

Streamlining Supplier Management to Scale Globally: A Case Study of Geosyntec Consultants and AdaptOne

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When Geosyntec Consultants, an engineering and consulting firm, began implementing AdaptOne's supplier management solution in 2014, the company knew the on-boarding process improvements it made would streamline and improve business process efficiencies.

Founded in 1983 and based in Boca Raton, Florida, Geosyntec works with public and private sector clients across the U.S., Canada, Malaysia and the U.K. It employs more than 1,200 consultants (engineers, scientists, technical personnel) and manages more than 8,300 suppliers, many of which require stringent safety certifications and compliance requirements that come from their clients.

As Geosyntec expanded its practice, it looked for a supplier management solution that could streamline its manual and disjointed processes, all while maintaining needed organizational accountability.

In choosing AdaptOne, Geosyntec identified a solution capable of supporting not only the robust and flexible supplier information management requirements of the engineering world but also a partner that could assist in meeting the requirements needed for an approved purchasing system for the federal government, thus providing additional opportunities to expand its potential client base.

AdaptOne: A Brief Background

AdaptOne provides a supplier management platform with deep domain capabilities that streamline and unify supplier on-boarding/enabement and workflow processes. The Alpharetta, Georgia-based company designed its offering to support all levels of complexity, as well as to provide a real-time, accurate vendor master across all suppliers.

While its approach is heavily centered on the SIM foundations of supplier registration, on-boarding, data collection and workflow setup, AdaptOne differentiates itself from peers through its business process management (BPM) development and deployment orientation. Each AdaptOne implementation is different, customized to the precise needs of the customer.

As Spend Matters explored in its [Vendor Snapshot series analyzing the provider](#), "one of AdaptOne's key strengths is its business consulting capability, specifically its ability to work with a customer to design the perfect registration and on-boarding workflows, no matter how complicated or sophisticated, and implement the right overall 'solution' that works exactly how the organization wants to manage its processes on top of it." This stands in contrast to its peers, which generally sell "modules" that are easily bounded and definable.

This consultative approach fit exactly what Geosyntec was looking for in its supplier management improvement journey, as the firm-specific complexities around supplier profiles, safety and compliance, insurance certificates and work product documentation requirements meant that out-of-the-box SIM and compliance solutions typically fell short.

Choosing a Supplier Management Provider

Prior to implementing AdaptOne, Geosyntec saw the potential of partnering with such a provider while working with one of its customers, NRG Energy, the largest integrated energy producer in the U.S.

NRG was already using AdaptOne and Geosyntec needed to use the system to qualify as an NRG supplier, so Geosyntec saw many of the benefits that could be applied to its own similar supplier requirements.

In addition to this realization, Geosyntec had concluded that it needed to streamline and manage the growing complexities of its supplier management ecosystem. It determined this was a way to meet some of the requirements of its clients when it came to diverse spend reporting and capturing certifications required by their clients, including the federal government. This was a key step when working toward an approved purchasing system.

When evaluating numerous selection criteria against the broader SRM solution market – on areas from cost of implementation to enterprise scalability, functionality, ease of implementation and adaptability of the solution to its unique organizational needs – AdaptOne stood out as the provider that best aligned with Geosyntec's short- and long-term business goals. This included providing an extensible and sustainable supplier platform that supported unique global business requirements; maintaining highly configurable, critical data (e.g., health and safety, certificate of insurance, regulatory and compliance documentation); and optimizing a supplier management processes through a centralized system.

Geosyntec confirmed that AdaptOne provided both a base platform to their supplier management implementation and the ability to rapidly configure the solution to meet its specific business requirements. This made AdaptOne an ideal choice over potentially more rigid and less configurable alternatives. Geosyntec said AdaptOne has been an excellent partner in developing its supplier management platform.

Benefits Realized

When Geosyntec started its supplier management initiative, the firm collected all data needed to do business via paper and had no centralized repository through which it managed data related to its subcontractors, independent contractors and vendors.

AdaptOne started its implementation by building a supplier portal for on-boarding subs and independent contractors and then requiring them to register in the portal to receive payment. The team then added vendor profiles in a second phase, during which information for all three supplier types was synchronized with accounting data contained in their accounting system.

With the first two phases complete, Geosyntec has streamlined its supplier on-boarding times and reduced the number of supplier requests and internal manual data entry.

There were two other benefits that stood out beyond the mere digitization of a manual process.

First, the new solution was more intuitive to use for everyone in the company. The old method worked for employees or suppliers who had been with the company for years, but for anyone new to Geosyntec, tasks from supplier on-boarding to record maintenance required a huge learning curve. The new workflows and centralized supplier information management created a one-stop shop for all elements of supplier on-boarding and management. This allowed procurement to point all employees and suppliers to one place for the process, meaning the business could on-board suppliers faster and more economically, improving process efficiencies.

This increased rigor and visibility created another unanticipated benefit: Geosyntec is now better able to manage risk by more effectively understanding its supply base and being able to evaluate those suppliers.

The new solution enables practitioners to easily capture and track all the documents to meet their client requirements as part of doing business with Geosyntec. It helps them understand the supplier's ability to meet the requirements and their historical performance. Rather than selecting the first local business that appeared in the phone book, practitioners are now able to dig deeper on qualifications. The solution helps not only gather needed information on quality and health and safety but also aids practitioners in making better business decisions about people with whom they hadn't directly worked with before.

"By streamlining and connecting their procurement processes on AdaptOne procurement platform, Geosyntec Consultants is delivering on their long-term business objectives and creating competitive differentiation in a global marketplace," AdaptOne President John Davis said.

Geosyntec Consulting Challenges and Recommendations

For organizations considering a rework of their supplier management processes, it is crucial to first consider the full scope of the potential project and all the potential areas it could touch.

As Geosyntec learned halfway through the implementation, mapping out a complete strategy ahead of time can save a lot of effort. When Geosyntec entered the third phase of its project, developing the tools toward implementing an approved purchasing system, it realized there were additional efficiencies that could be gained by developing a way to send invoices contained in the supplier management system to accounts payable. That required reworking a lot of the current data to enable communication between different systems – something that could have been avoided if the issue were prioritized upfront.

The root of the planning error was conflating a need for "quick wins" in the execution phases for the broader strategy itself. The staggered supplier management and then PO-system development approach produced improvements that brought the project momentum, but had the whole concept been designed from the beginning, Geosyntec could have reached their desired state faster. For those beginning a project, Geosyntec had this advice: "Try to think beyond what you're trying to accomplish today. ... Look at your strategic plans, where you see yourself going, where your company is going – and ask yourself if your system is as efficient and streamlined as it could be."

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