THE 2017 VAR

100

OUR ANNUAL RANKING OF THE TOP RESELLERS | CAN THEY HIRE THE TALENT TO MATCH THEIR GROWTH? THEIR CHALLENGES — AND SUCCESS STRATEGIES

Smarter clients, smarter workforce

The top value-added resellers ranked in this year's VAR 100 are concerned with hiring top talent to keep up with promising growth

BY RANICA ARROWSMITH

This year's VAR 100 are facing more educated clients who are ready and willing to adapt to the cloud. But now those clients also want more seamless technology, smarter reports and better analytics.

Hiring the expertise to keep up with these clients is top of mind for growing technology consultants. Finding employees with the subject-matter expertise as well as industry experience and the ability to work well with clients is paramount for forward-looking firms — because as clients themselves grow, value-added resellers have to live up to their name and actually add value.

"Our clients are not only dealing with technology challenges, they deal with growth challenges, people challenges and more," noted Armanino (No. 5 on this year's list). "By taking a strategy and transformation approach, we're going in on an assessment basis, asking critical questions and coming back with a roadmap of recommendations. Technology is part of those recommendations, but is not the whole thing. Then we have a strong dialogue on how to make those recommendations happen."

A FEW GOOD MEN (AND WOMEN)

Overwhelmingly this past year, VARs have been concerned with finding talent. As the technology advances quickly, firms are finding it difficult to find people who can keep up with the knowledge required to be effective, as well as training their existing staff to stay up-to-date.

For Boyer & Associates (No. 84), the main concern is simply finding talent with enough experience to "live up to [their] promise of making businesses better." Armanino agreed: "Not only do we need consultants who are MBAs with industry experience, we need talent with a broad spectrum of expertise," the firm reported. "We are always looking for consultants who have a deep expertise in their industries served and in the technology solutions we offer." This, firm management said, is its main obstacle.

But for DSD Business Systems (No. 47), management is more concerned with hiring people "whose work ethics and values are a great fit for [its] culture," because, as the firm reported, "Our highest business priority is how we treat people; our own employees, our customers and our vendors."

On the other hand, NetSuite reseller Explore Consulting (tied for No. 47) struggled last year to hire enough people to meet the explosion in demand following Oracle's acquisition of NetSuite. Other companies such as Cargas Systems (No. 32) faced the same fight, and had a hard time finding talent to support its growth. "Balancing profitability with growth and opportunity is always a challenge," the firm reported.

PEAK CLOUD

The good news, however, is that the industry no longer faces the struggle of convincing accounting professionals that the cloud is where they need to be. The cloud isn't dead, as some tech-forward talking heads like to say in the era of artificial intelligence and machine learning; rather, the cloud is in its heyday, with most professionals understanding its benefits, and knowing they need to adapt.

Chris Dobkins, the owner and president of Njevity (No. 99) said that the pace of cloud adoption has really accelerated: "A couple of years ago, we had to convince people cloud was the right choice for them. Now they're coming with the predisposition to cloud."

Cargas Systems reported the same: "Customers and prospects are interested in moving to the cloud. Instead of us educating them on the benefits of cloud computing, they are already knowledgeable and strategically looking at moving their solutions to the cloud."

DSD Business Systems, however, detailed a more specific type of client that the industry would do well not to let fall through the cracks. "Most publishers who have been in this niche for decades have successfully transitioned from an exclusively on-premises deployment model to a connected services model in the cloud," the company reported. "That leaves many orphan clients who are reluctant to transition to a cloud model, for reasons of their own. These legacy software clients need a high level of care, and if they remain in significant numbers, they will be a challenge to support. This is a trend, a threat and an opportunity, all rolled into one."

On the flip side, previously unsophisticated clients are now finding access to enterprise resource planning (ERP) platforms that become more affordable. Njevity's Dobkins calls this "the democratization of ERP systems."

"Suddenly small and midsized businesses can afford systems that previously only much larger customers could afford," he said. "We have to help bridge that gap in understanding. You may be able to afford an Indy car, but can you drive it? That's the big challenge — how do we bring our accounting profession forward so they can handle more sophisticated systems? Business owners ... have a team, but they may not know how to drive a race car yet."

DESIRE FOR SMARTER TECHNOLOGY

Now that the cloud is more understood and attractive than ever before, clients are asking for more: more intelligence, more flexibility and more customization in their solutions. The introduction of artificial intelligence and machine learning into most ERP platforms, such as Sage Live for Accountants built on the Salesforce App Cloud, has enabled real-time financial analysis and very flexible reporting that clients love when they see it.

"Customers and prospects are tired of the stringent, inflexible nature of legacy accounting solutions and want more robust reporting in a package that doesn't take months to implement or weeks to learn for new staff," reported Massey

Consulting (*see VARs to Watch, below*). "We have seen two substantial changes: A greater desire for more meaningful reporting, as well as more simplistic processes to accomplish greater goals."

Indeed, it's the advances in personal technology, too, that have prompted clients to ask for the same convenience, automation and seamlessness in their practice. "Our clients continue to move to the cloud to mobile applications in an effort to reduce staff and/or eliminate the complexity of running internal systems," reported WhiteOwl (No. 54). "Management expects the same ease of use and immediacy they experience on a personal level to be at their place of work."

Among our VAR 100 is Fourlane (No. 80), a QuickBooks provider. The company has a staff of 20, but operates 100 percent remotely with no physical offices. Admittedly, Fourlane's offerings are streamlined and specific, which makes operating remotely easier; but the virtual office is a trend more common among Millennial-run companies (the company's founder and CEO, Marjorie Adams, is a Millennial) and will continue as that generation advances in the workforce. AT

VARS TO WATCH

1. **Alta Vista Technology**
   Southfield, Mich.
   Dynamics GP, 365; Intacct

2. **Inspirria Cloudtech**
   Raleigh, N.C.
   NetSuite

3. **ISM**
   Portland, Ore.
   Sage 100 ERP, X3; Acumatica

4. **Joseph Eve**
   Kalispell, Mont.
   Intacct

5. **Massey Consulting Inc.**
   Raleigh, N.C.
   Dynamics GP; Intacct

6. **NP Solutions Inc.**
   Riverside, Calif.
   Abila MIP; Blackbaud Financial Edge

7. **Paradigm Technology Consulting**
   Allentown, N.J.
   Dynamics GP

8. **The Vested Group**
   Plano, Texas
   NetSuite

9. **Tidestone Solutions**
   Portland, Maine
   Dynamics GP

10. **WebSan Solutions Inc.**
    Toronto
    Dynamics GP, NAV, 365 for Financials

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The 2017 VAR 100

	Company / Location	Revenue ($ mns)	Offices	Staff	Top executive(s)	Accounting software
1	**RSM US** / Chicago	271.21	90	1,100	P. Vance, S. Ems	Dynamics; NetSuite
2	**Columbus Global** / Norwell, Mass.	171.00	44	1,200	T. Honore, K. Olsen	Dynamics GP, NAV, AX, 365 for Financials/Operations
3	**Tribridge** / Tampa, Fla.	168.00	12	800	Tony DiBenedetto	Dynamics AX, GP, NAV, SL, 365; NetSuite
4	**Crowe Horwath** / Chicago	101.00	40	486	Josh Cole	Dynamics AX, 365, GP, CRM
5	**Armanino** / San Ramon, Calif.	76.50	10	253	Andy & Matt Armanino	Dynamics AX, GP, 365 Operations, 365, CRM Online; Intacct
6	**Sikich** / Naperville, Ill.	58.00	21	280	Jim Drumm	Dynamics 365 Enterprise, 365 Business, AX, NAV, GP, SL; NetSuite
7	**Professional Advantage**[A] / Fargo, N.D.	57.50	9	259	Derek Rippingale	Dynamics GP, AX; Infor SunSystems
8	**Net@Work** / New York	47.48	20	185	Alex & Edward Solomon	NetSuite; Sage X3, 500, 300, 100; Abila MIP
9	**SBS Group** / Edison, N.J.	47.00	41	250	James Bowman	Dynamics 365, GP, SL, NAV, AX; Acumatica
10	**Edgewater Fullscope** / Athens, Ala.	45.70	3	188	Russell Smith	Dynamics 365 Operations, 365 Customer Service, AX, CRM
11	**InterDyn BMI (a Columbus co.)**[A] / St. Paul, Minn.	38.60	9	126	Keld Olsen	Dynamics GP, NAV, AX; Intacct
12	**Socius** / Dublin, Ohio	37.00	32	150	Jeff Geisler	Dynamics 365, AX, GP, NAV, SL; NetSuite; Sage 100 ERP, 500 ERP
13	**Western Computer**[A] / Oxnard, Calif.	36.00	14	160	Tom Bardos	Dynamics NAV, AX, CRM
14	**Wipfli** / Milwaukee	34.10	43	237	Rick Dreher, Ken Kortas	Dynamics 365, AX, GP, SL; NetSuite; Intacct; Abila MIP
14	**SWK Technologies Inc.**[A] / Livingston, N.J.	34.10	8	155	Mark Meller	Sage 100 ERP, 500, X3; NetSuite; Acumatica
16	**Vision33** / Irvine, Calif.	33.10	28	194	Alex Rooney	SAP B1
17	**ADSS Global**** / Exton, Pa., and Miami	31.50	48	150	Robert Campbell	Sage 100 ERP, 300, CRM, HRMS, FAS
18	**Sunrise Technologies**[A] / Winston-Salem, N.C.	30.50	5	150	John Pence	Dynamics AX
19	**AKA Enterprise Solutions**** / New York	30.00	3	125	Alan Kahn, Jack Ades	Dynamics GP, AX
20	**Blytheco** / Laguna Hills, Calif.	29.00	5	105	Stephen Blythe	Sage X3, 500, 100; NetSuite; Acumatica
21	**BAASS Business Solutions Inc.** / Toronto and Miami	27.00	21	127	Joseph Arnone	Sage 300; Intacct; Deltek; Salesforce
21	**CliftonLarsonAllen**** / Minneapolis	27.00	5	80	John Wooldridge	Intacct
23	**Clients First Business Solutions**** / Holmdel, N.J.	24.00	7	105	Thomas Falteich	Dynamics AX, NAV; Epicor; SAP B1
24	**Aktion Associates Inc.** / Maumee, Ohio	23.00	9	140	Scott Irwin	Sage 100 Contractor, 300 Construction/RE; Acumatica; Intacct
25	**I.B.I.S. Inc.**[A][1] / Peachtree Corners, Ga.	22.47	5	400	R. Puranik, S. Reddy	Dynamics GP, AX
26	**NexTec Group** / Seattle	21.00	11	100	Eric Frank, Russ Harper	Sage X3; Acumatica Cloud ERP; Dynamics GP, SL; Sage 500
27	**BKD** / Springfield, Mo.	18.30	10	48	Jerry Henderson	Dynamics 365, AX, GP, CRM; Intacct; Sage 100, 500, X3, eoStar
28	**Navigator Business Solutions** / Pleasant Grove, Utah	18.00	20	70	G. Fraser, C. Nielsen	SAP Business ByD, SAP B1
29	**Eide Bailly** / Fargo, N.D.	17.70	12	125	Scott Kost	NetSuite; Sage 100 ERP, 500 ERP; Salesforce
30	**Rand Group** / Houston	17.07	3	94	Ron Rand, William Wu	Dynamics AX, GP, NAV, 365; NetSuite
31	**BroadPoint Technologies** / Bethesda, Md.	16.00	2	80	Lee Raesly	Dynamics 365 for Financials, GP, SL, NAV; Serenic Navigator
32	**Cargas Systems** / Lancaster, Pa.	15.03	2	93	C. Cargas, N. Scott	Dynamics GP; Intacct
33	**Central Consulting Group** / Minneapolis	15.00	7	40	Steve McTavish	Deltek; EleVia; Intacct
33	**Encore Business Solutions** / Winnipeg, Manitoba	15.00	3	80	B. Twist, K. Chartrand	Dynamics AX, NAV, GP
33	**LBMC Technology Solutions** / Knoxville, Tenn.	15.00	4	55	S. Schuettler, J. McCorpin	Intacct; Dynamics GP, SL, 365 for Financials
33	**RKL esolutions** / Lancaster, Pa.	15.00	7	77	Joey Knoll	Sage
37	**SCS Inc.**[A] / Glendale, Calif.	14.70	4	52	Kolbeinn Einarsson	Dynamics NAV
38	**Collins Computing Inc.**[A] / Mission Viejo, Calif.	14.25	1	31	S. Collins, R. Forkner	Acumatica Cloud ERP; Dynamics GP
39	**Stoneridge Software** / Barnesville, Minn.	14.00	2	76	Eric Newell	Dynamics 365, AX, NAV
40	**Crestwood Associates** / Mount Prospect, Ill.	13.90	6	67	B. McGuckin, T. Thompson	Dynamics GP, SL, 365 Financials; Acumatica; Greentree
41	**SIS** / Duluth, Ga.	13.40	5	52	S. Mulka, R. Kannan	Dynamics 365
41	**FMT Consultants**** / Carlsbad, Calif.	13.40	2	75	Eric Casazza	Dynamics GP; SAP ByD; NetSuite
43	**Saratoga Technologies**[A] / Johnson City, Tenn.	12.62	3	80	David Temple	Dynamics GP
44	**Merit Solutions Inc.**[A] / Wheaton, Ill.	11.30	4	64	Bill Burke	Dynamics AX
45	**Diamond Municipal Solutions**[A] / Edmonton, Alberta	10.70	3	47	Mike D'Arcy	Dynamics GP
46	**Accordant Co.** / Morristown, N.J.	10.50	1	30	Robert Sandelands	Sage 100 Contractor, Sage 300 Construction/RE
47	**DSD Business Systems** / San Diego	10.40	40	87	Doug Deane	Acumatica; Sage 100, 300, 500
47	**Explore Consulting** / Bellevue, Wash.	10.40	1	55	S. Jones, J. DeSpain	NetSuite
49	**MicroAccounting - xkzero** / Dallas and Chicago	10.00	3	50	Bill Harris, Lorrie Harris	Sage 100, 500, X3; Intacct; Acumatica
50	**Business Technology Partners** / Deerfield, Ill.	9.00	2	43	Todd Perlman	SysPro; Intacct; Rootstock
51	**AcctTwo** / Houston	8.90	2	50	Marcus Wagner	Intacct; Adaptive Insights (FP&A); Nexonia
52	**Stambaugh Ness Business Solutions**[2] / York, Pa.	8.80	1	28	Steven L. Hake	Deltek Vision, GCS

Key: *All revenues are FY 2016, in U.S. dollars. Ties were not broken.*   **A** Accounting Today *estimate*   *Firm estimate   ** Data from published reports*
Abila MIP — *Abila MIP Fund Accounting*   ByD — *SAP Business ByDesign*   B1 — *SAP Business One*   Sage 300 Construction/RE — *Sage 300 Construction + Real Estate*
Notes: *1. A Sonata Software company*   *2. Includes Acuity Business Solutions (a division of Stambaugh Ness Business Solutions)*

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53	**The TM Group** / Farmington Hills, Mich.	8.70	2	41	Judith & Mark Thomas	Dynamics GP, SL, NAV, 365; Intacct; NetSuite
54	**WhiteOwl** / Miami	8.20	1	68	Stuart Rosenberg	Intacct; Dynamics GP, AX; Blackbaud Financial Edge
55	**MIBAR.net** / New York	7.90	1	28	Bart Nachimow	Dynamics GP; NetSuite; AccountMate
56	**BCS ProSoft** / San Antonio	7.84	5	38	William Vespe	Deltek PSA, Vision; NetSuite; Sage 100, 500
57	**CompuData Inc.** / Philadelphia	7.80	1	40	Angela Nadeau	Epicor; Intacct; Sage 100, 500
58	**Achieve IT Solutions**A / Port Jefferson, N.Y.	7.60	4	91	Tim Singleton	SAP B1
59	**GURUS Solutions**** / Montreal	7.59	9	75	Martin McNicoll	NetSuite
60	**Sererra** / Newport Beach, Calif.	7.40	4	28	Vijay Saha, Sunita Saha	NetSuite
61	**ABC Computers Inc.** / Onalaska, Wis.	7.30	4	45	Mark Christie	Dynamics NAV
61	**Innovia Consulting Inc.**** / Onalaska, Ind.	7.30	24	42	Donovan Lane	Dynamics NAV
63	**e2b teknologies** / Chardon, Ohio	7.17	1	50	Bill & Lynne Henslee	Sage 500, 100, X3; Epicor ERP
64	**Warren Averett Tech Group** / Montgomery, Ala.	7.06	14	59	J. Asbury, E. Jones	Dynamics GP, SL, AX, 365; Sage 100, 50, FAS, CRM; Intacct; QB
65	**Raffa** / Washington, D.C.	7.00	2	26	Tom Raffa, Seth Zarny	Dynamics SL, GP
66	**Accountnet Inc.** / New York	6.63	4	22	J. Peace, A-C McAllister	Dynamics GP, SL; Dynamics 365 for Financials
67	**Third Wave Business Systems** / Wayne, N.J.	6.60	5	37	Korey Lind	SAP B1, B1 Cloud; Dynamics GP
68	**Technology Management Concepts** / Los Angeles	6.56	1	25	Jennifer Harris	Dynamics 365, NAV, GP, SL
69	**JMT Consulting Group Inc.** / Patterson, N.Y.	6.50	3	28	Jacqueline Tiso	Abila MIP; Intacct
69	**JOVACO Solutions Inc.** / Montreal	6.50	1	44	Jean-Claude Coutu	Dynamics GP, 365
71	**Full Sail Partners Ltd.** / Steamboat Springs, Colo.	6.39	4	35	S. Gonnella, W. Gustafson	Deltek Vision
72	**Business Solution Partners** / Roslyn, N.Y.	6.25	10	25	D. Smooha, H. Zaidi	NetSuite; Dynamics GP, CRM, 365; Adaptive Insights; Blackline
73	**Kerr Consulting** / The Woodlands, Texas	6.20	12	62	David Kerr	Sage 100, 300, X3, CRM, HRMS; Dynamics NAV; CYMA
74	**EpiCenter** / Westfield, Mass.	6.00	4	65	Jeffrey Glaze	Epicor
74	**Intellitec Solutions** / Wilmington, Del.	6.00	1	28	R. Sommer, M. Bufano	Intacct; Dynamics 365, GP, SL; BI 360
74	**Synergy Business Solutions** / Portland, Ore.	6.00	4	30	Steven Toth	Dynamics SL, NAV, 365 Business Edition
74	**PA Group**A / Chattanooga, Tenn.	6.00	2	35	Bradley Hanon	Dynamics AX
74	**Trajectory**A / Toronto	6.00	2	32	Kurtis Meloche	NetSuite
74	**WAC Solutions Partners**A / Northborough, Mass.	6.00	13	50	Robert Distler	Sage 100 ERP, 300, X3, Pro, 50; NetSuite; Acumatica; Abila MIP
80	**CAL Business Solutions** / Harwinton, Conn.	5.90	1	28	George Mackiewicz	Dynamics GP; Acumatica
80	**Fourlane**1 / Austin, Texas	5.90	NA	20	Marjorie & Rob Adams	QuickBooks
82	**Arxis Technology Inc.** / Simi Valley, Calif.	5.80	1	28	David Cieslak	Intacct; Sage 100, 300, 500
82	**Faye BSG Inc.**2 / Woodland Hills, Calif.	5.80	4	27	David Faye	Sage; NetSuite; SugarCRM; Quickbase
84	**Boyer & Associates** / Minneapolis	5.60	1	18	Jack Boyer	Dynamics 365 Financials, GP, SL, NAV
85	**VistaVu Solutions**A / Calgary, Alberta, and Houston	5.58	2	20	Jory Lamb	SAP B1
86	**The Resource Group** / Renton, Wash.	5.55	2	28	Marty & Denise Schillaci	Dynamics GP; Intacct; Solver BI 360
87	**AlfaPeople Inc.** / New York	5.50	1	25	Erik Hoiden	Dynamics 365
87	**Express Information Systems** / San Antonio	5.50	3	15	Iris Schimke	Intacct; Dynamics 365, GP
87	**Silverware Inc.** / Phoenix	5.50	2	23	Sara Silver	Dynamics NAV, 365; Intacct
87	**SSi Consulting** / Vienna, Va.	5.50	2	21	Bill Aiton	Intacct; Dynamics 365, SL, GP; Unanet
91	**Southeast Computer Solutions** / Miami	5.40	2	26	S. Ferrera, R. Ceccarelli	Sage 100 ERP, 500 ERP, ERP X3; Acumatica
91	**T3 Information Systems** / Washington, D.C.	5.40	1	24	M. Adamowicz, C. McCarthy	Dynamics GP, SL, 365 Financials; Intacct
93	**Templeton Solutions** / West Palm Beach, Fla.	5.33	3	30	Steven Templeton	Dynamics GP, SL, CRM; Power BI
94	**goVirtualOffice** / Madison, Wis.	5.30	2	30	Dirk Shimpach	NetSuite
95	**Aronson & Co.**A/ Rockville, Md.	5.21	1	250	Jeff Capron	Sage 300 Construction/RE, 100 Contractor, Estimating; Deltek; QB
96	**Martin and Associates** / Cincinnati	5.20	1	22	Kevin Martin	Sage
96	**Queue Associates Inc.** / New York	5.20	5	50	Jeffrey Goldstein	Dynamics 365, AX, NAV, GP, SL, CRM
98	**eSoftware Professionals**A / Portland, Ore.	5.06	1	14	Jody Leoni	Dynamics NAV
99	**Delphia Consulting*** / Columbus, Ohio	5.00	1	43	Brian Delphia	Sage HRMS
99	**DWD Technology Group** / Fort Wayne, Ind.	5.00	3	25	Bob Kohlmeyer	Sage 100, CRM, HRMS, 50, BusinessWorks; Acumatica; Abila MIP
99	**Njevity Inc.** / Greenwood Village, Colo.	5.00	6	26	Chris Dobkins	Dynamics GP, PowerGP Online
99	**OmniVue** / Alpharetta, Ga.	5.00	1	20	Jeff Pyden	Dynamics 365, NAV, GP

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Notes: *1. Fourlane is 100 percent remote, with no offices.   2. Acquired the SugarCRM practice of Cynergy Solutions.*