



## CASE STUDY

# TULSA PERFORMING ARTS CENTER

## **ARTS CENTER GAINS SEAMLESS CONNECTION BETWEEN EVENT MANAGEMENT AND BACK OFFICE FINANCIAL SYSTEMS**

Tulsa Performing Arts Center was spun out of the City of Tulsa, executives needed new event booking software and financial software. Wanting software that was easy to use, CFO Jen Alden chose Acumatica, which also provided automatic integration with their first choice for an event management suite -- VenueOps from EventBooking.com. The combined software eliminated double financial entries and smoothed the event settlement process.

### SITUATION

“EventBooking suggested Acumatica to us,” Alden says. “Because I knew I needed something efficient, easy to use, and wouldn’t take a lot of time to do settlements.”

In order to give the Tulsa Performing Arts Center (PAC), more financial stability and flexibility, the City of Tulsa turned the PAC over to the Tulsa Performing Arts Center Trust to run day to day operations in mid-2019. It’s a move many cities are embracing to separate government operations from arts institutions, which operate differently.

The Tulsa PAC has six performance spaces and is the primary venue for most of the city’s performing arts organizations including Tulsa Opera, Tulsa Ballet, Tulsa Symphony, Theatre Tulsa, American Theatre Company, Theatre North, Tulsa Town Hall, Chamber Music Tulsa, Choregus Productions, Theatre Pops, Tulsa Project Theatre and Celebrity Attractions.

The PAC opened in 1977, and The Trust was a separate entity that presented programs outside the scope of what the facility’s regular user groups, ranging from children’s theater to folk and jazz music to Broadway touring productions. The 40-year-old center has six theaters with meeting rooms and three other event spaces, and plans are underway to renovate and expand the center by 142,000 square feet, essentially doubling the facility.

One month before the official handoff, the Tulsa PAC hired Jennifer Alden as CFO. Her first task was to create a financial system from scratch and have it ready to go for the August 21 opening of Hamilton, the Broadway hit that would be the PAC’s largest show.

### SOLUTION

**Easy-to-Use, Seamless Connection.** Tulsa Performing Arts Center was spun out of the City of Tulsa, executives needed new event booking software and financial software. Wanting software that was easy to use, CFO Jen Alden chose Acumatica, which also provided automatic integration with their first choice for an event

### COMPANY INFORMATION

- Location: Tulsa< Oklahoma
- Industry: Nonprofit performing arts

### KEY RESULTS

- Eliminated manual data entry into different systems
- Provided automatic event settlement
- Gained realtime financial view of the entire operation
- Avoided additional headcount needed with increased transactions
- Saved money and avoided expensive per-user licensing enabling “all user access”

### LIVE IN 30 DAYS

- Live operation within 30 days of project inception
- Expedited by avoiding a large conversion process
- 30 combined users on VenueOps and Acumatica

### REAL-TIME EVENT SETTLEMENT

- Instant access to revenue transactions from VenueOps event system
- Immediate visibility of expenses paid to vendors hired to support the production
- Complete audit trail of all event revenues and expenses for each production contract
- Prompt, one-click reconciliation to settle the contact





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management suite -- VenueOps from EventBooking.com. The combined software eliminated double financial entries and smoothed the event settlement process.

The PAC general manager had begun to review event tracking and event calendaring systems and was focusing on EventBooking's VenueOps when Alden joined the PAC.

"Event Booking suggested Acumatica to us," Alden says. "Because I knew I was going to be the only accountant for a while, I needed something efficient, easy to use, and wouldn't take me a lot of time to do settlements."

Acumatica partner mbsPartners, which had completed an important integration between the two systems – VenueOps and Acumatica – that enabled information easily flowed between the two systems. They also walked Alden through the various functions, including event settlements.

Alden evaluated other software but none provided Acumatica's seamless integration to VenueOps. "For me, the number one requirement was for a system to integrate with VenueOps and also be able to easily input ticket sales and be user friendly," she says.

"It also had to be user friendly because I have a clerk that helps with AP and she did not have an accounting background. We needed user friendly software so we could figure things out; not a large Oracle-based system with so many steps that we couldn't maneuver around easily."

**Fast Implementation.** The VenueOps/Acumatica software configuration needed to be live within 30 days. Having a preconfigured solution for convention centers and event management was a great first step. But to pull off such a rapid cutover, it took the combined efforts of mbsPartners, the staff at EventBooking.com and the team at Tulsa PAC to all work together. Today, the Cloud solution has about 30 combined users on VenueOps and Acumatica.

"We started working with the Acumatica team from mbsPartners to set up our new financial system," Alden says. "We didn't have a chart of accounts and didn't have beginning balances, so we started the income statement from scratch."

"The goal when I started on July 1 was to get this done before Hamilton opened Aug 21, and I can say we did hit that goal. That was a nice win!"

She had been involved with other ERP implementations which dragged on for six months to more than a year.

**Real-Time Settlement.** Regarding the VenueOps/Acumatica integration, she added "Now I don't have to go back and do anything like we would before. I have the cash balances and the proper accounting instantly instead of taking three weeks to figure it out. It's a great tool and it works smoothly."

"And the customers like it because they get their settlements much quicker", she added.

### CONNECTED BUSINESS WITH REAL TIME VISIBILITY

VenueOps allows scheduling of all activities for a particular event --, rent, equipment rentals, usher and other expenses. With six theaters and three event spaces, the software handles the thousands of events the PAC has each year.

VenueOpsWithin each space, they can schedule and set up expenses due from the customer.

"At the end of the event, those expenses are automatically pushed to Acumatica's AR module, and if those are the only expenses, we just send the AR bill out," Alden explains. "We don't have to key in the information again. We just push a button and it sends the data over, saving us tons of time- more than you know."

The integration and seamless connection also takes care of the customer data set up in VenueOps, sending it to Acumatica. If Tulsa Ballet does 10 events, "all the information is pushed automatically to Acumatica," Alden says, "We don't have to go back and figure out which event it is, it's just automatically done."

### INTUATIVE; USER-FRIENDLY

Because Acumatica is so easy to use, CFO Jen Alden has not had to hire many people to her accounting staff during this early startup phase. "Our clerk had no previous accounting experience and now she's doing all the AP work," Alden says. "I just hired an accountant and I didn't have to teach her at all; she just got on the system and easily uses it."

Alden anticipates adding more staff as the PAC grows but she won't have to worry about additional user fees because both VenueOps and Acumatica offer consumption-based pricing rather than expensive per-user licensing.