

Evaluating Acumatica and Oracle NetSuite: Considerations for SMB Companies

A Solution Brief for Growth-Minded Organizations

ORACLE NETSUITE AND ACUMATICA CATER TO SMBS

According to the Office of the U.S. Trade Representatives, approximately 30 million small and mid-sized businesses (SMBs) operate in the United States.¹ The number balloons to 213 million when including all SMBs worldwide.² Although these organizations are in various stages of process automation and digital maturity, most will benefit from a technology backbone that can manage their core operations, namely an ERP system.

Two leading ERP vendors for SMBs are Oracle NetSuite and Acumatica. Both NetSuite and Acumatica provide a cloud-native ERP suite designed for small and mid-sized businesses and offer comprehensive capabilities for supporting back-office and customer-facing operations. Both suites offer robust reporting, analytics, and configurable dashboards that streamline data analysis and inform executive decision-making. Since both were born in the cloud, they alleviate costly hardware needs and provide access anywhere on any device via a standard web browser.

Functionally, NetSuite and Acumatica offer similar features that cover financial management, customer relationship management (CRM), project accounting, payroll, inventory and warehouse management, manufacturing operations, wholesale distribution processes, and omnichannel commerce activities. While minor differences exist between the applications, the overall scope of features is more similar than not.

So, how should businesses evaluate the two systems beyond feature-function comparisons?

This Solution Brief will outline the critical criteria for choosing an ERP suite best suited to support an SMB's digital journey and identify significant differences between Oracle NetSuite and Acumatica.

¹ [Small- and Medium-Sized Enterprises \(SMEs\) | United States Trade Representative \(ustr.gov\)](#)

² [Global SMEs 2020 | Statista](#)

COMPETITIVE DIFFERENTIATION: ACUMATICA VS. EPICOR KINETIC



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DIFFERENTIATION #1

Implementation and Risk

When an ERP vendor struggles to showcase the value of their software solution, they often turn to price as their key differentiator, promoting the lowest price to potential customers.

NetSuite regularly discounts its software license fees for new customers to win their business—more on that later. They also greatly reduce the cost of implementation services to appeal to new buyers, often by 50-100% (yes, they offer free implementation!). It's a common tactic for NetSuite sellers to make the deal seem too good to be true.

And it is!

NetSuite uses a prescribed implementation methodology called “[SuiteSuccess](#),” designed to deploy the ERP software in a minimum timeframe. SuiteSuccess is the means to NetSuite's deeply discounted implementations. To defray costs and time, SuiteSuccess follows a defined scope that details:

- only core Financial Management and CRM are deployed.
- the solution is based on NetSuite-defined best practices, prohibits any modifications or integrations with other software, and does not provide data migration of historical data.
- customers can be held accountable for missing planned go-live dates—with penalties from NetSuite for delaying or missed milestones.

The SuiteSuccess methodology introduces high risk into the initial implementation. With a strict scope and timeline, many customers must extend the implementation to deploy the functionality they need to run their company properly. Or they find the installation does not support their needs at all. Customers who engage in a NetSuite implementation should always get clarity on the project's scope, including a detailed implementation plan with resourcing levels for each activity and deadline—in writing!

Please understand the breadth of risk associated with SuiteSuccess implementations. The above scenario is not an isolated occurrence. In fact, multiple implementation partners have a dedicated business model to “rescue” failed NetSuite deployments. A simple web search of “[NetSuite rescue](#)” reveals pages of partners offering to correct incomplete and failed NetSuite deployments!

The risk is personal and professional. Yes. Directors have been fired for buying IBM. And for buying Microsoft. And, for NetSuite.

In contrast, Acumatica partners conduct a thorough “discovery phase” at the beginning of the implementation process to ensure they meet every customer's needs and priorities. For example, the process includes transparent, bi-lateral discussions with the client's implementation team to validate the scope and project plan for success. Acumatica partners include these steps as part of the implementation cost estimate to avoid unpleasant surprises at go-live.

Alternatively, Acumatica offers an accelerated installation for customers that need a rapid, simplified, fixed-cost scope for their implementation, called “[FastTrack Deployment](#).” Yet, unlike SuiteSuccess, the FastTrack methodology doesn't bypass critical customer discovery and initial planning steps, which help verify expectations and ensure the achievement of implementation goals.

More importantly, Acumatica's deployment methodology encourages customers to retain and leverage their unique business processes, which provide a direct competitive advantage in their markets. Rather than dictate best practices as a template for customers to follow, Acumatica adapts the software and implementation to the way customers run their operation. Thanks to its flexibility and ease of use, Acumatica flexes to business process flows today and facilitates the changes you want to make in the future.

Not coincidentally, a web search for “[Acumatica rescue](#)” or “[Acumatica failed implementations](#)” does not uncover failed ERP deployments but tips and best practices for promoting a successful ERP deployment.



DIFFERENTIATION #2

Predictable Cost Structure

Catering to SMBs with limited IT staff means keeping things manageable and predictable. Cost predictability is imperative to achieving financial goals and optimizing profitability.

Acumatica strives to give customers a predictable economic impact throughout the life of the software. Intentional, customer-centric policies ensure that users optimize the value of Acumatica. For instance, Acumatica's [Customer Bill of Rights](#) protects all customers from unreasonable price increases for life!

Acumatica also has a customer-friendly licensing model that creates organizational value. Consumption-based pricing allows every employee—and external trading partners—to access the software! This price structure fosters collaboration across your whole ecosystem and breeds operational excellence as every stakeholder contributes to the company's success. Further, the more users engage with the ERP system, the lower the software cost becomes—a win-win for customers all around.

For NetSuite users, licensing costs can be a big surprise. Each user requires a license, so adding part-time, seasonal, and external users increase the system's price. Additionally, a client's transaction volumes may incur 'resource consumption' fees that are based on Service Tiers (volume thresholds). See below, as of July 2022:

Service Tier	Users	File Storage (GB)	Monthly Transaction Lines
Standard	100	100	200,000
Premium	1,000	1,000	2,000,000
Enterprise	2,000	2,000	10,000,000
Ultimate	4,000	4,000	50,000,000

When their subscription approaches renewal, NetSuite customers are often surprised to see significant price hikes that can [exceed 50%](#) of their original NetSuite contract. In addition, many are stunned to learn their contract will renew at the deployment's "then-current list price" rather than their initial discounted rate. Keep in mind, that reducing the number of user licenses [won't necessarily lower fees](#).

NetSuite customers should negotiate the best discount possible during initial contract negotiations. But, please be aware the longer the contract's term, the longer you are tied to it, regardless of the system's ability to operate to your satisfaction. This, too, adds to the total costs of ownership of NetSuite.

"I don't like that whenever we need something in Netsuite, it some how is another bundle that we need to pay for. I wish Netsuite came with all the things that we needed. We didn't know we needed a separate company to process cards, or to create automatic billing, or for dunning."

– NETSUITE REVIEWER
JUNE 28, 2022, ON [G2.COM](#)



DIFFERENTIATION #3

Usability

The importance of an ERP system's ease of use cannot be overstated. Software usability directly impacts user adoption, training success, employee retention, and staff productivity.

Via its consumption-based (and unlimited user) pricing model, Acumatica encourages all employees and trading partners to access and collaborate within its ERP application suite. Moreover, the system's [award-winning](#) usability delights users into wanting to work with the software package. The more users, the more streamlined and efficient the company's processes are while eliminating off-line workarounds.

Acumatica lets end-users create and modify process workflows with an intuitive, visual engine. Users control dashboards, forms, tables, and event triggers from within their workspace. Reports and generic inquiries expose data for custom analysis, again by users. Documents can be attached to any screen, built-in wikis enable communication and reference information across the organization, and color-coded next step recommendations simplify the completion of process tasks. Integration with Adobe PDF-formatted documents allow users to annotate directly on attached .pdf files, and Microsoft Teams integration lets users contact colleagues to discuss emerging issues in real-time.

High usability and flexibility help future-proof the system by adapting it to support your changing business for years. Acumatica's modern architecture allows modifications without developers' time and cost. Plus, as your business processes evolve over time, Acumatica fosters those changes with an adaptable, next-generation platform, so you create and retain competitive differentiation as a company. Since 75% of Acumatica staff works on research and development, semi-annual updates pack significant enhancements into every release—many result from direct feedback from our customers and ecosystem community.

“When we talk about Acumatica, it's not just about accounting but about where we do all our business. We work in Acumatica and don't need to leave.”

– SCOTT STARKWEATHER, PRESIDENT, BOULDER CREEK STONE

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It's no wonder that Acumatica is THE top-rated ERP suite for usability, [per G2](#) as well as [Nucleus Research](#).

NetSuite's usability is not quite as strong. Users complain that the system is [unintuitive, hard to navigate](#), with complicated screens, and too many ways to complete a process. In addition, it requires a [steep learning curve](#). Further, users find the standard reports inadequate and [customizing reports is difficult, typically requiring technical expertise](#). Users have experienced [slow performance](#), and suffered through multiple widespread [system outages](#) (e.g., [July 2022](#), [Jan. 2022](#), [Oct. 2021](#), [July 2018](#)).

Usability is also hampered by proprietary coding needed for customizations. NetSuite's platform leverages “[SuiteScript](#),” an off-shoot of standard Java, which requires formal training. Trained resources can prove scarce and expensive for customers who lack the skillset in-house. Acumatica's Microsoft-based .NET development environment is ubiquitous and a standard programming language.

Some NetSuite customers have [lamented](#) about the slow pace of NetSuite enhancements. Usability is negatively impacted when critical features are delayed from being introduced into the product, and users suffer for it.



DIFFERENTIATION #4

Partner Ecosystem

A strong user community and a growing ecosystem of partners can accelerate the value customers receive from their ERP implementation. From consulting partners who help deploy, train, and support the application, to independent software vendors who add complementary capabilities to the core ERP suite, partners fulfill many “last-mile” requirements for the user base.

There are some noteworthy differences between the partner ecosystems of Acumatica and NetSuite.

Acumatica has a thriving ecosystem. Value-added reseller partners (VARs) continue to flock to Acumatica. In addition, many Acumatica partners have switched away from selling legacy ERP products to hasten their growth trajectory by devoting more resources to selling Acumatica’s modern ERP. For software partners, Acumatica hosts a vital [marketplace](#) of ISV solutions—271+ applications across 43 functional categories and growing.

Acumatica’s partner channel enjoys a symbiotic relationship with the software publisher. Acumatica relies on its value-added reseller partners for ALL customer sales. There is never channel conflict between partners and Acumatica!

Customer support is similarly symbiotic. VARs serve as the first point of user support. [Acumatica Customer Support](#) remains available to address product issues as part of a dual-layered service. Strict certification requirements are mandated for all VARs, making competence a top priority for the Acumatica channel.

Acumatica takes care to take care of the partner channel, so your VAR can properly take care of you.

How does Acumatica’s Partner Ecosystem drive success? [CLICK HERE](#) to let our customers tell you why.

NetSuite sells and services their ERP product both directly and through VARs. But unlike Acumatica, NetSuite partners experience channel conflict on occasion with Oracle. Partners have had [profitable opportunities](#) taken away from them so that NetSuite can sell the deal directly, pocketing the proceeds. Others claim NetSuite is difficult to work with and consider the support and training they receive inadequate to meet their channel quotas. In addition, NetSuite’s pricing model makes it very expensive for small and mid-sized businesses.

These issues impact NetSuite end-users, as disgruntled partners provide lower service levels to their customer base than “happy” partners. Further, partners who feel dissatisfied in their relationship may end the partnership and look for alternate software packages to resell, leaving current clients to find other channel options for post-sales support.

Two former NetSuite channel partners were disenchanted enough in their business dealings with NetSuite that they publicly wrote about voluntarily terminating their relationships. Read about what [Technology Management Concepts](#) and [The Answer Company](#) had to say regarding the problems with NetSuite that led to their ultimate decision to walk away from the partnership.

“When [Oracle partner] Plexada complained to Oracle, the database titan allegedly retaliated, conducting a whisper campaign against the firm to deprive it of future deals and taking money from its Oracle Partner account to cover the outstanding amount owed by the Lagos government.”

– [“ORACLE SUED BY ONE OF ITS OWN GOLD-LEVEL PARTNERS OF THE YEAR OVER GOVERNMENT IT CONTRACT”](#), THE REGISTER, JUNE 16, 2022



DIFFERENTIATION #5

Ease of Doing Business

How a software vendor engages with its customers provides another source of competitive advantage for companies. True partnerships between publishers and end-users keep costs predictable, deliver new functionality prioritized by customers, and maximize use of the system by all employees.

Acumatica LIVES by its mission to be the most customer-friendly ERP provider, as evidenced by:

- A formal [“customer bill of rights”](#) manifesto, guaranteeing every user fair and friendly treatment.
- An Acumatica customer portal to facilitate collaboration with trading partners such as vendors, customers, and outside consultants.
- A steadfast focus on developing and supporting a singular ERP product with significant R&D investment (75% of Acumatica resources help develop and test the software).
- Free online training for ALL employees via [Acumatica Open University](#).
- [Award-winning](#) usability and satisfaction ratings from industry sources G2, IDC, Nucleus Research, and Gartner. Winner of the coveted CODIE award for the best software product in 2021.

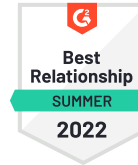
In contrast, Oracle has a questionable reputation in the enterprise software market, with many customers reporting their working relationship is strained. Be aware of claims NetSuite may engage in deceptive sales practices, such as [over-promising and under-delivering](#), [underestimating price quotes](#), and [lack of transparency](#).

Also beware of low levels of customer engagement, sympathy, and support. Users claim NetSuite [has not addressed](#) outstanding service tickets, [shown apathy](#) towards customer downtime, and [refused to engage](#) in a sales cycle with smaller prospects.

Be cautious, as Oracle is known for [auditing customers](#) and forcing sales to boost profits. Currently, Oracle is engaged in an [active lawsuit](#) that claims the software giant “misled its investors about the sales of its cloud products by threatening customers with expensive software licensing audits unless they agreed to use Oracle’s cloud software. The suit also alleges that Oracle offered customers large discounts for on-premises products if they accepted short-term cloud contracts they didn’t want and were unlikely to use.”

Independent enterprise software analysts, such as Third Stage Consulting, [recommend](#) vetting the relationship aspect of Oracle when selecting an ERP vendor, stating “there are companies out there that don’t like working with Oracle, they find their pricing and contract structures too complicated and cumbersome, and difficult to work with.”

So carefully evaluate the critical qualities of your IT partners to secure the kind of relationship you will benefit from as a valued customer.



“Our success is ultimately tied to Acumatica’s success, and they are building a strong and healthy product. They have a vibrant customer and development community and a product that’s growing, not stagnant. We can really craft Acumatica to do what we need it to do.”

– BEN ROTHE, GM & CEO, PREMIER 1 SUPPLIES

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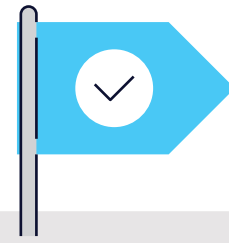
Acumatica is THE Choice for Small and Mid-Sized Manufacturers

SMB manufacturers seeking an ERP platform to support their production systems and overall business operations have many choices, Acumatica and Oracle NetSuite being two of the most popular. Aside from relative functional parity between the two systems, several other critical criteria must be considered.

To get the most from an organization's ERP system of record, look at each vendor's:

- **Implementation Methodology and Risk**
Acumatica better supports manufacturers who also distribute and sell goods in an omnichannel model.
- **Predictable Costs**
Acumatica's predictable cost structure and organizational efficiencies provide customers with operational excellence and superior value.
- **Usability**
Acumatica's award-winning usability leads the ERP field, and that allows customers to take full advantage of their technology investments.
- **Partner Ecosystem**
Partners are flocking to Acumatica; many partners have switched away from selling legacy ERP to hasten their growth. Acumatica provides dual layers of customer support via certified resellers and Acumatica's fully-staffed customer support department.
- **Ease of Doing Business**
Acumatica LIVES by its mission to be the most customer-friendly ERP provider in the industry. Read our [customer bill-of-rights!](#)

The best choice for your next ERP system is rooted in critical factors beyond feature-function comparisons, and towards true technology partnerships.



“We had difficulty with the lack of timeliness of getting data into and out of NetSuite, which would mean we couldn't be operating in real time. NetSuite also lacked the level of customization that Acumatica provides, so we would have had fewer options in the future to customize it to suit the specific needs of our business.”

– THOMAS FINNEY
IT DIRECTOR
SHOEBACCA



Acumatica Cloud ERP is a comprehensive business management solution that was born in the cloud and built for more connected, collaborative ways of working. Designed explicitly to enable small and mid-market companies to thrive in today's digital economy, Acumatica's flexible solution, customer-friendly business practices, and industry-specific functionality help growing businesses adapt to fast-moving markets and take control of their future.