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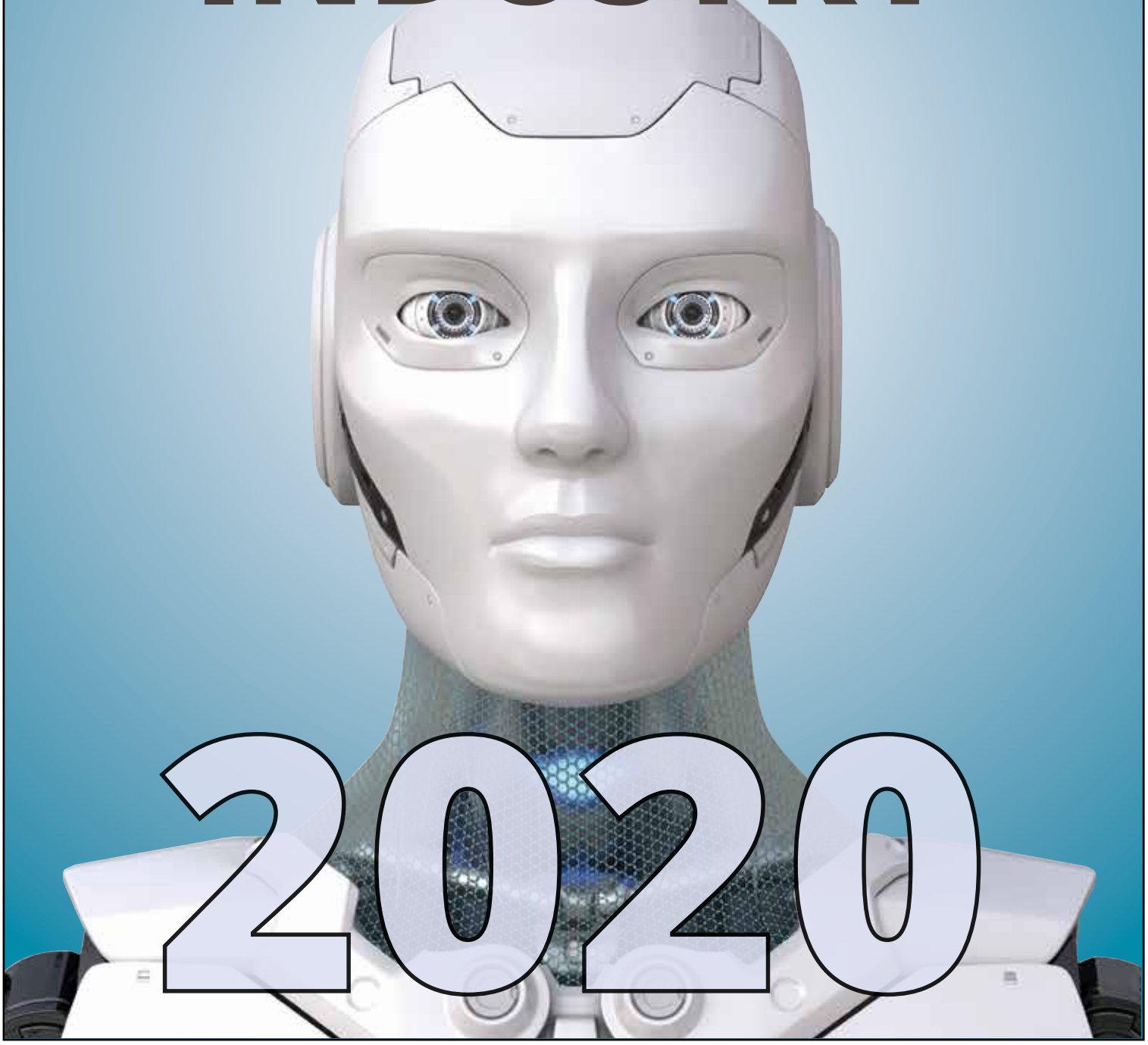
TOP PREDICTIONS FOR THE ERP SOFTWARE INDUSTRY



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Yagmur Sahin

EDITOR'S NOTE

Hello to everyone from the last issue of 2019,

The speed of technological development in recent years affects the economic systems as well as daily living habits. Also, the ERP industry is continuously evolving with systems that are renewed every day, products and updates that offer a highly dynamic structure with many innovations. Last year was full of rapid and effective developments in terms of the ERP sector. Influenced by all these developments, the industry enters 2020 with a new form.

In this issue, we asked the experts their "Top Predictions for the ERP Software Industry in 2020". Given their responses and in the light of the advancements last year, we can say that Cloud ERP will continue to be popular this year. Again, the user experience will be at the top of the list for ERP vendors in 2020!

In this issue, we have compiled the latest news, current events, articles, and interviews with the excitement of the New Year!

We hope that this year will bring you all the success you wish for!

See you in the next issue!

Happy New Year!

CONTENTS

Issue # 5 , December 2019

AUTONOMOUS DATABASE CHOICES TO FIT YOUR NEEDS — 06
News from ORACLE

SAP ENABLE NOW FRAMEWORK ADDRESSES THE SKILLS GAP THROUGH TAILORED SOLUTIONS — 08
News from SAP

ENDEAVOR ENERGY RESOURCES, L.P. TO UNITE 10 DIVISIONS ON IFS APPLICATIONS FOR OILFIELD SERVICES ERP — 10
News from IFS

WHY APIS ARE AS SEXY AS IOT AND AI — 11
News from IFS

ACUMATICA CLOUD ERP NAMED A LEADER IN FORBES, G2 AND GARTNER — 12
News from ACUMATICA

CAPGEMINI IS SELECTED BY BAYER AS A CORE STRATEGIC PARTNER TO TRANSFORM ITS IT LANDSCAPE — 14
News from CAPGEMINI

WHAT DO YOU OFFER YOUR CUSTOMERS DURING THEIR DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION JOURNEY IN 2020 — 17
*Quote by **Nicky Tozer***
Oracle NetSuite Vice President of EMEA

THREE TRENDS THAT WILL CHANGE THE MANUFACTURING INDUSTRY IN 2020 — 18
*Article by **Nick Goode**,*
Executive Vice President of Sage Business Cloud X3 at Sage

THE IMPACT OF LEADERSHIP BEHAVIOR AFTER YOUR ERP IMPLEMENTATION — 22
*Article by **David Beldyk**,*
President and
Founder of DABCO Consulting LLC, Partner of CCI

WHAT TO EXPECT FROM THE ERP INDUSTRY IN 2020? THREE BOLD PREDICTIONS — 26
*Article by **Robin Irvine**,*
General Manager, AVAAP

7 SUPPLY CHAIN PREDICTIONS: LOOKING AHEAD WITH 2020 VISION — 28
Article by BRYAN NELLA

INTERVIEW WITH JOHN HOGAN, — 30
SVP, Engineering at TraceLink

ANALYTICS COMES OF AGE — 34
*Article by **Lucy Thorpe**,*
Head of content for the UK based company In Cloud Solutions

PREDICTIONS FOR 2020 IN THE DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION — 37
Quote by Glenn Graney
QAD, Marketing Manager

INTERVIEW WITH COLIN EARL, — 38
the founder and CEO of Agiloft

DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION AND ERP IMPLEMENTATION: EMBRACE UNCERTAINTY TO MOVE YOUR BUSINESS FORWARD — 42
*Article by **Jean Magny**,*
President, and CEO at Genius Solutions

FIRMS INVESTING IN ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE TO WIN — 46
*Interview with **Behic Ferhatoglu**,*
General Manager, Canias

TOP PREDICTIONS FOR THE ERP SOFTWARE INDUSTRY IN 2020 — 50
*Article by **Kalyani Chaudhari**,*
Marketing Manager at Sage Software Solutions Pvt Ltd

TOP 3 ESSENTIAL AND SURPRISING FACTS ABOUT ERP SELECTION CRITERIA — 52
*Article by **Technology Evalution Centers***

WHAT DO YOU OFFER YOUR CUSTOMERS DURING THEIR DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION JOURNEY IN 2020 — 55
*Quote by **Robin Irvine***
General Manager, AVAAP

5 PREDICTIONS FOR THE FUTURE OF ERP SOFTWARE — 56
*Article by **Genius ERP***

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AUTONOMOUS DATABASE CHOICES TO FIT YOUR NEEDS

The role of the enterprise database has evolved, and its importance has increased tremendously since Oracle pioneered the technology more than four decades ago. Today's databases perform near real-time processing for the most important enterprise workloads in the world, such as at telecoms and financial institutions. They handle petabytes of data, and that data comes in many forms.

At Oracle, we are bringing enterprise-grade database technology to the cloud and making it dramatically simpler and more cost effective. Now every user in enterprises of every size of can get the benefits of database technology that was previously restricted to mission-critical systems. The world's most sophisticated database is now also the world's simplest.

Automation, Security, and Dynamic Elasticity

Oracle Autonomous Database supports all kinds of workloads—transaction processing, data warehousing, and mixed workloads. And with Autonomous Database, most of it can be automated.

Databases—especially mission-critical enterprise databases—have traditionally required a lot of oversight and manual management. With Autonomous Database, we've automated most of these operational tasks. The Autonomous Database uses machine learning and automation to help eliminate complexity and human error, enabling higher reliability and more efficiency.

This automation also makes Autonomous Database much more secure than other databases because it constantly updates and patches itself in response to the latest threats. Additionally, Autonomous Database can automatically scale up or down, and you pay only for the compute and storage you use. It's a dramatically better database experience.

Bringing the Cloud to You

Despite the many benefits of the public cloud, we recognize that customers — particularly large enterprises — can't move everything to the cloud. There are many reasons for that, including regulatory compliance concerns, latency issues, and application integration complexity. That's why at OpenWorld 2019 we announced Oracle Gen 2 Exadata Cloud at Customer.

The idea of Exadata Cloud at Customer is, if you can't come

to the public cloud, we'll bring the cloud to you. We take the same hardware, software, and APIs that we have in our Exadata Cloud Service in the public cloud, and we deploy them in the customer's data center. The customer stays in control of all their data, and all of their security policies can remain the same, so it makes it a lot easier to adopt. Customers get all the benefits of cloud technology, but they're also able to control the compliance and policies that had previously prevented them from going to the cloud.

Today we have Oracle Database available as a cloud service on Exadata inside customers' data centers, and in 2020 we also plan to bring Autonomous Database to customers' data centers.

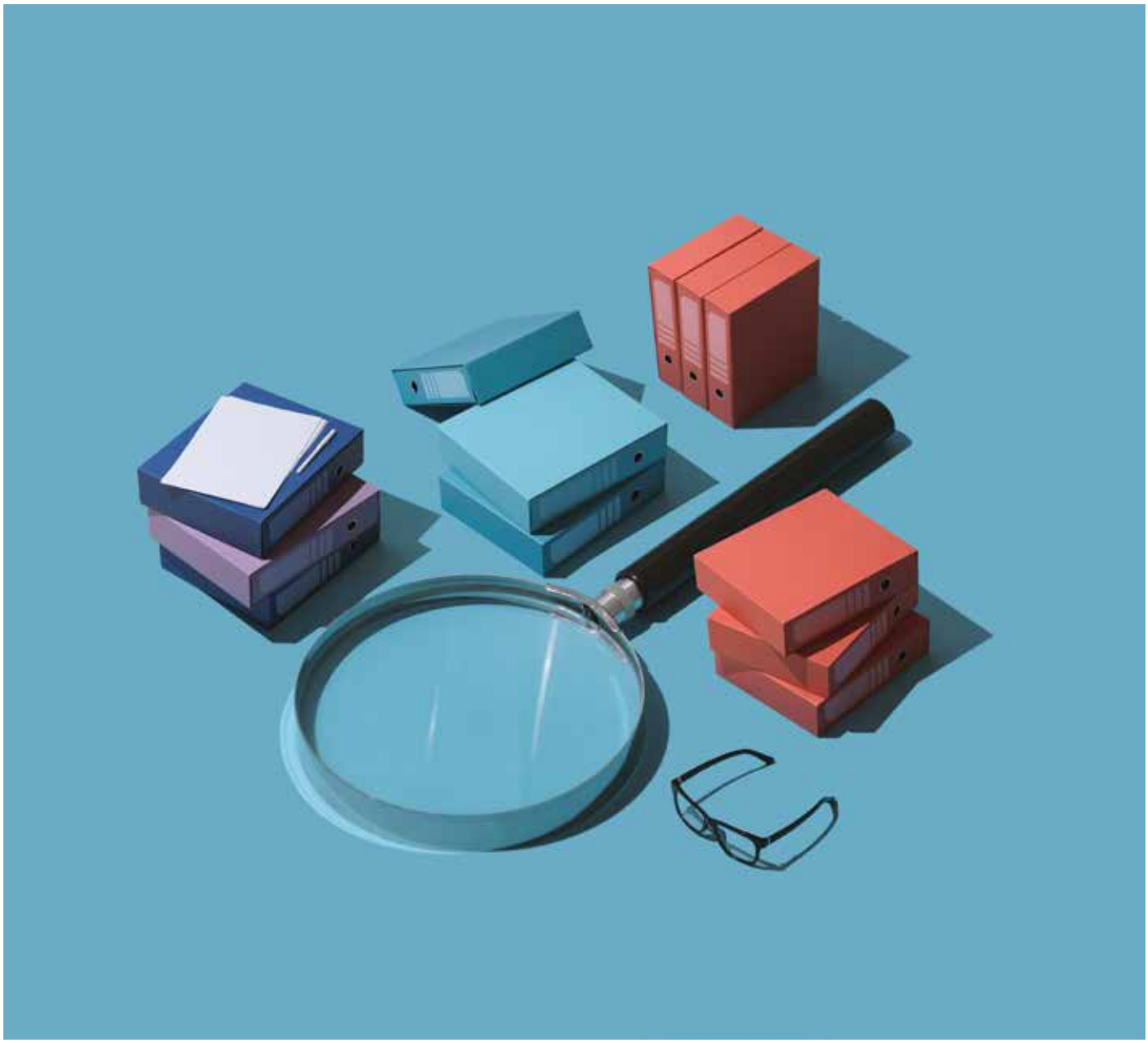
Get the Best for Free

Another Autonomous Database option available to customers is Oracle Cloud Free Tier. The free tier can be used by anyone, but it is particularly interesting for developers, students, and small businesses. The free tier makes it super easy to learn Autonomous Database, or to use it to develop new applications.

A lot of clouds have a free tier, but you normally don't get their best database. You normally get a lower-end commodity database. In the Oracle Cloud Free Tier, Oracle is providing the full Autonomous Database running on the Exadata platform—the same database and platform that is used by some of the biggest enterprises in the world.

With support for online transaction processing or data warehousing, public cloud or Cloud at Customer deployment, and a free tier for students and developers, Oracle Autonomous Database supports any kind of workload, deployment, or user with the simplest ease of use and the highest elasticity and security.

All the previously existing barriers to running databases in the cloud have now been eliminated.



SAP ENABLE NOW FRAMEWORK ADDRESSES THE SKILLS GAP THROUGH TAILORED SOLUTIONS

Today's geopolitical uncertainty and cyber threat landscape may be causes for concern for CEOs, but according to PwC's 22nd Annual Global CEO Survey, the availability of key skills is more top of mind for these executives leading organizations worldwide.

As the speed of innovation is accelerated for emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI), machine learning, and blockchain, now more than ever businesses leaders are realizing the need to educate and train their workforce, clients, and shareholders and ensure they are kept abreast of the latest technologies that affect their everyday work.

As companies adopt digital solutions as part of their transformations to intelligent enterprises, SAP's introduction of SAP Enable Now Framework – intelligent, in-product user assistance – is helping empower customers to close the skills gap and build the skills needed to adopt cloud solutions. With learning preferences changing and the need for on-demand, real-time training increasing, SAP's innovative and unique approach to enterprise learning provides customers with the right resources to allow them to operate at their full potential.

By rapidly creating and deploying content and microlearning tools, SAP Enable Now Framework offers users fast and efficient learning-enablement tools. These tools include formal, informal, and on-the-job support and equip employees with the necessary knowledge to master their jobs.

Measuring Success

Since rollout, SAP Enable Now Framework has received an overwhelming amount of support from leading industry peers, analysts, and customers. Recognized as an innovative solution that places the learner at the center, it has set the industry standard for intelligent enterprise learning and enablement.

SAP Enable Now Framework was recently awarded the Innovation in Education Services TSIA STAR Award by the Technology Services Industry Association (TSIA), one of the most prestigious awards in the industry. TSIA is the leading association for technology services organizations and for nearly 30 years, the TSIA STAR Award has honored technology companies for their commitment to outstanding innovation, leadership, and excellence. Winners are selected by TSIA's advisory board members, consisting of industry-peers, competitors, customers, and SAP partners such as Microsoft, Dell, HP, and Cisco.

The award serves as a major milestone for success and validates SAP's mission to educate the workforce on the innovative technology of today. Josh Greenbaum, analyst at Enterprise Applications Consulting, explained how SAP was "doing an exemplary job of providing

enablement that is needed by companies embarking on an intelligent enterprise-based transformation."

Shared Success

Beyond offering the framework to SAP customers, the company partners with global customers to customize it for their specific needs. Multinational consulting firm and global strategic services partner Capgemini is the first to have signed for SAP Enable Now and offered its benefits to its own customers. Capgemini positions the solution to bring users up to speed on their latest technologies, offering intelligent e-assistance within its core project training methodology. Throughout the project lifespan, SAP Enable Now provides Capgemini with seamless knowledge transfer by providing outputs for functional training and testing teams. Post go-live monitoring provides adoption metrics to show where users are struggling and where they meet performance expectations.

"SAP Enable Now is a proven game changer for Capgemini's delivery of client enablement, engagement and end user adoption of technology transformation," said Cathy Miller the Change Acceleration Practice Lead, NA People & Organization, Capgemini Invent "We have leveraged this new capability to transform the way we deliver change for our clients.. Gone are the days of delivering training just-in-time. Today, fueled by SAP Enable Now, Capgemini transformation teams empower and enable impacted stakeholders with needed knowledge where they need it, when they need it — a necessary adjustment to meet the expectations of our clients and their technology-evolving workforce deploying cloud solutions. Capgemini's partnership with SAP, SAP Enable Now, and our partner-managed cloud have allowed Capgemini to differentiate our offerings in compelling ways for our clients."

Full Steam Ahead with the SAP Enable Now Framework

With the speed of technological change significantly increasing, business decision makers understand that in order to get the most out of their investments in technology, it is important to prepare their workforce with the skills needed to effectively utilize and adopt these tools. SAP Enable Now Framework is currently available with SAP S/4HANA, SAP S/4HANA Cloud, SAP Marketing Cloud, SAP SuccessFactors solutions, SAP Cloud Platform, SAP Sales Cloud, SAP Data Warehouse Cloud, SAP Integrated Business Planning, SAP Digital Manufacturing Cloud, SAP Intelligent Asset Management, and SAP Predictive Engineering Insights. SAP is investing in other areas of the business to make it available for additional cloud solutions.

About SAP

As the Experience Company powered by the Intelligent Enterprise, SAP is the market leader in enterprise application software, helping companies of all sizes and in all industries run at their best: 77% of the world's transaction revenue touches an SAP system. Our machine learning, Internet of Things (IoT), and advanced analytics technologies help turn customers' businesses into intelligent enterprises. SAP helps give people and organizations deep business insight and fosters collaboration that helps them stay ahead of their competition. We simplify technology for companies so they can consume our software the way they want – without disruption. Our end-to-end suite of applications and services enables more than 437,000 business and public customers to operate profitably, adapt continuously, and make a difference. With a global network of customers, partners, employees, and thought leaders, SAP helps the world run better and improve people's lives.
For more information, visit www.sap.com

ENDEAVOR ENERGY RESOURCES, L.P. TO UNITE 10 DIVISIONS ON IFS APPLICATIONS FOR OILFIELD SERVICES ERP

IFS's enterprise resource planning (ERP) system to facilitate business growth across both field service and manufacturing operations

London, December 3, 2019 – IFS, the global enterprise applications company, announces that Midland, Texas-based Endeavor Energy Resources L.P. has purchased IFS Applications™ as the new ERP system of record for its oilfield services division.

Endeavor Energy Resources, L.P. ("Endeavor") is one of the top 10 oil and gas producers in Texas's Permian Basin, and the Endeavor's Energy Services Division provides steady access and stable pricing to support Endeavor's hydrocarbon exploration production operations.

After a rigorous selection process, Endeavor chose IFS Applications in the Microsoft Azure cloud.

Endeavor's hydrocarbon production has increased significantly over the last twelve months and IFS Applications was chosen to streamline services in the field to enable the Energy Services Division to deliver more value while containing operational cost. To do this, the Energy Services Division needed to unite its various business operations —including well services, vehicle maintenance, manufacturing, facility construction, cased hole work and facility maintenance and other miscellaneous work—on a single enterprise system, running in the cloud. Endeavor's Energy Services Division needs to support both internal asset management as well as billable field service as it performs work for Endeavor's hydrocarbon exploration and production operations as well as external customers.

"We selected IFS Applications because it enables us to manage our entire value chain from field ticketing and work orders on a mobile device used by the technician, to the general ledger," Endeavor Energy Services Director of Operations Kevin Northcutt said. "The built-in field service ticketing automatically updates inventory records and tracks job status, so we can increase the value we deliver our internal and external customers, regardless of any underlying increase in cost or staffing. And IFS offered a clear and reliable pathway to a successful implementation."

IFS Regional President, Americas, Cindy Jaudon said, "Companies like Endeavor need to automate business processes to remove internal constraints on cost and growth. IFS is uniquely positioned to serve customers like Endeavor that have broad service management needs that encompass billable work, which must be reflected on the general ledger, and work on their owned assets that must update the asset register. Mergers and industry consolidation mean more companies will face these complex service management needs, and IFS will be here for them."

IFS customers in the oil and gas industry include Interwell, Rever Offshore, Technip, Maersk Drilling, Maersk Supply Service, Odfjell Drilling, Babcock Marine, Heerema Fabrication Group, Archer, APPLY, MIR VALVE, Rosenberg WorleyParsons, BW Offshore, Semco Maritime, VARD, PGS, ShawCor, Icon Engineering, Mermaid Marine and Trans-Northern Pipelines Inc.

Learn more about IFS Applications for the oil and gas industry, visit: www.ifs.com/corp/industries/energy-utilities-and-resources/oil-and-gas/.

About Endeavor Energy Resources, L.P.

Endeavor Energy Resources, L.P. ("Endeavor"), is a private E&P company headquartered in Midland, TX. With over 350,000 net acres in the Midland Basin, Endeavor holds the second largest land position. As one of the largest employers in the Permian Basin, Endeavor is committed to the success of its employees and is fortunate to have a great team of visionaries who are dedicated to its mission, vision, and values. For more information, visit: endeavorenergylp.com

About IFS

IFS develops and delivers enterprise software for customers around the world who manufacture and distribute goods, build and maintain assets, and manage service-focused operations. The industry expertise of our people and solutions, together with a commitment to delivering value to every one of our customers, has made IFS a recognized leader and the most recommended supplier in our sector. Our team of 3,700 employees and growing ecosystem of partners support more than 10,000 customers around the world challenge the status quo and realize their competitive advantage. Learn more about how our enterprise software solutions can help your business today at ifs.com.

WHY APIS ARE AS SEXY AS IOT AND AI

Companies in our industry right now are working very hard to prove that they have successfully integrated technologies like the internet of things (IoT) and artificial intelligence (AI) into their enterprise software products. As I described during this interview with Silicon Angle's TheCube at our World Conference in October, what actually makes these transformational technologies valuable is the simple application program interface (API).

While there's nothing new about APIs, they're really coming into sharp focus as a need to get new applications to market increasingly quickly is coupled with a growing demand for 'digital transformation' from the c-suite. This is important because IFS Applications is now natively built on, and with Restful APIs. They are at the DNA of our solutions.

APIS FOR SOFTWARE DEVELOPMENT

IFS was an early adopter of this method of developing software. In 1998, we became one of the first enterprise software company to re-develop its applications as a component-based architecture. That means that instead of one big, monolithic block of code, our product was built of thousands of small software components, joined together by APIs. These APIs essentially define how different pieces of software work together. Because that working relationship is well-defined and established, it became easy and fast for IFS to make changes to the software. One component could be changed as needed without disrupting the whole.

We can liken this to the way your web browser interacts with resources on the Internet. Regardless of what web domain you are interacting with or how that content was developed, you can still successfully access that content regardless of whether you are using Google Chrome, Mozilla Firefox, Opera or Netscape (well, Netscape maybe not so much). The Internet works because there are well-defined and open standards that developers can easily understand and follow.

APIs have reached new heights since the early days of component-based architecture and the web of course. A lot of what we are using for APIs now was inspired by the dissertation of Roy Fielding, published at the turn of the century in 2000, who originated the idea of the representational state transfer, or RESTful, API. These have some technical advantages, but the main one is that it makes APIs easier to use, and easier for other systems to discover what resources that API can provide to them.

APIS FOR EXTENDING SOFTWARE

And it is this intuitive nature that makes RESTful APIs so desirable today. Even manufacturers and services companies today are, in many ways, becoming software companies themselves. They may have developers who write software to do things like open our applications to their customers or suppliers, introduce data from the IoT, and enable other systems to interact with our software in new and useful ways. And RESTful APIs make it that much easier for them to get access to a lot of the capabilities that live inside of the IFS models.

Our longtime commitment to this way of writing software and delivering value is one reason we joined the Open API Initiative. And our involvement will help us align our APIs with current and emerging standards for what is proving to be the language technologies use to talk to each other.

At IFS we are demonstrably serious about this commitment and we have gone all the way. We are not just building a select set of APIs "on-the-side". Our core architecture is dependent on OData based Restful APIs; it's the entire foundation for how our front–end works. Every form, every interaction goes through oData based Restful APIs. It is a firm commitment that delivers choice, flexibility and capabilities to our end user customers.... and we don't have to produce, and document API guides separate from the core product. APIs is at the core of our architecture.

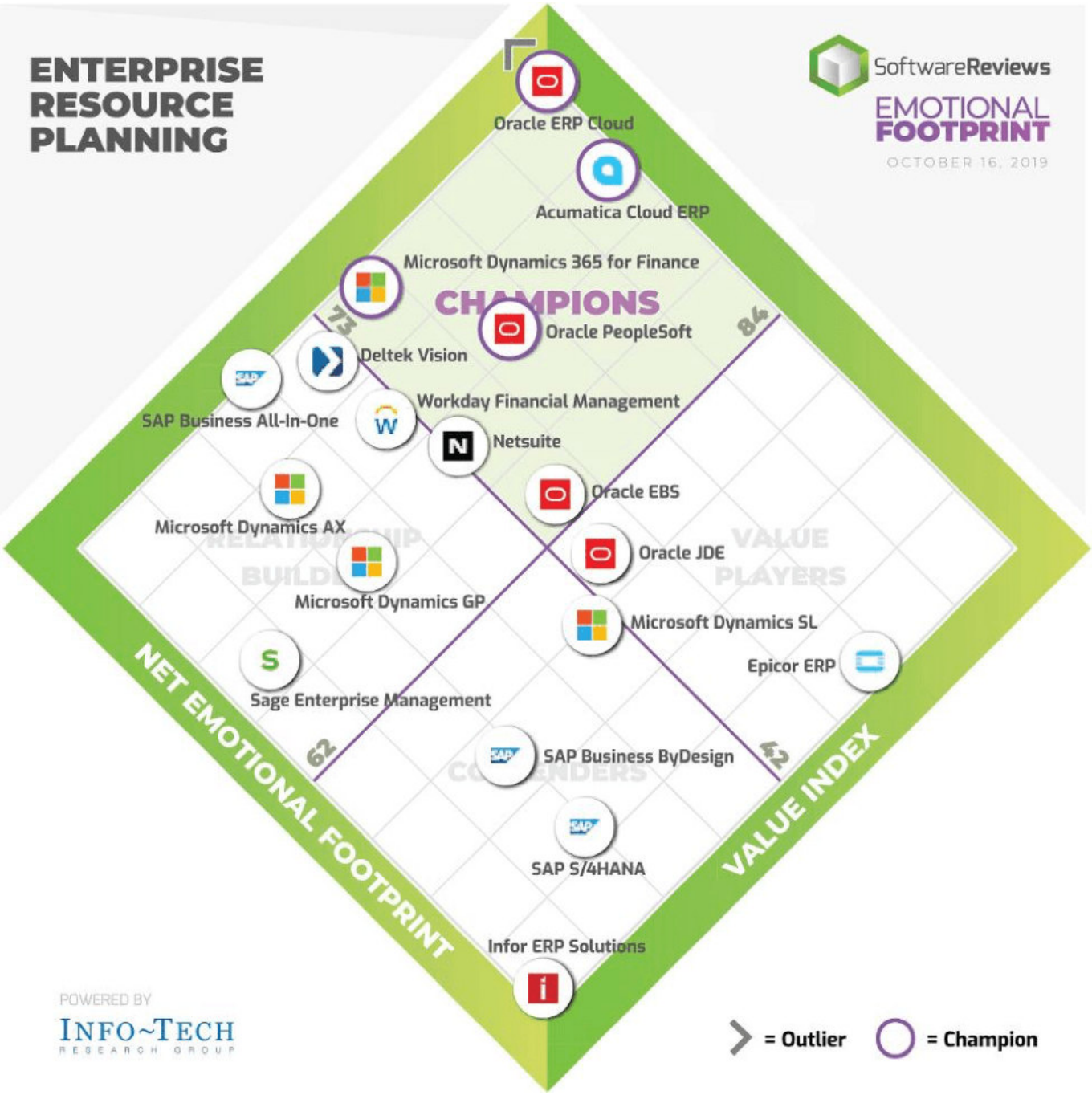
Acumatica
The Cloud ERP

The Reviews Are In!
Acumatica Cloud ERP Named a Leader in Forbes, G2 and Gartner

Acumatica's role as a Leader amongst cloud ERP vendors continues as Forbes, G2, and Gartner release Fall 2019 user reviews. We've put together a User Review page compiling the information, but because we're excited to spread the word about our usability and popularity ratings, here's a high-level overview of Acumatica's leadership status within the cloud ERP space.

Forbes

Forbes, a global media company, reports that SoftwareReviews, a division of InfoTech Research Group, released their Emotional Footprint Report on Enterprise Resource Planning, October 2019. In it, Acumatica's cloud-based ERP solution, the only mid-market option of the 18



vendors profiled, is one of the four most popular systems with users, coming in second only to Oracle ERP Cloud with Microsoft Dynamics 365 for Finance and Oracle PeopleSoft trailing behind.

With 960 customer reviews based on 25 questions, the Emotional Footprint Report uses Value Index (value users gain from the software vs. what they pay) and Net Emotional Footprint (how users feel about the software) scores to rank vendors within their diamond-shaped chart.

"The most liked ERP vendors have sales teams who excel at setting realistic expectations and then delivering on them while constantly improving their ERP systems to deliver time savings and improve security," Forbes writes.

Acumatica's Emotional Footprint is that of a Champion, according to Software Reviews. See their chart below.

G2

G2, the world's leading business software review platform, released their Fall 2019 Momentum Grid Report. Acumatica is a Momentum Leader, which means our cloud ERP software has a top 25% Momentum Grid score, placing us within the coveted shaded area.

The Grid is spliced along two axes, Satisfaction and Momentum Score. According to G2, "A product's Momentum score is calculated by a proprietary algorithm that factors in social, web, employee, and review data that G2 has deemed influential in a company's momentum."

Acumatica, with a score of 82, has the highest overall Momentum Grid Score, has a 4.5 star rating by manually verified G2 reviewers (who must use a LinkedIn account to review), and has received the following G2 Badges for Fall 2019: Momentum Leader, Best Usability, Best Relationship, and Leader Mid-Market.

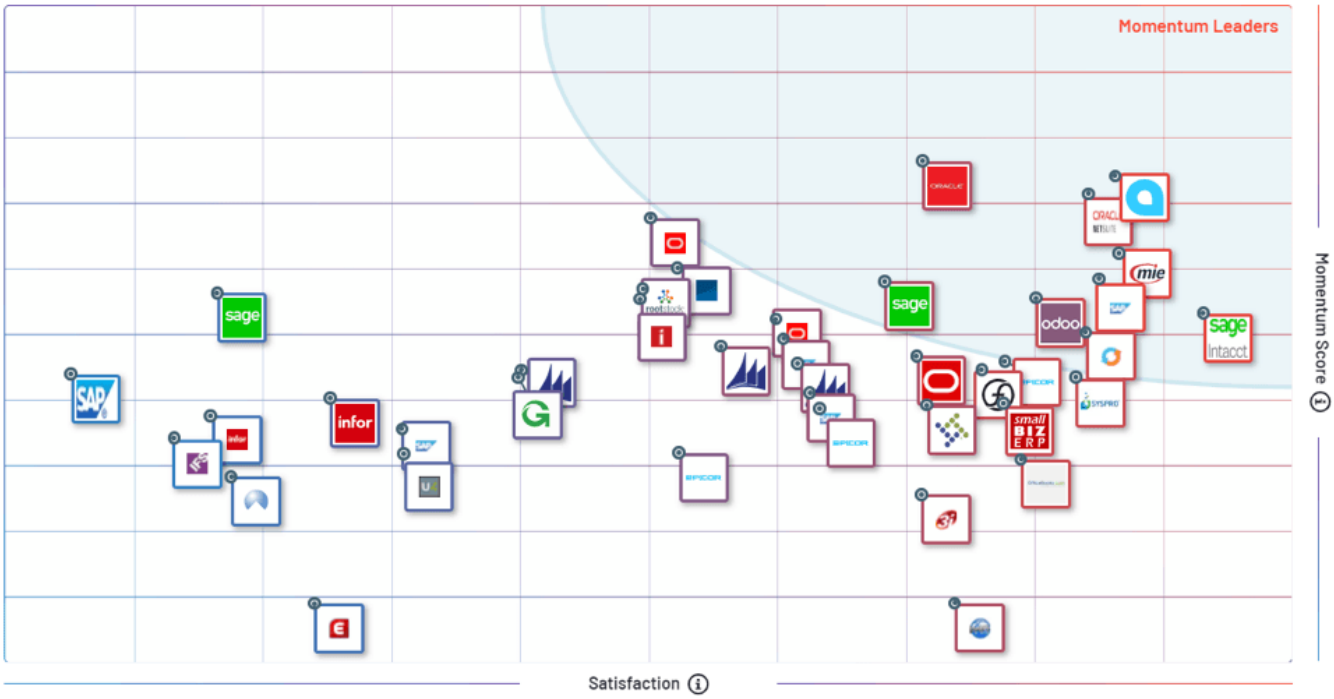
Reviewer John M. states in his July 2019 five-star review, 'Great application with great support!', "Has many features we require as well as the ability to create custom upgrades to handle our special requirements. The web based interface is very easy to navigate and allows multiple windows open at a time. Security is tight and ease of credit card processing is great."

More reviews like this are available on G2's Acumatica Reviews page.

Gartner

Gartner, a leading information technology research and advisory company, says Acumatica Financial Management is well-aligned with Gartner's vision of Postmodern ERP. Gartner Peer Insights and Gartner Digital Markets (Capterra, Software Advice, GetApp) provide rigorously vetted reviews, and Acumatica currently has a 4.4-star rating on both sites (91% and 94% of users respectively giving either a four-or-five-star rating).

One of many reviews, 'Best of Breed Cloud ERP System', gave Acumatica five stars, citing "ease of use, great dashboards, powerful technology, easy to integrate, and easy access to data." Check out more like this in the Capterra Acumatica Cloud ERP Reviews.



Kim Plank leads Customer Success Marketing efforts at Acumatica. She works to align Marketing opportunities and initiatives featuring existing Clients showcasing their success with Acumatica Cloud ERP.

CAPGEMINI IS SELECTED BY BAYER AS A CORE STRATEGIC PARTNER TO TRANSFORM ITS IT LANDSCAPE

Capgemini is selected by Bayer as a core strategic partner to transform its IT landscape

Capgemini strengthens and expands existing client partnership with new 6-year landmark deal worth over a billion Euros

Capgemini announced a six-year agreement with Bayer AG, the German global enterprise with core competencies in the Life Science fields of health care and agriculture, to transform its IT landscape and to further accelerate the digitalization of the organization. As part of the new agreement, Capgemini will deliver a wide range of transformational services, including Bayer's IT infrastructure Cloud transformation; run Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) and Business Intelligence/Analytics domains management and transformation, as well as the Service Integration of Bayer's entire new supplier eco-system.

Following a competitive tender process, Capgemini was selected as a lead partner, for its ability to enable large and complex transformations at scale, its proven track record in agility and flexibility, organizational change management, and robust and reliable delivery. Specific services within the agreement, that draw upon the end to end capabilities of the Group, include ERP; Business Intelligence and Analytics; Automation; global IT Infrastructure including public Cloud transformation; Unified Communications and end to end Service Integration.

"Major IT companies like Capgemini are able to realize scale effects and have an innovative power that we want to benefit from. We will focus our internal IT competencies on generating value for our businesses in the Life Science industry by providing differentiating solutions in an increasingly digital world," said Daniel Hartert, Chief Information Officer at Bayer.

"Our longterm partnership and deep commitment to Bayer has resulted in us being able to take our collaboration to the next level with this landmark deal, that draws on capabilities from across the Group. We are now looking forward to delivering a cloud-first strategy at Bayer to support the business in achieving its strategic goals and Bayer's 2022 transformation plan," said Olivier Sevillia, CEO of the Europe Strategic Business Unit at Capgemini and Member of the Group Executive Board.

The new agreement is due to commence on January 1, 2020, with several hundred team members from Bayer due to join Capgemini, to build their careers and growth opportunities.

About Capgemini

A global leader in consulting, technology services and digital transformation, Capgemini is at the forefront of innovation to address the entire breadth of clients' opportunities in the evolving world of cloud, digital and platforms. Building on its strong 50-year heritage and deep industry-specific expertise, Capgemini enables organizations to realize their business ambitions through an array of services from strategy to operations. Capgemini is driven by the conviction that the business value of technology comes from and through people. It is a multicultural company of over 200,000 team members in more than 40 countries. The Group reported 2018 global revenues of EUR 13.2 billion.

Visit us at www.capgemini.com. People matter, results count.

TOP PREDICTIONS FOR THE ERP SOFTWARE INDUSTRY IN 2020

ORACLE
NETSUITE

FROM STARTUP TO ENTERPRISE, NETSUITE IS THE #1 CLOUD ERP

Used by more than 18,000 customers, NetSuite encompasses:

- Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP)/Financials
- Professional Services Automation
- Omnichannel Commerce
- CRM

WHAT DO YOU OFFER YOUR CUSTOMERS DURING THEIR DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION JOURNEY IN 2020

Digital transformation is certainly the buzzword that continues to dominate headlines. But, we prefer to think of it this way – customers don't buy digital transformation; they buy a solution to solve a set of business challenges that help them progress and operate more effectively. Our customers are simply looking for the right tools to solve human challenges such as how to hire a great team or how to grow the bottom line, and that is what we will help them achieve in 2020.

In functionality terms, we've announced our move to Oracle Cloud Infrastructure, Oracle's Gen 2 Cloud Infrastructure, where we're already live in the EMEA region in London and Frankfurt. By Spring 2020, we will provision 100% of new NetSuite customers in Europe on OCI, bringing a number of performance benefits. OCI blends the advantages of the public cloud with the control and predictability of on-premise infrastructure to deliver high performance and high availability and also provides a path to the Oracle Autonomous Database, to deliver self-tuning, self-patching, secure database-as-a-service.

We'll also continually invest in our platform to bring richer functionality, make it more flexible, more verticalised and more suitable for each customer. A great example of this is SuiteSuccess, which will deliver greater industry-specific functionality in 2020. We've learned a lot from the 18,000+ implementations of NetSuite, and we want customers to benefit from our wisdom. SuiteSuccess effectively delivers a pre-configured version of NetSuite with leading practices, KPIs and dashboard specific to the size of the organisation or industry built in. In doing so, customers can be onboarded and benefitting from NetSuite even quicker, with best practices specific to their size and industry.

Nicky Tozer

Oracle NetSuite Vice President of EMEA

ORACLE NETSUITE

THREE TRENDS THAT WILL CHANGE THE MANUFACTURING INDUSTRY IN 2020

sage

*Article by **Nick Goode**,*
Executive Vice President of Sage Business Cloud X3 at Sage

The Fourth Industrial Revolution is gathering pace as companies increasingly turn to digitization to improve their processes. This herald a series of social, political, cultural, and economic upheavals that will unfold over the 21st century. As we have witnessed in previous revolutions, this will have a profound impact on societies, businesses, and citizens.

In response to this, the manufacturing industry is taking the initiative to equip itself with the technologies needed to succeed. This includes new skills in artificial intelligence (AI), the internet of things (IoT), machine learning (ML) and automated tools.

The sector has been through a turbulent year with US outputs continuing to lag in November. And in an increasingly digitized world, manufacturers need to find new ways to optimise operations and stay competitive.

Ironically, uncertainties around Brexit and USMCA have spurred the adoption of new technologies to meet the need for change. According to the Sage Manufacturing Report 2019, more than half of US manufacturers are planning to spend more on technology as they prepare for possible changes.

Despite the uncertainties ahead, the outlook remains positive for 2020. Many manufacturers are discovering new reasons to innovate. Driven by macro-economic pressures, competition, supply chain shifts, sustainability efforts and, of course, customer demands.

Here are three key trends that will shape the industry in 2020.

Green warriors accelerate the circular economy

The world today is suffering from far too much waste and pollution. The Extinction Rebellion movement has been making waves around the world. It's mobilizing people to rethink how we live our lives today and how we can change for a better tomorrow. This rising public awareness and understanding of the problems have had a dramatic impact on human behavior.

Consumers are consciously using less plastic, demanding brands to reduce unnecessary packaging, and becoming more "energy smart" in their everyday lives. Young people are renting goods rather than buying them. Gen-Z's are becoming less materialistic. We now recycle clothes, hire bikes and share hybrid electric car rides.

This behavior is altering consumer expectations on the products they receive. We are no longer looking for a fast churn to create more goods. Instead, we want better quality and longevity in the product lifecycle so goods can be reused or recycled.

In 2020, the shift from a linear economy (take, make and dispose) to a circular economy (reuse, repair and recycle) will take precedence in the industry. While not a new concept, the circular economy will hit its potential. The tipping point will be reached.

According to our latest research, almost every company impacted by green manufacturing trends (61%) have adopted a circular economy strategy (97%). Resource conservation, revenue and cost benefits are driving the adoption of circular economy practices. It is also seen as good branding.

Indeed, more companies are actively seeking new ways to create products by using supply chain waste more resourcefully. This will partly be driven by recycling targets set by the US, but consumer pressure is having a huge impact on the supply chain process.

Compliance from 'farm to fork'

A food system includes everything from farm to table. From food production to processing, distribution to consumption, every stage is integrated and has the ability to enhance – or damage – the environmental, economic, social and nutritional health of the ecosystem.

> **ENHANCED COMPLIANCE AND QUALITY CONTROLS, TOGETHER WITH TOUGHER REGULATIONS, WILL PLACE A RENEWED FOCUS ON FOOD STANDARDS IN 2020.**

At the center of all this is food traceability. It covers every stage of the ecosystem from producers to manufacturers, all the way through the supply chain to the retailer or caterer. Food traceability has been a top priority for food manufacturers and retailers for decades, yet consumers continue to be plagued by inconsistency in food quality standards. In some cases, negligence over food intolerances and allergens have resulted in life-threatening situations.

Consumers deserve to know where food comes from and how it is prepared. Demand for greater transparency and quality control has reached new heights. The growing popularity of plant-based food only adds to the complexity. Manufacturers need to take extra steps to ensure their production processes are of the highest quality to meet the latest food standards.

Enhanced compliance and quality controls, together with tougher regulations, will place a renewed focus on food standards in 2020.

Create your own applications playlist

Gartner predicts that by 2023, 40% of professional workers will orchestrate their business applications like they do their music streaming services. In recent years, we have seen a shift in how organizations are changing the way they deliver their IT services

to users that are much more modular and customizable.

Until now, many businesses offer IT services as a "one size fits all" approach. They expect employees to fit their job around what is available, and as a result of this, we have seen a rise in shadow IT where employees bring their own devices and applications to the workplace. It may also be a reason for the weak productivity levels we have been talking about for so long. In addition, this model has also had the unintended consequence of putting increasing risk to the organization's data security. The knock-on effect is a disruption to the business workflow.

Instead of restricting users from choosing their own way of working, businesses need to find new ways to provide effective IT services to employees. At the same time, they also need to enhance security and accessibility.

Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) technologies offer businesses the ability to consolidate their data and business applications and give IT the capability to deliver their services in building block form. As a result, users can create their own individual "playlists" of applications customized to their needs, empowering them to work more productively.

2020 will be a year of transformation for manufacturers, whether due to global economic pressures such as tariff-wars and Brexit, to social-shifts such as sustainability, transparency and data privacy. Manufacturers are awake to the situation and making great strides, and as they embrace the Fourth Industrial Revolution, so too will be the need to harness technology to meet the challenges of tomorrow.

Nick leads Sage X3 globally. He's been in the software industry for over 20 years working globally on cloud, mobile and enterprise b2b products. He's passionate about leadership, digital engagement, innovation and customer success.

About SAGE

Sage is the global market leader for technology that helps small and medium businesses perform at their best. Sage is trusted by millions of customers worldwide to deliver the best cloud technology and support, with our partners, to manage finances, operations, and people. We believe in doing everything we can to help people be the best they can be, so the combined efforts of 13,000 Sage colleagues working with businesses and communities make a real difference to the world.

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Nick Goode,

Executive Vice President of Sage Business Cloud X3 at Sage

sage

*Article by **David Beldyk**,*
President and
Founder of DABCO Consulting LLC, Partner of CCI

The impact of leadership behavior AFTER your ERP implementation

The impact of leadership style and behavior on the success of an ERP implementation has been well chronicled over the last several decades. Do a simple internet search and you will literally find hundreds of papers and articles on the subject. Despite the abundance of opinions and advice on how leaders should behave DURING an ERP implementation, I was surprised to find very little written about how leaders should behavior AFTER an ERP implementation. This is a critically important, but often neglected, aspect of building a world-class ERP system. Life in an ERP system doesn't just enable disciplined behavior – it demands it! Most leaders understand this, so it's notusually the blatant intentional leadership behavior that causes issues, but rather the more subtle, unintentional behavior. Operations leaders need to be alert to this fact, and conscious of how their words and actions can impact the organization. In this article, I address 4 common, well-intentioned leadership behaviors that can unwittingly undermine operations in an ERP environment.

Encouraging out-of-system reporting solutions

The innocent behavior: Making an urgent plea without stipulations, such as: "I need my report, and I don't care how you get it."

The intent: To create a sense of urgency in the organization to resolve a critical reporting deficiency. The unintended consequence: A request like this gives the organization a free pass to use whatever means necessary – including going outside of what should be the official system of record – to satisfy leadership. Since all employees want to please leadership, even the ERP believers may choose speed over an in-system solution, and the cynics will actually use this situation as proof that "the new system is not as capable as the old system". Talk like that can be poison to a digital transformation initiative. A better approach: When making a plea like this, add the stipulation that you are seeking a sustainable, in-system solution. For example: "I need my report. How can I get it from our ERP system?" This approach still conveys urgency, and encourages creativity, but closes the door to out-of-system solutions. Caveat 1: There are times when speed is so important that you really "don't care how you get it". In a situation such as this, leadership should be careful to explain the short-term need, while simultaneously requesting a long-term, sustainable solution. For example, "I need my report, and I don't care how you get it today, but we need to find a way to get this out of our ERP system going forward". Caveat 2: Although ERP systems are incredibly powerful and rich sources of data and information, not all data which is important to leadership will be available from your ERP

system. So, be careful not to try force-fit a square peg into a round hole.

Rewarding siloed behavior detrimental to the business as a whole

The innocent behavior: Public recognition of individual (person, site or function) accomplishments without understanding the total integrated business impact. For example: "Congratulations to the Greenville plant for achieving record production this month".

The intent: To boost morale via public rewards and recognition.

The unintended consequence: Public rewards and recognitions send a clear message to the entire organization as to what leadership considers important. As such, it is very important for leadership to reward the right kind of behavior. An ERP system runs much more smoothly and efficiently if the production output is predictable and consistent. Therefore, rewarding the wildly erratic behavior of one site can be extremely demotivating to the other sites that consistently meet their plan.

A better approach: While I am a big believer in frequent and public recognition, it is important for leadership to first seek to understand HOW the achievement (in this case "record production") was accomplished. Was it at the expense of deferred maintenance that might come around to bite you later? Did it result in an unwanted inventory build of a product that is easy to make, but hard to sell? Or was it the coordinated effort of multiple cross-functional teams working together to accomplish a stated business objective? Or perhaps a technological breakthrough that stands to reset the production rate standard going forward?

In passing out rewards and recognition, leadership should seek to:

- **Reward integrated teams working together to achieve important business goals. For example: "Congratulations to the Greenville plant and the Southeast Sales team for record performance this month which enabled us to hit our 3rd quarter goals."**
- **Reward breakthroughs, especially those critical for long term business success. For example: "Congratulations on a safe and successful start-up of Line 12" or "Thank you to the 'Packaging Kaizen Team' for solving a defect issue which has plagued us for months".**

Caveat 1: When a business is in a growth phase, both Manufacturing and Sales may need to expand simultaneously. Ideally, manufacturing output would grow at exactly the right pace to keep up with expanding sales, but in reality, it rarely happens that way. Therefore, leadership might find itself in a situation today where they need to pull the reigns on either Manufacturing or Sales while encouraging the other. Two months from now that situation might be the complete opposite, and this chicken-and-egg game might go on for months. Throughout this growth period, leadership should always keep the big picture in mind and reference the overall business objectives as they reward and recognize the collective team accomplishments.

Caveat 2: Sometimes one area of the business, such as a plant or functional team, might be in such dire need of "feeling the love" that leadership feels compelled to reward even the slightest hint of positive behavior coming from that area. As a leader, you need to sense and respond to this emotional need no matter what the logical guidelines suggest.

Accepting system outputs that appear out of step with the physical world

The innocent behavior: Accepting an explanation like "that's just an artifact of the system" when a system output appears to be out of step with reality. For example: "Product XYZ is actually more profitable than the system shows because it's usually the first product we run after a clean-up, so it gets an undue share of the product transition cost".

The intent: To explain why some of the system data cannot be accepted at face value.

The unintended consequence: As a leader, willingly accepting so-called 'system artifacts' effectively gives the organization tacit approval to ignore what the system data is saying. One of the greatest values of an ERP system is improving the speed and quality of business decision-making, and if the organization is constantly questioning the validity of the system data, this will severely undermine that capability.

A better approach: It is important to understand that, in setting up an ERP system, there are often many combinations of configuration settings and data structures that can be employed, each of which has its own set of pros and cons. The goal of the project team is to select the combination which provides the best balance of ease of use and functionality across all the various business scenarios. Unfortunately, sometimes what looked like a good choice during the design, build and test phases, ends up falling short in real life. As a leader, it is important to recognize when a change is warranted and then pursue making that change in a manner that doesn't cast a dark cloud over the entire ERP implementation.

In trying to assess if a change is warranted, the number one question a leader should ask is: Does the 'system artifact' prevent the business from successfully gaining a key business insight (in this example "profitability analysis") that is important to the business? If it does, the next logical question is: What will it take to fix it? Answering this question can sometimes be a very complicated process, and leaders should be careful to take a very wide view and consider the following.

1. **Are the master data elements, business processes, and technical components all working as designed? If not, fix those first, then reassess if additional changes are necessary.**

2. **What are the various options available, and what are the pros and cons of each? Be sure to ask what current capability may be lost if a given option is implemented.**

3. **If no option presented seems viable, and you feel caught between a rock and a hard place, consider pulling in a subject matter expert to help. To make sure you get a truly fresh perspective, it may behoove you to seek an independent, third-party (i.e. someone not affiliated with the initial implementation), with a reputable track record.**

4. **How easily could each option be implemented? Some changes are simple and can be implemented incrementally (e.g. one material at a time), while other options require more of a big-bang, wholesale, global change.**

5. **Test, test, test! Your testing plan should be commensurate with the degree of difficulty and exposure to risk. For example, a change that could be implemented one material at a time may require very little testing, as the risk can be easily managed and mitigated. Conversely, a global 'flip-the-switch' kind of change must be tested extremely thoroughly.**

> **"TO DEVELOP AN ORGANIZATION, IT IS NOT ENOUGH FOR LEADERS TO ENCOURAGE PROPER USE OF THE ERP SYSTEM: LEADERS MUST ALSO SEEK TO REMOVE BARRIERS THAT INHIBIT ITS PROPER USE.**

Caveat 1: Don't forget that "do nothing" is still sometimes the right choice. Once you have seen and heard all the possible options and risks, it is time to put your business hat on and decide if the business risk is worth the gain. Sometimes it is best to keep the system the way it is for now and consider making a substantial change during your next ERP upgrade project. In that situation, it probably makes sense to focus today's efforts on developing a robust workaround.

Showing blind loyalty to customers

The innocent behavior: Succumbing to repetitive unreasonable requests of major customers. For example: "We need to break into our production schedule because our top customer, I. M. Needy, is running short again".

The intent: Delighting the customer – what could be a more honorable goal than that?

The unintended consequence: If you are a leader who has been preaching to your organization about the virtues of schedule adherence, and what a key step that is on your journey to becoming a world-class supplier, good for you! That is music to my ears! You and your organization already know just how disruptive an unplanned break into the production schedule can be in an ERP system. Yet, seasoned manufacturing veterans also know that customers sometimes get in a bind and seek special treatment. If that request is infrequent and legitimately unavoidable – for example, as the result of an act of God, or a widespread labor disruption – we all understand and want to do our best to help. And rightfully so - extraordinary times call for extraordinary measures! But when the 'extraordinary' become 'ordinary', and leadership shows blind loyalty to the same customer, again and again, your organization will begin to question your own resolve to become a world-class supplier. The natives will get restless and you may start to hear rumblings such as "our leader really needs to talk to customer I. M. Needy!". And you know what? They are right! A better approach: This situation can challenge even the most seasoned leader. Convincing a customer that they need to change their ways takes tact, patience, and openness. Whether your company has recently gone live on ERP, or you've been live for decades, chances are that when your company first took the ERP plunge, it was for the purpose of improving your overall business performance. Perhaps, at the time, the shoe was on the other foot, and your own company was just like customer I. M. Needy – living a chaotic, scrambling kind of life, wondering how you were going to satisfy your customers when you couldn't even stick to a production schedule yourself. Well, chances are

that customer I. M. Needy is suffering too, and they may not see a clear path to success. As a leader who has already walked partway down that path (and it's always 'part way' because the journey never ends), you may be able to help paint a picture for the customer of what that path looks like. To do that, you will have to engage your leadership counterpart within the customer's organization, but you obviously don't want to take an aggressive, confrontational approach. Instead, I suggest you take a heartfelt, from-one-leader-to-another kind of approach which starts with you openly sharing your own journey. That approach goes something like this:

1. **Arrange a meeting with your customer. If they conduct routine supplier reviews, and you are invited to one soon, terrific! Take advantage of that. If not, request an opportunity to speak with your customer for the purpose of sharing your own plan to become a world-class supplier.**

2. **Use data to paint your story. Sticking to the cold hard facts helps take the emotion out of what could otherwise become a rather uncomfortable conversation.**

3. **Focus on the things of interest to the customer. Typically, this would include performance trends for things such as On-time In-full, Lead Time, Quality, etc.**

   a. **For things trending in the right direction, share how you were able to achieve that.**

   b. **For things trending in the wrong direction, share what challenges you face, and what plans you have in place to turn things around.**

4. **Help the customer see exactly how they compare to their competition regarding their disruptive behavior. Complaining openly about how their disruptive behavior negatively impacts your organization is not generally the most effective approach. While it may feel good for a minute, it immediately puts the customer on the defensive, and they may even consider that to be your problem, not theirs. If, however, you can help the customer see and draw their own conclusion that they are not competitive, this is a much more powerful message. And that is exactly the message you want the customer to receive.**

5. **Offer to keep an open dialogue going. An offer to 'help' might be accepted or rejected, but an offer to keep an open and active exchange of data and feedback going will almost always get accepted. Hopefully, this will lead to the sort of changes that will benefit both you and the customer.**

Caveat 1: As the old adage goes "You can lead a horse to water, but you can't make him drink". No matter how clearly you think you have painted the picture, the customer may still not pick up on exactly how disruptive their behavior is to both you and the customer. In that situation, you may have to be more direct in your discussions, and you may even have to go over the head of your leadership counterpart. If you decide to play that latter card, recognize that things could escalate quickly from there, so be sure you have a well thought out strategy with the full support of your own leadership. The key thing to keep in mind is that no matter how big and important the customer is today, if they show an inability or unwillingness to improve their disruptive behavior, they are vulnerable to competitive attack, and you can't let their demise become your demise.

In summary, post-go-live leadership behavior – both conscious and unconscious – plays a critical role in how quickly and thoroughly the organization assimilates ERP disciplines and philosophies into everyday life. To develop an organization, it is not enough for leaders to encourage proper use of the ERP system: leaders must also seek to remove barriers that inhibit its proper use. With conscious effort and self-reflection, leaders can go well beyond learning how to 'talk the ERP talk'. They will learn how to 'walk the ERP walk', and that is where true world-class capability is born!

Dave Beldyk is the President and Founder of DABCO Consulting, LLC. He has 30 years of Chemical Industry experience with DuPont, 15 of which were spent in an ERP environment. Dave has played an active role in several large-scale projects, the most rewarding of which was leading a highly successful, US$80 million global ERP implementation. Throughout his time in the ERP space, he has gained a deep appreciation and understanding of the critical role business processes play in the overall success of any ERP operation. In 2016, Dave and his company partnered with Competitive Capabilities International (CCi) to develop a product to help manufacturers prepare for, and get the most out of, their ERP implementations. Blending his real-life ERP experience with CCI's integrative improvement methodology and tools, the two partners created ERP Optimisation TRACC — a truly unique and innovative product aimed at instilling the kinds of behaviours and mindsets to help manufacturers excel in their ERP environment.

About Competitive Capabilities International (CCi)

Established in 1987, CCi is a privately held, global company that enables organizations to deliver sustainable results across the supply chain through a continuous improvement solution called TRACC. With its core experience residing in manufacturing and supply chain best practices, CCi's goal is to "unlock greatness" in organizational capability through proven experience in World Class Manufacturing (WCM), Total Productive Maintenance (TPM), Six Sigma, Lean and Supply Chain Optimization.

Learn more:

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*Article by **Robin Irvine**,*
General Manager

What to Expect from the ERP Industry in 2020? Three Bold Predictions

As the new decade rolls in, there is no denying the escalating buzz around cloud and digital transformation. The most recent McKinsey Global Survey on digital transformation notes that more than eight in ten respondents say their organizations have undertaken such efforts in the past five years. The real question on everyone's mind now is how will this technology improve organisation performance and impact the manufacturing industry in the upcoming year? Avaap's Global Manufacturing General Manager Robin Irvine shares three bold predictions for ERP software in 2020:

Current State: Organisations are currently facing compounding fiscal and budgetary pressures. This is driving C-suite leaders to prove sustainable cost reduction through cloud adoption.

Prediction 1.

Systems integrators and ERP vendors will be more transparent in their calculations to include other measurable cost benefits, such as reduced hardware and software administration. Increasing understanding of the business case for the cloud will be critical in helping executive leaders and boards understand the difference between deployment options. On-premise implementations require an up-front investment that is considerably more substantial and includes license fees and implementation, customization and upgrade costs, as well as on-staff expertise. Cloud, on the other hand, enables cost reduction in infrastructure, alleviating the need for maintaining hardware, upgrades, and backups. The partner community will need to be able to attach a true figure on the value of high availability, auto-recovery, and enhanced security of the cloud to help organisations communicate with business leaders and board members. Manufacturers will want to see upfront what they are investing in and how they can be expected to achieve quick ROI on technology investments.

Current State: Over the last 10 years, manufacturing CIOs have adopted a strategy of completely relying on the system integrator or vendor to supply all ERP skills and to completely own the IT transformation program. As we move into the next wave of digital transformation, CIOs are being held accountable to demonstrate a full ROI to their board. This is leading businesses to take a more active role in their IT projects and look to have more ownership to mitigate risk.

Prediction 2.

Manufacturers will revert to slightly more traditional models and start to adopt full-time in-house ERP solution architects, system analysts, and other skills as well as taking on the role of business ambassadors on expensive and high impact ERP projects. We'll see smart system integrators using this to their advantage by demonstrating their ability to work with a hybrid approach, with the customer being more involved. This is positive and will reduce risk, bringing a blend of internal knowledge and industry-specific skills together for a more comprehensive solution.

Current State: Traditional ERP users have watched the top four software vendors try to stabilize their cloud ERP strategies, but they haven't created clear pathways for organisations coming off legacy systems. For organisations that have been around for more than 10+ years, it is very likely that most, if not all, of their applications and services, were not started and are not currently running in a cloud environment. These long-standing historic brand companies who have built their businesses over decades, sometimes in excess of 100 years, may have been working on 20+-year-old systems, or a combination of siloed systems. With changing consumer demands and competitive pressures, organizations require agility, flexibility, and in some cases, a hybrid approach or solution to cloud migration.

Prediction 3.

Organisations that need a lot of prep work and a strong migration strategy will navigate towards a system integrator or ERP vendor who will work closely with them to understand their current state, current roadmap challenges, and can demonstrate an agile and hybrid capability of digital transformation. A successful system integrator in 2020 will be one who can demonstrate all these capabilities and ensure cloud readiness is incorporated as part of the plan for the future.

> **A SUCCESSFUL SYSTEM INTEGRATOR IN 2020 WILL BE ONE WHO CAN DEMONSTRATE ALL THESE CAPABILITIES AND ENSURE CLOUD READINESS IS INCORPORATED AS PART OF THE PLAN FOR THE FUTURE.**

While it's hard to predict accuracy when looking at the future, there's no denying that cloud and digital transformation will be big. As we pay homage to the annual ritual, it will be exciting to see how the industry evolves as companies begin their digital transformation journeys.

Robin Irvine is the general manager, global manufacturing at Avaap, where he is responsible for the sales strategy and delivery execution. A 25-year industry veteran and chairman of the M3 User Association for UK, Ireland, and Benelux, Robin brings deep IT and Infor M3 experience, with emphasis on the food and beverage and consumer goods manufacturing industry. He also brings experience in the used oil recycling, bio digestion, and pet food industries.

About Avaap

Avaap is an industry-focused advisory services and IT management consulting firm. Headquartered in Edison, N.J. with global offices and customers around the world, Avaap has deep expertise in healthcare, retail, fashion, manufacturing and distribution, and other industries. Avaap has earned numerous industry accolades, including being named on Computerworld's list of 100 Best Places to Work in IT since 2014; recipient of Infor's Alliance Partner of the Year award since 2014 as well as winner of several other Infor partner awards; five-year honoree on the Inc. 500, KLAS Category Leader in Revenue Cycle, recipient of NJBIZ 50 Fastest Growing Companies since 2015, and multi-year recipient of Becker's Healthcare and Modern Healthcare's Top Places to Work awards. Avaap's culture is powered by passionate people who are relentless in driving customer satisfaction. To learn more, visit www.avaap.com.

7 SUPPLY CHAIN PREDICTIONS: LOOKING AHEAD WITH 2020 VISION

Article by ***Bryan NELLA,***

The year 2020 approaches with promise amidst a backdrop of innovation and transformation occurring at a speed never witnessed before. We're experiencing a digital revolution that is changing the way we live, work and interact with one another. The power of information is just beginning to blossom as more of our decisions are based on data and use cases for artificial intelligence are delivering significant value. Meanwhile, global movements to protect the planet and operate responsibly continue to grow in importance. And an undercurrent of de-globalization continues to change the way countries and companies interact with each other.

Here's a look at some of the emerging trends and themes you can expect to take shape in 2020.

Sustainability Required

Sustainability is becoming a requirement in many industries. For not only retailers and consumer goods companies, but businesses of all stripes, sustainability is increasingly expected by customers, shareholders and the masses. It is even becoming increasingly important in talent recruitment. Environmental responsibility will be a core issue in the 2020 U.S. presidential race and elections around the globe.

One major initiative, the IMO 2020 low-sulfur mandate, kicks in on January 1st. IMO has the potential to hit the shipping industry with eye-opening impact. Demand for costly scrubbers and low-sulfur fuel will eat into margins and catch many carriers and shippers off-guard. Slow steaming will add days to already lengthy trips, forcing entire ecosystems to re-structure how they plan and execute on the production and delivery of goods while meeting requirements.

Eliminating Empty Miles

With a growing focus on sustainability and efficiency, empty containers will be an increasingly hot button across the shipping industry. In freight, waste means that more fuel is consumed, more carbon is emitted, and drivers spend more hours sitting idle. Empty miles, non-revenue miles or deadhead miles are a drag on the industry and economy, as businesses pay more to move goods. Carriers account for their own expectations for empty miles when deciding how much they charge for any particular load, so everyone from shippers down to end consumers – and, of course, the environment – ultimately pay the cost of empty miles.

Politics and Commerce Become Increasingly Intertwined

In 2019 shifting trade policies were perceived as a distraction. In 2020, they'll be addressed as simply part of the new reality we live in. Expect geopolitical volatility and relations between countries to become increasingly abrasive. Tariffs and trade regulations will become mainstays in business strategy discussions and everyone from chief supply chain officer to logistics manager will be keeping tabs on trade developments as a matter of doing business. Uncertainty will remain the norm for the foreseeable future with nationalism and trade conflict acting as the source of much of the friction. Whereas news coverage of politics and business were once separate areas, in 2020 the two will be inseparable in many ways.

Human Intelligence Molds Artificial Intelligence

Greater linking between the human mind and artificial

intelligence is emerging. Researchers have advanced studies of the human mind, including infants, to better understand how learning develops at an early age. The goal is to enhance artificial intelligence and machine learning models to be less linear and ridged, and more curious and perceptive. Current machine learning engines require feeding thousands of labeled images to teach machines to recognize what simple objects or animals such as a cat looks like. Yet errors are still prone when images of blurred shapes resembling that object are presented. An infant, on the other hand, learns through a handful of experiences what a cat looks like, and these might be actual photos or drawings in books. Infants also learn through experimentation and curiosity. In order to imitate this experience, some ML programs are being developed to be rewarded for curiosity versus accuracy. This research, linking human brains to AI, will increase and begin to show specific results in further enhancing human attributes in machines.

As supply chains progress towards autonomous processes, machine learning and AI platforms will continue to learn by observing humans and data signals that span across parties, regions and supply chains, to understand the complexities and nuances of global trade. Some workflows will move to lights-out status, while many other complex scenarios involving multi-party collaboration and network-wide orchestration will require greater learning from their human counter-parts.

Supply Chains Retreat Inward

In 2019, we saw supply chains shift out of regions such as China due to tariffs and trade conflict. In 2020 an emphasis will shift towards self-sustaining economies with supply chains relying on domestic resources and trading partners where possible. This will occur primarily in the US, China and other developed economies. Production will increasingly lean towards "produce locally, deliver locally." On the consumer side, there's a growing trend towards domestic brands. In China, consumers are increasingly turning to Chinese brands for clothing, high-tech gadgets and phones, and cars – and increasingly shunning Western names. In the US, companies are preparing for long term tensions with China by diversifying their supply networks beyond China and building up new networks elsewhere, in many cases closer to home.

The Digital Berlin Wall

Kristalina Georgieva, new director of the IMF, called out in her inaugural speech that, "Even if growth picks up in 2020, the current rifts could lead to changes that last a generation – broken supply chains, siloed trade sectors, a 'digital Berlin wall' that forces countries to choose between technology systems." The Digital Berlin Wall metaphor emphasizes emerging barriers and the impact technology is having on trade. As supply chains retreat inward and technology enhancements are further ingrained in trade, some of the moves being made today could have long term ramifications on supply chains, with parties or regions becoming walled off. Global agility and flexibility, points of focus for years as globalization expanded, takes a turn here. Resilience and flexibility remain important, but suddenly the ability to rapidly on-board and support suppliers outside of traditional sourcing hubs becomes essential as new digital barriers arise. Raw materials and essential input may suddenly become unavailable or costly. The need to act swiftly in the face of such risks will be essential to competing.

Upheaval of Industry Norms

In October, luxury brand Louis Vuitton announced plans to open a 100,000 square foot factory in Texas, the latest example of a shift away from industry best practices of consolidated production of high-end goods. Production of its high-end handbags are increasingly spread out, with 8 of its 24 manufacturing sites now residing outside of France.

In November, Maersk announced a pullback on ocean vessel investments, stating an intention to focus on land services as part of a broader initiative to drive growth. "We need to grow in acquisitions on land warehouses and customs house clearing services," Chief Executive Søren Skou said. "We have invested around $1 billion already on the land side supply chain and we are looking to put in hundreds of millions more over the next year."

In 2020, expect more upheaval of standard practices as businesses seek new ways to innovate and serve customers within the confines of a tense trade environment.

Next Steps

Moving into 2020, it's more important than ever for businesses to be thoroughly connected to their overseas partners. Collaboration, visibility and free-flowing data between parties are essential ingredients for thriving in a future that is increasingly uncertain and pressure-packed. Those companies that orchestrate their supply chain as a single cohesive network will have the agility and executional speed to proactively sense and respond to meet their customers' needs. This will be a significant competitive advantage in 2020 and beyond, separating industry leaders from the laggards.

tracelink
NETWORK FOR GREATER GOOD

*Interview with **John Hogan**, SVP, Engineering at TraceLink*

In this interview, we talked to John Hogan, who leads the global development team at Tracelink, about the present and future of the Supply Chain Management in the pharmaceutical industry. Here, John explained why TraceLink which has the world's largest Pharmaceutical supply chain network, is called a game-changer in the industry. Also, John shared his predictions about the industry and explained the factors that enabled Tracelink to become a leader in the sector.

What motivated you to start a career in this sector? Was technology always your career path?

I've been working with technology for my entire career, wearing several hats in a variety of large and small companies. What intrigued me about TraceLink, apart from the great team, was the opportunity to make a broad impact in a sector that was directly connected to peoples' welfare. TraceLink has a worldwide reach, and there are so many opportunities to use technology to improve the safety and efficiency of this vital supply chain. It's very exciting to be in a position to help our customers reimagine their businesses in ways that ultimately drive better patient outcomes.

Could you tell us about TraceLink and its unique services in detail? Where do you see your company in the global competition?

TraceLink has created the world's largest network of pharmaceutical supply chain partners, consisting of over 275,000 members and nearly 80% of the pharma supply chain ecosystem using its technology. Members establish connections with each other on the network, and the TraceLink Digital Network Platform enables seamless information exchange up to and down the supply chain, from manufacturer to patient. This is a game-changer for the industry, with a digital network platform not only driving efficiencies in logistics and compliance but opening up new opportunities that have never been feasible.

TraceLink helps companies in more than 46 countries meet compliance requirements that help to ensure a safe and secure supply chain. Now, all of the data resulting from these global regulatory requirements has created an ideal opportunity to extract and create value from this data to help companies solve existing challenges and to digitally transform business processes, including better supply chain visibility and orchestration.

The advantage of having a single platform that accumulates data from across the industry is that it enables an intelligent supply chain that can improve processes to have better patient outcomes, something we are extremely committed to.

Can you tell us about this cloud-based network designed especially for the pharmaceutical industry? What kind of data will it include?

More than a decade ago, TraceLink took bold steps toward creating a new paradigm. Starting with the security of the supply chain, the company created a network that allowed the industry to serialize billions of drug products. To date, the company has serialized over 6 billion products and helped industry players comply with emerging and changing regulatory standards aimed at creating a safer global pharmaceutical supply chain.

That was just the start of TraceLink's mission — a revolution has now catalyzed on this network. Today, hundreds of thousands of life science companies, 3PLs, wholesalers, hospitals, and pharmacists are beginning to collaborate in a way where they leverage each other's insights to dramatically improve patient outcomes. Information can be exchanged with never-before-seen fluidity and companies can work together in new and novel ways to ensure every patient gets the medications they need, at the time they need them, under the right conditions.

TraceLink's network of partners has grown exponentially in the past few years in the wake of recent regulations, with the EU Falsified Medicines Directive (FMD) and U.S. Food and Drug Administration's Drug Supply Chain Security Act (DSCSA). The DSCSA legislation, which is currently being rolled out in phases and taking full effect in 2023, ultimately requires that pharmaceutical companies serialize all of their products at the unit level to enable tracking through the supply chain in the interest of preventing counterfeit or otherwise harmful drugs from entering the market.

> **"TRACELINK HAS CREATED THE WORLD'S LARGEST NETWORK OF PHARMACEUTICAL SUPPLY CHAIN PARTNERS, CONSISTING OF OVER 275,000 MEMBERS AND NEARLY 80% OF THE PHARMA SUPPLY CHAIN ECOSYSTEM USING ITS TECHNOLOGY.**

As regulatory requirements expand and generate even more precise data across the supply chain, the question pharmaceutical companies are asking themselves is how can this data be used to improve patient outcomes?

The TraceLink Digital Network Platform is an application development and deployment platform that connects multiple levels of the supply chain to enable new digital supply chain processes and foster real-time collaboration. Leveraging the power of TraceLink's Digital Supply Network, the Digital Network Platform will help break down barriers as well as extend the reach of patient-centric supply chains and orchestration processes beyond the previous one or two upstream and downstream segments of product supply.

What happens when a company joins TraceLink Network?

When a company joins the TraceLink Network, all of its trading partners can be integrated and immediately become interoperable. TraceLink works with its partners to integrate into all of their partner data to create a complete picture of their end-to-end supply chain.

Companies who join the network will be able to gain visibility for the first time into real market demands for products so they can efficiently and adeptly

adjust their supply chain accordingly. They will also be able to adapt more quickly and efficiently to market pressures, in increasing important capability in the face of challenges such as fluctuating tariffs, natural disasters, drug shortages, etc.

With this visibility, the pharmaceutical sector will not only allow for great vigilance to weeding out counterfeit or tainted drugs that may be entering the supply chain. It will also give companies a much deeper understanding of their supply and demand in real-time. Pharmaceutical companies will be able to see when and where their products are in high demand and communicate quickly to avoid shortages. Overall, complete visibility will allow for communication and agility, ultimately enabling companies to overcome challenges before they become catastrophes.

How does the TraceLink Network increase supply chain visibility in the pharmaceutical manufacturing industry?

Integrating into the TraceLink Network will enable a real-time, end-to-end view of a company's supply chain operations, thereby creating a level of visibility that previously could not exist with lines of sight limited to the stages immediately before and after your company on the supply chain journey.

What technologies do you see playing a role in the development of applications for the TraceLink Network going forward?

As the TraceLink Platform continues to develop, next-generation technologies combined with advanced analytics models will play an important role in expanding its value and capabilities for the life sciences industry.

Artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning are still in their infancy in the pharmaceutical supply chain but will increasingly make it possible to combine data from multiple sources, including IoT devices and Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) systems into one single source and analyze it. This will allow companies to solve critical business challenges that exist today. For example, more advanced analytics will directly enable supply chains to better structure their supply chain and understand how to adapt operations, by generating intelligence from the data that will allow for more accurate forecasting of product demand.

My mission at TraceLink is to help foster an environment where engineers can collaborate in building great products, thrive in their careers, and continually evolve practices that drive quality and agility. We're in the strongest position in the industry to deliver technology that enables transformation, and that's an exciting place to be."

Senior Vice President of Engineering John Hogan leads product design, development, and testing of TraceLink products and solutions, ensuring the seamless processing and tracking of high-volume, highly distributed events, and facilitating shared customer value up and down the supply chain.

He joined TraceLink in January, 2018 from Boston-based cybersecurity startup Barkly, where he served as VP of Engineering and was responsible for product development and DevOps building out the company's unique approach to endpoint protection. At TraceLink, he is instrumental in helping grow and manage a rapidly expanding team that is building products that benefit customers worldwide.

Hogan began his career 25 years ago in Information Systems at Oracle. Throughout his career, he has held executive positions in software engineering at startups, early-stage, and late-stage companies, building product, customer success and support teams at Informix, Plumtree Software, Unica Corporation, and IBM. Prior to Barkly, he served as VP of Engineering and Director, EMM Products and Operations, respectively, at Storiant and IBM, where he was responsible for product strategy, development and hosting operations for both SaaS and traditional product lines.

Hogan holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Biology and Psychology from Stanford University.

"COMPANIES WHO JOIN THE NETWORK WILL BE ABLE TO GAIN VISIBILITY FOR THE FIRST TIME INTO REAL MARKET DEMANDS FOR PRODUCTS SO THEY CAN EFFICIENTLY AND ADEPTLY ADJUST THEIR SUPPLY CHAIN ACCORDINGLY.

About TraceLink

TraceLink is the world's largest integrated digital supply network, providing real-time information sharing for better patient outcomes. Leading businesses trust the TraceLink Life Sciences Cloud to deliver complete global connectivity, visibility, and traceability of pharmaceuticals from ingredient to patient. A single point and click a connection to the Life Sciences Cloud creates a supply chain control tower that delivers the information, insight, and collaboration needed to improve performance and reduce risk across global supply, manufacturing and distribution operations. The TraceLink digital supply network is used by businesses across the globe to meet strategic goals in ensuring global compliance, fighting drug counterfeiting, improving on-time and in-full delivery, protecting the product quality and reducing operational cost. For more information on TraceLink and our solutions, visit www.tracelink.com.

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*Article by **Lucy Thorpe**,*
head of content for the UK based company In Cloud Solutions

Analytics comes of age

2020 will be the year we make a decisive move towards analytics. We'll stop asking ourselves - do I need analytics and ask instead how do I get them? And make no mistake it will be the cloud offerings that win.

Over the past decade, we've become accustomed to using reports as a way of taking business decisions but progress is now accelerating beyond anything we've seen before. The days of passive reporting into what has already happened are now evolving into a world of live updates and beyond. Predictive analytics can tell us what will happen in the future using dynamic visual stories based on our own data.

So let's take a look at some of the Key Trends.

Self Service

Self-service analytics means you can get your hands on story-based visualisations of your data without needing to be a data specialist. Business leaders can interrogate their data themselves, bringing up a host of reports in highly usable and customisable formats. As a result many businesses no longer need IT teams to get hold of their data.

Cloud

The business has long reaped the benefits of the cloud in terms of access and cost but it also enables you to be more data-driven than ever before. An on-premise solution inevitably means slow access by which time data is often out-of-date.

Predictive analytics

Predictive and prescriptive analytics is changing everything and giving early adopters a serious advantage.

Business leaders with predictive analytics onboard are able to make better decisions by interacting with visualizations, drilling down for more detailed information, and answering business questions on the fly.

The power of cutting-edge machine learning is being combined with big data sets to create insights around past, present and future scenarios.

Products like SAP Analytics Cloud for example, alongside many other offerings from the major technology players, are now widely available to give advanced analytics capabilities to users of ERP.

Embedded analytics continue to have their place

A quick word here about embedded analytics dashboards and KPIs which come as part of an off the shelf ERP

product. These still very much have their place. The key benefit is that users get good cost-effective insights from focused data which allows them to make the right kind of decisions, without being overwhelmed.

Case Study: SAP Analytics Cloud

SAP Analytics Cloud's machine learning technology augments the analytics process, helping you go from insight to action in a fraction of the time.

Automated technology enables you to avoid agenda-driven and biased decision making by revealing the story of what drives your business.

Built natively on SAP HANA Cloud Platform, SAP Analytics Cloud allows business decision-makers to visualize, plan and make predictions all from one secure, cloud-based environment.

Manchester City football club, the 5th most valuable football club in the world, uses SAP Analytics Cloud to enhance the fans' experience. By accessing and analysing up to 10 years' worth of data about the team and its players they can evaluate trends over time, make direct player to player comparisons and create content which they can share with millions of fans via their website and social channels. The data is very much part of fans' experience including the City Pulse Wall – an interactive display that allows fans to explore statistics about the team and individual players as part of the matchday experience. It all stems from Manchester City's well-known commitment and reputation for being an innovative and forward-thinking club.

Prediction for the future?

Watch out for prescriptive analytics – sometimes described as the final frontier of analytics – this will tell you WHY something happened and contains within it the greatest potential for adding value.

Meanwhile, don't imagine that advanced analytics are just toys for the big boys – smaller businesses can benefit too – in fact, there is no business that would not be enhanced by business analytics! There are many offerings in the market to choose from. Look out for something which is visually stunning with great storytelling capabilities and above all intuitive and user-friendly. Happy Shopping!

About Competitive Capabilities International (CCi)

InCloud Solutions are a SAP Platinum Partner offering ERP software solutions, training and consultancy to SMEs and SMBs all around the United Kingdom. In Cloud Solutions Ltd is a proud member of the United VARS. In Cloud Solutions are experts in the ERP solution SAP's Business ByDesign, one of the best cloud-based ERP solutions in the world. The company already has over 35 ByDesign Customers in the UK and Europe, with operations across the US, Australia, Africa, Japan and China.

Lucy Thorpe is head of content for the UK based company In Cloud Solutions – the home of expertise in SAP cloud product Business ByDesign.

"WHAT DO YOU OFFER YOUR CUSTOMERS DURING THEIR DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION JOURNEY IN 2020"

Obviously we offer our customers access to great value cutting edge cloud technology but more importantly, we provide them with a trusted partner to walk along the road with them.

Lucy Thorpe,
In Cloud Solutions

INCLOUD SOLUTIONS

"PREDICTIONS FOR 2020 IN THE DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION"

The distinction between manufacturing ERP and operational activity will continue to blur. Manufacturers' current expectations are that the collaboration between planning and execution is no longer enabled by cumbersome interfaces or even worse, interim steps enabled by spreadsheets. The modern adaptive ERP must have the integral capability to both plan and order and monitor its progress as it happens.

QAD Production Execution is an operator-centric shop floor interface that provides a contextual view that focuses on shop floor personnel on a prioritized set of production orders. QAD also includes the integral capability in terms of connectivity to factory floor equipment. The marriage of the operator transaction data, equipment process data and production order status delivers the basis for real-time decision making, aggregates complete traceability data sets and the foundation for rich analytics.

Glenn Graney,
is QAD's Marketing Manager for the Industrial and High Tech markets. He enjoys comedy and all things funny until he is the subject of the joke. He and his wife live in Wilmington, North Carolina where their grown children intermittently visit and their pets rarely stray.

QAD

In this interview, Colin Earl, the CEO of Agiloft, spoke exclusively about Contract Management which is one of the fastest developing areas in the software industry. As the global leader of contract and commerce lifecycle management (CCLM) software that provides enormous advantages to companies, he mentioned that Agiloft is the only vendor with the confidence to provide an unconditional satisfaction guarantee. He also evaluated not only the present but also the future of the sector.

*Interview with **Colin Earl**,*
the founder and CEO of Agiloft

Could you tell us about your company and its unique services in detail?

Agiloft empowers businesses to easily manage the complete contract lifecycle while also extending to adjacent commercial processes, putting contracts at the core of all commercial activity. Agiloft is designed to map any business process, from the simplest to most complex, without programming. Our out-of-the-box contract and commerce lifecycle management (CCLM) software allows companies to customize the solution with tailored templates, workflows, custom fields, and rules, as well as fully integrate a contract lifecycle management (CLM) strategy with other business processes like customer support, CRM, ERP, ITSM, and more.

Would you evaluate your sector in general terms?

Contract management is one of the fastest-growing spaces in the software industry. Gartner estimates that currently, only 15% of organizations have an enterprise CLM system but, by 2023, 90% of organizations will have implemented CLM. That is due to a general trend towards digitization, but mostly because the technology has matured to a point that there is a strong ROI case for CCLM.

Contract management software no longer means just a stand-alone data repository, and it is evolving faster every year thanks to new technologies like no-code platforms, AI, and machine learning. In the most advanced CLM systems, AI-based intelligent OCR automatically imports contract data into systems, even from scanned documents. Coupled with risk scoring powered by machine learning, the entire process from contract creation to execution is now happening faster than ever before. Standard CLM features like one-click contract creation, e-signature, and flexible approval workflows all play a critical part in streamlining contract processes, and AI is adding additional value.

What distinguishes Agiloft from its competitors? Why should companies choose Agiloft?

As the global leader in CCLM, Agiloft is the only vendor with the confidence to provide an unconditional satisfaction guarantee that covers the software and consulting services.

Agiloft's no-code platform for CCLM helps organizations

ensure regulatory compliance, drive long-term revenue growth, maintain cost discipline, and minimize risk by managing and integrating the commercial processes that surround contracts. It also makes light work of automating processes that are too complex for competing vendors.

With Agiloft's holistic CCLM system, customers can monitor, analyse, and ultimately optimize the value flowing between internal commercial processes as well as from external sources such as suppliers. Agiloft CCLM also reduces security and compliance risk by bringing contracts and other sensitive data into one secure system. Agiloft's no-code platform enables CCLM because it allows the system to seamlessly adapt to each company's internal processes and integrate enterprise data in a way that is highly flexible, secure, and fully auditable.

In addition to the above, customers choose Agiloft because of our company-wide focus on customer success. To that point, Agiloft was recently recognized as a value leader and customer leader in Spend Matters' Q3 2019 Contract Lifecycle Management SolutionMap and also earned the 2019 Excellence in Customer Service Award from Business Intelligence Group.

What is CCLM and how can organizations create value with Contract and Commerce Management?

CCLM is an emerging contract-centric methodology that extends well beyond traditional contract lifecycle management. Using contracts as its core system of record, CCLM integrates the full scope of internal and external commercial systems to enhance security and compliance while driving enterprise-wide value creation. By bringing contract-adjacent processes (vendor management, buy/sell-side operations, CRM, ERP, and even IT service management) into the orbit of CCLM, organizations can not only monitor contract obligations and performance across departments, they are also empowered with enterprise-wide commercial data that informs future decisions regarding costs, suppliers, customers, and internal processes.

Digital transformation has affected every sector. Can we say that digital contracts make things easier?

> USING CONTRACTS AS ITS CORE SYSTEM OF RECORD, CCLM INTEGRATES THE FULL SCOPE OF INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL COMMERCIAL SYSTEMS TO ENHANCE SECURITY AND COMPLIANCE WHILE DRIVING ENTERPRISE-WIDE VALUE CREATION.

Yes. Digital contracts definitely make things easier by automating basic tasks like renewal notifications, one-click approvals, e-signatures, and other mundane tasks that no longer need to be done by a contract administrator. However, today's CCLM automates much more than basic tasks, including document assembly using a dynamic clause library, full auditability, and documentation, as well as a range of capabilities enabled through intelligent OCR and AI-based metadata extraction. For example, AI can analyze counterparty contracts, pulling out clauses and showing you which are different from your standard clauses. Agiloft's built-in AI tool can also take this a step further to assign a risk level to the incoming contracts based on the users' defined risk level formula.

Contract Management is a process with many risks. The most important of these risks is undoubtedly data security. What kind of services does Agiloft offer to its customers about data security?

U.S. government agencies and Fortune 100 corporations depend on Agiloft to keep their data safe. We employ a multi-layered security policy to provide military-grade security for our customers, and Agiloft recently earned SOC 2 security certification, confirming our commitment to ensuring customer data is fully protected.

The Agiloft platform provides precise access control at the record and field level, all managed by granual user and group permissions. Agiloft implements security best practices

such as encrypting passwords using the SHA-2 one-way hash function and protecting all communications with TLS encryption. Login sessions automatically expire and terminate after a period of inactivity. The net result is secure access, reliable performance, and full compliance with privacy standards such as HIPAA.

Where do you see your company in the global competition? What are your business strategies for 2020?

Spend Matters SolutionMap has repeatedly ranked Agiloft its customer leader for CLM software, and that's where we see Agiloft in the contract management space. Because of our configurable no-code platform and award-winning implementation team, we lead the industry in customer satisfaction and can provide custom-tailored solutions at a fraction of the time and cost of competing vendors. And if customers request a change it often only takes a few mouse clicks. This also allows us to easily extend the CCLM solution to include the most essential commercial processes that surround your contract lifecycle.

As we head into 2020, Agiloft will continue to provide CCLM solutions that unite complex organizational processes, putting contracts at the core of all commercial activity and giving businesses more insight into these documents and the relationships they represent.

Additionally, Agiloft will continue rolling out our AI Core, working with customers to integrate both our out-of-the-box AI capabilities as well as tools created with our open AI engine, which allows customers to integrate any AI model from Google TensorFlow or SageMaker to automate workflows and data analysis. We are excited to see what AI applications our customers create and how we can share those new applications with our clients. It is an exciting time at Agiloft, and 2020 will be another monumental year for the company.

Colin Earl is the founder and CEO of Agiloft, a Silicon Valley pioneer in no-code development platforms for business applications and contract and commerce lifecycle management (CCLM).

About Competitive Capabilities International (CCi)

Over three million users at organizations ranging from small enterprises to U.S. government agencies and Fortune 100 companies depend on Agiloft's top-rated product suites for Contract Management Software, Service Desk, Custom Workflow, and more. Agiloft specializes in automating processes that are too complex for competing vendors. Our best-practice templates and adaptable technology ensure rapid deployment and a fully extensible system. For more information, please visit www.agiloft.com.

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TODAY'S CCLM AUTOMATES MUCH MORE THAN BASIC TASKS, INCLUDING DOCUMENT ASSEMBLY USING A DYNAMIC CLAUSE LIBRARY, FULL AUDITABILITY, AND DOCUMENTATION, AS WELL AS A RANGE OF CAPABILITIES ENABLED THROUGH INTELLIGENT OCR AND AI-BASED METADATA EXTRACTION.

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Agiloft

DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION AND ERP IMPLEMENTATION: EMBRACE UNCERTAINTY TO MOVE YOUR BUSINESS FORWARD

*Article by **Jean Magny**,*
President, and CEO at Genius Solutions

Digital transformation — it's one of the buzziest of buzzwords to take hold in our industry over the last couple of years, but what does it actually mean for manufacturers?

Digital transformation: Changing the way you do business

At its core, digital transformation is the adoption of digital technologies in all areas of your organization that transform the way your company operates.

Sound familiar? Are digital transformation and ERP implementation actually the same thing?

We can go back and forth all day on this topic and the nomenclature, but I would argue yes. Digital transformation is about leveraging technology to make your business more streamlined, more effective, and to help you deliver more value to your customers — and that is exactly what ERPs do for your business.

Today's ERPs aren't just about replacing back-office functions and systems, like inventory management, accounting, order fulfillment and shipping: Today's ERPs include these important functions as well as things like automation, analytics and business intelligence, CRM — all with the goal of improving the way your company does business with the goal of making you a better, more effective business. It sounds like a digital transformation to me.

And both cause a high degree of disruption, as well as require a huge cultural shift at your organization. Both can mean walking away from the traditional processes and ways your company has been doing business, processes that your company may even have been built upon.

This level of change and disruption involves a huge cultural shift at your company, one that requires that you are willing to challenge the status quo — and get comfortable with failure: Not everything is going to be smooth sailing from day one, so you need to open yourself up, and be willing to live with some uncertainty.

In fact, the number one thing you need if you want to successfully digitally transform your manufacturing business — and successfully implement an ERP system — is to have a strong vision, and be able to turn that vision into reality.

It's never a lack of time, it's a lack of vision

The primary reason I hear from manufacturers wanting to delay, or completely cast aside, the implementation of an ERP system is lack of time. Company executives will recognize a need for updating and changing the way they do business, make a large investment in purchasing a software system, and then when it's time to actually install the ERP, the company will come back to me and say "We don't have the time to put the system in place, maybe in 6 months we can do it," or "Our operations manager says she is already too busy, she needs at least 3 months before she can make it happen."

Time and again manufacturers will come to me and say that they just don't have the time right now to invest in setting up a new ERP.

And when someone tells me this, I answer back: you do have the time, what you are lacking is the vision.

This might sting a little, but frankly speaking, there will never be a right time to implement an ERP, or digitally transform your company. And that doesn't mean you shouldn't do it, what it means is that you need to make the time for it now, and clearly communicate your vision, and your company's needs, throughout your organization.

> **ONE OF THE BIGGEST OBSTACLES IN DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION, OR ERP IMPLEMENTATION, IS HOW TO GET OVER THE INITIAL HUMP FROM VISION TO EXECUTION. BUT BY CHANGING YOUR MINDSET TO EMBRACE CHANGE, REALIZING THAT YOU WILL NEVER HAVE THE TIME — MEANING THE TIME IS NOW — AND COMMUNICATING YOUR VISION TO YOUR TEAM, YOU WILL BE ABLE TO DO IT.**

Manufacturers who need an ERP, or need to transform the way they do business, are companies that are on the cusp of rapid growth — or already growing. These manufacturers need a solution to make their operations more efficient and have recognized that an ERP is a right tool to transform their business. But because they are growing they are busy! And six months down the line, as the company continues to grow, they will be busier, the operations manager will be even more overwhelmed, and that manufacturer will still not have time to put their ERP in place — and most likely will give up on the project altogether.

My advice is always the same: embrace the disruption and live with the instability for a while. As a growing company, you are already functioning at a hectic pace. You know your team can handle it — so, as the saying goes, there is no time like the present. Invest the time now: Embrace the chaos, the uncertainty, and the failure. And yes I did say failure — big changes always bring with them problems and speed bumps — you need to be understanding and remember instant perfection isn't the goal, but long term improvement is.

Communicate your vision

The best way to get your staff on board with a major digital transformation project is to communicate your vision. You or someone in your company

recognized the need for an ERP. But now you are experiencing push back from your employees because even though they know a new system was purchased, and even though they may appreciate that a new system is needed, they might not entirely understand why, and they might not want to change how they do their jobs. That's natural, change is difficult.

I won't sugarcoat it — implementing an ERP is tremendously disruptive, and one of the biggest projects you will ever undertake as a manufacturer. It will impact every department in your organization, many people in your company will be personally affected, and it will change how your employees do their jobs. If they don't understand why the new system is being put in place, they will resist the change, and you'll risk the project falling apart completely.

It's on you as a leader to share your vision with your team. Have straightforward and open lines of communication with your staff. Let them know why the company needs to change, how an ERP will streamline operations, and the benefits it will bring to the entire organization. But also be open and honest about the disruption it will bring to the workplace, and the time and resources it will take to implement. If your staff understands your vision and understands why they need to change how they do their jobs, they will be more receptive to the system, and your implementation will stay on track.

It's also important to get key users and stakeholders within your company on board with the new system from the very beginning. If you know how important the operations manager will be to the change management process, get her involved with the system from the start. Make sure she understands the importance of the new system to the business and that she is an invested participant in the project. This way instead of being someone who can delay and derail the implementation process, she is an ally and a partner — she'll actually help you get other people on board.

Be the change you want to see

If you are feeling stuck in your digital transformation work, you are not alone. One of the biggest obstacles in digital transformation, or ERP implementation, is how to get over the initial hump from vision to execution. But by changing your mindset to embrace change, realizing that you will never have the time — meaning the time is now — and communicating your vision to your team, you will be able to do it. As a leader, you need to not only make the hard decisions, but you need to be a cheerleader and a champion for your staff, pushing them on, supporting them and encouraging them to create the changes that you know your manufacturing business needs.

Change never comes easy, but by stepping up, and being a strong and effective leader you can lead your company forward.

Jean Magny, President, and CEO at Genius Solutions

With over 20 years of experience working in industrial engineering with a focus on operational best practices, Jean has in-depth knowledge when it comes to the challenges faced by fast-growing manufacturing companies and their implementation of new processes with limited resources. Jean has a degree in mechanical engineering and has also completed the entrepreneurship development program at MIT's Sloan School of Management. Jean has served as both a technical advisor and a project manager for ERP implementations in small to medium-size manufacturers across North America.

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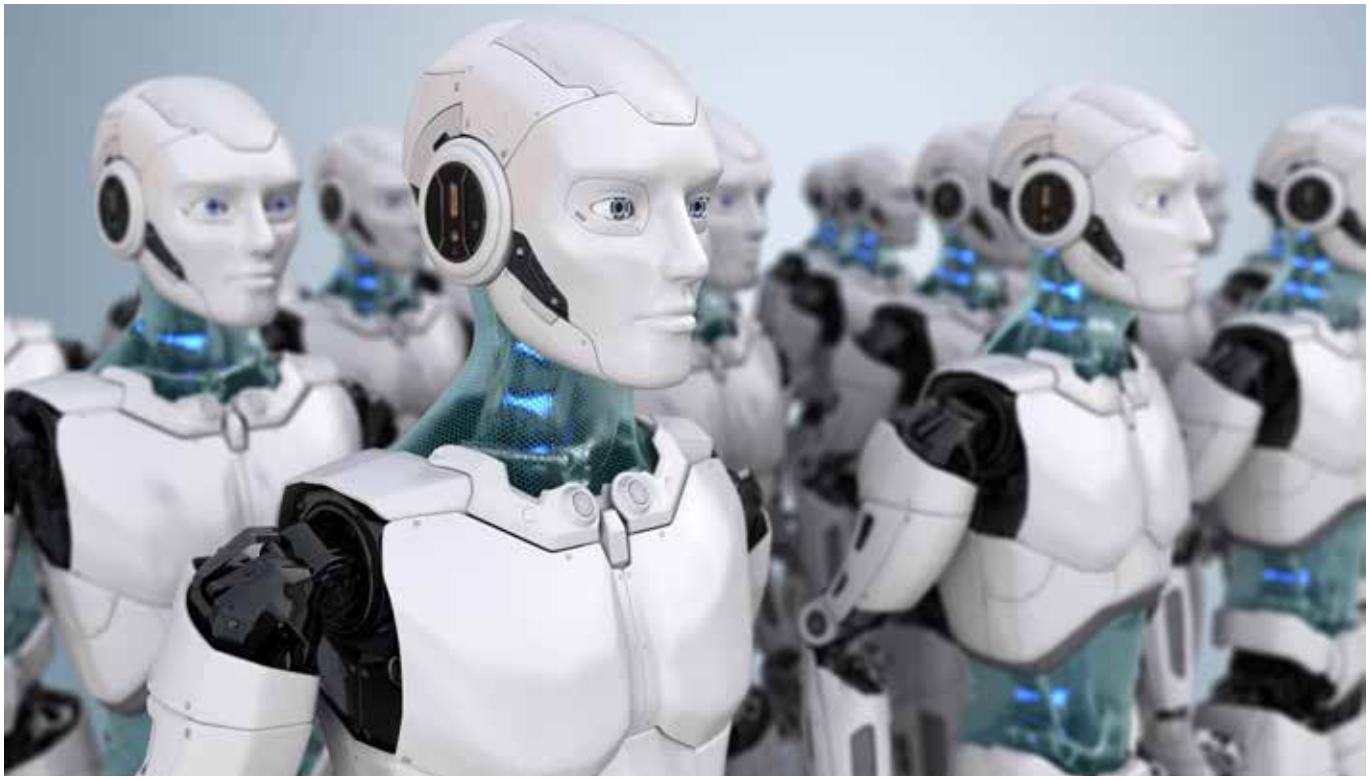

FIRMS INVESTING IN ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE TO WIN

*Interview with **Behic Ferhatoglu**, General Manager*

IAS General Manager Behiç Ferhatoğlu explaining the products and services they offer to companies in their digital transformation journey announces their future plans. Stating that IAS will go on investing in Industry 4.0 in 2020 continuously, Ferhatoğlu says, "Companies with advanced artificial intelligence systems will dominate the future."

caniasERP IAS General Manager Behic FerhatoğluIAS, having attracted the attention with last month's caniasERP Live 2019 event, presented the latest innovations in its enterprise resource planning solution caniasERP and its works on Industry 4.0 to the participants. After the event, the General Manager of IAS, Behiç Ferhatoğlu, talked about the future plans of IAS, the advantages offered by caniasERP and the services they provide to the companies in their digital transformation journey. "In 2020, we will continue our work on big data, Industry 4.0 and artificial intelligence," said Ferhatoğlu and added by emphasizing the importance of ERP Softwares in the digital transformation "Companies with advanced artificial intelligence systems will dominate the future."

Could you tell us about IAS and its fields of activity?

IAS is a dynamic, innovative and enterprise software company specializing in ERP. However, when we consider the studies that we have been focusing on for the last two years, it is more appropriate to call IAS a technology company. With IASDB, which was developed to provide the basis for our solutions in the field of big data management and artificial intelligence, we have developed into a corporate technology company that manufactures databases and produces hardware with the caniasERP IoT Box solution, which we have created for the purpose of collecting data from Industry 4.0 and IoT, and especially for collecting data from the production site.

How many countries does IAS operate abroad? Which sectors do prefer your solutions offered particularly?

As IAS we have currently 11 offices in Germany, Turkey, Switzerland, South Korea, India and the United Arab Emirates. With more than 50 solution partners all around the world, we are currently serving in 33 countries. Our enterprise resource planning solution, caniasERP is an industry-independent product. We have customers from more than 40 sectors. However, the main sectors in which our customers concentrate and develop special solutions are automotive, textile, defense industry, machinery and industrial automation, metal, packaging, food, chemical, plastic, building materials, electrical and electronics, mining, furniture, health, service & maintenance.

What are the advantages of your ERP solutions?

As an advantage, it can be said that our main product caniasERP, which consists of more than 40 modules, is a reflection of our 30 years of sectoral expertise and knowledge. We have more than 20 sectoral solutions. In this context, companies can quickly reach the best way of doing business in their sectors. The following is the speed, flexibility and agility that TROIA, our own software development platform, brings to us both as a software developer and to our customers who can easily make customizations. In addition, I would like to state that we have a 100 percent web-based, open-source, platform-independent, strong and reliable infrastructure.

Do you think companies in Turkey are aware of the importance of ERP?

We have to admit that we are still far behind the developed countries in this case! However, e-transformation applications expanded by the government every day, the attractiveness of the solutions in the Industry 4.0 field and the efficient implementation of these solutions only by advanced ERP software, raise the awareness about ERP rapidly.

What would you like to say about the importance of ERP for SMEs?

I would repeat it at every opportunity since it is a good example; ERP software is like the nervous system of enterprises. With a comprehensive project, companies that run all their business processes on ERP software can learn everything about their business from anywhere, at any time, and can be one step ahead of the competition by making critical decisions quickly.

We Invest in Cloud System in 2020

How does 2019 pass for IAS and what are your 2020 goals? How much investment do you plan and in which areas?

In September 2019, we focused on our new version 8.02, which was launched in September. In addition, we focused on growth and new operations. The most important of these is to start our South Korean operation and to continue our preparatory work regarding our operations in Switzerland and the United States of America (USA). While having expanded our own operations, we also continued to expand our service and sales network with our new solution partners. At the same time, we have been working on the organization structure for two years to make our projects more agile. On the one hand, we turn into a horizontal organization and on the other hand, we strengthen our teams with new colleagues joining us. Considering that we have not commissioned the US office yet, we are a big family with 11 offices in 6 countries, 280 employees and more than 50 solution partners. One of the important activities we have done this year was the significant arrangements we made on our licensing model. This is a work we've been experimenting with over the last few years. At the last point, we have simplified our licensing model and made it much more understandable for both our customers and prospects. With the growth of our customers, increasing numbers of users meant increasing licensing and maintenance costs for them. In our new licensing model, we aimed to make these costs more advantageous

> **IF WE CONSIDER THE ERP SOFTWARE, IN PARTICULAR, IT CAN BE SAID THAT WITH THE HELP OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE, THE TRANSACTIONS PERFORMED BY THE USERS WILL DECREASE DAY BY DAY, AND DECISION SUPPORT FUNCTIONS SUCH AS PLANNING AND FORECASTING WILL SPREAD FASTER AND MORE ACCURATELY ACROSS ERP SYSTEMS.**

with growth. The first half of 2019 was shaped in line with all these efforts. It is a year in which we have achieved very positive results from a commercial perspective. In the first half of 2019, IAS experienced a growth of around 15 percent in Euro terms. Our goal is to continue this in the second half of 2019 in a similar manner. In addition to our market entry investments in South Korea, Switzerland and the US, we will continue to work on big data, Industry 4.0 and artificial intelligence in 2020. And also 2020 will be a year in which we will invest in the Cloud System. caniasERP has been available over the Internet since 2000. In all markets where we operate, we also offer our customers the opportunity to use caniasERP by renting with SaaS method. However, upon increasing demands, we decided that we should offer a more comprehensive solution. We continue to work on a solution

that will allow our customers to use caniasERP anywhere in the world by making a single monthly payment including caniasERP and IASDB's license and maintenance leases, as well as cloud server hardware lease and server management fees. Our goal is to offer this solution to the market in 2020. We will continue to grow rapidly with our new version caniasERP 8.02, our database IASDB and our Cloud solution. We think that we are now in the big leap period in which we will achieve over 100 percent growth. In this direction, we continue to work non-stop.

IAS Constitution to be ready in 2020!

Could you share your IAS Constitution project, purpose, and scope?

The IAS Constitution project actually emerged during our meetings to meet the challenges we faced while expanding our operations and entering new markets. As a 30-year enterprise software company, we have many certifications for the management and supervision of our processes. However, none of these reflects our corporate culture and business practices and does not contain all the details about the processes. We have prepared very detailed handbooks in order to increase the sustainability of our success and shorten the adaptation times of our new colleagues and we have started to see the benefits in a short time. This project proceeds, our goal is to document all our business processes with the same concept until the beginning of 2020.

Artificial Intelligence to Dominate Future Trends

How do you evaluate the future of the sector? How will the development of digital technologies shape your sector?

We can mention all the developments separately, I think that artificial intelligence is the development that will affect the corporate software market the most as it will be in all our daily lives. If we consider the ERP software, in particular, it can be said that with the help of artificial intelligence, the transactions performed by the users will decrease day by day, and decision support functions such as planning and forecasting will spread faster and more accurately across ERP systems. From this perspective, it would not be wrong to say that companies with advanced artificial intelligence systems will dominate their markets in the future.

caniasERP Live Completed with Huge Interest

Every year you organize a caniasERP Live event. How is the feedback of these events? How do they affect customer satisfaction?

Last month we organized the sixth caniasERP Live event in Istanbul. It was a great organization! There were over 700 participants, most customers, and prospects. We announce the innovations and new products that come with our new versions during these events. Therefore, it is our first job to plan the detailed presentation requests that occur immediately after the event. This year, we have introduced functions such as online costing that came with our new version caniasERP 8.02. In addition to this, we explained the innovations to use the application through the process maps, cockpit applications, our new WebClient, our database solution IASDB and the solutions we developed for Industry 4.0 to the participants and we received intense attention. Since caniasERP Live events bring together the entire caniasERP environment, including other countries in which we operate, we give great importance to these events in terms of prestige.

About Canias

IAS is founded in Karlsruhe, Germany in 1989 by a handful of talented and dedicated people. Since the early days of IAS, the dream was to be the game-changer in the ERP industry by providing best-in-class solutions. IAS developed its own unique software development platform, TROIA in 1997 and released caniasERP 6.01 in the year 2000 as one of the first few ERP solutions available online with full functionality. TROIA, open-source and platform-independent integrated development environment, and its exceptional flexibility feature are the core strengths of caniasERP, as evidenced by various third-party studies. Over the years, the brand "caniasERP" has played an important role in helping companies gain Operational Excellence in Industries such as Automotive, Aviation & Defense, Printing, Packaging, Textile & Garment, and Machinery & Industrial Automation. IAS, a global ERP company, catering to over 1000 companies with more than 30.000 concurrent users across diverse industries in more than 30 countries, its core competency has always been in being quality conscious and providing innovative solutions that can be delivered quickly and cost-effectively in a complex environment. With over 250 professionals and consultants and excellence R&D centers and subsidiaries in Germany, India, Turkey, UAE, and Korea along with business partners in across the world, IAS is one of the highest-rated ERP vendors with its solution, caniasERP, available on-premise, on-the-cloud and also mobile devices. IAS, over the years, has received many prestigious awards and acknowledgments in various countries, such as ERP Excellence by GPS Germany in 2017 and Best of 2018 in ERP Solutions category by Initiative Mittelstand in Germany. IAS is also ISO/IEC 27001 Information Security Management and as well as ISO/IEC 15504 Software Process Improvement and Capability Determination (SPICE) certified company. IAS, today more than ever, is committed to providing superior quality on its solutions and services to leverage efficiencies in companies to reach operational excellence and expand its operations into further global markets

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Top Predictions for the ERP Software Industry in 2020

*Article by **Kalyani Chaudhari**,*
Marketing Manager at Sage Software Solutions Pvt Ltd

With 2020 just about to knock the door, there are a lot of expectations from the most effective enterprise management solution - ERP. This blog will unveil top predictions made by industry experts about the ERP software in the upcoming year.

Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) is usually the most big-budget investment companies will have to make. But, it certainly justifies its price through performance and effectiveness. When it comes to taking care of a company's financial, accounting, human resources, manufacturing, and more such segments, ERP solution does justice in every respect. Therefore, it goes without saying that ERP adoption is the cleverest decision any company can make.

2019 has witnessed a perpetual growth in ERP adoptions by companies from diverse industry domains and as per the report released by Allied Market Research, the projected growth for the ERP market is $41.69 in 2020. Considering these figures, a lot of eyes are rolled onto what's the next-gen ERP system has to offer in the New Year. Let's see the top ERP predictions made by software evangelists for 2020.

1. Wearable Technology and Mobile ERP Solutions will gain momentum:

Mobiles and intelligent gadgets like Smart Watch, Google Home, and Robots have become an unalterable component of our modern lives. With a lot of Business Development Managers, Decision Makers and CIO/ CXO level people mostly spending their time in travel, mobility has become the need of the hour. Accessing vital professional data remotely results in productivity boost and more prompt responses. Therefore, mobility and wearable technology combined with ERP solutions will be in great demand.

2. Cloud continues to remain dominant throughout:

Data reveals that right at the start of 2020, the cloud computing market will reach $258 billion. Although a lot of companies had reservations in regards to migrating their data to cloud pertaining to certain risk factors, 2019 has seen a noticeable rise in figures. 2020 will be no different; instead will witness a surge in these figures even more due to Cloud ERP advantages outweighing its limitations.

3. Vendors will get more personalized with solutions:

As the ERP market will continue to grow, there will be a neck-to-neck competition between the best solution providers. Being said that, vendors will focus on providing not only the best performing products but also premium customer service. Right from emails to product updates and RFPs, vendors will get more personalized to offer the best and right solutions without consuming time and energy.

4. IoT functionality:

Core business processes, IoT devices, and third-party apps and external data can be connected dynamically. Manufacturing ERP is predicted to be IoT enabled to simplify the link between your shop floor and office. Communication will be improved with ERP systems that support API due to its real-time alert functionality.

5. Artificial Intelligence as a new element:

The welcoming approach towards analytics for better decision-making gave birth to Big Data analytics, which cleared the path for AI-enabled ERP application into the marketplace. These solutions offer an intuitive experience its users to make future predictions. Some of the substantial benefits list of better decision-making, process automation, and setting performance benchmarks.

6. ERP market leaders:

As per Gartner's recent report, the top vendors analyzed for 2018-2019 are SAP, Oracle, Workday, Sage, and Infor. These vendors will continue to remain the top industry players even in 2020 with their existing products and customized solutions. Additionally, the digital transformation will trigger fresh ERP investments. According to Technavio, the ERP software market size is predicted to reach a CAGR of over 9% by 2023.

> **SMARTLY DESIGNED SOFTWARE FUNCTIONALITIES LIKE FINANCE MANAGEMENT, RESOURCE MANAGEMENT, DATA COLLABORATION, PREDICTIVE ANALYSIS, AND VENDOR MANAGEMENT HAVE HELPED A LOT OF COMPANIES GAIN A COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE IN THEIR RESPECTIVE DOMAINS. AS A CONSEQUENCE OF THIS, SMES ARE MAKING A TRANSITION FROM STANDALONE APPLICATIONS USED TO MANAGE VARIOUS OPERATIONS SEPARATELY TO AN INTEGRATED ERP SOLUTION THAT ALLOWS COLLABORATION OF MULTIPLE DEPARTMENTS THROUGH A SINGLE PLATFORM.**

Takeaway

The ever-increasing market demand for ERP software has made it quite popular among multiple industries. ERP solution is quintessential in enhancing business operations and process efficiency. Smartly designed software functionalities like finance management, resource management, data collaboration, predictive analysis, and vendor management have helped a lot of companies gain a competitive advantage in their respective domains. As a consequence of this, SMEs are making a transition from standalone applications used to manage various operations separately to an integrated ERP solution that allows collaboration of multiple departments through a single platform. The upcoming year 2020 will be no different is driving favoritism toward ERP applications. It will see even more rise in software adoption in comparison to the previous year. Market leaders like SAP, Oracle and Sage will continue serving different industry domains through their products and services.

Kalyani writes about trending technologies like artificial intelligence, machine learning, and business management applications like ERP and CRM. Her expertise lies in demand generation through inbound and outbound practices, data analysis and campaign management through CRM tools. She works for Sage Software Solutions Pvt. Ltd., a leading provider of ERP and CRM software to small and mid-sized businesses in India.

You can learn more about her on Twitter | LinkedIn

About Sage Software Solutions Pvt. Ltd.

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Technology Evaluation Centers

TOP 3 ESSENTIAL AND SURPRISING FACTS ABOUT ERP SELECTION CRITERIA

Marketing campaigns for enterprise resource planning (ERP) solutions often highlight aspects of the software which entice potential purchasers, such as cloud capabilities, competitive pricing, or big data business intelligence (BI). While impressive, these features don't necessarily ensure that the ERP system meets the needs of your organization.

Determining your ERP selection criteria prior to comparing solutions is an essential activity which guides the selection process to success. Some of the most surprising facts about selecting ERP benchmarks revolve around unexpected bias, a renewed focus on user experience (UX), and an inflated sense of importance regarding software customization.

Objective Criteria Conceals Subjective Bias

In an ideal environment, the selection criteria for ERP would consist of completely objective and measurable elements, perfectly weighted to match the operational needs of your organization. Unfortunately, some of the most crucial ERP system selection criteria will lend themselves to bias, even if the data consists of precise numbers.

At first glance, some market data would appear to offer quantifiable aspects of ERP selection. The price of ERP implementation, for example, could be considered objective because the final cost of the software will be expressed with numbers.

This line of thinking is misleading. ERP software pricing doesn't reflect the value of the implementation, nor does price reveal the return on investment (ROI) derived from the system. Complicating the value versus price question is the fact that the most expensive ERP software solutions aren't necessarily the best, and the least expensive ERP solutions aren't automatically the worst. In fact, the question of best or worst is not objectively measureable. A solution that is ideally suited for one organization (i.e., the best one) may be ill suited to another organization.

Sometimes, costly implementations don't feature the same level of support or functionality offered by a more economical system. Or, a specific functionality valuable to your business or a feature that your business can scarcely do without may not be available on expensive ERPs, while lower-price software may provide it.

The size of the software provider is sometimes considered to be a useful metric because the number of working employees correlates with the health of the company. On the surface, this may appear to be an objective criteria for selecting an ERP system. Similar to price, the number of staff within a software company does not signal the presence of the specific functionality you require, nor does the size of an ERP company translate into superior quality software and support.

A surprising number of criteria for ERP selection will be issues that cannot be quantified in an objective fashion. In some cases, the locality of the software company will be important because of the need to service a specific geography. For this scenario, a local ERP company will have an innate understanding of the demographics you serve, whereas an international ERP company won't understand the nuances of conducting business in your area.

Powerful Pivot to Ease Of Use & End User Experience

Despite the fact that ease of use is completely unquantifiable, the importance of the end user experience has never been considered more important. A study of ERP selection methods revealed that ease of use and maintenance rose from seventh place to first place in importance over the span of three years—a significant rise in rank.

Ironically, during the same time period, the perceived value of ERP consultants diminished significantly. Consultant suggestions fell in rank from 8th to 18th in importance, despite the fact that great consultants help to guide businesses through a wide range of subjective decision-making processes and user-friendly solutions.

Some companies have gone as far as differentiating themselves from their competition by focusing more on user friendliness than other aspects of ERP software. For example, Jonar's Paragon ERP solution considers usability to be a top factor for implementation, allowing businesses to install their full-featured ERP in around ten minutes. Rather than undergo an implementation process that lasts months, even years, the software is ready to go after the installation is complete.

> **FOLLOWING BEST PRACTICES MEANS SELECTING AN ERP WHICH INCLUDES THE FEATURES YOU NEED AS STANDARD: THAT WILL SERVE YOUR BUSINESS BETTER THAN A SOLUTION WHICH REQUIRES CUSTOMIZATION.**

User interface (UI) and user experience (UX) weighs heavily on usability and adoption rates. Even the fastest, most function-packed ERP will fall behind on expected ROI if end users have difficulty learning to use the software and manipulating it in an efficient manner. Paragon addresses this issue by simplifying the layout while using skeuomorphic design to make digital forms look like their physical counterparts, such as purchase orders and invoices. Skeuomorphism refers to visual software objects, like digital forms, which look like their physical, real-world counterparts.

Contextual button design also helps reduce the difficulty of manipulating ERP software. Instead of buttons which blindly execute functions, contextual buttons offer functions specific to the task at hand. For example, if you're shipping inventory to a buyer, the available buttons should show options such as printing shipping labels, calculating shipping costs, or a selection of available logistic options. Clicking the button on a shipping screen should not cause unrelated processes to occur, such as the calculation of inventory valuation or producing an inventory forecast.

One of the upcoming ERP features that will likely catch on is the creation of easy customization performed by end users for dashboards, reports, triggers, and display screens. Traditionally, customizing ERP

software falls on the shoulders of software providers and their programmers, who must spend time rewriting and repurposing code to achieve the desired custom functions.

Allowing the end user to customize software without impacting the source code can be realized through a business logic or rules engine. Users input the necessary data fields, define how the fields are associated with each other, and outline rules that determine specific functions which are pertinent to business operations.

Businesses know their own industries and their particular business procedures better than the companies supplying software. As such, if an ERP solution lets end users create their own custom functions without altering the core code, the software achieves superior usability compared to customizations which require months to complete. It also speeds the adoption of the new software by employees, easing their transition to a "new way of doing things" and simplifying the training process.

Customization Is Overrated

There's little to no value in re-inventing the wheel when available technology already performs the functions you need at a high level.

The majority of ERP implementations feature some sort of customization—as many as seven in ten ERP installations include custom code. Very few, as little as 5%, needed major modifications that completely revamp the established application. In most cases, it would make better business sense (and provide much more value) to select a system with functions and features that are well aligned to one's specific business requirements rather than choosing one that requires considerable customization to get it to fit. Following best practices means selecting an ERP which includes the features you need as standard: thavt will serve your business better than a solution which requires customization.

Mehdi Aftahi, Chief Technology Officer of TEC, states that ***"companies embarking on ERP implementation projects should avoid customizations." Instead, organizations should identify "unique and critical requirements before acquiring the ERP software", which ensures that "the chosen solution not only has coverage for those specific processes, but can offer best practices to improve them."***

Due to the inherent complexity of this type of software, there's no such thing as a perfect fit for ERP software, regardless of the level of customization applied. Some ERPs are developed for specific industries, including best practices and optimized processes baked into the solution. Other than these industry-specific software solutions, optimizing your business processes to fit in with the best possible software solution represents an easier, more effective plan for implementation.

Certainly, customizing your ERP remains a valuable option to ensure that your software does what you need it to do. Nonetheless, businesses should focus on evaluating their needs, identifying their selection criteria, and then comparing those criteria to available functions and features offered by competing software vendors in order to find the ERP software which enables best practices along with fulfilling their requirements, adjusting processes to facilitate compatibility.

"WHAT DO YOU OFFER YOUR CUSTOMERS DURING THEIR DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION JOURNEY IN 2020?"

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Robin Irvine,

General Manager

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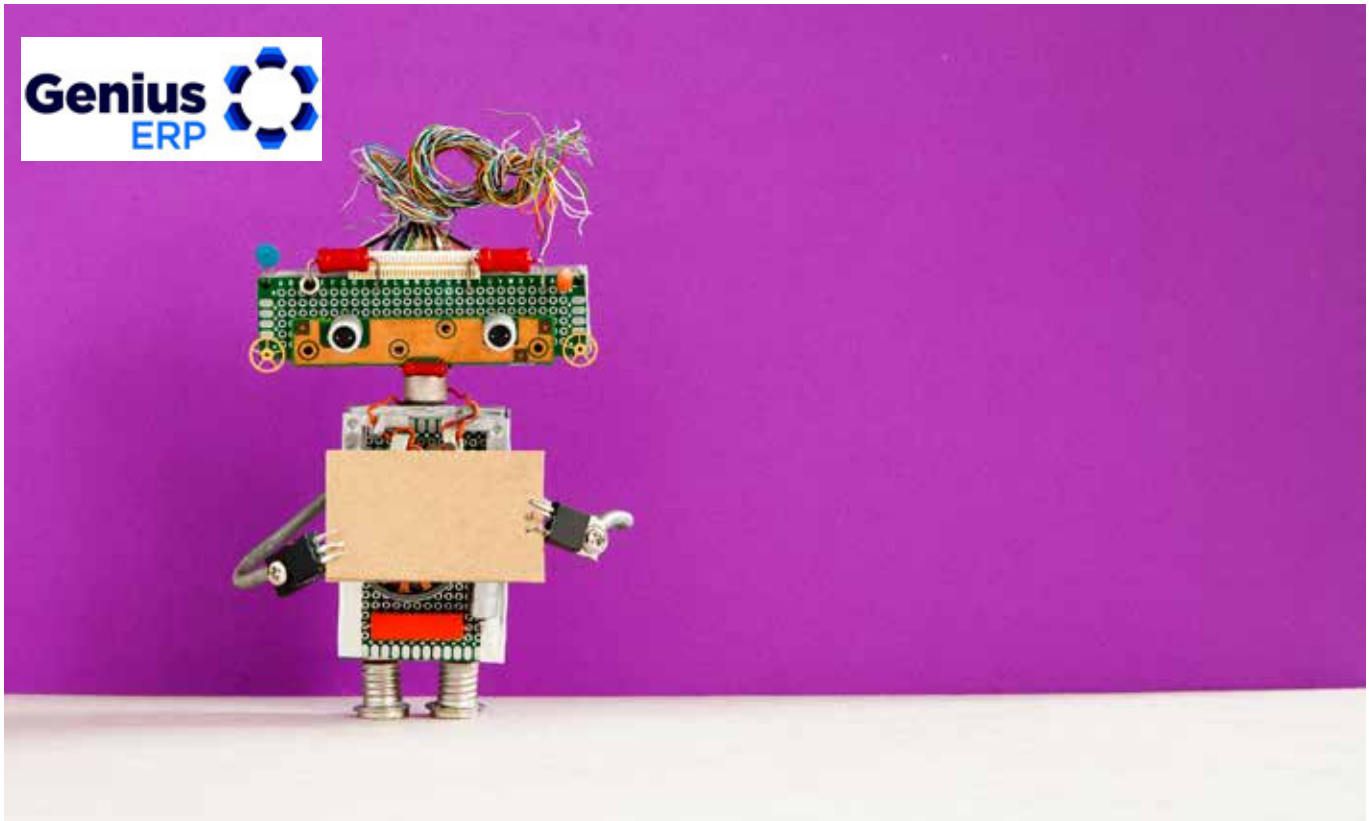

5 PREDICTIONS FOR THE FUTURE OF ERP SOFTWARE

It's not news that ERP features for manufacturing SMEs help companies solve their operational issues, both large and small, on whole new levels. Integrating an ERP system into your manufacturing operations can be an indispensable strategy for reducing costs, optimizing production processes, and significantly increasing the odds that your company will continue to grow and evolve longer term. The majority of businesses nowadays are finally prioritizing "going digital" and all it entails. The fact is, ERP systems must continue evolving in order to fulfill businesses' ever-changing needs.

Global ERP Software Market is expected to amass $41.69 billion by 2020, registering a CAGR of 7.2% during the 2014-2020 forecast period.

Here are 5 future trends in ERP systems that help illuminate the future of ERP features for manufacturing SMEs:

1. The increased popularization of ERP systems

As fresh, new generations of employees continue to enter the workforce, the popularization and therefore consumerization of ERP systems will likely rise to meet their demand for systems that aren't run on obsolete technologies. Similarly, ERP vendors that still develop and support outdated user interfaces will face increased pressure to create user-friendly, intuitive features. This means prioritizing ERP features for manufacturing SMEs that resemble consumer technologies more closely.

2. IoT-enabled

ERP can facilitate a new level of interconnectedness between core business processes, external data, IoT devices and third-party applications. IoT-enabled manufacturing ERP can easily link and sync your office with your shop floor. No looking back. API-supported ERP systems can receive data from further down an assembly line and send real-time alerts. Our customers in trailer manufacturing appreciate this improved communication. Such a system can also take charge of inventory control, delivering data to the ERP backend in real-time, instantly updating inventory balances and cost calculations to keep your numbers accurate.

3. Beyond Siri

When it comes to future enhancements of ERP systems, AI's the word. More and more businesses are catching on. Siri and Alexa have brought us a long way in our quest for hassle-free phone calls, reliable alarms, and effective searches. But AI-based technology can also be used to up your efficiency as a manufacturer. An AI-based, voice-activated personal assistant can be invaluable to manufacturers, making it far easier to make an informed decision thanks to strong in-depth data analysis. The automatic analysis of shop floor data also helps streamline production by identifying problems or irregularities on the spot. The manual version of such an analysis would require significantly more time and resources.

4. Mobile, mobile, mobile

Although demand for cloud-based solutions has garnered industry attention, mobility will likely be the primary technological reality ruling ERP features for manufacturing SMEs by 2020. Mobile apps are undeniably the best way to respond to real-time changes in production. Having immediate mobile access on the shop floor makes it possible for users to cope with line problems on the spot, reducing wasted resources and materials. Managers, even while off-site, can ensure operators are following production schedules and instructions, or issuing maintenance orders. Supervisors can access product availability or change work data on the spot. What better way to stop a problem in its tracks?

5. Flexibility

If you're in manufacturing, you know better than anyone that highly efficient production and turnaround times are a necessity. It's hard to predict how your business processes will look in the coming years. ERP for transportation manufacturing or any other manufacturing industry needs to facilitate a reliable stream of top-tier parts. But amid constantly changing product configuration, suppliers, partners, and of course, customers, flexibility is a necessary asset. Worthwhile ERP allows users to create new product categories, support new business processes, and send auto-notifications when a product is ready for shipping. The faster your sales team gains information, the faster your customers do.

Future trends in ERP systems play a special role in today's growing market trends and requirements. ERP features for manufacturing SMEs must be able to connect devices, departments, partners, suppliers, and your loyal customers in one versatile database. Before we know it, AI-powered ERP for transportation or other manufacturing industries will do a lot more than simply track every aspect of your business. It will go one step further and actually provide recommendations for improving and optimizing at every level, becoming the real brains behind the operation!

Discover the competitive advantages of Genius Solutions' ever-evolving ERP features for manufacturing SMEs here.

"ALTHOUGH DEMAND FOR CLOUD-BASED SOLUTIONS HAS GARNERED INDUSTRY ATTENTION, MOBILITY WILL LIKELY BE THE PRIMARY TECHNOLOGICAL REALITY RULING ERP FEATURES FOR MANUFACTURING SMES BY 2020. MOBILE APPS ARE UNDENIABLY THE BEST WAY TO RESPOND TO REAL-TIME CHANGES IN PRODUCTION. HAVING IMMEDIATE MOBILE ACCESS ON THE SHOP FLOOR MAKES IT POSSIBLE FOR USERS TO COPE WITH LINE PROBLEMS ON THE SPOT, REDUCING WASTED RESOURCES AND MATERIALS.

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