



Blu Banyan & Ipsun Solar

## Ipsun Solar Uses Solar Optimized Cloud ERP to Automate Business Processes and Do More With Less



Residential and commercial solar installer in Washington, D.C., works with Blu Banyan to implement NetSuite-SolarSuccess cloud ERP and create direct integrations to its industry solutions.

Five years ago, two renewable energy powerhouses joined forces with the goal of creating a solar engineering, procurement and construction (EPC) firm that would help customers untether themselves from electric utility bills and fossil fuels while also reducing the world's dependency on coal and gas power.

“We’re able to do a whole lot more than what we did before while also saving some time for our administrative and accounting teams. We’re doing more with the same number of people and we have a system that’s more reliable and less stressful than tracking a million different spreadsheets.”

Joe Marhamati, Vice President, Ipsun Solar



**“We lacked an integrated, holistic ERP for inventory and accounting. We were ready to have one single source of truth that would allow for consistent, reliable accounting and inventory.”** Joe Marhamati, Vice President, Ipsun Solar

Together, CEO Herve Billiet, an electromechanical engineer who co-founded and engineered the first Belgian solar car and designed and installed his first residential solar system in 2009, and VP Joe Marhamati, who served as an energy adviser to the President’s chief sustainability officer during the Obama administration, founded Ipsun Solar.

Today, their company conducts residential, commercial and large-scale solar panel installations throughout Northern Virginia, Maryland and D.C. with custom-made solar photovoltaic (PV) systems for each of its clients.

### **Ready for a Change**

As the business grew from a two-person company to more than 50 employees and earned a reputation for quality and consistency, it began to outgrow the Excel spreadsheets, QuickBooks and heuristic problem-solving it was using to run the business. Ipsun Solar’s founders decided to consolidate their accounting and inventory systems onto an enterprise resource planning (ERP) platform.

### **“Anything is Possible”**

Referred to NetSuite-SolarSuccess by a fellow member of a purchasing collective it was a part of, Ipsun Solar decided to implement the platform in January 2020. Marhamati credits Blu Banyan,

a NetSuite Solution Provider, with successfully guiding the company through its first big software implementation and building direct integrations with the company’s other software systems, which include HubSpot for customer relationship management, TSheets for time tracking and Paystand for B2B payments.

Blu Banyan also built several new integrations using open application programming interfaces (APIs), managed other customizations and was readily available to answer questions and solve problems throughout the implementation process.

“Whether we wanted to integrate systems or take advantage of out-of-the-box automation, Blu Banyan handled it for us,” said Marhamati. “I think their MO is ‘basically anything is possible.’”

### **The Key Benefits**

With its new solar industry-specific ERP platform in place, Ipsun Solar gained better visibility over its accounts receivables process, and the integrations into Paystand and HubSpot. “We’ve been able to automate most of our residential invoices,” Marhamati explained. When a deal moves to a particular stage of construction, for example, SolarSuccess generates invoices based on that specific milestone.

“That has been the biggest advantage and has definitely helped us out a lot,” he said. Other benefits include more accurate inventory levels. Blu Banyan built a direct integration between NetSuite-SolarSuccess and RF-SMART, a tool that Ipsun Solar uses to scan products as they come in and out of its warehouse. “We now have accurate, consistent, reliable reporting on inventory,” said Marhamati.

With its NetSuite-SolarSuccess implementation, Ipsun Solar gained an accounting system that offers granular reporting, metrics, saved searches and cash flow management. It has automated its invoice process and improved its inventory management, the latter of which supports goods loss prevention and provides more reliable inventory counts.

### Setting Proper Expectations

Ipsun Solar is also using the Authorities Having Jurisdictions (AHJ) Registry, a crowdsourced, public registry that allows solar installers to conduct comprehensive code research before building. Blu Banyan was a leader in developing the Registry, which is also bundled with SolarSuccess, and aims to eliminate the cost for solar installers of research to identify the appropriate AHJ for construction, electrical and fire codes.

“Our sales team uses it because the AHJs are so sliced and diced, with over 36,000 AHJs across the country,” said Marhamati. “When you get an address, it’s almost impossible to know 100% what AHJ it’s in unless you use a registry. The AHJ Registry is critically important on the sales side to ensure that you’re pricing jobs out correctly and setting proper expectations with customers.”

In the near future, Ipsun Solar wants to start using NetSuite cloud ERP to develop more accurate forecasts based on existing/projected sales. This will help it more effectively manage large-scale, bulk procurement. “We’ll be able to start putting purchase orders out for several quarters or even a full year,” said Marhamati, “and gain the peace of mind of knowing that we have a system that forecasts based on real numbers and sales.”



#### Company Snapshot

**Company:** Ipsun Solar

**Location:** Washington D.C.

**Industry:** Solar Company



**Partner Name:** Blu Banyan

**Location:** Berkeley, Calif.