

Chemical manufacturer upgrades from a break-fix partner to a strategic relationship and gains new advantages.

Challenge:

OCI needed a partner that was responsive and knowledgeable, but also one that could take the strategic role, guiding them as they digitized and streamlined their processes.

Solution:

OCI began working with VistaVu on their SAP Business ByDesign project. The Customer Success program provided a dedicated CEE to help OCI resolve legacy issues they had and identify optimization opportunities that various segments of VistaVu's team was able to deliver on.

Result:

SAP Business ByDesign is allowing the company to serve its customers more quickly and more smoothly with an integrated system.

When OCI Beaumont implemented its first enterprise resource planning (ERP) system, the company worked with an SAP Business ByDesign partner with limited resources. Although a higher number of tickets during a new system implementation isn't unusual, OCI issued thousands of tickets and could have as many as 40 open at any given time.

OCI learned that issues with this partner extended beyond slow ticket resolution. Serge Hoover, Finance and Systems Director at OCI Americas, says the partner's team was hindered by limited product and industry knowledge. "We were paying for the time they were taking to educate themselves in addition to solving our problems," she adds.

The partnership with the firm also slowed progress in OCI's digital transformation.

OCI

Industry: Chemical production

Size: 100 Employees

Products & Services:

Location: Nederland, Texas

<http://www.ocipartnerslp.com/dev/index.php>

"We tried integrations several times, but they were never able to make them work," Serge says. "We'd spend a lot of money and time, but ultimately we'd just have to abandon the project."

In light of the goals OCI set at its IPO and for the future, it was clear they needed a different partner to help deliver the solutions and services they needed.

Partnering with VistaVu Turned It Around

VistaVu acquired OCI's previous partner in 2017, and Jory Lamb, VistaVu's founder and CEO, urged Serge to give his company a try.

"We basically took a chance, and the rest is history," Serge says, recounting a completely different working relationship than they had with the previous company and newly identified opportunities to make technology work for OCI.

Serge appreciates VistaVu's project management capabilities, attention to detail, and quality of work with minimal errors. She also says that VistaVu completes projects efficiently and in a timely manner. On several occasions, VistaVu has set up new company codes within OCI's instance, adding new companies in short time frames.

Serge points out that at the beginning of the relationship, VistaVu was going through a transition of its own –focusing more on customer experience, managed services and overall customer success. Ami Burns, VistaVu's Client Engagement Executive (CEE), became OCI's main point of contact.

"Ami could do it all. She understands business processes, is a good communicator, has a lot of initiative, and is on top of things all the time," Serge says.

"She's a knowledgeable resource, and she works hard to ensure we're successful. She's an advocate for us, so we don't have to be."

"Working with VistaVu doesn't require as much handholding as it did with the previous partner. For someone in my position, that's amazing," she comments.

Serge recalls that on one of their monthly cadence calls, Burns suggested that OCI make the best use of some hours in their contract to leverage the Boomi integrations team to review and make recommendations to improve OCI's accounts payable (AP) processes. With VistaVu's guidance, OCI was able to automate processes necessary to participate in OCI's parent company's cash pooling processes, first automating payment files to make ACH payments and then automating bank statements. This Boomi integration eliminated manual closing processes that took a few days each month.

Serge adds that VistaVu also helped integrate their BlackLine reconciliation tool with their ERP system, eliminating the need to manually download trial balances during closing and maintaining visibility throughout the closing process.

"We were skeptical because we had tried integrations in the past," Serge says, "but they work well. It made us wonder what else we could do with Boomi."

The Payoff for OCI

Working with VistaVu has changed chasing an IT firm for service into forming a partnership that reveals how their business can be more efficient by using technology. "VistaVu has helped us with projects that have improved our processes, and every integration has been successful," Serge says.

The results for OCI can be measured in the elimination of tasks that previously took full days each month. Senior account managers and accountants have replaced mundane, manual processes for higher-value tasks. "We're repurposing their time on things that make more sense," Serge explains. She adds that many people on the OCI team are enthusiastically adopting new technology, recognizing that it will streamline processes and make their lives easier.

"A big win with efficiency will be our upcoming project to automate our entire AP process using SAP Concur Invoice she adds. This project will result in time savings for AP clerks, department managers and the accounting manager by replacing the current, paper-based system with automated processes."



Photo provided by OCI Beaumont.

"We would have never considered doing a project like this if we hadn't had the experiences, we had with VistaVu," Serge points out. "They've earned our trust. We know that they can do what they say on time and within budget."

She adds, "We've been burned before, but now the door is open, and we're asking what other technologies are out there that we can leverage," she says.

Serge says she considers VistaVu more as a strategic partner than an IT service provider. She recalls a conversation in which a VistaVu project manager advised her that she didn't need to make an investment in new technology to accomplish an integration that she needed. "I don't think another consultant would have been honest and told me I could just connect directly rather than trying to make a sale. That conversation increased the value of our relationship that much more – I know VistaVu will always do what's in our best interest."

The relationship has been so successful that Serge has introduced VistaVu to OCI's Iowa subsidiary, to begin a proof of concept. "I'd like to expand VistaVu's reach within OCI because we've had such a good experience with them," she says.

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