



American Reporting Company

www.arcreports.com

At A Glance:

- **Company:** American Reporting Company
- **Location:** Kirkland, WA
- **Industry:** Financial Services / Real Estate Services
- **Challenge:**
 - Centralize data to make key business metrics and reports more accessible — and more timely
 - Create a technology platform that can be easily, and efficiently, expanded when new business lines are added
- **Software switched from:** QuickBooks, ACT!, Excel, proprietary CRM solution
- **Other software considered:** Internally developed solution
- **Results with NetSuite:**
 - Billing cycle reduced from 4 days to 6 hours, allowing second, past-due batch of bills to be generated each month
 - Receivables reduced by 22 percent in two months
 - Two new business lines added seamlessly — and with minimal expense — to system



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*— Nate Porter, VP of Technology & Process Management
American Reporting Company*

The Results:

With NetSuite, American Reporting Company has been able to reduce its billing cycle from four days to six hours. “We now get invoices out on the 2nd or 3rd of the month, instead of the 15th, which has had a major positive effect on our cash flow,” says Nate Porter, VP Technology & Process Management at ARC. Indeed, the billing cycle is now so efficient, ARC is able to send out a second batch of invoices each month, for past-due accounts. That helped reduce its receivables by \$159,000, or 22 percent, in just two months.

ARC is also able to save money as NetSuite's hosted model means it doesn't have to worry about maintaining or expanding expensive systems — all of the database and reporting technology resides at NetSuite, accessible from any Web browser. That's enabled ARC to add two entirely new business lines - escrow and appraisal - without breaking the bank on new hardware and software. The NetSuite platform also proved less expensive than building a system in-house: “We calculated that an internal solution would have cost us \$231 per user, per month, while NetSuite costs us \$107,” says Porter. “That's a pretty large cost savings.”

The Challenges:

In mid-2004, American Reporting Company was in both an enviable and troubling place. “We were turning a profit but we didn't know why,” says Porter. “With the systems we had in place, we couldn't see where the growth was, or what areas to focus on. It would take a month or two just to learn what products our customers were using.” At the same time, ARC was planning an ambitious expansion of its business, adding escrow, appraisal, and title services to its credit reporting business, hoping to provide a bundle of services to mortgage brokers, banks, and credit unions. “Our goal was to provide all the pieces involved in real-estate settlement,” says Porter.

But first, ARC had to get its own house in order. Its current infrastructure — a piecemeal collection of QuickBooks, ACT!, Excel, and proprietary CRM packages — meant that there was no centralized repository for data, let alone any comprehensive reporting tools. “What

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a sales representative wanted to use, they used, whether it was ACT!, Excel, or something else entirely," says Porter. "At the end of the day, business data was all over the place, and no one could look and see the big picture. We couldn't do any proactive management reporting, any analysis."

There were more immediate problems, as well. With its completely manual billing process, ARC employees would have to enter, by hand, data from multiple, incompatible systems — a time-consuming process that was prone to error. "With QuickBooks and our proprietary CRM system, it could take four days to get out invoices," says Porter. "It took so long to do one set of bills, we didn't even think about doing a second, past-due, set, to help cut our receivables."

In August 2004, Porter and ARC's IT manager, Dean Jarman, decided that the best way to fix the old system was to get a new system. They had five key requirements. The new system had to be flexible enough that ARC could add a new business line without having to add a lot of expensive new technology. Data would have to be centralized in one place. The system would have to be accessible from any location — as the company was planning to expand its staff from 15 to 60 in 2005, with employees located throughout the country. It would also have to integrate with the various platforms used by ARC's vendors, so customer and billing information would not have to be rekeyed. Finally, the system would have to give ARC a comprehensive, real-time look at key business indicators — so that ARC could better plan, and grow, its business.

After three months of research, and a lot of debate about whether to buy a product or build a solution internally, ARC stumbled across NetSuite. It didn't look back. "NetSuite could give us exactly what we needed," says Jarman. "We'd get daily metrics and a centralized database where we could store vendor data and customer data in one place."

The Solution:

Soon after it launched NetSuite in May 2005, ARC discovered that as handy as having all of its business data in one place was, better still was the way NetSuite delivered that data. "NetSuite's dashboards are fantastic," says Porter. "Our sales staff and customer support teams can see in a glance exactly where they are, day to day, getting all of their key data. And we get our data in as close to real-time as we can possibly get. That's important, because our industry is far behind, technology-wise, and NetSuite's dashboards give us a big advantage. With QuickBooks and our old custom CRM solution, we didn't get any of this."

NetSuite also facilitated ARC's expansion plans. "We knew we would be acquiring companies and adding business lines," says Porter. "NetSuite let us add escrow and appraisal businesses without having to add new systems." And a unique gateway — designed by ARC and NetSuite — enables NetSuite to integrate with systems used by ARC's vendors. "We're no longer manually keying data into the system because NetSuite can automatically pull it in from our vendors via the gateway," says Porter.

More importantly, real-time data combined with robust reporting tools has enabled ARC to better understand, and steer, its business. "With NetSuite, we were able to do an analytical report and see that one of our products, Rapid Re-Score, was one of our most profitable, yet wasn't selling as well as it could have," says Porter. "NetSuite let us see, very quickly, that this was a product we needed to push harder. So we did. It is knowledge like this that helps us grow — and grow our bottom line."

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