CASE STUDY

The automation technology that helped sell a company to Ernst & Young

AT A GLANCE

- Cut typical time-critical implementation time roughly in half compared to the traditional approach
- Some implementation phases reduced from weeks to minutes
- Cited by EY Advisory Leader as a reason for acquiring Integrc
- Transformed delivery from time based pricing to outcome based pricing
- Typical gross margin for RouteONE projects around 20% higher than consulting based delivery

INTRODUCTION

Before Carter Loxworth, I was Operations Director of Integrc, a company I co-founded and helped grow into the world's largest SAP GRC (Governance, Risk & Compliance) specialist. I was responsible for client delivery, efficiency, building and managing the consulting team, delivery standards, and the profitability and performance of our UK operating company.

This case study is the story of RouteONE, the automation technology I built at Integrc that didn't just make the business more efficient, it drove meaningful growth, double digit increase in project profitability and it's the technology EY themselves pointed to as the reason they acquired the company.

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BACKGROUND

Integrc was formed in 2012, through the merger of a boutique UK consultancy firm I'd co-founded in 2006 and a Dutch firm. We grew quickly, becoming the market-leading SAP GRC specialist, expanding into new territories including India and the Middle East.

Growing that fast meant constantly running into the same wall the whole industry ran into: SAP GRC implementations were traditionally slow, manual, and expensive.

THE PROBLEM

This wasn't just our own experience; we had the data to prove it was industry wide. A GRC performance survey we ran found that more than 60% of organisations running SAP were still managing and testing their internal controls in a predominantly manual way.

That manual approach was the ceiling on how fast we could scale. Every new client meant another slow, resource-heavy implementation. The traditional playbook was to get faster at the manual process. We made a different bet.

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THE SOLUTION: ROUTEONE

Rather than just accelerating the old manual approach, we built something genuinely automated: RouteONE, our own automated configuration engine, backed by a large library of pre-built content, an accelerated implementation methodology, and a framework for end-user adoption.

The distinction mattered. We weren't offering clients a faster version of the same manual process. We were replacing large parts of it outright and offering clients something genuinely different and enhanced that no-one else was: a guaranteed outcome with business critical risks under control.

Our solution was benefits rich. For clients it delivered critical projects quicker than anyone else could, at a fixed cost with user adoption (which was historically a problem in this complex, technical area) built-in as a guaranteed outcome.

For Integrc, it became our USP; no-one else could do projects like this. It increased our average gross margin on projects by over 20% compared to running the same project as a traditional consulting engagement, it directly strengthened our owned IP which was high on our agenda as we prepared to find acquisition partners, it helped us win more deals and compete more effectively with our biggest competitors and ultimately helped get the company acquired in 2015.

RECOGNITION

RouteONE won a GRC Technology Innovation Award, an independent industry recognition, not something we were claiming about ourselves.

KEY FEATURES

Automated configuration engine expedites time consuming manual work

Draft system could be built within 24 hours of project start

Large library of pre-built content

End-user adoption framework ensures user engagement and adoption for assured ROI from the project

HOW IT WORKED

Traditionally, SAP GRC projects were consulting engagements. I'd deploy a project team who would gather requirements, create solution design and architecture, configure the solution, oversee testing, write project documentation and hand it over to the client.

We implemented SAP GRC for some of the biggest companies in the world. Over the years we did these implementations, projects ranged from 3 months to 2 ½ years, depending on the project size, complexity and scope.

RouteONE automated the basic system set-up right at the start so the client had a working environment in week one to learn from, start the engagement process and use so they could contribute to better contextualised design decisions.

Our experts could spend more dedicated time with the client doing the things machines can't; building relationships and creating effective solution design.

As design decisions were made, they would be added to design sheets, which when complete would be loaded into the RouteONE configuration engine which would automate the detailed system configuration, saving weeks of technical build work.

Ultimately, RouteONE enabled projects to be completed for less manual effort with certainty provided on the outcome for the client.

THE OUTCOME

RouteONE became the reason a Big Four firm wanted to acquire us.

When EY announced the acquisition in 2015, their own Advisory Risk Leader for Europe, Middle East, India and Africa, Jonathan Blackmore, said “Integrc has unique and differentiating technology and industry insight, and we look forward to welcoming their highly skilled people into EY. With this acquisition, we will be able to provide a world-class set of solutions to help our clients’ GRC operations work better”, pointing directly to what RouteONE had built.

Bruce Ramsay of Equiteq, who worked with Integrc in preparing for the sale and led the transaction, was just as direct: “Integrc is a great example of how to build a valuable consulting business: their focus on a single technology and process (SAP GRC); plus the software they developed to beat competition through faster, cheaper and better implementations; and the operation in India to enable them to maintain relationships and revenue with key global clients through an outsourced support service. All these contributed to making them a well sought-after acquisition target”.

In August 2015, Integrc was acquired by EY.

WHY THIS MATTERS TODAY

The work I’m doing for clients now on AI transformation is not fundamentally different to what I did in 2014 with RouteONE. It’s effectively the same thing in a new domain, for a different client base: transforming client delivery that creates better outcomes for end clients and delivers enhanced margin for consulting companies.

Previously, it was spotting that SAP GRC compliance was a manual, repeatable process, eating time and money that should have gone toward growth and counted toward retained earnings, it was building real automation around it, not just working faster. Now, it's spotting the same pattern in small businesses: repetitive, manual admin and delivery of manual, automatable work, standing between a team and what actually grows the business and building AI agents to take it on.

The technology's changed. The instinct hasn't.

NEXT

See how an IT services company adopted agentic AI into their service delivery

Talk to us about building something similar for your business