



Blu Banyan & Norwich Solar Technologies

Integrated Commercial Solar Provider Uses Cloud ERP to Stop Managing by Spreadsheet



A provider of turnkey solar solutions in New England works with Blu Banyan to replace its spreadsheets and basic technology systems with NetSuite-SolarSuccess.

Since its founding in 2011, Norwich Solar Technologies (Norwich) has been working with municipalities, community services institutions, schools, businesses of all sizes and residential clients to provide complete, end-to-end solar solutions in Vermont, New Hampshire and Maine.

But, as demand for solar energy and other clean technologies has soared and its business has grown, Norwich quickly realized that running its business on QuickBooks and multiple spreadsheets was a poor recipe for success.

“Our financial close was incredibly complicated and fraught with errors because we have so many subsidiaries consolidating together. That problem has almost gone away completely.”

Spencer Newman, CFO, Norwich Solar Technologies



“We can look at all of our subsidiaries as standalones or consolidate them into our main financials. That’s been incredibly useful from a financial planning standpoint.” **Spencer Newman, CFO, Norwich Solar Technologies**

Turnkey Solar Solutions

According to the Solar Energy Industries Association® (SEIA), solar accounted for 43% of all new electricity-generating capacity added in the U.S. in 2020, its largest share ever. If all goes as planned, SEIA predicts the domestic solar industry will install more than 324 GW of capacity over the next 10 years, quadrupling the current amount of solar capacity installed.

With many companies establishing at least one climate or clean energy target, Norwich aims to help organizations reach those goals by providing development, design, engineering, procurement, construction, power purchase agreements, structured financial solutions and long-term operations and maintenance services.

The company ranks as one of the largest solar companies serving New England and is not your standard solar firm. Its research and development division focuses on developing next-generation solar and storage solutions with support from agencies like the U.S. Department of Energy. Another division manages photovoltaic (PV) and solar development in Vermont, New Hampshire and Maine.

In 2021, the company added a new division, RunTime Solar, which manages operations and management (O&M) work for Norwich and for other solar developers in New England.

The company also owns a number of properties and solar projects. “We primarily work on large, complex, commercial projects, most of which involve some type of land component,” said Spencer Newman, CFO. “Our aim is to integrate all services under a single umbrella.”

No More Managing by Spreadsheet

Effectively managing complex, multifaceted solar projects requires great coordination, teamwork and technology. “Business complexity is our business challenge right now,” Newman explained. “We have so many different types of projects underway in various locations, plus our grant work and our new RunTime division. It’s a lot to manage under one tent.”

Until recently, the company was using a combination of QuickBooks, Salesforce and spreadsheets to manage its operations plus the transactions that it conducts with about 20 different subsidiaries.

“Things started to get really unwieldy,” said Newman. “It was just very cumbersome trying to do everything in QuickBooks. Our hope was to eliminate this ‘managing by spreadsheet’ approach and manage by ERP instead.”

Shedding Unwieldy Technology

Ready to replace its unwieldy technology solutions with a single, unified ERP system, Norwich explored the options on the market but quickly landed on NetSuite. “A few of us already had experience using NetSuite,” said Newman. After speaking to SunCommon, another solar company in Vermont, Norwich learned about SolarSuccess, a NetSuite application specifically optimized for residential and commercial solar companies that’s been developed by NetSuite Solutions Partner Blu Banyan.

With SolarSuccess, all aspects of a solar company’s business—sales pipeline management, CRM, accounting, purchasing, installation project management (including project costing and profitability), inventory management, customer invoicing, universal financier connectivity and business intelligence—share data from a single source. The solution provides end-to-end visibility into cash flow, profitability, acquisition costs, project summaries and alerts, and other functions.

“SunCommon had integrated NetSuite-SolarSuccess, and told us that they’d wished they heard about Blu Banyan earlier,” Newman recalled. “When I heard that, I called Blu Banyan and asked them if they could help us, and they came in at the ground floor and helped us determine if NetSuite was the right product and how we would go about implementing it.”

An Extraordinary Implementation Partner

Norwich implemented NetSuite in February 2021, and got insights into its multifaceted operations that were lacking in its QuickBooks/spreadsheet setup.

With NetSuite-SolarSuccess in place, Norwich has also been able to vastly condense and simplify its month-end financial close—a process that used to take weeks to complete.

Along with financials, Norwich is also using NetSuite-SolarSuccess to manage its supply chain activities, purchase orders, and associated workflows and approval processes. “We didn’t have those capabilities before,” Newman said, “and they have substantially tightened up our internal controls.”

Thanks to SolarSuccess' budgeting functionality, Norwich now has a good sense of where it stands on both original and re-forecasted budgetary projections. "We're currently working with Blu Banyan to develop a cash flow forecasting tool based on all of our budgets," Newman said, who calls Norwich's partnership with Blu Banyan "extraordinary," and very different from any other relationship he's had with an implementation partner.

"The Blu Banyan team is smart, easy to talk to and very upfront about everything," he added. "The company's CEO follows up with me regularly, just to check in and see how things are going, which I really appreciate."



Company Snapshot

Company: Norwich Solar Technologies

Location: White River Junction, Vt.

Industry: Solar Company



Partner Name: Blu Banyan

Location: Berkeley, Calif.