

VAI S2K GETS TAX COMPLIANCE

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VAI has announced a partnership with Exactor. The partnership will enable customers of VAI's S2K, a mid market ERP solution to take advantage of the Exactor tax compliance software. This is a coup for VAI. The list of integrations that Exactor already has is not extensive but does include major players such as Microsoft, Sage, NetSuite and QuickBooks.

It seems likely that this came about as result of one of VAI's customers Rowmark. Founded in 1993 by Fred Kramer, Rowmark manufactures engravable sheet plastic. This is sold in the awards, engraving and signage markets as its core product lines. It has more than 200 distributors spread across the globe with operations in the US, Belgium and Australia.

An early adopter of S2K, Rowmark says it quickly attained a return on its investment. The company has now automated its end to end tax support within the S2K suite. Gary

Justen, Director of Information Technologies at Rowmark commented: "With our continual growth, Rowmark needed a solid tax solution in place to help meet expanding business demands, and we found that in VAI's partner, Exactor. The Exactor team is extremely knowledgeable about tax laws and has addressed every special situation we've come across in a timely manner, making our lives much simpler. With Exactor's easy-to-use interface, we have found a cost-effective solution through VAI that has enhanced our operations and reporting while simplifying our working environments."

VAI will need to actively promote Exactor across its customer base for the partnership to be successful. For some customers there will be little benefit. For others, who find tax compliance onerous it will be worth a look. It would be interesting to know whether the development involved was paid for completely

by Rowmark or whether VAI or Exactor also invested. As a Tax compliance solution Exactor needs to create more such partnerships in order to increase the possibility of implementation. It is unlikely that companies will purchase the software stand alone. They will purchase it only if it integrates into their existing ERP Finance solution.

The inference is that Exactor chose to integrate their software with S2K though. Tim Walsh, Director of Sales and Business Development, Exactor commented: "As a business that places great value on providing quality customer service, we wanted to pair our services with a company of equal standing and found that with VAI. And after hearing of Rowmark's success of integrating our sales tax software into VAI's S2K solution, we know we've made the right decision and look forward to many more fruitful working relationships."

Conclusion



As VAI builds out integrations for its solution it will be interesting to see whether it expands its app center further. The latest buzzword appears to be Platform with SuccessFactors recently launching theirs. VAI might choose to launch their integrations as a marketplace, similar to Sage earlier this year. However with only 26 integrated applications it will need to persuade more companies to integrate their software.

There are a large number mid market ERP solutions out there. For companies looking to deploy them the existence of a marketplace is growing in importance. For those companies without one they may struggle to win customers in the future. VAI has taken a step in the right direction with this partnership. It will be interesting to see where they go next.

Even for those companies on platforms already there has been a trend for them to form alliances. Almost a platforms within a platform. Rootstock are one such company who have built their manufacturing solution on the Salesforce platform. However, they have extended their functionality through agreements with several other Salesforce apps over the last few months.

