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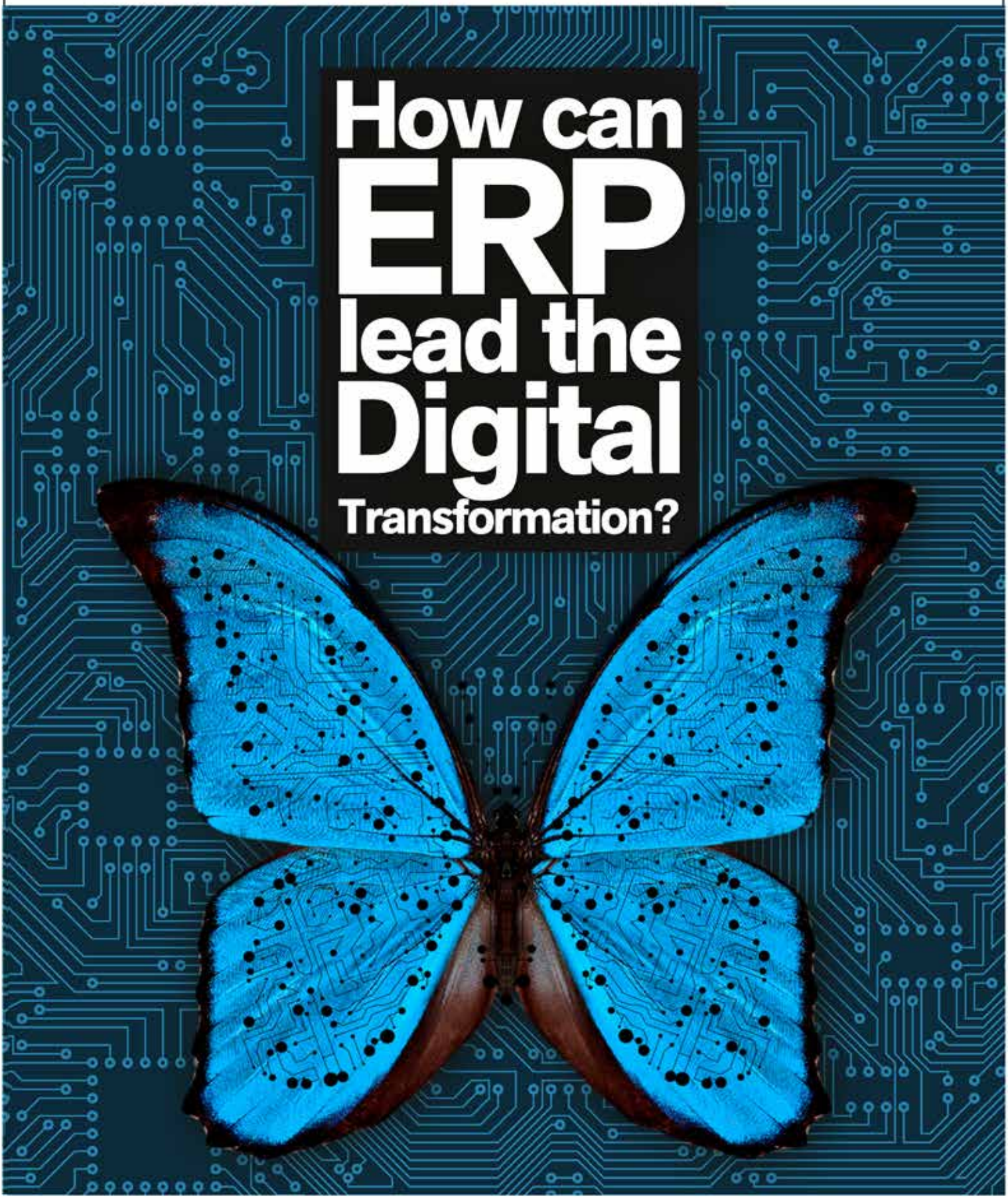
How can ERP lead the Digital Transformation?



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Yagmur Sahin

EDITOR'S NOTE

Hello to everyone from the first issue of the year,

As ERP News Magazine, we wish that 2020 will bring good luck and success to everyone!

We would like to thank everyone who has contributed to this issue after a long period of holidays. As we always do in every issue, we have again searched for the answer to a certain question about ERP "How can ERP Lead the Digital Transformation?" We hope that you will enjoy reading the answers that we have gathered for you.

If you are curious about the unbreakable link between the digital transformation and ERP which has become a need rather than a luxury, then this issue is just for you! If you'd like to share your ideas regarding the industry or the advantages that your products will bring to the industry, write to us!

See you in the next issue...

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KAWASAKI HEAVY INDUSTRIES SELECTS SAP S/4HANA MANUFACTURING TO STREAMLINE AIRCRAFT PRODUCTION

SAP SE announced that Aerospace Systems Company, a division of Kawasaki Heavy Industries (KHI) and leading Japanese manufacturer of aircraft, chose the SAP S/4HANA Manufacturing solution for production engineering and operations to integrate its design and manufacturing processes.

"Industry leaders like KHI are choosing SAP to help better understand their manufacturing frontlines in real time to improve production outcomes," said Mike Lackey, SAP global vice president of Solution Management, Manufacturing. "The solution can easily adapt and meet their business needs as the company evolves and grows in Japan and globally."

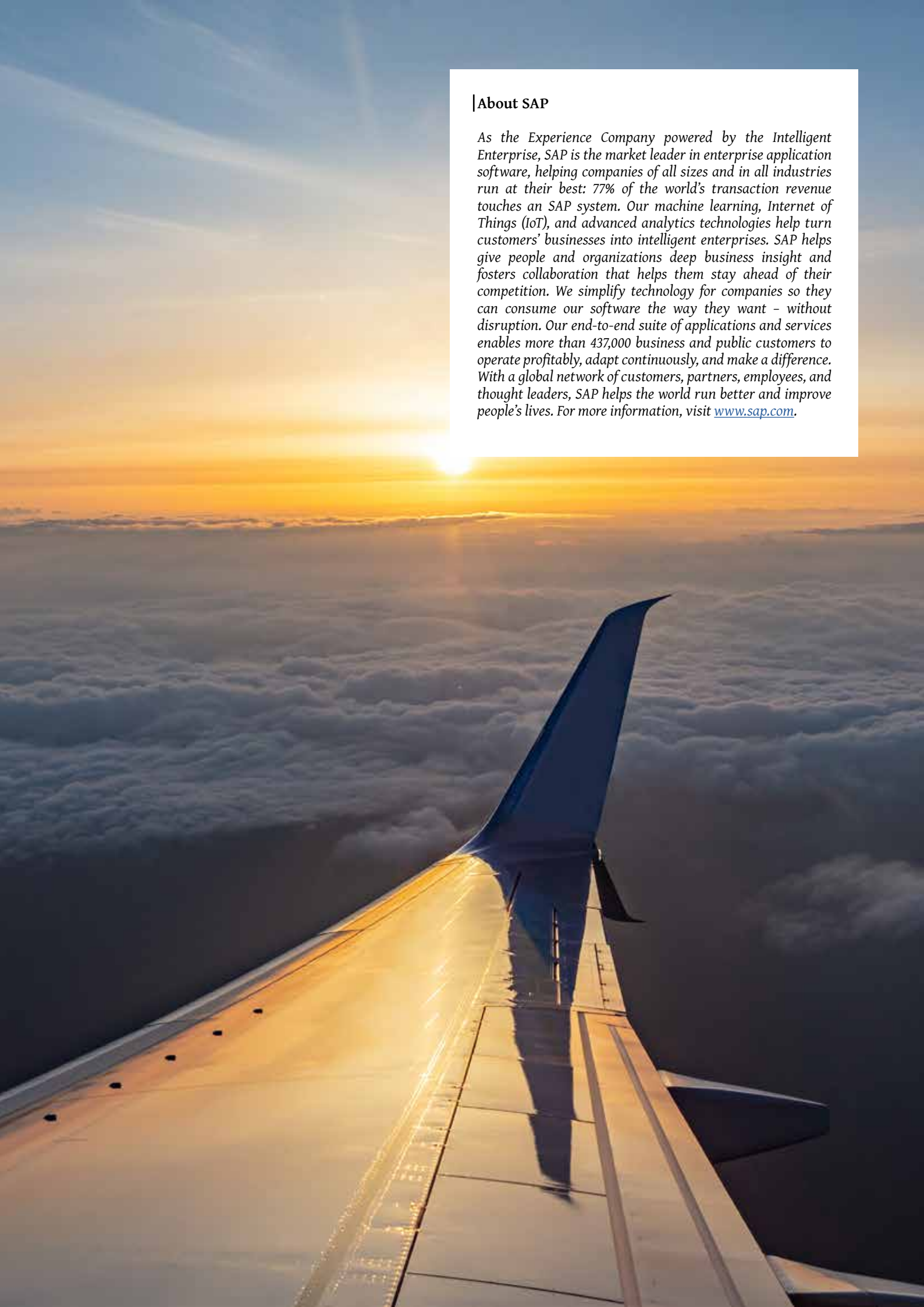
KHI currently relies on paper documents, and many tasks in its manufacturing processes are performed manually. With SAP S/4HANA Manufacturing, KHI aims to digitalize massive quantities of materials to enhance efficiency in its operations and provide greater detail in traceability and disclosure to its customers.

"As an organization that focuses on wide-ranging operations in the aviation sector and space technology, we needed a solution that would help simplify functionality, enhance planning capabilities and optimize adaptability," said Dr. Akihito Sakai, associate officer, deputy general manager (Gifu plant, SCM & IOT), Manufacturing Division, Aerospace Systems Company, Kawasaki Heavy Industries. "We recently completed the design work to deliver SAP S/4HANA Manufacturing for centralizing data management at every stage of the manufacturing process, which ultimately aims to drive greater efficiency and business outcomes."

SAP S/4HANA Manufacturing for production engineering and operations can help KHI streamline processes by centrally managing design and manufacturing bills of material (BOMs) for aircraft as well as reflect changes at the design stage. Technical requests can be transmitted accurately and completely to manufacturing sites even if sudden design changes arise; this prevents production delays and the need for design rework. The solution is also designed to deliver highly detailed traceability and enhanced work efficiency through the digitalization of work processes.

With SAP S/4HANA Manufacturing powering its digital transformation, KHI plans to use the data and insights gathered from business processes to further improve production activities.

SAP S/4HANA Manufacturing for production engineering and operations delivers seamless integration of engineering and manufacturing BOMs required for large and complex assembly as well as manufacturing in the aerospace industry.



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.

RETAILERS FIND FUTURE TOP CUSTOMERS WITH DATA SCIENCE FROM ORACLE

First-party data, enriched with one of the world's largest data marketplaces, helps retailers identify prospective customers who share similar tastes to best existing buyers

Oracle is helping retailers find their top future customers using data science. A new offering from Oracle Retail, Consumer Insights aids retailers in understanding the characteristics of their best customers then extends those traits to find similar potential customers among the petabytes of third-party consumer data in Oracle Data Cloud. This enables retailers to optimize customer acquisition campaigns with more relevant, targeted products and offers.

Gaining new customers is a top priority for retail marketers, with the cost growing every year. In the recent holiday season, a new survey showed that 77 percent of retailers planned to increase their spend in this area. But are they reaching the right prospective buyers?

With Oracle Retail Consumer Insights, retailers can achieve a deep understanding of their existing customers through enriched attributes and advanced data science. For example, do the most profitable athletic gear customers also purchase particular brands of soft drinks or deodorant or snack foods? Is there a common denominator in the type of vehicle they drive or restaurants they frequent or vacations they take?

By enriching first-party data retailers have on their existing customers with purchase data and other characteristics that happen outside the retailer's vantage point, Consumer Insights can cluster together attributes and actions and identify new segments that would be otherwise unknown. Retailers can then use this information to find similar buyers to target with offers that are highly relevant to their lifestyle and tastes.

The data in Oracle Data Cloud represents profile-linked transaction-level sales data and a rich set of other demographic, geographic, and interest attributes from Oracle Data Cloud. Through this new solution, that third-party data can now be coupled with first-party data retailers have on customers, omnichannel touch-points, inventory movements, promotional response, and much more.

"The value of data can't be found in zeros and ones, but in human connections to the interests, experiences, and behavior of current and potential customers," said Cecilia Mao, vice president of product, Oracle Data Cloud. "When you know that your customers are also more likely to buy at the grocery store, brand affinity and hobbies, you can build more accurate models to find your best potential customers, then use multiple channels to reach them at scale."

Applying predictive and prescriptive analytics to this data, retailers can connect, analyze, experiment, and explore new customer segments, knowing that advanced decision science is under the hood. Consumer Insights evaluates "what if" analysis and explores and finds prospects in a continuously iterative process to get the criteria right and identify the most appropriate customer segment. Once correctly identified, retailers can take action by launching campaigns, promotions, or advertising, with the option to activate using Oracle Data Cloud's industry-wide connections.

"When it comes to grabbing the attention of potential customers, every second and moment matters," said Jeff Warren, vice president, Oracle Retail. "Armed with intelligent data based on real customer attributes and behaviors, retailers will truly be able to put the needs and likes of shoppers at the center of their new customer acquisition strategy."

Visit Oracle (booth #4837) at NRF 2020 Vision Retail's Big Show (January 12-14) at Jacob K. Javits Convention Center, New York City, to see Oracle Retail Consumer Insights live. While in the booth, see the full Oracle Retail Insights Suite and demo the new Retail Home dashboards to see why Oracle is the modern platform for retail.

BLUE NILE SHINES BRIGHT WITH ORACLE CLOUD APPLICATIONS

World's Leading Online Jeweler Says "Yes" to Oracle to Help Create Customer Experiences as Unique as Each Diamond

Blue Nile, a leading online diamond jeweler, has chosen Oracle Cloud Applications to support its commitment to providing customers with more choices, straightforward information, and legendary service. With Oracle, Blue Nile has been able to streamline financial operations and delight customers by providing an experience as personal as the diamond they're purchasing.

Founded in 1999 with the idea that the diamond and engagement ring business was ready for innovation, Blue Nile is now the #1 online diamond jeweler in the world for engagement and wedding rings, boasting an inventory of over 200,000 diamonds. To maintain its tradition of innovation and constantly provide new ways for customers to create the perfect pieces for every occasion, Blue Nile needed an integrated suite of applications that would help it personalize customer experiences at scale and improve operational efficiency. After careful evaluation, Blue Nile selected Oracle.

"At Blue Nile, everything we do is dictated by our customer-first philosophy and that includes the technology we select to run our business," said Andre Woolery, senior director of brand marketing, Blue Nile. "To preserve our focus on exceptional customer service as our business continues to grow, we needed to be able to seamlessly connect all parts of our organization. Oracle Cloud Applications is not only helping us bring all our teams together, but just as importantly, it is helping us really use data to our advantage. This will make a huge difference to both the experience we offer customers and the efficiency of our core business processes."

With Oracle Customer Experience (CX) and Oracle Enterprise Performance Management (EPM) Cloud, Blue Nile is now nimbler and more precise with its marketing tactics, and is able to drive accurate and agile financial and operational planning across the entire organization. Oracle Responsys, part of Oracle CX, has helped Blue Nile hone its marketing program to be more personalized and timelier for each customer interaction across online and traditional channels including its website, call center, and showroom. In addition, Oracle EPM Cloud has helped Blue Nile make its planning and budgeting process more efficient by seamlessly integrating data and processes with Blue Nile's core ERP and operational systems.

"Just like diamonds, every customer is unique and this means brands need to take a data-first approach to managing each customer interaction in order to truly personalize the experience," said Rob Tarkoff, executive vice president, Oracle CX and Oracle Data Cloud. "Blue Nile is a perfect example of a retail brand that has taken advantage of technology to rethink a traditional industry, and the results it has achieved speak for themselves. We look forward to working closely with the Blue Nile team to help them continue to put the customer first."

Oracle CX empowers organizations to take a smarter approach to customer experience management and business transformation initiatives. By providing a trusted business platform that connects data, experiences, and outcomes, Oracle CX helps customers reduce IT complexity, deliver innovative customer experiences, and achieve predictable and tangible business results. Oracle EPM Cloud is the only complete and connected cloud EPM solution that gives customers the agility needed to outperform in today's constantly evolving business landscape.

About Oracle Retail

Oracle is the modern platform for retail. Oracle provides retailers with a complete, open, and integrated platform for best-of-breed business applications, cloud services, and hardware that are engineered to work together. Leading fashion, grocery, and specialty retailers use Oracle solutions to accelerate from best practice to next practice, drive operational agility, and refine the customer experience. For more information, visit our website www.oracle.com/retail.

About Oracle Data Cloud

Oracle Data Cloud helps marketers use data to capture consumer attention and drive results. Used by 199 of AdAge's 200 largest advertisers, our Audience, Context and Measurement solutions extend across the top media platforms and a global footprint of more than 100 countries. We give marketers the data and tools needed for every stage of the marketing journey, from audience planning to pre-bid brand safety, contextual relevance, viewability confirmation, fraud protection, and ROI measurement. Oracle Data Cloud combines the leading technologies and talent from Oracle's acquisitions of AddThis, BlueKai, Crosswise, Datalogix, Grapeshot, and Moat.

About Oracle

The Oracle Cloud offers a complete suite of integrated applications for Sales, Service, Marketing, Human Resources, Finance, Supply Chain and Manufacturing, plus Highly Automated and Secure Generation 2 Infrastructure featuring the Oracle Autonomous Database. For more information about Oracle (NYSE: ORCL), please visit us at www.oracle.com.

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LEADING U.S. NATURAL FIBER AND FOAM MANUFACTURER BARNHARDT SELECTS IFS APPLICATIONS IN THE CLOUD

Fully managed cloud ERP solution from IFS to provide operational visibility through one version of the truth

IFS, the global enterprise applications company, announces that Barnhardt Manufacturing Company, a leading producer of natural fiber and foam products, has chosen IFS Applications™ 10 as its enterprise resource planning (ERP) system of record.

A fourth-generation family business based in Charlotte, NC, Barnhardt owns and operates eight manufacturing facilities across the United States. With a diverse product line comprising nine different brands, the company needed to consolidate its IT environment, which consisted of a number of disparate systems that did not cover all mission-crititcal processes.

Following a competitive bid that included several global ERP vendors, Barnhardt chose IFS Applications based on its full suite of capabilities and robust cloud delivery architecture through the Microsoft Azure platform. The IFS solution will support all parts of Barnhardt's value chain, from manufacturing, warehousing and product development, project management to financials, quality management, and maintenance.

"We were looking for an end-to-end ERP solution that could help us free up time for our IT staff to focus more on more strategic activities rather than business system upkeep," said Todd Sain, Corporate Director of IT. "With IFS Applications, we will be able to consolidate crucial areas such as multi-company, multi-brand financials to achieve new levels of operational visibility and control—all in a secure cloud environment that is 100 percent managed by IFS."

Cindy Jaudon, IFS Regional President, Americas, added, "We are thrilled to see nearly three quarters of new customers in North America opting to deploy in the cloud, which speaks to the strength of our managed service offering. Barnhardt, like all growing manufacturing companies, will benefit from IFS Applications' robust capabilities that are engineered to handle multi-site and multi-company strategies while ensuring flexibility and choice in terms of architecture and deployment. We look forward to a long and mutually beneficial collaboration with Barnhardt."

Learn more about how IFS supports manufacturers at www.ifs.com/corp/industries/manufacturing

About Barnhardt Manufacturing Company

Barnhardt Manufacturing Company, a privately held, family owned business, was founded in 1900 by Thomas M. Barnhardt. With corporate headquarters in Charlotte, NC, the Company has additional facilities in Mount Airy, NC, Kinston, NC, Dalton, GA, Griswoldville, MA, Clearfield, UT and Reno, NV. Its products are distributed globally.

From its beginnings as a supplier for buggy seats and horse collars, Barnhardt has deepened its commitment to fiber based markets with an emphasis on cotton purification. Through acquisitions, the Company has expanded into the dental, medical, pharmaceutical, beauty, furniture, mattress and carpet padding, foam and insulation markets. Today, Barnhardt Manufacturing Company operates two divisions: the Barnhardt Natural Fibers Group and NCFI Polyurethanes. The Natural Fibers Group supplies purified cotton for pharmaceutical packaging, as well as the production of baby and personal hygiene products such as swabs, cotton balls and rolls, wipes, pads and tampons. Additionally, it manufacturers and markets its own line of consumable products into the dental, medical and beauty markets. NCFI Polyurethanes produces flexible and specialty urethanes used in bedding, aircraft, insulation, roofing and geotech markets.

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.

Lumenia announces 5th UK Lumenia ERP HEADtoHEAD™ event – compare 12 leading ERP solutions at 1 event

Are you in the market for a new ERP? Or frustrated with your current ERP system? The Lumenia ERP HEADtoHEAD™ event offers a unique opportunity to meet, compare and experience the leading ERP vendors and their products. Taking place on 24 /25 March at the MK Dons Stadium in Milton Keynes, 12 of the UK's leading ERP vendors will go head to head to demonstrate their ERP solutions. This will be the 5th running of the event in the UK.

If you are planning to select, upgrade or replace your ERP system, then the ERP HEADtoHEAD™ event is a must attend event. It is the perfect opportunity for senior finance or IT managers to efficiently review and compare the leading ERP systems.

Solutions suitable for various organisation sizes, from large corporations to SME's, will be represented. ERP solutions to be demonstrated include SAP S/4 HANA, IFS, Epicor, Sage X3, Microsoft Dynamics 365, SAP Business ByDesign, QAD, Unit4, Advanced and SAP Business One.

The ERP HEADtoHEAD™ event, was established by Sean Jackson, Managing Director of independent ERP consultants, Lumenia Consulting. "People should attend the ERP HEADtoHEAD event as it is a really good way to meet the ERP vendors that are active in the market and to meet other companies that are planning to start the ERP journey. You can get 2 months of work done in 2 days." says Jackson.

The event takes place over two days and is facilitated by Lumenia Consulting. On Day 1, all vendors take part in an 'Elevator Speech'. During this session vendors present a summary of their USP's to convince delegates why it would be a good idea to attend their demo. Delegates can then choose to attend sessions focused on Finance, Production, Procurement, HR, Supply Chain, Projects or Sales. Each demonstration is based on defined high-level scripts which makes it easier to make system comparisons.

Day 2 includes the opportunity to hear a panel discussion, comprised of industry end users sharing their experiences on how to avoid ERP implementation mistakes. Attendees can also hear thought-provoking, vendor-independent presentations from Lumenia Consulting on 'Are you ERP Ready?' and 'Characteristics of Successful ERP Projects'.

There will be lots of opportunities for delegates to meet with vendors within the expo area and to network and compare experiences with other organisations also planning to implement ERP.

"Good opportunity to compare different ERP systems over a short timescale. Good event - worthwhile attending". "Good overview of the ERP Process. Suppliers very helpful and knowledgeable. Good scripts giving apple for apple comparisons", commented previous event delegates.

Special discounts apply for early bird bookings and for more than two attendees registering per company.

For further information and to register check out the event website www.erpheadtohead.com

CANIASERP WINS CONTRACTS WITH H GROUP, AND KOREA GOLD EXCHANGE

Receiving favorable reviews for its flexibility, reasonable deployment cost, and quick implementation period, caniasERP wins contracts with H Group, and Korea Gold Exchange.

Global ERP company IAS (Industrial Application Software), which founded IAS Korea in February 2019, is drawing attention. The company won awarded contracts from mid-sized companies to large corporations only three months after having launched caniasERP in Korea. Last October, caniasERP was selected as the standard information system for the H group. It was also selected as the standard ERP for small to mid-sized affiliations of the H group and currently working on the project. caniasERP Go-Live will be serviced starting from January 2020 for H Resort, and the solution will be applied to around 20 affiliations in domestic and also overseas sequentially.

In November 2019, the Korea Gold Exchange (KED) decided to adopt caniasERP which is recognized as its high flexibility is exceptional compared to other products in the industry. Now they are in the process of implementation for caniasERP Go-Live by July 2020. KED also decided to adopt caniasERP for subsidiaries: 3M, International, and Digital Asset. Moreover, 'the first development of W project in Gwangju' is also in progress.

In this regard, IAS Korea cited the advantages of caniasERP as the flexibility of function, cost, support of cloud environment, easy and fast deployment period, reasonable construction cost and maintenance cost.

caniasERP is an enterprise ERP solution that can be customized to meet customer needs with more than 40 modules. Basic modules include core ERP such as finance, cost, sales, purchasing, production, logistics, and etc. Moreover, it also includes extended functions that are document management, project management, business process management (BPM), robotic process automation (RPA), knowledge management, and the Internet of Things (IoT)

In addition, unlike general ERP vendors, caniasERP has the advantage of providing a licensing policy based on concurrent access users so that each user does not need to share an ID through bookmark configuration on his or her own screen. Moreover, it is OS and DB independent structure and multi-platform ability that allows customers to recycle their computer assets as much as possible, significantly reducing the total cost of ownership of an information system. The implementation cost has also been reduced by a platform-independent relational database system called IASDB.

IAS Korea is currently releasing demo programs and also more than 2000 educational videos on its website and YouTube channel for customers to experience caniasERP directly and indirectly. The company's goal is to promote caniasERP for SME customers who plan to adopt or replace the ERP system and also to correct the preconception that the international ERP vendors are more expensive than domestics.

THE FUTURE OF YOUR INDUSTRY WILL BE SHAPED BY *canias*ERP

With 30 years of ERP experience, as in dozens of industries, we have strategic knowledge on all specific requirements of TEXTILE industry. INDUSTRY 4.0 will change the world forever. Is your business ready? Go with *canias*ERP.

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For detailed information:
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SAP S/4HANA MOVEMENT: IMPLEMENTATION AS THE FIRST STEP TO BUILDING THE FUTURE

Technology implementation matters – just not for the reasons you may think. A well-managed project may result in expected outcomes, but its impact on the long-term health of your business is what delivers the greatest promise. SAP has the tools you need to build such a lasting future.

Basedon SAP'sexperienceservingmorethan437,000customers in over 180 countries, it is always a good idea to change while you can, not when you have to. More importantly, access to the right services, assets, and tools makes the process easier.

Safeguarding Deployment for Long-Term Innovation

Regardless if a business wants SAP or an SAP partner to lead its SAP S/4HANA project, frameworks are offered for both. When choosing a global strategic service partner as a prime lead, SAP Integrated Delivery Framework aligns the delivery roles, methodologies, and services of SAP with those of global SAP partners to create a holistic delivery plan and approach. The framework clearly defines the roles and responsibilities of the customer, implementation partner, and SAP at each stage of the project, thus simplifying customer engagement, removing delivery inefficiencies, and accelerating time to value.

If a company chooses SAP as its only implementation partner, SAP Advanced Deployment provides repeatable, standardized delivery services that help reduce project costs and inefficiencies, as well as pre-packaged technical and functional accelerators that can further accelerate rollout. Based on the proven SAP Activate methodology and tailored to an enterprise's specific transition scenario, the service streamlines the implementation or migration to a high-performing, sustainable digital core. Quality assurance audits are performed throughout the process to help ensure accuracy and fidelity to functional scope design. SAP Solution Manager 7.2 or the new SAP Cloud ALM solution build the platform for the entire project lifecycle and beyond.

Whether employing the assistance of SAP or its partners, SAP will help make sure that an implementation project becomes a success. Enabling customers to develop a culture of continuous innovation while leveraging services and deployment tools within SAP Advanced Deployment and SAP Integrated Delivery Framework during the initial project is the objective of the journey that starts with SAP S/4HANA. Some of those assets, tools, and services are explained here.

Deployment Tools

SAP continuously optimizes existing tools and develops new ones, with a strategy that follows insights gained over the past four years since the product launch.

Many customers are choosing between the two mainstream options: standard conversions and new implementations. Therefore, SAP seeks to provide the best possible tools for both. Customers can find detailed information about the tools for system conversion and new implementation in the manifesto, "Mapping Your Journey to SAP S/4HANA: A Practical Guide for Senior IT Leadership."

SAP's top goal is to provide tools that make SAP S/4HANA projects simple business for both customers and partners. As with any IT project, reliable planning, lower risk, and short project times with fewer test cycles are key. SAP is also listening to customers that ask for more guidance and fewer options.

SAP's top priorities for conversion projects are:

- Automation for custom code adaptation
- Materializing the "clean digital core" paradigm
- Downtime optimization with standard tools, especially for midsize and large systems
- Assistance for data cleansing in SAP ERP through modern technologies such as microservices in SAP Cloud Platform

On the other hand, there are three essential parts of every new implementation:

- Preconfigured best practices with SAP Model Company as the project's baseline
- Data migration from legacy systems
- Easy integration through leveraging SAP Cloud Platform

SAP works closely with partners for a seamless integration between the SAP standard tools and their special complimentary offerings.

SAP Model Company Services

SAP Model Company services provide the enterprise content baseline for SAP software implementations – whether on-premise, cloud-based, single tenant, or multitenant, or a hybrid of these environments. Customers can gain a ready-to-use, preconfigured reference solutions that provide preconfigured processes and data for their industry and line of business.

Available for a growing number of industries and lines of business, the implementation services simplify and accelerate the preparation, exploration, realization, and deployment phases of migration to SAP S/4HANA. They are interoperable and assembled to order, so customers can accelerate the transition to an intelligent enterprise.

SAP Value Assurance Services

SAP Value Assurance offers a choice of three service packages to provide the right level of service coverage and engagement for an on-premise, cloud, or hybrid implementation. From planning and safeguarding to business-ready and business optimization, each package offers a predefined structure that is tailorable to specific needs and desired outcomes.

Unlocking Long-Term Business Value with SAP S/4HANA

The SAP S/4HANA Movement program is committed to accelerating customers' transitions to SAP S/4HANA with significant efficiency and minimized risk. However, SAP is does not step away once the technology is implemented and running smoothly; instead, we stand by customers, providing the service and support they need to build a business that is ready for anything that comes their way today, tomorrow, and years into the future.

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.

ERPNEWS

"HOW CAN ERP LEAD THE DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION"

With 2020 the intelligent era has arrived and there are 5 things every business leader would like to take advantage of in the coming decade.

- Digital security
- Machine learning
- Internet of things
- Advanced analytics
- Business algorithms

To do this you'll need a digital core.

Next-generation intelligent ERP is that core and will lead the digital transformation process by providing a robust foundation upon which everything else rests.

Lucy Thorpe,
In Cloud Solutions

INCLOUD SOLUTIONS

ADAPTIVE ERP: JUST WHAT DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION NEEDED

*Article by **Evan Quinn,***
General Manager

Digital Transformation, like most high hype subjects, unfortunately, cannot be concisely defined. It concerns an overabundance of technology and business trends, all overlapping and interacting like an out of control Venn diagram – and that crazy Digital Transformation Venn diagram looks different for every company and morphs every day for every company. You can't simply order Digital Transformation from Best Buy or MediaMarkt, plug it in, boot it up, and poof, all done with Digital Transformation.

Need some examples of the slippery pig nature of Digital Transformation? Smart Devices, so important to Digital Transformation, are rapidly turning into Learning Smart Devices – a consumer example is the Nest Learning Thermostat. Recently released smartphones already tiptoe into the realm of self-learning. Robots are beginning to learn (yes, it is kind of scary). The plant floor, the warehouse, distribution, logistics, retail and how, when and where decisions are made are not just on the path of smart manufacturing, but of learning – continuously and increasingly automatically. We are already swimming in a great data-lake of sensor data, and that lake is turning into an ocean of smarter sensor data. Similarly, we will share our mass quantities of smarter data with others in the value chain far more than in the past, but we will need to protect all that smarter data better than ever.

Basically, the pace of technologically driven change continues to accelerate. For businesses of all kinds, but most for manufacturers and their value chains, Digital Transformation represents not just smart manufacturing, but self-learning manufacturing.

What acts as the main river to tie together all the tributaries of Digital Transformation together into a common stream of rapid continuous improvement? Old-fashioned Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP)! Sorry, that is incorrect, for there could be nothing more restricting to Digital Transformation than old-fashioned ERP. Those slow to implement, impossible to change, difficult to operate and maintain old-fashioned ERP monoliths stifle Digital Transformation. Then how does a company fit all these puzzle pieces of Digital Transformation together into a single picture if not with ERP?

A modern, adaptive ERP is required for successful Digital Transformation. Some call it postmodern ERP, some call it intelligent ERP, some call it digital operation platforms, some refer to it as a solution for Enterprise Business Capabilities. Regardless, today's modern, adaptive ERP turns good old-fashioned ERP on its aging ear. While on the surface, much of Digital Transformation seems to be happening at the edge. It is useless until it is brought into core operational, financial and decision-making processes. What is different about adaptive ERP versus old-fashioned ERP? Here are just a few examples of what separates adaptive ERP from good old-fashioned ERP.

- Architecturally, adaptive ERP assumes change is always in the works. It is designed, therefore, for a more loosely coupled, fast-changing world. Typically, adaptive ERP uses a microservices and RESTful approach, which more readily supports a loosely coupled world. This allows for the rapid development of new data and processes and

the addition of new technologies. Try any of that with old-fashioned ERP.

• When one thinks "deployment" these days, the knee-jerk reaction is "cloud." There is a good reason for that: If IT departments struggled maintaining old-fashioned ERP where things seldom changed and the presumption is you had three years to upgrade, they would be in for a real shock with adaptive ERP. The fast-moving adaptive ERP that supports Digital Transformation requires a depth of expertise possessed typically by the ERP vendor and their closest cloud service provider and partner friends. That said, there are many kinds of clouds and like everything else, clouds are changing and doing so quickly. Therefore, a well thought out adaptive ERP has a reference architecture, which is a system template for deployment. With public, private, hybrid, multi-cloud, and even on-premise clouds, the customer can choose the approach or approaches and the reference architecture enables the adaptive ERP to run properly and with good performance out-of-the-box and over time. This also makes the adaptive ERP more amenable to running on different clouds. Why get locked into a single cloud?

WELL THOUGHT OUT ADAPTIVE ERP HAS A REFERENCE ARCHITECTURE, WHICH IS A SYSTEM TEMPLATE FOR DEPLOYMENT. WITH PUBLIC, PRIVATE, HYBRID, MULTI-CLOUD, AND EVEN ON-PREMISE CLOUDS, THE CUSTOMER CAN CHOOSE THE APPROACH OR APPROACHES AND THE REFERENCE ARCHITECTURE ENABLES THE ADAPTIVE ERP TO RUN PROPERLY AND WITH GOOD PERFORMANCE OUT-OF-THE-BOX AND OVER TIME. THIS ALSO MAKES THE ADAPTIVE ERP MORE AMENABLE TO RUNNING ON DIFFERENT CLOUDS

• "Platform" has been a buzzword in the tech industry for more than three decades, but it has never been more important than today for modern, adaptive ERP that enables Digital Transformation. Some ERP vendors, however, use the term "platform" in misleading ways. Look closely at "XYZ Platform" and you might simply find a set of packaged tools for development and related activities. A platform for adaptive ERP consists of layered services. This layering approach provides more stability and consistency while remaining open to change. For example, security should sit at the core of layered services so that it propagates through all the other platform services. At the far end of the layered services are apps themselves, built from dev services that take advantage of all the other layered services (e.g., user experience services, data services, deployment services, QA services) – including other apps (thanks again to the RESTful approach). Ask the ERP vendor you are considering hard questions about its platform. Did the vendor package up a bunch of tools and slap the term "platform" on the package?

• The term Analytics gets bandied about randomly just like the term Digital Transformation. There are countless analytics solutions out there, each one purporting to be better

than the rest. There is one thing, however, that has been overlooked in the many decades the IT industry has pursued analytics nee business intelligence – the user. Nearly every user is a decision maker. Shouldn't that person, therefore, have access to metrics and real-time data that help them do their job better? Adaptive ERP includes embedded analytics that can be easily used and adapted by everyday users, not just data scientists, to deal with new or unpredictable business situations spawned by Digital Transformation. By the way, the notion that a single database can effectively handle classic business transactions and analytics use cases is unrealistic in the realm of Digital Transformation.

Adaptive ERP, because of its loosely coupled and platform layered services nature can support different forms of data management as the needs arise due to Digital Transformation requirements. The data environment of Digital Transformation is complex and becoming more so – a single data management solution for everything that is required and for everything that will be required is a pipe dream. Adaptive ERP, using a microservices, RESTful architecture, with flexible deployment enabled by a reference architecture, a layered services platform and embedded analytics will really help a company take advantage of Digital Transformation. As transformation business models and technologies get introduced, a flexible adaptive ERP helps companies more quickly come up to speed and realize the benefits. Old-fashioned, brittle, monolithic ERP, conversely, stands in the way.

Evan is an experienced tech industry professional who has worked at companies like Chase Bank, Symantec, Gartner and currently QAD. His focus has been on development, product management and marketing in enterprise applications and application development.

ADAPTIVE ERP INCLUDES EMBEDDED ANALYTICS THAT CAN BE EASILY USED AND ADAPTED BY EVERYDAY USERS, NOT JUST DATA SCIENTISTS, TO DEAL WITH NEW OR UNPREDICTABLE BUSINESS SITUATIONS SPAWNED BY DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

ERPNEWS

"HOW CAN ERP LEAD THE DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION"

ERP or any technology does not lead the digital transformation – people do: Digital Transformation requires leaders and experts that find the right balance between trying new things and maintaining stability and security. A flexible, adaptive ERP, however, sure makes things easier!

Evan Quinn

QAD

ERP IS YOUR OPPORTUNITY TO BE SUCCESSFUL IN A COMPETITIVE AND CHALLENGING BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT

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

According to the most recent McKinsey Global Survey on digital transformations, more than eight in ten respondents say their organisations have undertaken such efforts in the past five years. Digital transformation provides a valuable opportunity to move away from manual processes, increase productivity and efficiency, and allow leaders to focus on more strategic initiatives.

For a digital transformation programme to truly create impact, it requires a solid strategy, foundation, and core: The ERP application. ERP bridges the gap between business challenges and technology, simplifying functions such as finance management, accounting, and inventory management. Cloud-based ERP accelerates the speed of transformation while providing a single version of the truth to business users. When used correctly, ERP guides and supports the business on a daily and real-time basis, bringing revolutionary change to processes and how work gets done.

The ERP core contains all the business rules which drive decisions, processes, and other business systems that require data and instructions. This is what will eventually automate the business, drive enhanced return on investment, and create a competitive edge in the modern business environment. The ERP strategy should be to maximise on all available functionality within the core application, reducing application and process duplication, ultimately reducing cost and business complexity.

ERP: A Friend for Life

When investing in ERP, don't think short term. A strong ERP core can support the business beyond three to five years, and more likely closer to 10 to 15. Consider current needs, but also how the business will grow to ensure that decisions are made with longevity and the future business model in mind. Many business applications such as customer relationship management systems are short to medium term. ERP is the business foundation and not a short-term strategy. Implementing a future-fit ERP solution, organisations can easily incorporate new, emerging technologies such as

business intelligence (BI), artificial intelligence (AI), and the internet of things (IoT). This will not only make the transformation process easier but also opens the door to greater efficiencies and growth, as well as opportunities to innovate. ERP fundamentally changes the business, if you allow ERP to lead your digital transformation programme.

ERP Leading the Digital Transformation

Digital transformation failures are predominantly associated with no clear strategy or being underfunded. McKinsey finds that fewer than one-third of organisational transformations succeed at improving a company's performance and sustaining those gains. Ironically, the lack of strategy creates the underfunding issue.

A strong digital transformation strategy involves a radical reimagining of how the organisation uses technology. Organisations that retrofit current processes to fit their new technology rather than rebuild their operations to most effectively use new technology are limiting ROI. Cloud provides an opportunity to accelerate the transformation and eliminate customizations. Organisations that take a "do what has always been done" approach are more likely to end up with one-off customisations that vendors may not support for long. These customizations also likely don't follow leading practice recommendations, further lowering the probability of project success.

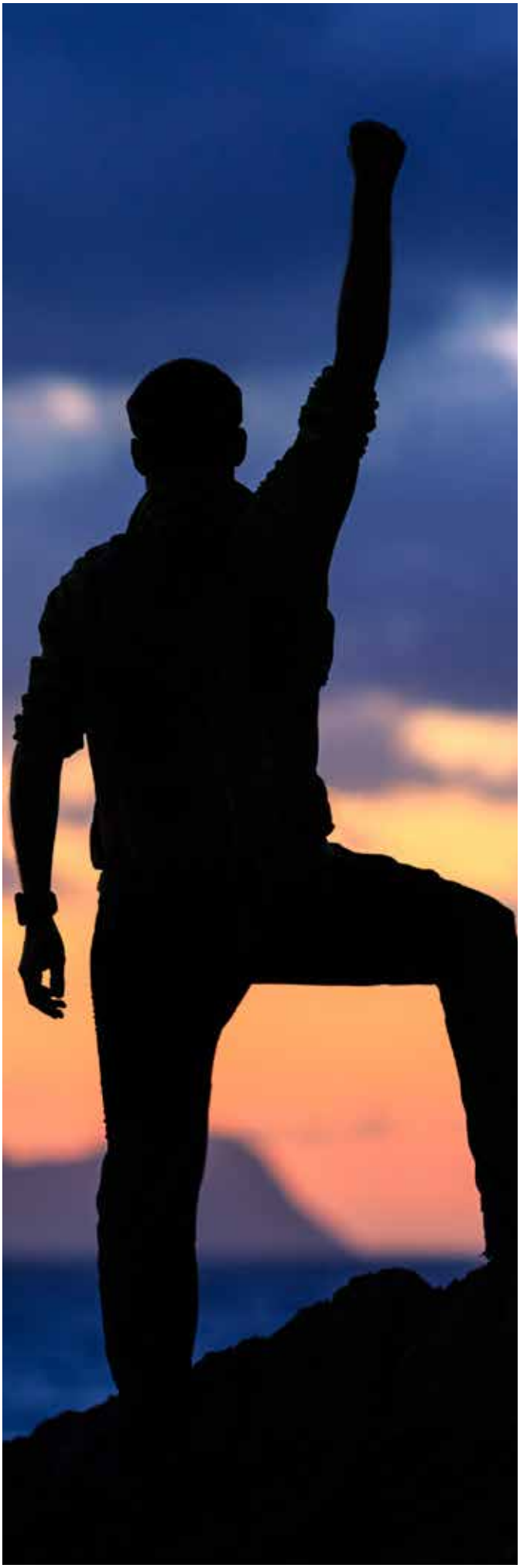
> **A STRONG DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION STRATEGY INVOLVES A RADICAL REIMAGINING OF HOW THE ORGANISATION USES TECHNOLOGY. ORGANISATIONS THAT RETROFIT CURRENT PROCESSES TO FIT THEIR NEW TECHNOLOGY RATHER THAN REBUILD THEIR OPERATIONS TO MOST EFFECTIVELY USE NEW TECHNOLOGY ARE LIMITING ROI. CLOUD PROVIDES AN OPPORTUNITY TO ACCELERATE THE TRANSFORMATION AND ELIMINATE CUSTOMIZATIONS**

Along with a strong digital strategy should be a strong strategy to change. Humans are creatures of habit and not comfortable with changes to their habits. Having a solid Organisational Change Management (OCM) plan can help. According to the global leader in change management best practice research Prosci®, the number one indicator of project success is active and visible sponsorship from leadership. Faster and more active adoption is more likely when executives and business leaders show strong support for change, as well as feeling they understand why change is happening.

The digital transformation strategy exists because the business requires it for sound and justified reasons, including scaling up, improved security, market drivers, customer requirements or modernisation. Conversely, the biggest risk to the business is the digital transformation programme.

Risk can be mitigated by building the core first in the ERP layer and then allowing the ERP to drive the digital transformation in achievable and manageable sprints. These sprints should be aligned with the business operational and financial strategies for the duration of the digital transformation.

Digital transformation is a large step for most organisations, but one that



can come with big rewards for those who plan correctly. Focusing on the core, your organisation's ERP system allows for the largest competitive advantage and future growth.

Author Bio: 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.

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.

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ERP is the most important component of successful digital transformation as it offers organisations the best opportunity to truly innovate. ERP connects the entire business, brings powerful data and analytics, and automates business functions to create increased efficiencies and better experiences for customers, suppliers, stakeholders, and others. It offers a single version of the truth for better, faster decision-making to support future growth and drive the business vision.

Robin Irvine,
General Manager

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ERP AND DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION: MEETING ON HIGHER GROUND

priority™

*Article by **Eran Rozenfeld**,*
Managing Director, Priority Software U.S.

Ah, digital transformation. Everybody's talking about it and lately, we are all part of the conversation. From single business owners to multi-national corporations, the integration of digital technology into all areas of a business, fundamentally changes how you operate and deliver value to your customers.

Digital transformation is the new norm – the process of deploying digital technologies to create new or modify existing business practices, and enhance the customer experience. Simply put, it provides an opportunity to automate core business functions, such as finance and human resources, or manage end-to-end operations that include manufacturing, inventory, distribution and more.

But digital transformation does not stand alone. It shares the stage with ERP. From the small business to the enterprise giant, ERP has a major influence on digital transformation. ERP software can transform your business digitally, while a robust, open and flexible ERP system can significantly affect the way you work. Operational efficiency has become the driving force behind integrating digital transformation in the workplace, and it's due in part to big technologies players, the likes of ERP, AI, IoT and business analytics that continue to shape digital transformation.

There are numerous ways in which ERP can be part of your organization's digital transformation process, far too many to list here. These are my top five.

Head in the clouds

Cloud ERP is the key contributing factor in how ERP promotes and supports digital transformation. Cloud-based ERP enables organizations to access data remotely, anywhere and at any time, and implementation is faster and easier, resulting in a smaller investment in company time and resources. Combined, cloud ERP helps put digital transformation on an organization's fast track (and keep it there).

When the going gets tough

While we're all trying to keep pace with fast-changing business practices, it's competition, getting in and staying in the game, that helps businesses prosper. Digital transformation has made companies faster, better, stronger, paving the way for new opportunities and 'healthy' competition. As such, ERP has amassed all of the benefits along the digital route by forcing vendors to keep up – and continuously deliver customized solutions with new features and functionalities, so that ERP can give companies a true competitive edge.

That's great, let's integrate

Today's ERP can take a lot of credit for running the full gambit, delivering end-to-end business and operational management and control. But it's also ERP's ability to provide a broad platform for integration. This means that modern ERP systems can be easily integrated with 3rd party solutions, tools or apps, to perform a myriad of functions and tasks. With endless possibilities, companies can leverage new technologies, all with a simple plug-in, API or other device, directly into their ERP.

Socializing

ERP can and does go the extra mile. Social ERP, or what some call, "ERP of the future", means that data on each customer is shared throughout the supply chain. It's a surefire way to connect with customers and obtain accurate customer relationship management data. Social ERP can widen the range of functionality of your existing system and unleash the potential of ERP to transform the business digitally.

Taking innovation to scale

Scalability is a key quality of any

ERP system, given the future growth generated by streamlined operational performance and maximized productivity. Being scalable, ERP systems can handle a multitude of tasks, regardless of the size or complexity of your business. You can readily integrate the latest features and improve performance with version updates, to further automation and digitalization practices in your business.

It seems we've come to expect a lot from our ERP systems – and ERP does not disappoint. Numerous vendors continue to develop more intuitive, customer-focused systems in the hope of better managing our business world. With digital transformation at every turn, when it comes to increasing productivity and efficiency in the workplace, one thing we know for sure, that ERP can't be far behind.

Eran is an experienced ERP sales professional with close to 20 years of ERP software expertise, including project management, process analysis, and system implementation. Prior to joining the Priority U.S. management team, Eran was Founder & CEO of Infobase Information Technology, a Priority ERP software consultancy and implementation provider based in Israel. He holds an MBA in Marketing from the UK's Darby University and a BA in Economics from Bar Ilan University, Israel.

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The Role of ERP in Digital Transformation

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

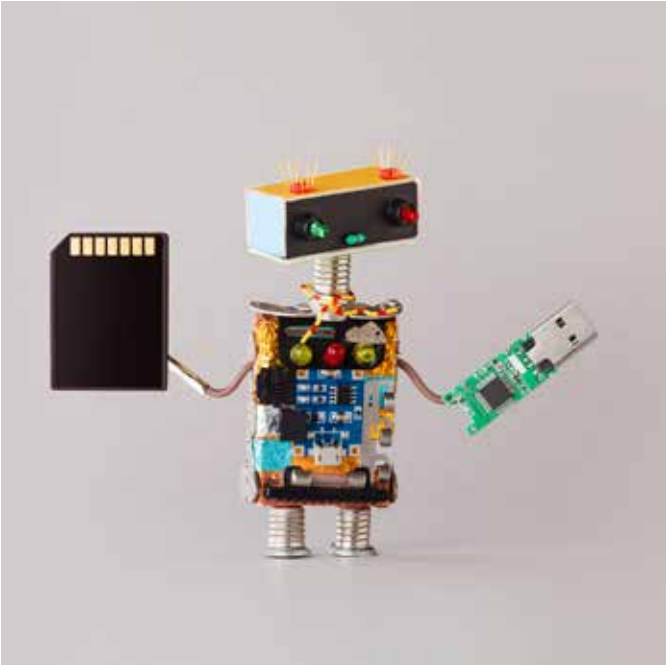
Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) application knocks down operational inefficiencies, data duplicity and increases the turn-around time with maintaining cost and quality. Simply put together, ERP is an umbrella term when it comes to managing your accounts, resources, finances, inventories, and manufacturing. Also, it is possible to manage customers, suppliers, vendors, and partners through a single collaborative platform.

Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) software allows a unified view of multiple business operations and facilitates remote working. This means companies can save both time and effort and at the same time be readily available anytime without having to be stationed in one place. Consolidating data, which was once considered to be a mind-boggling task, is nowadays a no-brainer for most companies due to ERP. Also, emerging technologies like Artificial Intelligence (AI), Machine Learning and Big Data can be integrated with a modern ERP. Therefore, ERP leverages organizations with a bird's eye view into their operations and address promptly the loopholes, if any. These potential capabilities of the ERP system will seamlessly set any organization onto the journey of digital transformation.

Following are the ways in which ERP can lead the digital transformation:

Low Infrastructure Cost

With cloud ERP deployment, companies choose to sign up for the SaaS framework. This will get companies committed to paying just the monthly/ annual subscription instead of investing in heavy IT infrastructure and other hardware. Therefore, businesses can save on money and work from the ground-level with less investment. The addition of various exponentially enhancing ERP functionality adds both values to work and saves money in the long-run. It is advisable to get rid of older features, functionalities and customizations that are no longer in need.



Enhanced Reach

As a part of digital transformation, it is important that companies are available for their customers and other associations all the time. Since ERP leverages freedom of movement, employees can access data and connect with vendors, suppliers, and customers from anywhere, anytime. Although most companies believe to have an on-premise ERP system, cloud-based solutions offer scalability, cost-effectiveness and safeguards against cybersecurity.

Technology Integration

It is important that your ERP systems are scalable. Also, it is not a novice term for your employees. As much as important it is to implement ERP flawlessly, the fact that employees should be given rigorous training of the software cannot be overlooked. An ERP system can be used to its maximum potential only when its users are well-versed with its features and functionalities in and out. Unless employees are trained to use ERP fully, the company is as good as a non-ERP user. The higher level in digital maturity is when companies can integrate modern technologies like AI, machine learning, IoT, big data, and automation tools as and when required.

> **GETTING AN ERP SYSTEM PLAYS A VITAL ROLE IN DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION BY LEVERAGING INVESTMENTS IN TECHNOLOGIES AND ENHANCED BUSINESS PROCESSES TO ASSESS THE WORTH AND ATTAIN SUSTAINABILITY THROUGH SOUND METHODOLOGY, COGNITION, AND IMPLEMENTATION**

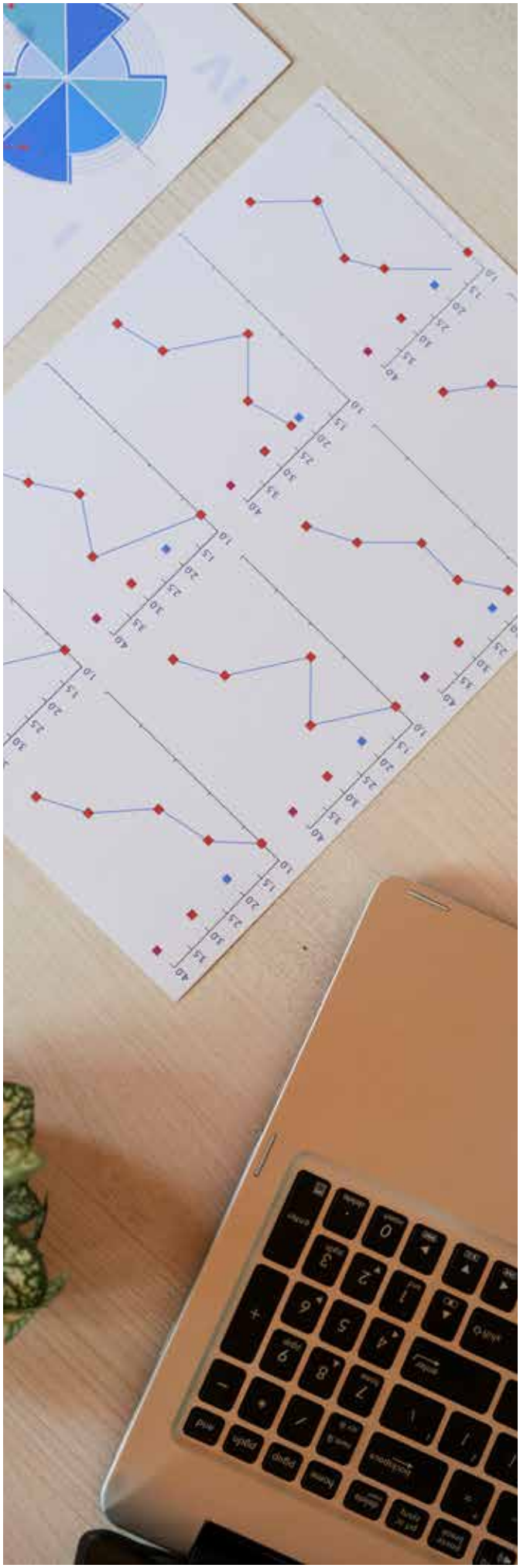
Accurate Data

Data hygiene is very much important when it comes to doing business with heavy cash flows. Data redundancy or data duplicity can burn a hole in the pocket. Multiple entries of the same suppliers, vendors, and customers can demand time and energy, which could potentially be used in elevating business operations to its optimum levels.

Better Integration Capabilities

ERP has the functionality to integrate with other software tools and applications. This results in improved business operations and creates a base for thriving technology. For example, ERP can be integrated with Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system. Such integrations improvise business processes and help create greater sustainability. Also, integration with social media platforms, analytics tools and other technologies simplifies complex business operations.

Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) application is a strong business suite that simplifies complex functions, integrates multiple tools and applications, collaborates multiple departments and manages inventory, finance and resources. Organizations experience increased profitability, better management and a unified view of the business through a single platform for all the operations, along with achieving mobility. ERP system leads to digital transformation by exploring the maximum potential of modern technologies like AI, machine learning, blockchain and big data.



> **EVEN IF YOUR PLANS DON'T FORESEE ANY DEFINITE GROWTH, IT'S STILL WISE TO ASK THE VENDOR ABOUT VARIOUS "WHAT IF" SCENARIOS. SOMETIMES THE QUESTION OF SCALABILITY CAN BE A DECISIVE FACTOR WHEN IT COMES TO SELECTING FROM COMPETING ERP SYSTEMS**

Takeaway

Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system has evolved since the inception of cloud technology. A cloud-based ERP system goes beyond collaborations and remote working; it literally helps organizations keep up with the fast-paced environment. ERP software offers powerful data and comprehensive analytics that help companies gain profound knowledge about their business. Getting an ERP system plays a vital role in digital transformation by leveraging investments in technologies and enhanced business processes to assess the worth and attain sustainability through sound methodology, cognition and implementation.

Kalyani writes about upcoming technologies like big data, machine learning, virtual reality, AI and robotics. Her expertise lies in growing business opportunities by market qualified lead generation through inbound and outbound practices. Kalyani works for Sage Software Solutions Pvt. Ltd. is 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

Sage Software Solutions Pvt. Ltd. is a leading ERP and CRM solutions provider, driving business transformations. Our ERP software helps manufacturing industries manage their accounts, inventory, and supply chain with faster execution time.

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ERP can leaf the digital transformation path with its optimum potential of collaborating multiple departments onto a single platform, facilitate mobility and seamless integration with other tools and technology.

Kalyani Chaudhari,

Marketing Manager at Sage Software Solutions Pvt Ltd

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INCLOUD SOLUTIONS

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

What is the role of ERP in digital transformation?

Along with 2020, the intelligent era has arrived. Digital transformation has become less of a buzzword and more of a reality and business owners are keen to put some flesh on the bones – how exactly can they use and shape the digital transformation concept to achieve the best advantage for their enterprise?

The answer will be different for everyone and each company needs to ensure that its technology road map aligns with critical business needs. SAP Business ByDesign chief Rainer Zinow gives the example of a German wine company that provides customers with precise information about the grapes in any given bottle of wine simply by zapping the label with their smartphones. This is how they have added value to their customers but each company will be different. So the question everyone needs to ask is - what can the latest technology do for me? And here, in particular, we are looking at the role ERP plays in bringing that about.

The digital core

ERP plays its most useful role in providing you with a digital core. Depending on which product you use this should be made up of 3 elements. Firstly you should be getting a range of built-in capabilities like financial management, CRM and people management. Next, you want the capacity to access a range of intelligent services from machine learning to the internet of things and even advanced statistics. Then you will be looking for a digital platform that gives you the capability to build out elements that are not included as standard but which make a huge difference to you because of your individual needs. The digital core, therefore, is made up of an intelligent suite, intelligent services and a digital platform.

A cloudy future

Cloud ERP is highly in demand and the market continues to grow to ensure that cloud products doing well now will continue to have a long shelf life into the future. Companies are investing heavily in these solutions to ensure that their customers continue to find them relevant and valuable on their digital transformation journey.

For example;

Mobile is how most millennials now want to access their ERP at least part of the time, so the best companies are making sure that the user experience here is good. Mobile access should mirror that of the desktop system and be both seamless and attractive.

Analytics have become vital too. It's not just about collecting the data anymore, now it's about using it to make smarter decisions and that data has to be easy to use. SAP Business ByDesign, for example, is working on a library of pre-built KPIs to make life quicker and easier.

Regulatory Compliance - Great ERP keeps you up to date with changing global compliance – the result of a great deal of backroom work from your provider – so you don't have to worry!

Finally,

Integration platform

When you want to build out new integrations to really take advantage of all that the intelligent enterprise world has to offer, a side by side extension model gives additional freedom for integrating 3rd party applications.

So you can see how next-generation intelligent ERP is leading the digital transformation process by providing a digital core. This is the robust foundation upon which everything else rests and without which everything else would fall. So if you want to forge ahead with growth and innovation in 2020 a trusted ERP foundation is essential.

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.

5 BUSINESS INTELLIGENCE TRENDS TO MONITOR IN 2020

Article by ***Aimee Laurence,***

The last few years have seen a major shift in business intelligence. It became all about big data, and the importance of data. Gone are the spreadsheets of old, replaced now by interactive dashboards and visualizations. Advanced data analysis became accessible to all and created self-service analytics. The landscape of business intelligence is still changing and 2020 will see some key emerging trends that are important to monitor. We've compiled for you the 5 key areas we predict will be major for business intelligence in 2020.

Automation

According to Gartner, by 2020Ph.D. over 40% of data-related jobs will be automated by machines and we are already seeing this occurring. Companies are automating every step of their business including their analytics. Part of the reason this is happening is because of a shortage of skilled analysts that cannot match the high demand. Companies know they need to automate as much as possible to keep their human workforce focused on necessary tasks.

Data discovery

The age of spreadsheets and dashboards is gone; the focus is now on telling a story of data. There is an important new trend of analytics that can interpret data for a company. Companies have loads of data but they need it to make sense for their business. Some startup companies are creating data discovery and data visualization tools that transform data into a narrative, but this is still in the early stages and will likely see important developments in 2020. In fact, according to Olivia Romilly, a business writer at PhD Writing Service and BigAssignments, "To do this, businesses need software they can use easily, can be moulded to their needs, requires little interpretation time, and can handle large quantities of data. Visualization of data is becoming more vital for companies to be able to gain key insight and feed into their decision-making process."

Mobile Updates

To date, mobile business intelligence was limited to replicating a desktop experience in a mobile-friendly way. However, 2020 will likely see updates to how mobile business intelligence is presented. No longer will it be sufficient to replicate a desktop interface on a mobile phone, but the entire experience will be different.

Voice and Natural Language Searching

With the increase in hands-free technology and voice assistants, there will be a big increase in natural language searching. Lee Palmer, a business strategist at Write My Paper and Assignment Help, says that "the opportunity for natural language searching in 2020 is through voice search because there is is a real need in everyday life to fill this niche, especially when you consider the trend of mobile business intelligence." If you're on the go, it's much more likely that you'll be using voice to do something instead of typing it in your phone.

> **THE WAY PEOPLE ENGAGE WITH THEIR ANALYTICS IS CHANGING ALSO. INSTEAD OF LOGGING ON AND LOOKING AT DASHBOARD DATA TO CONSUME ANALYTICS, THE CONTENT CAN INSTEAD BE DISTRIBUTED TO THE USER AT ANY TIME, ANY PLACE. IN 2020, THE TREND WILL PROBABLY BE TO BRING DATA ANALYSIS TO THE USER BY INTEGRATING IT INTO EVERY APPLICATION INSTEAD OF HAVING THEM SEARCH FOR IT**

Data Analysis

The way people engage with their analytics is changing also. Instead of logging on and looking at dashboard data to consume analytics, the content can instead be distributed to the user at any time, any place. In 2020, the trend will probably be to bring data analysis to the user by integrating it into every application instead of having them search for it. Though there are certain companies that are wading slowly into this field, no major vendors are making analytics available everywhere yet. However, this is likely to change in 2020 as demand from the user will force vendors to consider various ways to deliver analytics directly to the user.

This includes predictive analytics tools that can help shape a company's risk management strategy by looking at current data trends and historical data to predict future trends. It also looks at self-service analytics which enables each user to extract their own data a way they can understand it.

The environment of business intelligence is increasingly complex, so it's important to understand the trends and latest developments to always stay ahead of the game. Companies need to adopt the most recent technologies in every field to make sure they aren't left behind. The business intelligence community is under pressure to modernize its approach to analytics. The 5 trends listed above will make a big difference in achieving this necessary shift.

Aimee Laurence, a lifestyle blogger at Business Essay and Essay Writing Services, is involved in numerous business projects. Her goal is to identify problems and present solutions to various projects and improving efficiencies in overall communication. Also, she writes for Academized.com, academic service.

Technology Evaluation Centers

3 OFTEN-OVERLOOKED ASPECTS OF ERP SOFTWARE

The major benefits of enterprise resource planning (ERP) software are well known. The automation of routine transactions, the integration of critical business functions, and the linking of different departments, plus the capture and centralized storage of data are all things you may expect to gain from a successful selection project for a new ERP solution.

In most cases, ERP systems available today are also comprehensive in what they offer. In other words, you'll find that ERP solutions have good coverage of functions such as finance/accounting, sales management, inventory management, customer relationship management, business intelligence capabilities, and other such business mainstays. In other words, each function has a sufficient number of features built into the software.

Here at TEC, we've frequently written about the importance of evaluating functionality and features in light of your business requirements when selecting ERP software. In this post, however, we direct your attention to three less-obvious aspects of ERP systems that can be overshadowed by functional categories and the incorporation of new technologies. These are harder-to-quantify aspects of the software, or "soft factors", that nevertheless matter a great deal for the long-term success of an ERP system adoption.

Aspect #1: User Experience (UX)

How employees feel about using ERP software, while it is a subjective impression, is actually important. The user friendliness of any ERP solution ranks up there with how well the functions and features align with your company's business requirements. This is because even the most comprehensive, feature-rich piece of software will turn out to be a poor investment if would-be users find it confusing, or they take a long time to learn how to use it, or some of them outwardly refuse to use it altogether.

So how do you judge something as subjective as UX? The answer lies in having a properly chosen selection team—not just one or two individuals. The selection team should be made up of employees from every department or stakeholder group that will be using any new ERP system.

Besides consulting these stakeholders when gathering your requirements, you'll want to include them when it comes to comparing competing ERP solutions. A particular UX may seem intuitive and user friendly to you, or to the information technology (IT) manager, or someone else at your organization, but when that person from accounting, or inventory, or sales, etc., tries it out, they may find it's far from ideal.

People today are used to using consumer apps and websites that make things easy in their personal lives. Most people will bring similar expectations to their workplace, so they may run out of patience if they encounter software with a substantial learning curve. Keep in mind that most users will not need to understand how to configure or set up the new software—they'll just want to be able to perform the tasks they need to accomplish quickly and easily. In the case where the screen they land on is not the one they need, they expect a quick swipe or click will take them to exactly what they're looking for.

More and more, ERP software vendors are focusing development time and effort on providing consumer-grade user experience. This is a trend we expect to continue, meaning most companies ought to be able to find an ERP system that both meets their functional needs and passes the UX test.

Aspect #2: Scalability

Most businesses hope to grow and expect their ERP software to accommodate that growth. ERP solutions are expected to have a working life span of at least 2 to 3 years before a major upgrade is required. A lot can happen in that time frame.

> **EVEN IF YOUR PLANS DON'T FORESEE ANY DEFINITE GROWTH, IT'S STILL WISE TO ASK THE VENDOR ABOUT VARIOUS "WHAT IF" SCENARIOS. SOMETIMES THE QUESTION OF SCALABILITY CAN BE A DECISIVE FACTOR WHEN IT COMES TO SELECTING FROM COMPETING ERP SYSTEMS**

Most modern ERP solutions offer scalability—defined as a solution's capability to handle an increasing amount of work or to be expanded to accommodate more users and demands.

As with most things, scalability comes with additional costs. Ask your ERP vendor to add 50 additional user licenses, and it's reasonable to assume there will be some additional fees. While negotiating to purchase a new ERP solution, it's wise to ask about scalability. Ask how growth would be handled, including the cost of adding additional licenses. In some cases, there may also be some need for additional hardware. Hardware is less of a consideration if the chosen ERP software is based in the cloud, but even cloud ERP systems depend on the customer having reliable and fast internet connectivity with sufficient bandwidth. That may not seem like a problem for a smaller business, but may require some upgrades for, say, a company with a couple hundred users or more.

Even if your plans don't foresee any definite growth, it's still wise to ask the vendor about various "what if" scenarios. Sometimes the question of scalability can be a decisive factor when it comes to selecting from competing ERP systems.

Aspect #3: Vendor Support

While this is actually an attribute of the people behind the software rather than the software itself, it is too important to overlook. It also straddles the middle ground between something that's a subjective perception, such as UX, and something that can be backed with some numerical values, like scalability. For example, the average length of time it takes for a vendor to resolve a service

ticket issue is a quantifiable measure and hence an indication of the vendor's level of responsiveness. But even though the overall perception of whether a vendor is responsive and supportive is not something that can be quantified, it can still be as important to a user group's level of satisfaction.

Working with a vendor that stands behind its ERP solution and is eager to nurture the relationship with your organization—the customer—after the sale, can be a vital aspect of whether your new ERP system lives up to the expectations and offers a good return on investment (ROI).

The quality of vendor support is arguably even more important than it was 5 to 10 years ago. That's because cloud-based deployments have become so common. When most ERP software was on premise, the frontline of user support was often provided by in-house IT staff or hired consultants who often worked on-site. In the age of the cloud, however, support is most often delivered via help screens, online chat applications, and phone. In most cases, it also involves vendor staff other than the sales engineers your selection team was likely to interact with during your software evaluation and demo.

So, how can your selection team possibly evaluate the quality of vendor support before you make the decision to purchase a particular ERP system? The best way is to talk to other customers, much like yourself, who have already experienced this vendor support firsthand. Be sure to ask the vendors of the ERP solutions on your shortlist to provide you with a list of client references. If possible, those references should include companies that are similar to yours in terms of industry, size, or preferably both. Most importantly, contact those people and get as much relevant information as you can from them. This means not settling for a vague and general comment such as "the service has been good." Press for some details.

Getting Qualified Help

ERP software is far from one-size-fits-all. Most vendors would be loath to turn away a new client simply because the vendor lacks experience in that client's particular industry or the vendor's solution has many but not all of the features and functions the prospective client requires. However, even though a solution may lack some needed features, it may still represent a good fit for an organization's requirements. The best way to ensure your organization spends its time giving careful consideration only to those ERP solutions that are fairly well aligned to their needs is to go into the selection process with a clear idea of your business requirements, priorities, and goals.

You don't have to go it alone. The software selection process has well-defined and proven best practices, and independent consultants and online resources are available that can help guide you through the process. Just be certain that such guidance comes from an impartial source that is not obliged to recommend some vendors' ERP software while ignoring others'.

TEC has plenty of resources to help you through the entire process: requirements gathering, the selection process, negotiation and purchase, implementation, and maintenance. Even if you just need some basic questions answered, don't hesitate to contact TEC.

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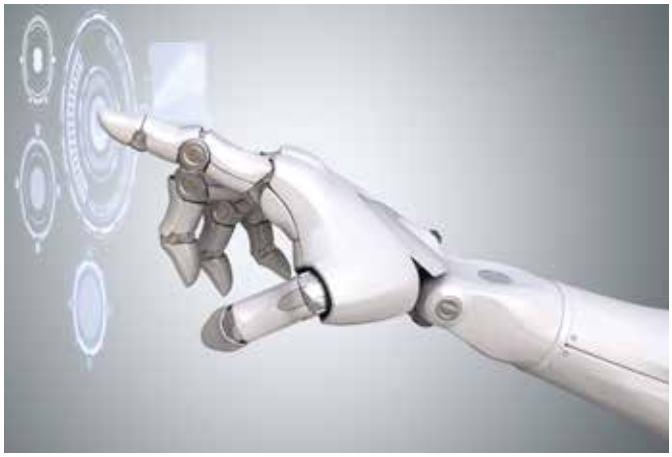
HOW ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE CAN BE APPLIED TO ERP SOFTWARE

Article by ***Ashley Halsey,***

Artificial Intelligence, also referred to as AI, is everywhere these days. Once merely the talk of fanciful science-fiction films, AI is now used daily, globally and often by people who don't even realize that they are using it. Its applications range from helping you choose a film on Netflix to advertising clothing that you are in the market for to diagnosing cancer. It uses large swathes of data to create predictive images of the world around us and, remarkably enough, we're only just at the beginning of unlocking its true potential. One recent area that has seen a big introduction to AI is ERP software or Enterprise Resource Planning software. ERP software is like a digital manager, who links all of the disparate elements to a company together to create a unified, working organism. AI can be applied to this model to make it much more efficient and help to create the best possible scenario for success across a company. Let's look into how that can be done.



Product Management

From supply to warehouse to customer, the life cycle of products within a company is an important one and, on the largest scale, a very complicated one. Managing how much product is where is one of the most difficult tasks that companies face, a task that spans across multiple departments. "Using AI for predicting the flow of product, based on modeling for supply and demand, allows for much more efficient control and inventory management under the ERP system", explains Jorge Martinez, a deep learning expert at Writinity and LastMinuteWriting. It's a really excellent way to avoid the tiresome inventory comparisons that need to happen all the time and to speed up the understanding of where and when the product will be needed in your company.

Forecasting

Connected to the point above, the very concept of predicting, or forecasting, the market or company future is immensely powerful. AI uses data to analyze your company and spot trends that would take data scientists weeks and weeks to establish on their own. The trends can be used to forecast the future on both large and small scales. "ERP and AI go hand in hand since ERP software systems get a very complete picture of operations within a company. The amount of data that can be gathered with ERP software makes it the perfect companion to AI that can then use that data to make predictions that will then

> AI CAN USE FINANCIAL DATA TO THEIR BENEFIT FOR THE PURPOSE OF LEARNING ABOUT THE COMPANY AND MAKING PREDICTIONS ABOUT ITS FINANCIAL FUTURE. BUT IT CAN ALSO BE MADE RESPONSIBLE FOR ESTABLISHING THINGS LIKE WAGE ADJUSTMENT, COMPENSATION DISTRIBUTION, AND ALL THE OTHER COMPLEX, NUMERACY-HEAVY SIDES TO FINANCE WHICH ARE IMPORTANT FOR COMPANIES OF ALL DIFFERENT SHAPES AND SIZES

inform company policy and practice", explains Nasir Jan, IT expert at DraftBeyond and ResearchPapersUK. This is a very valuable application of AI within any company and can be used to help companies keep ahead of their competition.

Time-Saving Automation

AI can act, at least logically speaking, like a human being, knowing when to trigger what, in such a way that you can really save time and man-power in getting certain procedures done. Humans fulfill roles under the ERP software's guidance but most of what they are doing relates to a strict set of rules, rules which can be just as easily taught to and adopted by an AI. Taking personnel away from these sorts of jobs frees you up to use them elsewhere, which can massively boost your company's productivity. The more mundane, but still important, tasks can then be taken away from human beings who can direct their more fine-tuned facilities towards problems that require human intervention.

Financial Data

AI can use financial data to their benefit for the purpose of learning about the company and making predictions about its financial future. But it can also be made responsible for establishing things like wage adjustment, compensation distribution, and all the other complex, numeracy-heavy sides to finance which are important for companies of all different shapes and sizes. Finance is a crucial area and being able to eliminate human error with AI could prove extremely valuable to your company.

Conclusion

Hopefully, this list has ably indicated to you all of the ways, both complex and simplistic, in which AI can couple with ERP software to boost efficiency, spot trends, make predictions and otherwise have a positive influence on your company. AI is an amazing tool that deserves to be implemented in all sorts of companies.

Ashley Halsey is a professional tech writer, working at LuckyAssignments and GumEssays, writing on all sorts of topics relating to marketing strategy and technology for business. She spends most of her spare time traveling with her family and gathering information for her latest piece of writing.

ERPNEWS

TOP PREDICTIONS FOR THE ERP SOFTWARE INDUSTRY IN 2020

As we look into 2020, we see leaders of large enterprises aborting embedded ERP and EDI solutions. Instead, they will be taking advantage of cloud-based ERP solutions with loosely coupled and tightly integrated EDI architecture. This technology stack will fully automate companies' value chains and yield significant improvements to their organizations. We also believe this same ERP & EDI quiver will be a huge contributor to blockchain adoption. An adaptable EDI platform integrated with ERP can make this happen.

Glenn McPeak,
Data Masons' CEO

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

Data Masons sees more customers adopting cloud-based Microsoft ERP platforms that are integrated with a well-devised cloud-based EDI solution in 2020. This adoption will enable an organization's digital transformation efforts by electronically integrating their entire value chain. Our seamlessly integrated and loosely coupled EDI architecture will require no customizations for ERP integration. This powerful solution will help companies to on-board ANY trading partners safely and securely without requiring significant internal IT resources.

Glenn McPeak,
Data Masons' CEO

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TOP 2020 AI TRENDS: WHY PEOPLE ACTUALLY WANT MORE MACHINES IN THE WORKPLACE

Article by ***Susan Galer***

Artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning will soon be everywhere, and we will learn to love them for all the right reasons. That is my prediction after seeing the latest research about these fast-evolving technologies. Read on for a quick update on 2020 AI trends from leading industry analysts.

Expect Booming Growth for AI and Machine Learning

Begin with the big picture: Gartner analysts said that AI — with a particular emphasis on machine learning — will eventually infiltrate just about every existing technology. IDC predicted companies will invest over $265 billion worldwide in new intelligence technologies by 2023.

Slightly further out, IDC researchers predicted that AI will be inescapable by 2025. These analysts saw AI as a "key ingredient" in 90 percent of business software applications. They also said that over 50 percent of user interface interactions will incorporate AI into computer vision, speech, natural language processing, and augmented and virtual reality. Forrester analysts called automation "a force-multiplier that will disrupt economic opportunity for many… a dynamic already underway that will pick up substantial speed and scope and requires attention now."

AI: Fastest Route to Victory

One pervasive theme in 2020 AI trends was speed, or as many analysts called it, "hyper-automation." Gartner analysts predicted that hyper-automation will spread big-time, notably into more traditional knowledge worker tasks. By 2024, IDC said AI-fueled enterprises with "proactive, hyper-speed operational changes and market reactions, will respond to customers, competitors, regulators, and partners 50 percent faster than their peers."

Regarding customer experience (CX), Forrester researchers saw near-real-time experiences becoming table stakes for most industries as companies were pressured to build matching real-time customer experience signals. Forrester researchers predicted that CX leaders will manage a "portfolio of automation experiences, from the building and testing of data to the delivery and perceived value (or lack of value) of those experiences."

Humans Plus Machines: The New Norm

Here is the kicker, and it's heartening to us humans: Gartner researchers said that AI and machine learning will not completely replace people because "AI-driven autonomous capabilities… cannot match the human brain's breadth of intelligence and dynamic general-purpose learning. Instead, they focus on well-scoped purposes, particularly for automating routine human activities."

Forrester analysts picked up the human-machine thread, predicting that work will depend on "a symbiotic

relationship between [hu]man and machine. This is not a [hu]man-led, machine-do structure; instead it will match leadership, decisioning, and executive tasks across robots and machines that best deliver the desired outcome."

Additionally, about those 90 percent of enterprise applications that IDC predicted will be chock-full of AI, the same researchers said most will "deliver incremental improvements to automate processes and replace heuristic or rule-based techniques to make applications smarter and more dynamic."

How Machine Learning Benefits Daily Business

There are many places in the business where a strategic dose of AI and machine learning will quietly, yet dramatically change how people work and companies operate. These include order to cash, design to operate, customer experience, and procurement.

In this video demonstration at the SAP TechEd event, I saw how image-based recognition helped automate the procurement experience. It showed how a buyer ordering everyday equipment – such as a laptop, keyboard, or mobile device – would not need to type in product names or model numbers. The buyer could simply take a picture of the product on their mobile device and the algorithm would quickly find the exact product or suggested comparable items from the supplier catalog.

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"This just one example of how we're applying machine learning in small steps in hundreds of places across SAP solutions," said Jana Richter, chief product owner of SAP Leonardo Machine Learning Applications. "It doesn't completely change procurement, but brings automation and convenience where it counts — in this instance, to image-based purchasing."

What the AI Future Holds

In Gartner's latest surveys, respondents who wanted AI to help with tasks outnumbered those who wanted AI to completely take over tasks three to one. That is likely because the same respondents ranked, in order of importance, their top-three reasons for using AI as: automating repetitive or manual tasks, improving customer experience, and reducing costs.

As for where people come in, Forrester analysts advised workers to learn core skills, adapt to new working models, and "understand what it means to be ready and fit for the future, maximizing their 'Robotics Quotient (RQ).'" For the uninitiated, Forrester coined the term RQ, which scores someone's ability to work with machines.

Naturally, analysts have caveats about AI's growing prevalence, but that's for another article.

HOW CLOUD ERP HELPS CONSUMER PACKAGED GOODS COMPANIES SOLVE THEIR BIGGEST IT CHALLENGES

Article by ***Jon Goode***

Here are five different ways a unified, cloud enterprise resource planning solution can help CPGs work through some of their biggest technology obstacles.

In today's uncertain trade environment, consumer packaged goods (CPG) firms need extremely high levels of inventory management and accuracy, both of which help them manage ever-changing tariff complexities. They also need solid supply chain planning, forecasting and demand planning capabilities—all areas where legacy technology solutions fall short. Learn more about these challenges and how to solve them in "How Technology is Transforming the CPG Industry."

GSI is a NetSuite partner with deep experience working with CPG companies whose annual revenues range from $50 million to $200 million. Over the years, it's come to understand some of the technology pain points that CPG companies are dealing with and how a cloud ERP can help them overcome these issues and prevail in today's competitive business environment.

Their legacy solutions are holding them back

In most cases, the CPG industry's legacy solutions lack essential functional components of an integrated system that can handle complex inventory planning, for example, or associating landed costs with items in order to manage tariff considerations and other complexities. There's also no way to configure these financial and operational functions within a legacy ERP, nor can these tasks be handled effectively using spreadsheets or QuickBooks, both of which are still in use at many CPG companies.

They have small IT staffs

This hampers CPG companies' ability to upgrade their current technology infrastructures and benefit from modern solutions. In many cases, CPG companies are working with small IT staffs, and a lot of them have no desire to have much of any IT staff. A unified, cloud ERP supports these "lean IT" missions by providing a turnkey platform that needs little or no intervention on the part of the CPG firm. Taking even more pressure off its clients' IT staff, GSI steps in to handle any administrative activities that the company doesn't want to take on, making the unified ERP completely turnkey and ready for operation.

> WITHOUT SIZABLE IT TEAMS AND EXPERIENCE TO LEAN ON, CPG FIRMS TEND TO GET STUCK IN A VICIOUS CYCLE OF TRYING TO ALIGN THEIR TECHNOLOGY NEEDS WITH THEIR BUDGETS (AND TIME). WITH THE GSI SUITESUCCESS METHODOLOGY, EACH CPG CLIENT'S SPECIFIC CUSTOMIZATION NEEDS ARE ASSESSED AND THE INTEGRATION OF ANY THIRD-PARTY SOLUTIONS IS MAPPED OUT IN ADVANCE

Their "frankensystems" lack capabilities and don't integrate with one another

In most cases, today's CPG companies rely on partially-integrated ERP solutions like Microsoft Dynamics GP and Sage. Most have fairly complex business requirements in place, and tend to augment their ERPs with spreadsheets and other manual approaches. Knowing that these "frankensystems" don't provide the modern capabilities that they need to operate their global enterprises, CPG firms come to GSI in search of a full-blown, integrated ERP that works on the day that system is switched on.

They have analysis paralysis

Without sizable IT teams and experience to lean on, CPG firms tend to get stuck in a vicious cycle of trying to align their technology needs with their budgets (and time). With the GSI SuiteSuccess methodology, each CPG client's specific customization needs are assessed and the integration of any third-party solutions is mapped out in advance. This provides a conduit for continuous improvement at a low risk—meaning, it doesn't require managed service clients to purchase any "hours" in advance.

They can't easily manage multiple currencies or subsidiaries

Working with CPG clients whose annual revenues are $50 million to $200 million, GSI sets up dashboards that enable enterprise-wide visibility that most of those companies previously lacked. It also manages multi-currency and multi-subsidiary requirements. The $100 million CPG firm that recently purchased or created new subsidiaries, for instance, must be able to parse those entities' data out and assess it both collectively and separately. NetSuite brings those capabilities to the table by allowing companies to do fairly simple financial roll-ups across all of their subsidiaries.

Knowing that CPG companies lack IT capabilities, GSI also focuses on ease of integration. It avoids complex customizations within the ERP software itself while also providing a high level of flexibility when integrating outside applications into the unified, cloud platform. Download the full GSI kit to learn more.

POP QUIZ, HOT SHOT: IS A 2-TIER ERP STRATEGY RIGHT FOR YOUR ORGANIZATION?

Yes, considering a two-tier ERP strategy is a little different than Dennis Hopper and Keanu Reeves taking us through the Hollywood-fabricated intensity regarding a bomb on a bus.

However, we do have a brief quiz to help you decide if a two-tier ERP strategy would be helpful for your business. Here you go:

Is your business a manufacturer, distributor, private equity firm, or holding company?
- *Yes*
- *No*

Is your business a multi-national company or one with multiple business units?
- *Yes*
- *No*

Does your company currently use homegrown, Oracle, or SAP enterprise software systems?
- *Yes*
- *No*

Will consolidating your operations onto one enterprise software system result in the degradation of business processes?
- *Yes*
- *No*

If you answered "yes" to all the above, it's time to seriously consider a two-tier ERP strategy.

What is a two-tier ERP strategy?

A two-tier ERP strategy is an agile approach to business modernization that allows an organization to iteratively replace legacy software without disrupting core ERP business operations. With a two-tier ERP strategy, businesses don't need to view their headquarters and other sites as a collective whole. Instead, they can consider the needs of each location, along with the organizational operational requirements, to choose the best systems capable of easily working together to meet their diverse needs.

This approach provides businesses the necessary ERP elements needed in both headquarters and at the various sites, without requiring the implementation of unneeded functionality in either place. With a two-tier ERP strategy, the individual sites can focus on the operational business systems needed to run that location—like local manufacturing or field service needs—while headquarters can focus on the financial management and other necessary systems needed to run the organization overall.

Why should you be thinking about a two-tier ERP strategy now?

If your answers to the brief quiz above aren't incentive enough to start thinking about a two-tier ERP strategy, let's take a closer look at what a two-tier ERP strategy can bring to your business with a "Top 3 Reasons Why You Need a Two-Tier ERP Strategy":

Your organization is already considering a cloud-based computing strategy

Many companies are now in the research and consideration phase of moving away from an on-premises computing environment to a cloud-based infrastructure, for various reasons—among them being reduced costs, better security, and faster integration or deployment of acquired or expanded operations. Cloud computing is fast becoming the new standard for IT infrastructure, and organizations are keen to take advantage of all the benefits it will bring.

You're finding it difficult to codify or automate the business processes that power competitive differentiation

The ERP software industry has a long-standing, negative reputation for making companies adjust their business processes to how the software works rather than providing software that adjusts to the business processes and workflows the businesses have honed and consider the "secret sauce" of their business strategy.

With a two-tier ERP strategy, businesses can maintain the ERP systems and business processes that remain constant—like general ledger, financial reporting, and other staid workflows. If it ain't broke, don't fix it.

However, this strategy also gives companies the flexibility you need to accommodate new, unique, or revised business processes in other areas, like product development, customer engagement, services enablement, and more. This flexibility comes from an extensible, industry-focused, cloud-based ERP software system—which can be deployed without resulting in business process degradation or value loss.

You don't have an easy way to get a comprehensive view of what is happening across all parts of the organization

Show of hands: who here loves all the data, tables, spreadsheets, and weeks it can take to get information, analyze it, and then use it to make decisions? Decisions that could have saved your organization thousands of dollars if you only had the information and analysis available real-time?

While some people may be really into spreadsheets, no one is into losing thousands of dollars. This is an area where a two-tier ERP strategy really shines.

With an industry-specific ERP system automating production-level workflows, parts are sourced, inventory is managed, and products are efficiently made and shipped. At the same time, money sent, money received, parts in stock, and other relevant information is collected and transmitted in real-time to the core reporting engines at corporate headquarters.

At headquarters, the ERP system there can aggregate all the data coming in and analyze it, displaying key performance indicators on dashboards built specifically for each executive or individual who is tasked with tracking various metrics. (Side note: if your core ERP system can't accommodate this level of data aggregation and analysis, check out how Miller Industries, the world's largest manufacturer of towing and recovery equipment, uses Birst Analytics to get this level of information).

What do you need to execute a two-tier ERP strategy?

There are two key things needed to make a two-tier ERP strategy work: First, the distinct industry needs of the plant need to be built into the ERP system. Secondly, the ERP system should be cloud-based, with the ability to integrate with other ERP systems and industry-specific applications, in addition to providing the flexibility needed to be quickly and easily implemented virtually anywhere, at any time.

For a thorough discussion on what you need to be thinking about when it comes to a two-tier ERP strategy, check out "Use the Cloud to Optimize Your ERP Footprint in a 2-Tier Strategy," an IndustryWeek webinar recently hosted by Infor and Deloitte.

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