

WHITE PAPER

Mapping the Oracle NetSuite Partner Journey





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Mapping the Oracle NetSuite Partner Journey

An in-depth look at how five NetSuite Solution Provider Partners climbed the stairway to partner success one step at a time.

In business, companies that learn from the successes and failures of those who came before them—and then develop their own success formulas based on that information—can more efficiently and effectively plot their individual paths.

NetSuite Solution Provider Partners can also learn from the mistakes that others have already made, borrowing pages from the “winning” playbooks to accelerate their success, rather than enduring an endless loop of trial-and-error experiences. They can learn the best practices for:

1. Establishing their NetSuite practices
2. Elevating their client acquisition efforts
3. Expanding their marketing scope
4. Accelerating growth
5. Dominating their target markets

Combined, these five steps provide partners with a step-by-step approach, or stairway, that has proven critical to success. This paper explores each step individually and shows how existing NetSuite Solution Provider Partners have harnessed these principles and put them to work within their own practices.



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Establish Success

As a new NetSuite partner, it is important to lay the groundwork of a successful practice by focusing on early opportunities with smaller companies that have an immediate need for NetSuite's financial functionality.

David Lasky, Managing Director at ScaleNorth Advisors, says this is exactly what his company did when it decided to become a NetSuite BPO partner for accounting in 2018, later joining on as a Solution Provider Partner as well. The company focuses solely on NetSuite, with about 35% of its business being business process outsourcing (BPO) and the remainder generated by its Solution Partner offering.

Through its partner program, NetSuite equips BPOs with a single, flexible solution to manage clients of any size, from developing businesses and startups to Global 2000 corporations.

NetSuite's Alliance Partner Program offers outstanding growth opportunities for global and regional systems integrators, finance and business advisory firms, and technology consulting providers.

Working primarily with clients in the \$5 million-\$25 million annual revenue range, ScaleNorth takes a "financial first" approach when working with new customers. "We tell them that they can boil the ocean and solve every business problem they've

accumulated over the last 10 years," Lasky said, "or they can start with financials, gain some visibility and control over their business, and then start layering in other functionalities."

As a former NetSuite customer, Lasky sees the platform's modularity as a key win for small to mid-sized enterprises, most of which come to ScaleNorth for help getting off of QuickBooks. Early on, he said the company framed out its target customer based both on annual revenues, current technology pain points and growth plans. ScaleNorth also put time into learning everything it could about the NetSuite platform and cloud computing, and how to market it to potential customers.

"We spent a lot of time in the learning cloud and getting all of the certifications," Lasky said, "which really helps when going to market." Focused on getting its first logo signed as quickly as possible, ScaleNorth also leaned on NetSuite for support. "Our channel management team was really helpful with taking our questions," said Lasky. "We have each other's cell phones and for the first two years at least we were talking throughout the week."

Because everyone has heard of Oracle, Lasky said spreading the gospel of NetSuite ERP was fairly easy. "We explained that we were Oracle NetSuite partners, told them what we could do as implementation partners and explained what the platform could do for them," he said. "That resonated both with our very first customer and with our current clients."

CHAPTER 2

Establish Competencies in Specific Modules to Elevate Your Practice

The next step in your journey as a NetSuite partner is establishing competencies in modules beyond financials so that you can prospect for more complex deals.

This stage can be somewhat of a whirlwind for new Solution Provider Partners, but the extra effort will pay off down the road in the form of more lucrative, long-term deals. Just ask Dave Taylor, Principal Solutions Architect at 9Gauge, which—in transitioning over from Alliance to Solution Provider Partner—has effectively scaled its business to delve into more multifaceted opportunities.

To ferret out those new opportunities, 9Gauge decided to focus primarily on prospects in the manufacturing and high-tech industries. Leveraging its principals' personal networks, participating in industry webinars and forming strategic alliances with P/E and accounting firms helped 9Gauge “elevate” itself in its target market's eyes. “By combining these tactics,” said Taylor, “we've been able to keep our customer pipeline full while continuing to build out our referral networks.”

Just about one year into its switch from Alliance Partner to Solution Provider Partner, 9Gauge is beginning to see the fruits of its labors in the form of a first round of software license renewals.

“Alliance was a good start and treated us well, but it made sense to naturally move over to Solution Provider,” said Taylor. “Based on our projections, we'll see a nice revenue bump as a result of this decision.” As a Solution Provider Partner, the license sales 9Gauge was seeing, plus the ability to offer a managed services support option in addition to implementation services, made the switch worthwhile.

Taylor suggests new partners should explore managed services as an ancillary offering, mainly because it helps to keep 9Gauge closely tied to its existing customers.

“Focus on establishing a true partnership versus just going in and doing an implementation and then walking away. Our managed service offering helps us stay engaged with customers who wind up spending less money than if they had to revitalize and re-up the relationship every time a need arises.”

Dave Taylor, Principal Solutions Architect, 9Gauge

Expand Your Expertise

With success now established, you can focus on additional ways to help your customers by expanding your expertise. For Blytheco, these expansion efforts germinate from the company's original sales cycle for each customer. That's when the NetSuite Solution Provider Partner takes the time to learn about the different facets of its customers' business, its current and future software needs, and how NetSuite ERP accommodates those requirements.

"We keep the NetSuite ROI message in front of the customer at all times and revisit it with them periodically," Mike Fron, Director of Strategic Solutions for Blytheco, explained. "By creating that vision upfront, we can more easily stay connected with clients and help them see the value of what we're proposing."

Working closely with NetSuite's account management organization (AMO), Blytheco has developed an expansion method centered on "white space data," or those ERP capabilities that haven't been adopted by a specific client. It examines the cross sections of specific verticals and then determines which tools are currently in place, and which are lacking. For example, a company may have implemented inventory management but not the Demand Planning or Fixed Assets modules.

Blytheco also uses marketing materials that focus narrowly on answering the "what's in it for me?" question for its prospective and current customers, both of which are generally dealing with multiple challenges at any given point. For example, it's used email campaigns specifically centered on how a fully-integrated SuitePeople HCM system can help

solve a company's most pressing human resources management problems (versus just sending out a data sheet or FAQ on the application).

"To expand your customer base, you have to connect with some type of pain point that those companies are feeling," said Fron. The value propositions are sometimes cost-related (e.g., an existing service that just raised its fees) or they can center on a specific benefit that the platform delivers, like using a centralized database for all data, assets and information.

"We come at it from a consultative angle by starting with the data and then comparing companies across a specific industry," said Fron, who calls the NetSuite ecosystem "very friendly" and said other partners have served as key resources for Blytheco as it has grown its NetSuite Solution Provider Partner practice.

"We have relationships with other Solution Providers and Alliance Partners that have deep specialties, including ecommerce and marketing automation. Sometimes you just can't staff everything. Building those relationships and partnering with other partners or with NetSuite have both been valuable tools."

Mike Fron, Director of Strategic Solutions, Blytheco

Microverticals Accelerate Your Practice

The NetSuite Solution Provider Partner ecosystem accelerates its growth by establishing sub-industry (microvertical) expertise, monetizing its intellectual property (IP) and becoming a trusted expert for its current and future clients. For example, AdaptaLogix, a NetSuite Solution Provider that's also a Solution Developer, has developed its practice in a number of ways.

Focused mainly on pre-revenue pharmaceutical companies that are working on cures for rare diseases, AdaptaLogix works in a midmarket space where QuickBooks is often the application of choice. Once a drug formula is approved by the FDA and commercialized, these pharma companies have to scale up operations within a matter of months or even weeks, in some cases. These companies need a more robust platform to run their operations on and turn to AdaptaLogix to help them implement NetSuite and then optimize that ERP investment.

With partners who have experience in the pharmaceutical space and a NetSuite-only practice approach, AdaptaLogix has built out IP that's specific to its target customer base. For example, it developed a clinical trial accrual expense management solution that, when integrated directly with NetSuite, reduces the amount of time it takes for clients to process accrual expenses by 75%. This is just one-way AdaptaLogix has used the microvertical approach to enhance and build out IP that can be leveraged across its entire customer base.

Today, when AdaptaLogix's sales team sits down with a new customer, it can present an ERP solution and demo that have been tailored to its specific audience.

"The big differentiator for an industry expert that's already built IP is that you can anticipate all of the questions the prospect is going to ask," said Michael McKenzie, a partner at AdaptaLogix. "You also know the challenges and pain points, and that leads to much deeper conversations." For AdaptaLogix, those conversations often revolve around industry best practices and how the prospect can best leverage those benchmarks within its own organization.

This "deep" selling approach also leads to a quicker sales cycle and helps build confidence within the client base in terms of AdaptaLogix's strong, reliable delivery methods. "We don't have consultants jumping from one industry to the next and always switching gears," said McKenzie. "We have a focused team and that helps build momentum from project to project." That ability to build momentum was one of the key reasons this partner chose NetSuite "right out of the gate," he added, and elected to build an entire organization around it.

"NetSuite's core platform is extremely strong and global in nature, with concurrent, multi-functionality for GAAP [generally accepted accounting principles], plus statutory reporting by country. These capabilities are vital to our microvertical, 95% of which is public and global."

Michael McKenzie, Partner, AdaptaLogix

Dominate Your Microvertical

By controlling a big chunk within a particular market, NetSuite Solution Provider Partners can position themselves for long-term success, enhance their earning power and prepare their organizations for years to come.

For NetSuite partners, the key metrics used to determine market dominance include (but aren't limited to) milestones like surpassing \$5 million in NetSuite-related business, achieving 5-Star NetSuite Partner status and developing software functionalities for specific microverticals. Individually or combined, these are three pillars that most Solution Provider Partners should be aiming for as they grow their practices.

A NetSuite Partner since 2005, goVirtualOffice is another business prospective partners can learn from. A 5-Star Partner for the last seven years, the organization has a mix of manufacturing, distribution and software clients nationwide. Dirk Shimpach, Founding Partner, says his firm's geographic and vertical approach to market dominance blends well with NetSuite's own model.

Using an education-first sales approach, goVirtualOffice uses webinars to share information about NetSuite's demand planning, inventory and ecommerce capabilities. It seeks out commonalities across its client base and then uses that intelligence to target similar companies. Shimpach points to SuiteLife and SuiteSuccess as two tools that provide a high level of value for partners, with the former serving as a jumping-off point for newer partners.

SuiteLife is partner-focused set of resources, certified training and tools that enable NetSuite partners to develop expertise around specific business functions, product areas and industries. SuiteSuccess is a set of leading practices based on NetSuite's more than 20 years of helping companies succeed with cloud ERP. It provides pre-built reports, KPIs and dashboards by role and by industry designed to help small and rapidly growing companies manage all aspects of their business using a single system.

Having adopted the SuiteSuccess implementation approach soon after the methodology was introduced four years ago, goVirtualOffice uses it to do quicker implementations based on established standards and processes. "When clients get an ERP that's prebuilt for their particular industry, it really does change the conversation," said Shimpach. "We can say to new customers, 'Here are the leading practices and here's how they will work for you. From there, we can deal with exceptions versus trying to build a whole project from scratch.'"

Now in the midst of whittling down its microvertical options, goVirtualOffice wants to build out IP for a specific space (which Shimpach won't reveal yet) and get its first client (which is already onboard and ready to go) implemented and live within the next five months. While this is a slightly different approach than goVirtualOffice has historically used, Shimpach is confident that the move will help his company get that much closer to market dominance.

"We're really looking forward to getting this first customer under our belt, getting them referenceable, and then getting three or four more of them," he said.

CHAPTER 6

Ready, Set, Go!

By borrowing the key best practices outlined by partners in this white paper and following the establish-elevate-expand-accelerate-dominate framework, NetSuite Solution Provider Partners will find themselves well on their way down the path to success.

If you're ready to learn more about becoming a NetSuite Partner, please [complete this form](#) to connect with one of our team members.





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