

Alberici:

Enterprise Technology Revolution



A bold move to Computer Guidance ERP has given this industry-leader all the perspective it needs

From complex construction projects in the automotive and energy industry to healthcare, heavy / civil industry and beyond, Alberici has always been recognized for superior quality construction and world-class customer service. The company's consistent top 60 U.S. ranking by *Engineering News-Record* and Alberici Group's annual revenues of approximately \$2 billion undoubtedly support that fact. But it's what Alberici has done to support its own operations—an enterprise-wide ERP implementation—that has us all talking now.

It was fortunate that the Computer Guidance team had the opportunity to sit down with Frank Kropiunik, Alberici's Chief Information Officer and Vice President of Support Services, following its go-live date with Computer Guidance Corporation's construction enterprise resource planning (ERP) solution.

Q Frank, with customers around the world already taking advantage of Alberici's vast construction services offerings, what drove your recent decision to upgrade Alberici's legacy accounting software to a fully integrated enterprise-class ERP solution?

A: Our go-live in November 2013 was the culmination of an exhaustive selection process, which resulted with the implementation of Computer Guidance Corporation's ERP solution. Given the fact that over half of these types of projects fail for companies of our size, we wanted to ensure we had the solution provider, system and plan in place to guarantee our success.

But to answer your question as to the why, it was really the growth of our organization over the past years that had Alberici looking for efficient ways to scale

our operations to meet the needs of our expanding business and overall strategy. We needed greater accessibility across our organization to business-critical data and wanted a single integrated system to deliver it.

Q And your existing infrastructure just wasn't designed to keep pace with the rapid expansion that Alberici has experienced?

A: Due to the complexity of our projects and the variety of industries we serve, we needed to bring more automation to our business processes through additional technology and software functionality. And, by working with Computer Guidance, we were able to capitalize on many components of our current IT platform.

We also wanted to bring data to the operations side of the house by providing them with access to real-time business-related information. With the implementation of Computer Guidance's ERP, we were able to improve several of our business processes by automation through technology and make sure that we provide information to Alberici's project stakeholders and employees when they need it, where they need it and how they need it.

Q What features and functions were "must-haves" during your construction ERP software search?

A: Well, from an IT perspective, we wanted a scalable and reliable system that would support Alberici as we stand today as well as what we might look like years from now. The software solution had to provide a wealth of applications integrated with and driven by a single database to support the business.

Equally important for our solution selection were our financial and project requirements. Ideally, it would be an enterprise-level system where all key functions were fully integrated so data could be exchanged both seamlessly and transparently. Computer Guidance Corporation ensured that our imaging and workflow, or Enterprise Content Management (ECM), were part of the ERP application suite and not a bolt-on standalone solution. With a single system, everyone from finance to projects to HR could access their document images within the ERP solution with extensive search and filtering capabilities. In addition to ECM, Computer Guidance's software allows our users to tailor dashboards, generate advanced reports in order to make information visible, meaningful and actionable on demand.

Q How important was it for Alberici to have and/or build a relationship with the solution provider?

A: Beside the actual solution itself, our synergy with Computer Guidance Corporation was paramount to our selection and ultimately, our success. Trust is critical. Technology and software change, but the relationship must remain. I view it as a marriage. And, Alberici treats our clients the same way.

Computer Guidance was a great listener, incorporating the exact functionality we required internally and in the service of Alberici. We are both leaders in what we do; it is why we made the move to its ERP and it makes a great difference that the organization encourages the collaboration with clients like us through concepts like the Computer Guidance Advisory Board and User Conference.

Q So, the synergy and relationship were critical. What were the key differentiators that set Computer Guidance's ERP solution apart from the competition?

A: The bottom line was its ability to deliver all of our key, construction-specific functionality requirements within one system. Computer Guidance's ERP has the breadth and depth of functionality to serve large contractors, but with the inherent simplicity to be easy to maintain. It is browser-based with a solid hardware platform, and features advanced ECM functionality that is fully integrated with the financial and project management applications. It also offers unparalleled business intelligence application, providing dashboards and advanced reporting, and solutions such as Canadian Payroll that are demanded from our Canadian operation.

Q Now that you have implemented Computer Guidance's ERP solution, how would you describe the benefits to Alberici?

A: First and foremost, we have achieved significant cost-savings by automating some fundamental business processes within our organization that used to be performed manually via spreadsheets. One of which was the automation and development of a comprehensive financial forecast reporting system by leveraging Computer Guidance's business intelligence and analytics application. Our financial forecasts are now built

from real-time data, and are accessible on demand and enterprise wide.

Adding to the list would be our new integrated imaging system with OCR that allows Alberici to process on average 6,000 to 6,500 A/P invoices a month and the automation of the approval and imaging processes of approximately give or take 5,000 to 5,500 payroll checks per month.

Prior to Computer Guidance's ERP, we manually located and distributed reports, which can be cumbersome any given day, let alone during an audit. Now we have automated indexing, search and archival capabilities, we can pinpoint any information or file within the system through a click of a button and then file, access, sort or retrieve on demand.

Q Let's talk about day-to-day operations now. What type of data or information is most vital for your organization?

A: Integrated financial and project management information brings the office and field together. So, for Alberici, being able to view equipment, billing, subcontract management, human resources, payroll, job cost, materials and more, all through one system in real time was a real game changer for us.

Alberici has multiple divisions and business units serving a wide range of industries from operations across North America. When you are running a multi-million dollar job, accessibility to the core or nucleus of our business is essential and it has to be on demand, quick and secure. That's where we leverage

the inherent mobility and accessibility provided by Computer Guidance's eCMS ERP web-based solution.

Q You indicated earlier that the ERP implementation was a huge success. What do you think contributed most to that outcome and why?

A: Being as heavily involved in the entire process as I was, the answer for me is an easy one—it was the commitment of the solution provider and the collaborative efforts of Computer Guidance and Alberici. And, the outcome was fantastic, just as we had expected.

Q What recommendations would you offer to other contractors when it comes to searching out and selecting an ERP solution?

A: Do your homework. Talk to any potential solution provider's customers and users. Inquire about their experience with the software and implementation, as both are critical, as well as the support they receive. Be sure to get non-technical views and talk with CFOs because this software needs to be chosen based on the needs of the business and not just on what IT wants. Then, choose a trusted provider with whom you can establish a long-lasting partnership.

Q What's next for Alberici in terms of bringing on additional technology solutions?

A: We have already leveraged Computer Guidance's business intelligence and analytics solution to optimize and automate our financial reporting capabilities, so we are looking forward to establishing and building new dashboards and additional reports. We are merging eCMS ERP with Prolog from Meridian Systems (Trimble) by leveraging Computer Guidance's web services integration capability. And, after that, Alberici plans to roll out Computer Guidance's mobile applications, including remote time entry and field reporting, as well as its human resources self-service application.



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