

Armed With Powerful ERP, Growth-Focused GovCon BlueHalo Integrates 11 Companies Into One, Aims for \$1 Billion Revenue Mark

CASE STUDY

When you're as active on the merger & acquisition (M&A) front as government contractor BlueHalo has been recently — it has acquired 10 companies in a less than two years — you expect to inherit a patchwork of disparate systems, processes and technologies. You also figure to encounter significant difficulty in integrating all those moving parts into a single digital environment where data and insight flow unimpeded to people across the business, when, where and how they need it.

That's exactly the challenge BlueHalo CFO Robert Richards took on when he joined the company in late 2020. Specifically, he was tasked to bring multiple legacy enterprise resource planning (ERP) systems into a single, coherent, enterprise-wide whole, and to do so quickly, without disruption, to support the company as it integrated new employees, systems, customers, products, services and data on the fly.

"Some were on a Deltek Costpoint system. Some were on Quickbooks. Others were on PROCAS, and Deltek GCS. And some were on Unanet ERP GovCon," explains Richards. "What we needed was one core ERP system for the larger enterprise."

But not just any generic, off-the-shelf ERP product would do. BlueHalo needed its solution to map directly to the company's business processes, while also being flexible and scalable to keep pace with the company's ambitions to become a billion-dollar enterprise in short order. And perhaps most importantly, it needed to provide a superior user experience, with service and support to match the quality of the software itself.

With various ERP systems in use across the BlueHalo ecosystem, the company's IT decision-making team had a unique opportunity to evaluate those systems side-by-side. Ultimately, they decided only one fit the bill:

Unanet ERP GovCon.

BLUEHALO

ABOUT BLUEHALO

BlueHalo (www.bluehalo.com) is purpose-built to provide industry-leading capabilities in the domains of space technology, space superiority, directed energy & counter UAS, autonomy, and cyber, SIGINT and intelligence solutions. The Company is an end-to-end lifecycle partner, delivering technical expertise from R&D through deployment, offering both products and services. BlueHalo seeks to deliver advanced engineering solutions to address the most complex needs for the national security and healthcare communities. BlueHalo was launched in 2020 with the merger of Aegis Technologies Group, Excivity, EMRC Heli, Applied Technologies Associates and Brilligent Solutions. The company has over 1,300 employees located across the United States, with more than 500,000 square feet of facility space, including over 300,000 square feet of laboratory and manufacturing space. The company is majority-owned by Arlington Capital Partners (ACP), a leading private equity group based in Chevy Chase, Maryland, that specializes in building highly innovative and disruptive companies in government-regulated and adjacent markets, including aerospace and defense, government services and technology, healthcare, and business services and software.



THE ERP SOLUTION FOR BLUEHALO

This wasn't Richards's first rodeo. In fact, he had overseen a similar ERP consolidation effort at his previous employer, a government contractor that, after a flurry of M&A activity, had integrated seven companies into one.

By the time Richards arrived at BlueHalo, the company already had selected Unanet ERP GovCon to serve as its digital financial backbone. His positive prior experience with Unanet ERP led him to immediately endorse that decision.

Unanet ERP GovCon went live within several months of Richards arriving at BlueHalo, in January 2021. Besides relying on the solution's core project-based financials capabilities, with advanced analytics capabilities and real-time dashboards, KPIs and other critical information, the company has been utilizing a number of other features and functionalities within Unanet ERP GovCon, including:

- the Unanet Subcontractor Portal for streamlined, automated subcontractor time entry and data collection.
- Unanet's project planning and forecasting functionalities to support real-time budget versus actuals management and reporting.
- Unanet contract management to give the company visibility and control of everything from project funding to contract modifications and statements of work.
- the Unanet Connect integrations marketplace for pre-built API connectors to enable Unanet ERP GovCon to integrate with other critical business software, including FlowTrac for managing the expanding product side of BlueHalo's business.

“Unanet is offering a better experience for the end user as well as better synchronization of all our data.”

— Robert Richards, BlueHalo CFO



IMPACT

The move to Unanet ERP GovCon began paying dividends for BlueHalo almost immediately and, more than a year later, continues to deliver a range of benefits:

- **FULL DATA MIGRATION IN 2 MONTHS, NOT 18.** After A complicated integration and migration process that might take 12 to 18 months or more with other ERP systems, with countless hours of employee time along the way, took just two months to execute, **saving BlueHalo staff hundreds of hours of implementation time.** “Unanet ERP GovCon has facilitated the integration process much more effectively than some of the other ERP platforms that make data integration a real struggle,” Richards observes.
- **ONE ENTERPRISE ERP SYSTEM IS DOING THE WORK OF A DOZEN.** All the disparate data and processes that once resided within multiple ERP systems across 11 companies (Deltek Costpoint, Quickbooks, PROCAS, and Deltek GCS, among others) now have a single, secure and readily accessible home within Unanet ERP GovCon.
- **COMPLIANCE IS A TRANSPARENT, EASY-TO-MANAGE ENDEAVOR.** Compliance, a potentially massive headache for a fast-growing, acquisition-minded firm, is straightforward thanks to Unanet’s robust tools for managing compliance with DCAA and other complex government requirements.
- **ELEVATING THE EMPLOYEE EXPERIENCE.** The employee/user experience with Unanet ERP GovCon far surpasses that of the legacy systems previously used by BlueHalo’s recently acquired companies. “There’s no comparison,” says Richards. “For a people-focused, employee-driven company like ours, the employee experience is critical. With Unanet, we’re optimizing the employee experience while being compliant.”
- **MAJOR IMPROVEMENTS IN PROJECT REPORTING AND PLANNING.** “Having the ability to use the project-management functions within Unanet to look both forward and backward makes a big difference for our project managers and our business,” Richards says.



- **SUPERB VISIBILITY INTO AND CONTROL OVER SUBCONTRACTORS.** With the ability to monitor and manage subK onboarding and billing through Unanet's Subcontractor Portal, BlueHalo can promptly bill out subK costs, while keeping real-time tabs on subK time and burn rate for each project, just as the firm does with its own employees. "The Unanet Subcontractor Portal has really streamlined how we collect time and expense data from our subs," Richards explains, "so we can bill those costs quickly, without having to chase down data or do a lot of manual data entry."
- **SECOND-TO-NONE SUPPORT.** "The access to support, reference materials and help documentation from Unanet is always fantastic," says Richards. "The YouTube videos, the content library, Unanet University — you can see the investment of resources by Unanet in building out content and giving people the reference materials they need to understand how to solve a problem. It's easy for them to find any piece of information they need. In my experience, that is not the case with other providers."
- **EASY INTEGRATIONS TO BUILD A SEAMLESS DIGITAL ECOSYSTEM.** BlueHalo has access to more than 100 prebuilt integrations with Unanet ERP GovCon via the Unanet Connect marketplace, enabling the company to build an entire integrated digital ecosystem around its ERP solution.

“Our goal is to be a billion-dollar enterprise. With Unanet ERP GovCon, we feel like we have a system that will grow and scale with us. It’s a big win.”

— Robert Richards,

KEYS TO SUCCESS

Successful (and fast) ERP implementations like the one orchestrated by BlueHalo don't happen by accident, but rather are the result of careful planning and sound decision-making. Here are several factors that positioned BlueHalo for a positive outcome with Unanet ERP GovCon:

1. Finding an ERP solution fit for an ambitious, growth-focused government contractor.

As tall an order as integrating 11 companies into one was, it became a straightforward exercise due to Unanet ERP GovCon's scalability, flexibility and integration-readiness. Unanet ERP GovCon helped expedite a process that other, more rigid ERP products likely would have hampered.

2. Not settling for a 12-18 month integration/migration timeline when it can be done much faster.

BlueHalo could plan for and keep to an aggressive implementation timeline because it has a purpose-built ERP solution that maps directly to a government contractor's project-based workflows, processes and systems.

3. Full data integration.

Having a single source of data truth across the enterprise is key to consistently smart decision-making, and to maximizing the efficiencies of an ERP system.

4. Prioritizing readily accessible support and educational resources.

An ERP solution is only as good as the support that stands behind that solution. Unanet's "fantastic" multimedia resource base is a big part of why BlueHalo is seeing such strong user engagement and overall positive employee experience with Unanet ERP GovCon, according to Richards.

To learn more about Unanet ERP GovCon and what a purpose-built solution can do for your government contracting firm, contact us at www.unanet.com.

Where Information Means Insight

Unanet is a leading provider of ERP and CRM solutions purpose-built for Government Contractors, A/E, and Professional Services. More than 3,200 project-driven organizations depend on Unanet to turn their information into actionable insights, drive better decisionmaking, and nurture business growth.

