YouTube channel the provides what he says is a business challenge outcome basis. King says providing objective information is critical to establishing credibility.

"We are not trying to sell anything. It's just informative," King says. The channel has had about 1.4-million views and 7,000 subscribers. Websan is also very transparent about information online "You find pricing, timelines and scope that tends to accelerate the sales process," he says.

Providing information accelerates the sales process by avoiding protracted demos. The result? "We have doubled the size of the company in under three years," says King. "Recurring revenue is greater than 50 percent."

Sage Coming Together

Sage this year has something it has not had before—one person in charge of its channel program.

In January, it named Aziz Benmalek as EVP of the global partner organization. But that does not mean Sage will end the separate channel programs for the Sage onpremise products and cloud-based Intacct, at least not anytime soon.

"They are still very distinct and separate partner programs," says Nancy Teixeira, VP of North America partners and sales. But she adds, "We have a fair degree of cross over."

Part of that cross over represents Sage's ability to sign historical Sage resellers, who had taken on other cloud products, to carry Intacct. Among the largest Sage partners, ADSS Global, DSD Business

Systems, Net at Work and SWK Technologies, all carry Intacct.

The only one of the top Sage resellers not carrying the cloud application, is Blytheco, once a perennial Sage award winner. But it will probably come back into the fold.

Moreover, the Intacct channel program and the one for Sage 100, 300 and 500 have moved closer together. The reseller conferences were combined in the spring and there is one leader for both channels. It's part of the general trend

towards One Sage in which the historical conferences, Sage Summit and Intacct Advantage, became Sage Transform, although the users for 100, 300 and 500 won't be brought to the same event until the fall of 2022.

Teixeira noted there is not a forced migration for the on-premise users.

"A big part of our strategy has been removing friction so we can migrate existing sage customers to Intacct, where there is a fit," she says. Teixeira continues, "where there is not a fit, we have landed the Sage Partner cloud."

The others can access a hosting for Sage 100 and 300 through Cloud at Work, a sister company to Net at Work. "They are working with us in an early-stage pilot for their own Sage customer," Teixeira says. "They are now opening it up to Sage customers of other VARs."

Bob Scott has been informing and entertaining the mid-market financial software community for more than 30 years, including more than 21 years through email newsletters. His covered started with print publications first as technology editor of Accounting Today and then as the Editor of the former Accounting Technology from 1997 through 2009. He has covered the traditional tax and accounting profession during the same time and continues to address that market as Executive Editor of The Progressive Accountant.

