



NexTec Group Helps Oil and Gas Startup ISS Launch in 6 Months



About Industrial Specialty Services

Operating out of Deer Park, Texas, and with six locations, Industrial Specialty Services (ISS) was formed to provide technical maintenance and repair services and solutions to the refining, petrochemical, gas, power, pulp and paper, offshore and subsea markets throughout North America.

On January 31, 2020, a private equity (PE) group acquired a carved-out business unit in the energy services industry and set goals of at least tripling the company's size by year five. The PE group faced an aggressive deadline to stand up the newly formed company from scratch while generating \$40 million in annual revenue and supporting more than 200 employees.

"Compared to Microsoft Dynamics, Sage, and Oracle NetSuite, there's not a whole lot of comparison. Acumatica leads the pack."

James Craig, Former CEO, Industrial Specialty Services



Key Results

- > Implemented a scalable cloud ERP platform to support rapid growth.
- > Minimized IT investments by leveraging the cloud for voice, data, and business applications.
- > Eliminated the need to hire internal IT resources.
- > Utilized NexTec's veteran implementation team with extensive oil and gas industry experience to implement Acumatica in 6 months.
- > Reduced total cost of ownership while achieving high ROI.
- > Delivered a 3% EBITDA improvement annually attributed directly to Acumatica.

The CEO at the time, James Craig, needed to form his management team, hire personnel, and establish new company departments for Operations, Sales, Marketing, HR, Engineering, Safety, Accounting and IT.

Additionally, the entire back-office needed to be set up including data and voice networks and related infrastructure and enterprise systems for office locations in the USA and Canada.

Craig brought on a veteran team consisting of NexTec Group, BDO Digital, and Acumatica to set up mature internal systems – all while working through the COVID-19 pandemic and Hurricane Hanna.

Challenges: Stand Up Business Carve Out in 6 Months

Craig knew carving out an asset entangled with its parent company posed a different level of complexity than merely acquiring a company outright (a carve-out is the divestiture of a business unit that the parent company sells, partially or wholly).

As he moved through the due diligence process, he already had a team and technology platform in mind to help him with the process. Craig had previously worked with BDO Digital during an IT Due Diligence engagement conducted for the Equity Group's purchase of ISS and he decided to ask BDO Digital for their recommendations for this transition.

Deploy Proven Team & Technology

Craig turned to Francisco Callegari, who had helped him set up similar infrastructure at Guardian SealTech, and who now headed IT managed services at BDO Digital. Having led ERP implementations at various companies over the years, the pair knew exactly which platform they wanted: Acumatica Cloud ERP. They also knew who to pull in to deploy Acumatica: NexTec Group, which had successfully implemented Acumatica at Guardian SealTech and many other companies.

"NexTec Group did a great job of training and getting people to understand how the system works, which drove adoption," said Craig.

NexTec had deep knowledge about the oil and gas industry, had many successful Acumatica implementations under its belt, and plenty of project accounting expertise.

"We brought a wealth of knowledge to help ISS establish best practices as a competitive edge, not only helping them launch but scale quickly," said Chuck Oliver, Vice President, Acumatica Practice, at NexTec Group.

"The primary idea was to create a solution that was designed around the cloud," Craig said. "It was a critical element because we wanted to get away from maintaining servers or being responsible for them. We wanted to limit as much network infrastructure as possible, so we can stay focused on what we do best, which is servicing businesses in their plants and not running an overdone IT show. We needed a solution we could trust, and that we knew would work with the services we provide."

Solution

Start-ups or carve-out companies usually do not have the negotiating power, knowledge, or even credit standing to negotiate favorable terms with vendors, and they frequently miss strategic opportunities to optimize contracts and pricing. BDO Digital was able to help solve this problem.

BDO Digital architected and implemented ISS' network infrastructure and IT department support services by securing Microsoft licenses, brokering deals with IT vendors, and negotiating to optimize costs while ensuring continuity of services. BDO also leveraged its enterprise level relationships and procured all necessary office and employee hardware, such as laptops, cell phones, copiers, scanners, and other office equipment for all ISS locations and employees.

"Next, we had to put an ERP platform in place," Callegari said.

Acumatica: Easy Selection, No Comparison

ISS, BDO, and NexTec did not need to evaluate ERP systems. "We did a full-blown evaluation previously at Guardian SealTech and rated each ERP with a large panel where Acumatica was selected," Craig explained. "Since ISS was a complete stand up, we didn't see any need to go and do that research again."

Craig had experience with at least seven ERP implementations throughout his career, including those of Microsoft Dynamics, Sage, and Oracle NetSuite, as well as homegrown systems. This was his second Acumatica deployment.

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"The ease with which Acumatica works and how it looks and feels compared to Microsoft Dynamics, Sage, and Oracle NetSuite, there's not a whole lot of comparison. Acumatica leads the pack," Craig said.

He liked Acumatica's ease of use, unique pricing model, scalability, open APIs, and ability to integrate with third-party applications easily. "It's a fully integrated package that doesn't need a lot of customization."

IT Infrastructure and Challenges

Craig felt he was well positioned to meet his critical implementation deadline after having worked on an Acumatica project in the past with Callegari, the former CIO at Guardian SealTech, and with NexTec Group. Then, worldwide oil prices tanked to sub-zero, Covid-19 struck the U.S., and Mother Nature unleashed Hurricane Hanna over Texas and the Gulf Coast.

Even with these challenges, Craig said at the time, "The implementation went surprisingly well. The only real hiccup was a little hitch in the training and interaction with people. We couldn't meet face-to-face and not being in-person was a little restrictive."

BDO Digital along with Acumatica and Microsoft 365 allowed ISS to concentrate on what they do best – servicing businesses in the plants. The team easily shifted to virtual meetings using Microsoft Teams and Microsoft 365, which BDO Digital had earlier deployed for ISS, and they had everything up and running in just 6 months, which was half the time from the final cutoff deadline.

"Our experience on Teams was outstanding and a big win for ISS," Craig said. "Teams allowed us to transition to work from home for some and we were able to continue with training and implementation activities. We had to change our approach since we couldn't be in-person, but it worked out well."

NexTec's discovery meeting was the only meeting held onsite before COVID hit. The rest was done remotely, with the exception of go-live. Holding online meetings and training webinars also helped ISS lower its implementation costs.

Benefits: Critical Data Available Instantly

ISS has long-term, ongoing relationships with customers, who issue projects daily. Projects can range from two days to 20 days or more, occur on site at customer locations, and are governed by rate agreements. "In the field service environment, these can be very high volume, short-term projects, and we need to track profitability by location, site level or customer. The ability to capture that in real time is critical for us," former CEO Craig explained.

With Acumatica, ISS executives see billable hours in real time. "On Sunday we have everything in and processed by Monday at noon," Craig added. "We can see how successful we were in the previous week."

ISS can do that because the NexTec team used Acumatica's flexible software to configure dashboards that allow ISS to automate quotes, update invoices with double time and holiday rates, and change and recalculate margins on projects if needed. None of those items are out-of-the-box with Acumatica, but easy to configure for clients.

Additional dashboards allow ISS to track critical KPIs such as employee utilization and employee revenue levels on a project, division, or consolidated basis. These dashboards easily allow ISS managers to drill down and quickly view the underlying data.

"Our dashboards are critical and NexTec has done a great job," ISS' Craig said. "I anticipate as we settle down and operate more, we'll be making some additional modifications to things we might want to see a bit differently."

Acumatica's ability to provide real-time access to data is a great management enabler, Craig added. "Seeing billable time and how much we pay our field services team is one of the largest management tools we have, and we knew we would be able to get that level of detail from Acumatica."

"We can issue or create 20 to 30 brand new projects every morning," he said, "and we can limit who gets assigned to what job. Acumatica is not only a management tool, but we can also use the data for post analysis and profit analysis and see those in real-time, which are critical for us."

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Before the carve-out, the old business unit used multiple, cobbled together systems designed for a different industry and it took a significant amount of time and effort to obtain a past view of their operations. BDO Digital, along with NexTec, architected the data process flow and controls in Acumatica for ISS to manage their business in real time. During the first full month in business, ISS accrued revenue for the month and invoiced two months of billings for its first closing. Previously, the business unit carried a month's worth of unbilled revenue.

"Putting two months' worth of AR on the books in the first month helped our liquidity and BDO Digital and Acumatica provided that for us," Craig explained.

Ease of Use

ISS finds Acumatica's user interface to be very intuitive and easy to use, which drove employee adoption and continued high use of the new business solution.

"The intuitiveness of how Acumatica is laid out is very nice, and that makes it very simple to use," Craig said. "It's simple to put dashboards together, and it provides notifications for authorizations, which helps keep everyone plugged in and using the solution."

Callegari added, "As to employee training and onboarding, Acumatica is very easy to use, which means we don't have to explain something 25,000 times. We can show employees what they need to know with just a few clicks."

Additional Functionality

ISS has plans to add several Acumatica modules and third-party applications in the future, including manufacturing, field services, and asset and equipment tracking, Craig said

"Right now, we're settling into what we've established so far, and we plan to give full mobility to the field techs so they can plug in directly and upload expenses and per diems. We also want to look at the Field Services module to add value to our dispatching and predictive scheduling for employees with specified skills."

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ISS would like to track the utilization of its equipment and add manufacturing as it adds fabrication services, Craig added.

They would like to connect ADP for a more integrated payroll. "Acumatica's open API has been an important factor for us from the start," Craig said. "Part of finishing the full integration of ADP is so we can have HR manage employee training, skill sets, and security certifications better. With Acumatica's notifications, HR can get automatic reminders of what certifications are set to expire."

Positioned for Growth

IT Industry benchmark studies show that well-run, mature enterprises have IT departments that cost 1 to 3 percent of revenue. In year one, ISS was already projecting less than 1 percent of total cost of ownership (TCO) for IT. This achievement typically takes much longer to get to that number, and this is a huge win for ISS.

Going forward, ISS and its investors have an aggressive strategy to triple in five years or less. The plan includes acquisitions and organic growth, and the ability to scale using Acumatica's unique licensing model and its flexible platform.

"We won't need much more (infrastructure) to add a similar-sized company," Craig said. "As far as the back office goes, we can absorb a majority of employees and only need maybe two people in admin roles to handle safety requirements."

Acumatica's unique licensing model based upon consumption means ISS does not have to worry about huge increases in per-user seat licensing costs as the company acquires others and grows.

"If I add 230 employees, I want to get off their systems and have one combined business solution as quick as possible. Having that flexibility is critical," he said. "BDO Digital, together with Acumatica and Microsoft are a huge part of the strategy we've set for the business."

NexTec played an integral role in meeting the final separation date of the carve-out. "They have a high level of knowledge about Acumatica, and likewise, they understand our industry, which is a pretty big thing," Craig explained. "We're in a very niche industry and to find people who understand the industry is a critical element."

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“NexTec was wonderful to work with, had a good understanding of how to configure the system and was very responsive,” he added. “They also did a great job of training and getting people to understand how the system works, which drove adoption.”

Long-term Results and ROI

NexTec prides itself on partnering with clients like ISS for the long haul. Five years after successfully implementing Acumatica at ISS, we caught up with Francisco Callegari and the ISS team at Acumatica Summit 2025 to discuss where they are now on their ERP journey, and the long-term results and ROI they have seen since implementing Acumatica.

Key Results:

- > **Measurable Bottom-Line Results**
Delivered a 3% EBITDA improvement to the bottom line on an annual basis as the company scaled through acquisitions, with direct attribution linking these gains to Acumatica Cloud ERP.

- > **Rapid Implementation**
Successfully consolidated 13 legacy systems into one cloud-based ERP while staying within the initial six-month transition period—avoiding \$600,000 in additional transition costs.

- > **Immediate Cash Flow Impact**
Accelerated invoicing from a month in arrears to same-month billing, dramatically improving liquidity and cash flow from day one of operations.

- > **Long-term Strategic Partnership**
NexTec continues to serve as an ongoing strategic partner, providing deep subject matter expertise, direct access to leadership, and seamless coordination with the Acumatica ISV ecosystem

“That’s really cool when you see an ERP system having that direct impact that is so measurable,” said Callegari. “I can trace this 3% EBITDA to Acumatica. And it’s not me saying it, it’s the COO saying it.”

“I see NexTec as an ongoing partner,” Callegari added. “This is not a vendor to me; it’s a strategic partner. They are with us in the good times and the bad times. I can call them anytime. There is no bureaucracy—straight to where you need the problems to be solved and they will be there for you.”



Connect with a NexTec expert to explore how a modern ERP can improve your business.

Let's Talk

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NexTec Group is one of North America's largest and most experienced technology consulting firms, specializing in industry-specific solutions for mid-sized organizations. For thirty years, NexTec, a Pine Services Group company, has been a trusted partner to businesses, delivering, implementing, and supporting the core Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) and Business Intelligence (BI) solutions they need to scale and grow. Winner of the 2026 Acumatica Excellence Award for Customer Success and 2025 Acumatica VAR Partner of the Year, NexTec is a gold-certified Acumatica implementation partner with seasoned consultants from coast to coast.