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BLU BANYAN

HOLISTIC NETSUITE
EXPERTISE WITH
A FOCUS ON SOLAR
INNOVATION

JAN RIPPINGALE,
CEO & Co-FOUNDER



\$15

COVER STORY

BLU BANYAN

HOLISTIC NETSUITE EXPERTISE WITH A FOCUS ON SOLAR INNOVATION

By Justin Smith Gonsalves

Some months before Tiger Woods returned to making golf history in early April this year, Jan Ripplingale, the CEO and co-founder of Blu Banyan—an award-winning NetSuite Solution Provider and SuiteApp developer—received an unusual request from one of the company’s premier clients, Augusta National Golf Course. The client wanted Blu Banyan’s assistance in solving a unique operational challenge. “They had installed NetSuite at the backend to run multiple Pro Shop outlets that sell a wide range of logoed clothing and articles to the attending spectators. However, Augusta was working in a very fast-paced, high volume transaction environment, and needed to keep the products on the shelves for the spectators to buy. Using their existing NetSuite user interface, it was impractical to accurately manage and move inventory between the shops with such a high volume of transactions,” says Jan.

What Augusta National needed was a solution that could help them leverage NetSuite in a way they could enter the flow of transaction data from multiple sources

directly into their system, and respond to customers both quickly and accurately. And that’s exactly what Blu Banyan delivered. As the first step, Blu Banyan looked at the client’s workflow and identified the field interface as the blocker. The company then developed a novel touch screen interface to NetSuite, and integrated a predictive analytics engine that allowed Augusta’s employees to monitor and respond to the rapidly shifting inventory needs in the shops. “Working closely with Augusta we enabled the inventory managers to use the back office power of NetSuite directly, in a way that’s free from the data re-entry and syncing issues that was handicapping their response time and productivity,” recalls Jan.

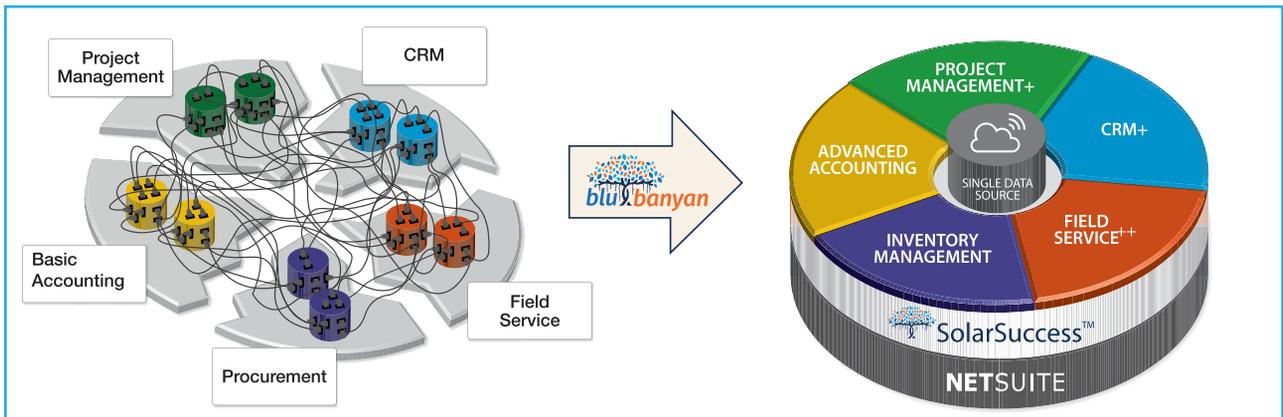
As an award-winning NetSuite Solution Partner and SuiteApp developer, Blu Banyan is committed to innovations that produce practical and measurably effective products, processes, and partnerships. The company’s robust business transformation processes ensure that every step is repeatable, explainable, and auditable. With a focus on systemic innovation across client services, product development, and solution implementation, Blu Banyan engages primarily in the retail, manufacturing, wholesale distribution, and solar sectors.



A KEY ASPECT OF
BLU BANYAN'S
MISSION IS TO
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ENERGY THROUGH
INNOVATION

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Product. Process. Partnerships.

A key aspect of Blu Banyan’s mission is to help accelerate the adoption of solar energy, through innovations that enable Solar Installers, the economic engine of the solar industry, to take their businesses to the next level of productivity and profitability. Using a partnering rather than simple contractor approach, Blu Banyan coaches clients on how to gain immediate benefit from their new solutions, while highlighting the further skill and tool investments that would yield progressively better ROI. There are three major areas that Blu Banyan focuses on to achieve this enhanced ROI—Product, Process, and Partnerships.

- **Product:** Blu Banyan has optimized the strengths of the NetSuite platform in creating SolarSuccess, the premier end-to-end operational solution for solar installers. Based on over a decade of experience at the intersection of the solar industry, software development, and business analysis, SolarSuccess has well over a thousand significant solar-specific enhancements to NetSuite, with ongoing 3rd party integrations for field service, distributor inventory, dialers, lead generation, weather forecasting, training tools, and more. Key areas like field service and training are important enough to the overall installer experience, that Blu Banyan has moved beyond deep integration into selective white labeling, and the company continues to evaluate other candidates for white label level integration. “From a product perspective, our goal is a truly seamless end-to-end solution that makes SolarSuccess the obvious one-stop-shop for installers,” explains Jan.

- **Process:** “Even the best products depend on the breadth, depth, and speed of adoption by clients,” says Jan, “so we give intense attention to the iterative improvement of each of those aspects in our implementations, whatever the industry sector.” One such innovation is the introduction of MPGs, or Measurable Productivity Gains, a way of identifying specific functional areas in a company where quick and

measurable wins are achievable. In particular, Blu Banyan continues to refine phased implementation approaches that enable accelerated go-live dates, with minimal disruption and immediate productivity impact. Upon engagement, Blu Banyan drives co-development of custom metrics and accountability checklists with its clients, to ensure active management engagement with the skills transfer necessary to meet target deadlines. “Management often needs detailed and fast feedback on how well their staff is meeting the agreed training and testing commitments,” says Jan, “because their internal reporting on implementation progress is often compromised for a variety of reasons.”

“MUCH OF THE SOLAR INSTALLER MARKET IS MADE UP OF RELATIVELY SMALL COMPANIES THAT LEVERAGE THEIR LOCAL ADVANTAGE, AND SO FAR NO ONE HAS BEEN ABLE TO COME UP WITH AN INTEGRATED SOLUTION THAT MEETS THEIR COST OBJECTIVES”

- **Partnerships:** Blu Banyan understands that industry-wide advances in software-based productivity are only possible through partnerships and group activity, and so the company is actively engaged with major projects like the Department of Energy’s Orange Button initiative, and the United Nations’ Impact Index. In the case of Orange Button—an initiative to develop and introduce a standardized data exchange format across the entire solar industry ecosystem, including manufacturers, distributors, installers, designers, financiers, permitting agencies, and utilities—Blu Banyan is leading development of the project’s first reference implementation, a solar industry Product Code Registry. Participation in these

kinds of initiatives allows Blu Banyan to collaborate with other innovators to move the whole industry forward and to “future proof” its clients against the impact of new standards and regulations. “We are active in these strategic projects because we want to make our contribution to the amelioration of the climate crisis by boosting productivity especially in the renewable energy sectors,” Jan notes.

Drive toward Innovation through SolarSuccess

What really differentiates Blu Banyan is its ability to innovate. Though most of its visible and impressive client list is non-solar, with SolarSuccess, the company’s first SuiteApp, Blu Banyan is taking its drive for innovation to the next level. “With the rapid decline in hardware costs over the last decade, reducing soft costs— which account for two-thirds of installation costs today—through organizational efficiency has become the most difficult and pressing challenge for solar installers, and that’s where we come in,” remarks Jan. The difficulty is that soft costs have many different sources— incompatible programs, data entry errors, inventory and procurement mistakes, inefficient labor utilization, project management fumbles, changing customer acquisition costs, delayed and erroneous invoicing, late payments, permitting problems, and inconsistent and late reconciliations. Incompatible applications for each functional area of the business lead to conflicting, incomplete, and out of date information flows, crippling management’s ability to respond in a timely and informed way to changing risk and reward.

SolarSuccess illustrates what Blu Banyan means by innovation in practical terms. The service provides customized dashboards, KPIs, task queues, solar project workflows, visual timelines, financial project templates, and facilitates multiple partner integrations. Typical implementations take between



two to four months, depending on what tools the client is already using and how extensive and complex the data import from the existing system is. Multi-phased approaches are available to solve the most pressing needs (usually connecting project milestones to accounting events), followed by full integration of CRM and other applications. “All potential SolarSuccess clients can get a free one-hour business software consultation/ audit, including assistance in mapping their own business against the Blu Banyan Solar Operations Value Chain,” says Jan. This helps the client to identify specific functional areas to make a priority and to understand what is required to move from foundational to transformative competence.

NetSuite’s Preferred Partner for the Installer Micro-vertical

As a micro-vertical market, the solar installer industry has between 1,500-2,000 potential NetSuite clients, and NetSuite’s selection of Blue Banyan as its preferred partner for the installer micro-vertical is a testament to the company’s value proposition. “The

partnership that we have with NetSuite around the solar part of our business is very unusual. NetSuite recognizes our unmatched expertise in serving solar installers, and directly supports us in addressing that micro-vertical market,” mentions Jan.

In the solar market, Blu Banyan currently caters mostly to the larger residential and commercial solar installers in the U.S. With a strong presence in the solar mid-market, the company is planning to use its experience to drive the cost and effectiveness of implementation down to a level that players in the long tail market (companies with \$3 - \$20 million in annual revenue) can be profitably addressed. The goals are implementations that are under \$20,000 and take 60 days or less to go-live. This will both greatly expand the business efficiency of the whole installer market, and create a competitive moat for Blu Banyan as the low-cost supplier of business management solutions optimized for the sector. “Much of the solar installer market is made up of relatively small companies that leverage their local advantage, and so far no one has been able to come up with an integrated solution that meets their cost objectives. Our goal is to become the low-cost enabler of that marketplace,” says Jan.

Toward a Bright Future

One of the key differentiators for Blu Banyan is their work culture. The company has a bias towards “actionable intelligence,” through the cultivation of a team of professionals concentrated on constant improvement, on iterating its internal and client-centric activities and experience towards ever more productive outcomes. “Every aspect of our product, process, and partnering is under constant review, intending to identify any area in which improvements can be made in functionality, ease of use or time/cost reduction,” Jan concludes. **CA**

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Company:

Blu Banyan

Key Person:

Jan Rippingale
CEO & Co-Founder

Description:

An award-winning NetSuite Solution Partner and SuiteApp developer with extensive experience in ERP consulting, implementation and professional services, especially in the retail, manufacturing, wholesale distribution, and solar sectors

Website:

blubanyan.com

Top 10 NetSuite Solution Providers - 2019

Cloud-based financials/Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP), PSA, CRM and omnichannel commerce software have become the holy grail for companies looking to efficiently manage people, products and services, and their money. Companies across diverse industries leverage NetSuite's cloud ERP, omnichannel commerce, CRM and many other solutions to reap the significant advantages that are becoming synonymous with world-class cloud computing—efficiency and flexibility, large productivity gains, and dramatic IT cost reduction.

However, implementation of technology solutions is no cakewalk and requires a commitment by an expert team to ensure success. This is where experienced NetSuite solution providers come in. Gauging the changing times, CIO Applications has compiled a list of top 10 NetSuite solution providers 2019 in order to guide organizations in tackling their ERP challenges.

CIO Applications is honored to feature Blu Banyan on its annual list of NetSuite Solution Providers. Blu Banyan is an award-winning NetSuite Solution Partner and SuiteApp developer with extensive experience in ERP consulting, implementation, and professional services, especially in the solar, manufacturing, wholesale distribution, and outdoor apparel sectors.

The list comprises Canada-based Trajectory—a leading owner-operated NetSuite and cloud software consultancy. Offering a perfect mix of hands-on business consulting and technology, the company help companies improve operational efficiency and increase stakeholder value. For Top Step Consulting, however, the trick lies in providing a comprehensive set of solutions through its STEPS program, which delivers a holistic approach to the complete professional services life cycle. On the other hand, Harbour Mastery specializes in Software-as-a-Service and hosted web-based solutions.

With several innovative technological capabilities and success stories up its sleeves, these new-age solution providers are constantly proving their mettle in the NetSuite solutions landscape. We hope this issue of the CIO Applications helps you build long-term customer relationships in a technologically-driven environment.

We present to you CIO Applications' "Top 10 NetSuite Solution Providers - 2019."