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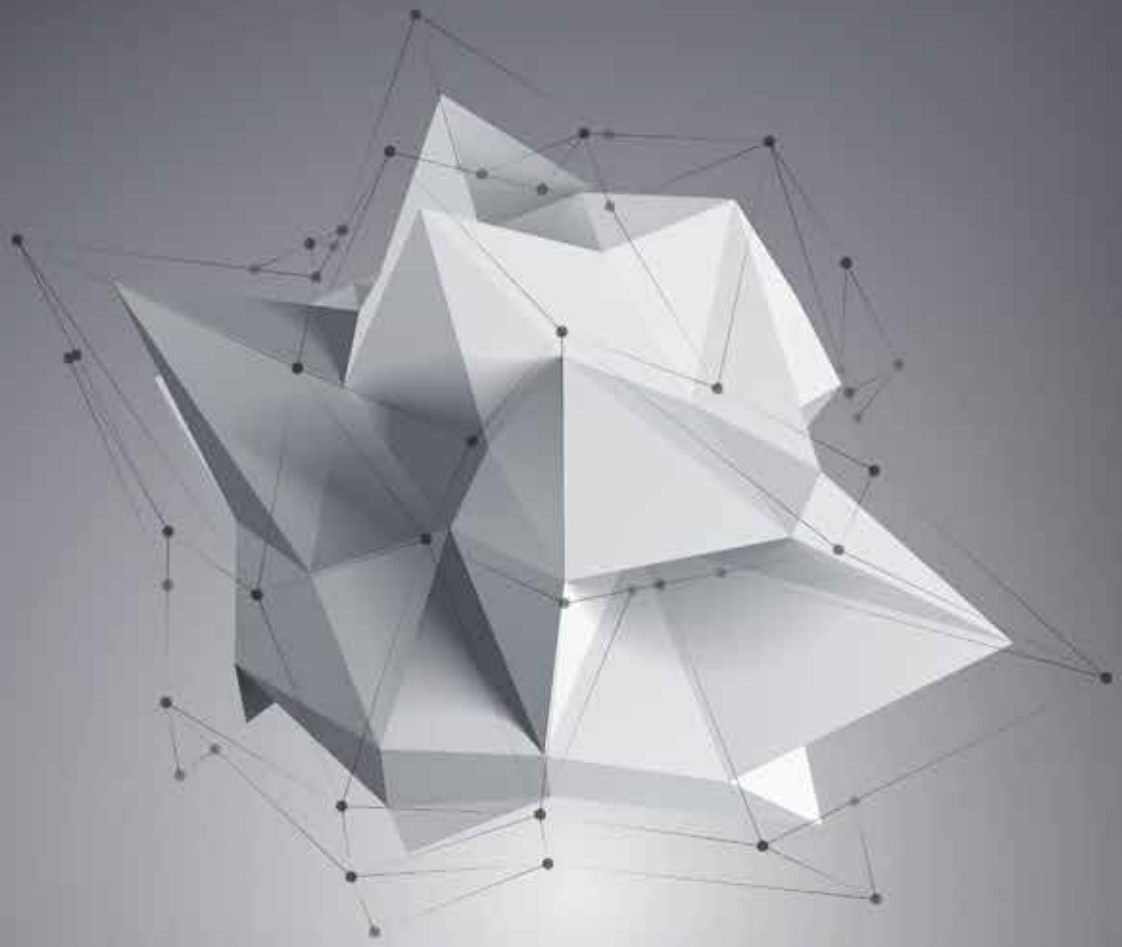
Shape your Digital Transformation journey with Cloud ERP



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ERPNEWS

CEO & PUBLISHER
Harun DOYURAN
harun@erpnews.com

MANAGING DIRECTOR
Pinar SENGUL
pinar@erpnews.com

EDITOR
Yagmur SAHIN
yagmur@erpnews.com

ASSOCIATE EDITORS
Katie SLIMOV
katie@erpnews.com

Burcu Nihal DEMIRCI
burcu@erpnews.com

ART DIRECTORS
Alex MIRZAI
alex@erpnews.com

SOFWARE DEVELOPMENT
Burak OZTURAN
burak@erpnews.com

FOR ADVERTISING
advertise@erpnews.com

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Yagmur Sahin

EDITOR'S NOTE

Hello everyone from the February issue of ERP News Magazine,

In this issue, we have prepared some exclusive unique content for you as usual! The role of cloud ERP in digital transformation is on the main agenda of our February issue. Cloud ERP, which takes ERP software to the next level by providing speed, agility, and instant information flow, provides great convenience to companies in terms of investment.

With Cloud ERP you can combine your data and transactions in a single system, and you can work location independently. If you have been hearing the advantages of Cloud ERP for years, this issue contains more information that will surprise you!

The world is moving on a digital path. Probably cloud computing plays the most critical role along this road. In this issue, the latest news, articles, and events about ERP, everything you wonder about Cloud ERP and digital transformation is awaiting you!

See you in the next issue!

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Priority Software U.S., Eran Rozenfeld

Avaap, Robin Irvine

Founder and CEO, Banyan Hills Technologies, Steve Latham

Aptean, TVN Reddy

Sage Software Solutions (P) Ltd., Jitendra Somani

Global Shop Solutions ERP Software

Epicor, Terri Hiskey

Claudia Jeffrey

Genius Solutions, Jean Magny

Michael Grace

Data Masons, Glenn Mcpeak

Prophix

TEC

Unit4

Oracle Netsuite

THE CHIEF ELUSIVE OFFICER: MORE THAN ONE IN FIVE EMPLOYEES HAVE NEVER MET THEIR CEO

More than one in five (21%) non-management employees have not met their CEO and less than half (42%) have met their CEO in a one-on-one situation, according to global research from people-based ERP software provider Unit4. It should come as no surprise then, that sixty percent of employees in the US feel they don't have a say into where their organization is headed.

The research also found that more than three in five (62%) non-management employees have never received company-wide emails from their CEO. This lack of even the simplest, most direct outreach to employees demonstrates a clear need for CEOs to increase their engagement with their workforce.

The findings come from Unit4's Decision Making for the Future Business Report; Who Calls the Shots in the Business of Tomorrow? which is based on interviews with employees across the world – the UK, US, Germany, Sweden, Denmark, Canada, and The Netherlands – to identify how working practices and organizational behavior dynamics 3differ in companies from around the world.

The research points to institutional challenges non-management employees face in getting their voices heard. Disappointingly, over a third of global respondents (37%) said they would feel uncomfortable approaching senior management to complain about something in the organization, with the most uncomfortable employees being non-managers from the United States (40%).

Crucially, however, executives do not perceive the disconnect between leadership and the rest of the enterprise. Nearly all CEOs (94%) think they are performing well in their role, whereas over a third (37%) of non-managers believe the head of their organization is the right person for the job.

Mike Ettling, CEO at Unit4, said: "Today we really have a new board member in companies across the world – the Chief Elusive Officer, the business leader who has not once engaged with their employees or sought to empower them to make decisions that impact the future of their organisation. This must change, and it must change fast."

"When CEOs are disconnected from their workforce, employees can be left feeling disengaged which can lead to much lower productivity at work and ultimately impact the bottom-line. A rigid, hierarchical business structure is simply no longer suitable for today's workforce and CEO's need to change in order to lead more effectively"

"This old-fashioned management mindset is no longer fit for today's business and must be rejected in order to encourage the best asset a company has, its people. Perhaps a way to enable that is through the better use of technology so that employees can feel more engaged and empowered to make those decisions." For more information or to access the full report, please visit www.erpnews.com

About Unit4

Unit4's next-generation enterprise software supports our customers in delivering an exceptional People Experience to their customers – from students and professionals to the public servants and non-profits doing good in the world. Unit4 transforms work to be more meaningful and inspiring through software that's self-driving, adaptive and intuitive, intelligently automating administrative tasks and providing easy access to the answers people need. Unit4 works with people the way people work. For more information please visit https://www.unit4.com/thepeopleexperience follow us on Twitter @Unit4global or visit our LinkedIn page

PROPHIX SOFTWARE ACHIEVES 50% ANNUAL CONTRACT VALUE GROWTH IN 2019

Leading CPM Software Provider Continues Trajectory to Cross $100M in ACV in 2022; Investments in AI Poised to Rapidly Transform FP&A, Positioned for Growth in International Markets

Prophix Software, a global leader in Corporate Performance Management (CPM) software, released its business summary for the fiscal year 2019, ended December 31, 2019. The company reported strong growth, recording an impressive 50% growth in annual recurring revenue (ARR), an increase from 42% ARR in 2018, continuing its goal of generating $100M in ARR in the near future. Revenue from Prophix' cloud business increased 247% year-over-year, with 95% of all new customers in the cloud.

Prophix acquired more than 60 new customers in Q4 alone (with customers hailing from industries including construction, not-for-profits, sports entertainment, and manufacturing); totaling more than 1580 active customers worldwide. Prophix also expanded its global presence in 2019, providing its solutions to customers in more than 100 countries with more than 500 customers located outside of North America.

Prophix also launched the industry's first AI-powered Virtual Financial Analyst in 2019, with compelling new voice and text capabilities to enable dialogue on financial insights through cloud-delivered natural language innovation.

"Our goal at Prophix continues to be driving innovative solutions to the market to help financial professionals complete their work with improved accuracy and efficiency," said Alok Ajmera, President & COO, Prophix. "Prophix' launch of the Virtual Financial Assistant was an important step in realizing that vision, providing financial departments with the first CPM solution equipped with AI and Natural Language technology. Delivering faster, more accurate insights frees financial professionals from the time-consuming shackles of manual data entry and reporting to elevate the financial department to a more valuable strategic position within an organization. As consumers, we enjoy these sorts of convenience technologies in our day to day lives and it only makes sense that we deliver those same advancements to the Office of Finance."

With an industry-high Customer Net Promoter Score of 77, Prophix continues to lead in customer satisfaction, winning accolades from industry analyst firms including in Gartner's 2019 Peer Insights Customer Choice report, where Prophix was named a leader in Cloud and Financial Planning and Analysis. Prophix continues to grow and develop its partnership ecosystem, announcing over 50 new partners this year, including Acumatica, a leader in cloud ERP software. Prophix also announced a new certified integration with Sage Intacct accounting software platform for financial planning, reporting, and consolidations, providing joint customers with unparalleled insights into business performance.

Prophix achieved additional accolades this year when Anita McArter, Vice President of Channels and Alliances, was recognized as one of The Top 50 Women Leaders in SaaS of 2019 in recognition of her exceptional leadership and results. The company also had a successful year giving back to the community, raising a total of $125,000 for local charities as

part of Prophix' Corporate Social Responsibility Program.

Prophix Fiscal Year 2019 Highlights:

- Achieved 50% ACV in 2019, positioning the company to cross $100M in ACV in 2022
- Over 95% of customers acquired in 2019 are on the cloud
- More than 60 new customers added in Q4; totaling over 1580 active customers
- Prophix surpassed 500 clients outside of North America, in more than 100 countries
- Launched industry's first AI-Powered Virtual Financial Assistant
- Established over 50 new partners, including Acumatica and new Sage Intacct certification

About Prophix

Your business is evolving. And the way you plan and report on your business should evolve too. Prophix helps midmarket companies achieve their goals more successfully with its innovative Corporate Performance Management (CPM) software. With Prophix, finance leaders improve profitability and minimize risk by automating budgeting, planning, and reporting, and puts the focus back on what matters most – uncovering business opportunities and driving competitive advantage. Whether in the cloud or on-premise, Prophix supports your future with a platform that flexes to suit your strategic realities, today and tomorrow.

CUSTOMERS AND PARTNERS BENEFIT FROM QUALITY EDI INSTALLATIONS AND ON-TIME DELIVERY

DATA MASONS
EDI MADE SIMPLE®

Data Masons, a Microsoft One Commercial Partner and EDI innovator, has positioned itself to remain an industry leader in cloud-based EDI solutions while developing new features for its industry-leading Data Masons EDI technology. Data Masons is coming off one of the most successful years in its history, aided by the 2019 promotion of two key executives: Vice President of Operations Molly Kelly and Vice President of Development Steve Massey. Under the leadership of Ms. Kelly, Mr. Massey and CEO Glenn McPeak, the Company streamlined operations, tightened development cycles, doubled the company's workforce, increased revenue by more than 130 percent, and produced double-digit YOY profitability — all while increasing customer satisfaction and maintaining a 98-percent client retention rate.

"We are expecting 2020 to be the year large organizations move away from embedded EDI solutions and embrace tightly integrated and loosely coupled cloud EDI solutions," says Data Masons CEO Glenn McPeak. "Cloud EDI adoption enables customers to digitally transform their entire value chain and yield significant improvements."

Data Masons is ready to move enterprises from challenged embedded EDI solutions to Data Masons EDI (formerly known as Vantage Point) a 100 percent cloud-browser-based platform. Data Masons EDI has advanced security features such as multi-factor authentication and supports multi-tenant deployment, which significantly lowers operating costs. Data Masons EDI delivers tighter ERP integration, with one-click access to EDI data without invasive ERP customizations.

Customers running Vantage Point will still be able to benefit from Data Masons cloud technology thanks to a new cloud-connection solution that will support on-premise ERP solutions with Data Masons EDI running in the Data Masons Cloud.

The new Data Masons EDI cloud solution also offers a new pricing model that greatly simplifies the purchase and deployment of the system. Existing Data Masons customers moving to the pricing model in 2020 will have all upfront costs waived.

About Data Mansons

Since 1996 Data Masons has specialized in EDI Made Simple®, offering cloud-based and on-premise EDI solutions that can integrate with any partner or platform in a secure environment with no customizations. It is a leading EDI solution provider for companies using ERP platforms including Dynamics 365 Finance and Operations, Dynamics 365 Business Central, Dynamics AX, Dynamics GP and Dynamics NAV. Data Masons' product flexibility and expert service options have made it the ideal partner to deliver high-performance business-document integration, with more than 1,500 global customers, including FILA, The Hershey Company, Brevell, Shopbop (a subsidiary of Amazon), Citizen Watch, Zippo, and more. Data Masons is a privately held company headquartered in Sarasota, FL, with international offices in Amsterdam, Netherlands, and Sydney, Australia. Additional information about Data Masons and its solutions is available at Datamasons.com.

ERPNEWS

"WHAT IS THE ROLE OF CLOUD ERP IN DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION"

"In the era of digital transformation and technological innovation, legacy ERP systems are poorly suited to adjust and contribute to greater organizational success. Cloud-based ERP solutions are rising in popularity and revolutionizing the entire enterprise resource planning system. Modern ERP systems deserve a modern approach - a smart platform that can adapt to any ERP endpoint quickly and externalize partner-specific business rules and logic that requires no embedded code in the ERP. Microsoft has developed a truly robust integration framework in Dynamics 365 that facilitates connections to partners and many useful interfaces. Data Masons EDI solution enables enterprises to quickly onboard new partners and relationships without customizations or consuming valuable IT resources.

Glenn Mcpeak,
CEO at Data Masons

DATA MASONS
EDI MADE SIMPLE

BUSINESS TECHNOLOGY PLATFORM: BRIDGING DIGITAL INNOVATION AND THE EXPERIENCE ECONOMY

Article by ***Isabell Petzelt****,*

The conversation around the experience economy is often wrapped around the idea of using large volumes of pure data to make processes more intelligent. But it is much more than that to users – whether they are employees, customers, suppliers, partners, or anyone else that business systems may touch.

What it comes down to is the delivery of outcomes that they can benefit from and never achieve anywhere else.

Essentially, providing experiences is the outcome of a long transition from commoditizing goods to delivering services as a competitive differentiator and revenue source. In 1997, the Harvard Business Review first introduced this concept by using birthday celebrations as an example. Back in the day, people would bake birthday cakes from scratch. Then came cake mixes and the arrival of bakeries at local grocery stores. Now, the whole process has been outsourced completely – including the celebration – to restaurants.

Businesses must focus on designing experiences that are engaging and valuable enough to command a fee. Think about Zipcar, Uber, Lyft, and Airbnb – the whole concept of experience as a service is becoming a way of life. Customers are no longer just renting a house, for example, to vacation in Italy. They are also taking cooking lessons in Tuscany, tasting wine in the Loire Valley, and heading to the French countryside to learn the art of cheese-making.

Unlocking the Economics of Experience with the Right Technology Foundation

An experience-focused business model may not be easy to create, establish, and run at first, but users demand it. I would even dare to say that users have long outgrown traditional IT infrastructures and business models. In return, businesses need a better way to keep up with user expectations while cutting through the complexity of innovating and implementing new digital capabilities on top of current IT software landscapes.

For businesses that do succeed in this landscape of value-generating experiences fueled by hyper-digitalization and continuous innovation, the secret often lies in how quickly companies use data and technology to create new experiences on a single platform. It is what allows them to tightly connect processes and ecosystems to improve customer experiences and streamline operations. They even actively use data and analytics for strategic ends while identifying risks and predicting business outcomes when there is still time to do something about them. SAP calls this the Business Technology Platform.

Business leaders realize that these capabilities lead to timely, confident decisions that boost workforce productivity and customer loyalty. In the same way, they also see significant opportunities, inspiring them to continuously invent new approaches and implement them rapidly in order to gain a greater competitive advantage.

Take, for example, a company that uses the full portfolio of the Business Technology Platform from SAP — everything from database and data management, application development, and integration to analytics and intelligent technology. All capabilities already work in concert, enabling the fastest way to innovate. This approach not only accelerates how data becomes business value, but it also bridges the gap between on-premise and cloud environments to give customers a choice of deployment options and enable them to transition at their own pace. The portfolio leverages existing digital investments while attaining a new level of intelligence to innovate and extend new business models, processes, and experiences on top of the platform.

A business technology platform sets the foundation needed to enhance cognitive, virtual, and physical experiences now and in the future. When it comes to competing in the experience economy, this is excellent news. Businesses can now give users everything they need to make better decisions, exploit information and applications to learn faster, and gain real-time, real-life insight to think and reason more critically.

SAP EXECUTIVES RECOGNIZED AS 2020 CHANNEL CHIEFS BY CRN

*Article by **Angelika Merz**,*

SAP is honored to have two of its channel executives named to the prestigious list of 2020 CRN Channel Chiefs:

- Karl Fahrbach, chief partner officer
- Nanette Lazina, vice president of Mid-Market Channels

Fahrbach and Lazina are among the 2020 Channel Chiefs who have shown outstanding commitment, an ability to lead, and a passion for progress within the channel through their partner programs.

The honorees were chosen by the CRN editorial staff for their dedication, industry prestige, and exceptional accomplishments in driving the channel agenda and evangelizing the importance of channel partnerships.

Fahrbach is leading a movement, the Next-Generation Partnering initiative, to help ensure SAP partners are able to create their own IP and become part of the $200 billion economy that SAP partners are expected to create by 2024. Under his leadership, SAP is providing an unparalleled economic opportunity and improving the overall partner experience, believing this is a key lever for a good customer experience.

Nanette Lazina: 2020 CRN Channel Chief ExecutiveLazina was recognized as one of the top women of the channel by CRN in 2019 and has increased partner deal registration and more than doubled the number of indirect (partner) cloud deals from the previous year. Under her leadership, the North America channel is stronger than ever, helping SAP drive strong cloud adoption across the region.

"IDC sees that customers of all sizes everywhere in the world need counsel and support when it comes to evolving their next-generation system landscapes," said Steve White, program vice president, Channels and Alliances, IDC. "It's great to see SAP encouraging their partners to enrich the SAP portfolio of solutions with their own intellectual property, supporting those customers to streamline the acquisition and use of these technologies."

SAP is executing on its intelligent enterprise strategy. Partners aligned with this strategy are well positioned for long-term growth and opportunity. Market momentum for SAP partners has never been stronger. The SAP partner economy is expected to double in the next three years, driven by a proliferation of partner-developed innovations in conjunction with SAP.

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

PAVING THE WAY FOR DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION IN CONNECTED CONSTRUCTION

Article by ***Andrew Morawski*** *,*
Senior Vice president and General Manager of Oracle Communications

Construction is one of the most impactful industries to all of us, affecting homes, roads, schools, businesses, cities, and societies as a whole. For the communications industry, construction has always provided a critical piece of the connectivity infrastructure on which we all rely. And now, communications increasingly underpin much of the transformation disrupting the construction industry, which is becoming a testing ground for digital innovation in communications, networking, cloud, AI, machine learning, robotics, analytics and the Internet of Things (IoT).

The immense pressure to be faster, safer, productive, efficient, and cheaper has transformed construction from purely physical to an amalgamation of physical and non-physical. Inspired by the IoT, the boundaries of construction are changing, as with 3D-print cities, AI/ML digital workflows and analytics, cloud-enabled building information modeling (BIM), wearable sensors, Bluetooth-enabled asset tracking, and WiFi mesh networking—all of which are helping to connect and manage an extraordinary amount of "things," whether machines, devices, tools and equipment, as well as the human beings operating and relying on them.

The ability to pull in various forms of data and information, and to communicate it in real time is increasingly important as far-flung project teams seek to be simultaneously informed about what's happening and to quickly understand and adjust for the impact of change. Graphics, drawings and information models must be synchronized to foster real transparency and trust among all stakeholders. The harmonization of information through photo and video sharing, annotation and chat has greatly improved communications, collaboration and performance across key areas of construction, including:

> **THE ABILITY TO PULL IN VARIOUS FORMS OF DATA AND INFORMATION, AND TO COMMUNICATE IT IN REAL TIME IS INCREASINGLY IMPORTANT AS FAR-FLUNG PROJECT TEAMS SEEK TO BE SIMULTANEOUSLY INFORMED ABOUT WHAT'S HAPPENING AND TO QUICKLY UNDERSTAND AND ADJUST FOR THE IMPACT OF CHANGE**

- Asset management (number of machines, their performance metrics, locations);
- Materials (sensors that detect the strength and integrity of concrete, steel, wood);
- People (the number of people, their locations, their training, their safety).

The worksites of tomorrow also require high-performance, highly resilient networks that promise reliability and redundancy. This is especially true for construction projects that have a low tolerance for link failures or capacity issues as with bandwidth-hungry construction applications for desktop virtualization and collaboration.

Because of the rapid pace of IoT in construction and the need for better safety, performance and efficiency, Oracle Communications' work in 5G, SD-WAN, signaling and policy, network and border control, and enterprise communications will help bring the construction and engineering world into full view, with unprecedented visibility and control through a connected supply chain that will drive performance, mitigate risk and inspire new levels of collaboration.

To learn about digital innovation in the worksite of tomorrow, check out this new video. Also check my blogs to see future installments on how technology is affecting other industries.

WANT MORE FROM YOUR QUARTERLY CLOUD UPDATES? HERE'S A 4-STEP PLAN TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF NEW INNOVATION

*Article by **Douglas Kehring** ,*
Executive Vice President, Corporate Operations, Oracle

The power of cloud applications is that they provide more value with every quarterly update, helping companies keep up with customer expectations that are evolving at a faster-than-ever pace. Organizations must continuously transform or risk being left behind.

But it's important to have a plan so you can take advantage of the innovation. Here at Oracle, we're no different than our customers: We're using Oracle Cloud to improve our customer and employee experiences, but we reimagined our application deployment methodology to get the most from the stream of new features.

For example, since our implementation of Oracle ERP Cloud for expenses in January 2018, we have leveraged each of the quarterly updates to better deliver on our vision for an intuitive and delightful employee experience. Since our initial go-live date, we've implemented new features that have reduced manual data entry, eliminated unnecessary data capture, and simplified the user interface so employees can make quicker and easier expense submissions.

Here's the 4-step methodology we use for managing quarterly updates, which has helped us to add an average of 100 new features every quarter:

Analyze

Oracle's IT and business teams evaluate new features to prioritize the uptake of those that improve the user experience and productivity.

Plan

The teams collaborate on the strategy for the uptake of new features and go-live, including operational changes resulting from user experience improvements as well as communications to impacted teams and users.

Test

Regression and user acceptance testing are conducted on key flows to ensure systems continue to run smoothly and new functionality works as intended.

Launch

New features are enabled on the go-live date, and to ensure ongoing success, teams continuously track user feedback and plan for improvements in future updates.

We've Learned Along the Way...

Here are a few concepts we've learned that help us ensure we are leveraging new features to their full potential and achieving our goal for delivering exceptional experiences even as expectations change.

Collaborate for success

IT and business teams must share a common vision

> **HERE AT ORACLE, WE'RE NO DIFFERENT THAN OUR CUSTOMERS: WE'RE USING ORACLE CLOUD TO IMPROVE OUR CUSTOMER AND EMPLOYEE EXPERIENCES, BUT WE REIMAGINED OUR APPLICATION DEPLOYMENT METHODOLOGY TO GET THE MOST FROM THE STREAM OF NEW FEATURES**

and understanding of how they can innovate to deliver exceptional experiences, and they must work together to ensure ongoing goal attainment.

Develop a streamlined process to manage updates

Don't miss out on opportunities to innovate the experiences you deliver. Instead, define a simple methodology for reviewing and adopting new features. We learned, for example, that we were wasting time on duplicate testing between IT and business teams and that we need to test only key use cases prior to going live.

Communicate, but don't worry about announcing every single feature

For example, when we began implementing a digital assistant for expenses, we told employees because we knew they'd be excited. But when we simplified payment notifications, we spared employees the details of what was an intuitive improvement to the experience.

Remain flexible to meet your business needs

While you should enable features that improve the user experience as soon as possible, if you are not prepared to launch in the quarter they are released, there is nothing preventing you from waiting. With Oracle Cloud, you have the flexibility to choose when to enable incremental innovations.

To find out more about Oracle's business transformation, visit oracle.com/oracleatoracle.

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.

Douglas Kehring is Oracle executive vice president for corporate operations. His responsibilities include oversight of business transformation, corporate development, corporate systems and cloud data center strategy.

INTEGRATION: EIGHT WAYS YOUR LIFE WILL CHANGE

Article by ***Ann Marie Bond,***

Just when you thought it was safe to go back into the water, the integration landscape is about to change dramatically.

Rather than be afraid of diving into your next integration project, there are eight things you need to know to swim with the sharks in 2020.

Get Under the Covers

The lines between application development and integration will blur as apps are compelled to have integration embedded under the covers, not as an afterthought. Business services can involve complex interactions with cloud apps and data that require ordering, have dependencies or may even need to be reversible on demand. You can handle these sophisticated jobs with advanced integration orchestration to manage app interaction.

The ESB is dead – long live the ESB!

As companies transition to more modern, distributed and hybrid architectures, ESB has become a term that's synonymous with legacy. But instead of focusing on eliminating legacy, the focus should be around the business problem they are trying to solve. Thus, ESB is here to stay - as an essential element in the new world of APIs, microservices and cloud infrastructure, integrating legacy components and bringing together on-premises data and cloud SaaS models.

B2B is Reborn in the Cloud

As an unseen but critical part of the business, on-premises B2B gets attention only when something fails. Now B2B integration is about to be given a new lease on life - in the cloud. B2B in the cloud delivers a subscription-based cost model, along with easier access to SaaS apps, better user experience, fewer IT resources, and scalability. The revived B2B model leverages APIs as a new channel for communicating with partners and suppliers.

Open Data Leads the Way

The proliferation of SaaS applications in the cloud has made it more difficult to create a coherent view of customer data that is already distributed across disparate systems. The Open Data Initiative (ODI) is poised to tackle this with a common standard. You'll soon be free to weave together behavioral, transactional and operational data about customers and leverage it for an amazing customer experience.

Cloudy with a Chance of Clarity

Multi-cloud will mature for reasons of cost, efficiency and performance – and because organizations often want to deploy in closer proximity to their applications. Therefore, any integration on Azure may need to interact with services/apps on AWS and GCP, but you will need a control plane that governs them and provides holistic visibility to IT teams, so they can focus on managing applications and integration instead of infrastructure.

A Hybrid World

Enterprises continue to rank hybrid as the ideal IT operating model, and this will only increase in 2020. That's because it gives organizations the flexibility they need to ensure critical data and systems are protected - while taking advantage of the many cloud options to keep costs under control. Hybrid integration isn't an alternative architecture; it's the only architecture.

Smarter APIs

API management is ripe for automation with new AI capabilities that protect and control APIs in an intelligent way. This might include API policies that reconfigure dynamically based on traffic, security threats, and identified patterns. The next level of security control is bots that sit in your network, constantly monitoring behavior and use machine learning to determine patterns that are threats.

Integration of Things

The Internet of Things is growing astronomically and, as the number of devices increases, the amount of data increases exponentially. Integration helps channel, refine and transform the data to leverage it for applications, automation, monitoring, and analytics. That's why we call IoT the "Integration of Things." In 2020, IoT vendors must have integration in their toolkit to be viable.

EPICOR.

MACHINE LEARNING AND AI CAN TAKE ERP FROM A FUNCTIONAL ROLE IN BUSINESS GROWTH TO A FUNDAMENTAL ONE

Interview with ***Terri Hiskey***
Vice President, Global Product Marketing, Manufacturing, Epicor

Digital transformation has become a driving force for businesses today. For companies that want to use this power correctly, many technological developments that come into our lives with Industry 4.0 are vital. Real-time, error-free and streamlined operations provided by developments such as machine learning and artificial intelligence, which have a serious impact on digital transformation, make the services of businesses more effective. Epicor, which is at the leading position in today's ERP market and uses new technologies very effectively, shows that it will maintain its position in 2020 with the advantages it offers to organizations. Terri Hiskey ,Epicor's Vice President, Global Product Marketing, Manufacturing answered the most frequently asked questions on this subject for our esteemed readers.

What role does data play in driving the connected factory?

Connected factories, driven by data analytics, are helping companies to automate various tasks. The amount of data now available to companies may seem overwhelming at first, but this information can be instrumental in helping business leaders stay informed, make crucial decisions, and plan ahead.

The manufacturing industry is reimagining its automation capabilities in light of recent real-world examples of AI and IoT. In the past, only single-function automation had been available to companies, with a fixed functionality based on designated rules that could not be self-optimized. Now, factories embracing smart technology can automate a variety of processes simultaneously – with the ability to connect to co-located machines and devices, as well as a wider network that can be integrated on an international scale.

How significant will machine learning be in progressing the manufacturing industry?

Machine learning provides a key opportunity for manufacturers to optimize their collected data, create the ultimate manufacturing environment, and continue to grow through automation. With machine learning, factories can use robots to operate with enhanced precision, thus reducing machine downtime and ultimately improving the production process in both quality and efficiency. Machine learning also provides manufacturers with the

> BY TRANSFORMING DATA INTO VISUAL INFORMATION VIA AI, USERS ARE ABLE TO BE MORE AGILE AND ACCURATE IN THEIR DECISION-MAKING, BASED ON A COMBINATION OF EVENTS, MARKET STATISTICS, AND HISTORICAL DATA

ability to optimize their software to accurately predict outcomes. This can be continually improved upon as more data is collected and integrated into the system, allowing it to define patterns and track outcomes. Predictive maintenance, network security, and analytics are all areas that machine learning is helping businesses to improve upon, and it continues to revolutionize the manufacturing industry.

How will machine learning and artificial intelligence improve efficiencies for companies leveraging ERP?

With all eyes on machine learning to disrupt the industry and drive business growth, having the right ERP system in place can make or break a company's success. An adaptable and agile system will be the key to unlocking the potential of all that AI and IoT can offer the enterprise.

Machine learning and AI can take ERP from a functional role in business growth to a fundamental one. It is imperative that the ERP system in place is able to embrace and apply machine learning – this is the glue that connects the various aspects of dynamic manufacturing processing. Visual solutions are one way that AI is being leveraged with ERP systems to accelerate operations and facilitate smarter working. By transforming data into visual information via AI, users are able to be more agile and accurate in their decision-making, based on a combination of events, market statistics, and historical data. AI can also provide helpful insights to improve accuracy, identify incidents, and forecast and adjust production or distribution levels based on customer demand.

How can businesses leverage the cloud to support their digital transformation?

Cloud-based systems are not new to the manufacturing industry. However, opportunities thrive to leverage cloud for additional improvement to business processes. Looking ahead, cloud environments will be further optimized and will bring a prolonged level of innovation and return on investment by allowing manufacturers to increase mobility and scalability.

In order to harness the potential of provocative new technologies such as AI, IoT, and robotic process automation, a growing number of workloads will need to transition to the cloud. From there, businesses can harness the overwhelming amount of data produced and have the power to process and gain insight from it. Reviewing the configuration of cloud environments for the age of AI and machine learning will be essential to enterprises understanding where efficiency and profitability gains can be made.

What else can businesses do to be successful and glean maximum value from their technology solutions?

Before the manufacturing industry can achieve these game-changing results by way of their software solutions, they need to thoroughly evaluate their existing processes. Once organizations can determine what is working and what needs to change, they can fully realize the potential of any new technology solution. The right technology can be the key to transformation, so the choice of technology partner should be carefully considered when making plans to embrace innovation. Regardless of the solution implemented, it is crucial to realize that implementing new software solutions on sub-optimal processes cannot solve business issues. Before implementing any new technology, businesses must assess internal processes and define the ideal outcome. From there, they must work to bring these processes to the desired state. Once these steps have been completed, technology to enhance productivity and value can be implemented.

One other key factor is the software delivery model. Though many organizations are content with on-premises deployment models, it is often a cloud-based, software-as-a-service (SaaS) approach that can best empower businesses, drive improvement, and increase simplicity and automation. Good partners can help enterprises through the entire process to ensure the best decisions are made based on their company.

About Epicor Software Corporation

Epicor Software Corporation drives business growth. We provide flexible, industry-specific software designed to fit the precise needs of our manufacturing, distribution, retail, and service industry customers. More than 45 years of experience with our customers' unique business processes and operational requirements are built into every solution-in the cloud or on premises. With this deep understanding of your industry, Epicor solutions dramatically improve performance and profitability while easing complexity so you can focus on growth. For more information, connect with Epicor or visit www.epicor.com

GLOBAL SHOP SOLUTIONS CASE STUDY:

BRISTOL MACHINE COMPANY

A privately-held contract, fabrication and machining firm, Bristol Machine Company manufactures OEM parts for mining and heavy equipment manufacturers around the world. These include hydraulic cylinders, brake assemblies, machined weldments, gearbox housings, machined castings, smelter furnace cooling blocks and more.

Headquartered in Sudbury, Ontario, Canada, Bristol Machine offers complete manufacturing solutions, including custom machining, welding, heat treatment, chroming, gear cutting, technical support and global exports. They perform a variety of contract work for the local mining industry and offer engineering services for global smelter manufacturing firms. The firm is registered with the Quality Management Institute to ISO 9001-2000, and the Canadian Welding Bureau to W47.1 Division 2.1.

Bristol Machine implemented Global Shop Solutions ERP software to comply with a large OEM client that required all its suppliers to have an ERP or MRP system in place. But their old business management system also had numerous drawbacks that suggested a more up-to-date system would yield a significant return on investment.

"Our previous system had no scheduling capabilities," recalls Alain Theriault, Engineering Manager for Bristol Machine. "The manufacturing piece couldn't talk to the financial piece. And we had to enter everything twice, release everything twice, and hope that we got pricing between the two correct. Our customers realized we needed an ERP system, and so did we."

After researching different ERP packages, Theriault settled on Global Shop Solutions due to its intuitive interface, stable ownership, and integrated manufacturing, financial and scheduling modules. More important, only Global Shop Solutions ERP software offered the ability to handle OEM, serial manufacturing, make-to-stock and one-off job shop projects all in one system.

Better BOMs, Better Costing

Bristol Machine's old system lacked the ability to handle BOMs. As a result, all BOMs had to be built manually – a slow and often painful process. With Global Shop Solutions ERP software, Bristol Machine can now build large, multi-level BOMs with ease. More important, the BOMs make all the data visible and linked, making it easy to check the status of all subcomponents on a project, roll up their costs, and determine the true cost of the project.

"Creating BOMs in Global Shop Solutions lets us track all the different work orders so they complete together to finish the entire assembly," says Theriault. "That way, we no longer have $50,000 projects waiting on a $10 part for completion. And Global Shop Solutions links all the costs together for one final assembly, so we know as soon as a project is done how much it costs."

"The system also gives us very accurate historical costs. This helps us know where we can go with quotes to get new business, and allows us to adjust to changing market conditions more quickly because we know our true costs compared to sales on a regular basis."

> **CREATING BOMS IN GLOBAL SHOP SOLUTIONS LETS US TRACK ALL THE DIFFERENT WORK ORDERS SO THEY COMPLETE TOGETHER TO FINISH THE ENTIRE ASSEMBLY. THAT WAY, WE NO LONGER HAVE $50,000 PROJECTS WAITING ON A $10 PART FOR COMPLETION. AND GLOBAL SHOP SOLUTIONS LINKS ALL THE COSTS TOGETHER FOR ONE FINAL ASSEMBLY, SO WE KNOW AS SOON AS A PROJECT IS DONE HOW MUCH IT COSTS.**

Powerful Customization Capabilities

Like many Global Shop Solutions customers, Bristol Machine has used the powerful Global Application Builder (GAB) to create several enhancements that save time and simplify operations on the shop floor. One of these supports the company's extensive use of sophisticated CNC machines.

Bristol Machine's old system contained a large database with all the setup sheets and manufacturers' instructions for manufacturing parts. Unfortunately, this database was not compatible with Global Shop Solutions ERP software. Using the custom GAB application, workers can now access the database directly from the Shop Floor Data Collection stations on the shop floor.

"Instead of having two separate, stand-alone databases to manage all the manufacturers instructions, we have one that seamlessly integrates with Global Shop Solutions," explains Theriault. "We don't have to recreate our database. We don't have to bother with duplicate data entry. And our people have instant access to the documents they need right on the shop floor. The time savings are enormous!"

Bristol Machine also makes good use of Global Shop Solutions' ability to create custom reports in Crystal Reports. And they've even done some customization within Global Shop Solutions' sales analysis module to improve their financial acumen.

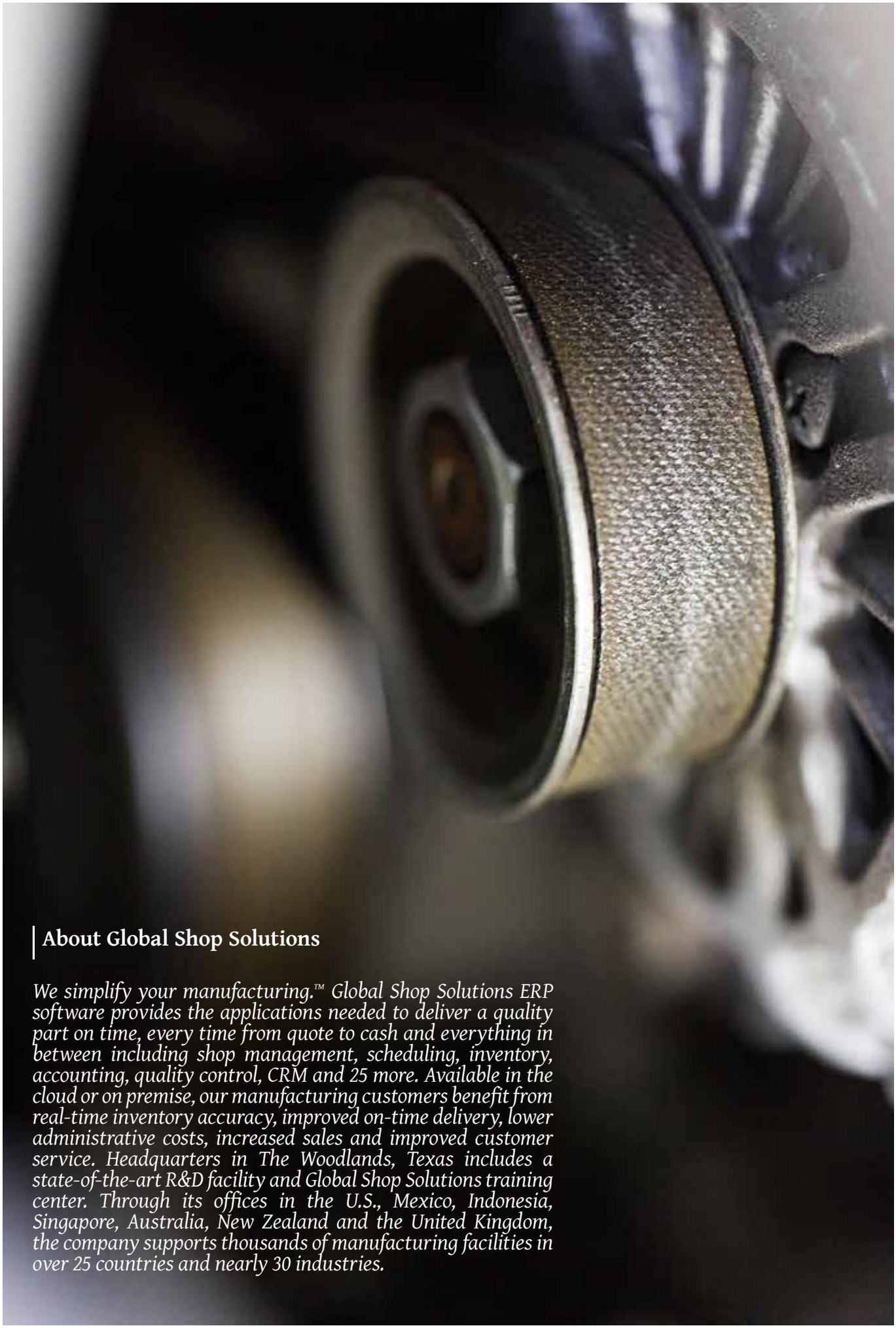
"One of the real strengths of Global Shop Solutions is that it makes our financial status easily visible at any time," adds Theriault. "We operate three separate plants, and we've made a few customizations to sales analysis that allow us to individually see the financial health of each plant."

People, Service Make the Difference

Theriault believes that the true measure of an ERP software goes beyond its technical capabilities to include the quality and competency of people that develop, implement and support it.

"The strength of your workforce in large part determines the quality of your product," he explains, "and very few ERP firms can match the quality of people at Global Shop Solutions. At most ERP companies, the consultants are software people who have some knowledge of manufacturing and try to make your company fit their software. Global Shop Solutions consultants are manufacturing people who understand your business and try to make their software fit you."

"Global Shop Solutions is a great product backed by great people. Whether you do OEM serial production parts or project-based parts; whether you're trying to integrate finance and manufacturing; or whether you need to add in a powerful scheduling functionality, Global Shop Solutions addresses every business need you could have."



About Global Shop Solutions

We simplify your manufacturing.™ Global Shop Solutions ERP software provides the applications needed to deliver a quality part on time, every time from quote to cash and everything in between including shop management, scheduling, inventory, accounting, quality control, CRM and 25 more. Available in the cloud or on premise, our manufacturing customers benefit from real-time inventory accuracy, improved on-time delivery, lower administrative costs, increased sales and improved customer service. Headquarters in The Woodlands, Texas includes a state-of-the-art R&D facility and Global Shop Solutions training center. Through its offices in the U.S., Mexico, Indonesia, Singapore, Australia, New Zealand and the United Kingdom, the company supports thousands of manufacturing facilities in over 25 countries and nearly 30 industries.

ERPNEWS

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THE STRENGTH OF YOUR WORKFORCE IN LARGE PART DETERMINES THE QUALITY OF YOUR PRODUCT, AND VERY FEW ERP FIRMS CAN MATCH THE QUALITY OF PEOPLE AT GLOBAL SHOP SOLUTIONS. AT MOST ERP COMPANIES, THE CONSULTANTS ARE SOFTWARE PEOPLE WHO HAVE SOME KNOWLEDGE OF MANUFACTURING AND TRY TO MAKE YOUR COMPANY FIT THEIR SOFTWARE. GLOBAL SHOP SOLUTIONS CONSULTANTS ARE MANUFACTURING PEOPLE WHO UNDERSTAND YOUR BUSINESS AND TRY TO MAKE THEIR SOFTWARE FIT YOU.

"

Global Shop SOLUTIONS ERP SOFTWARE

10 MUST DO'S

FOR SMALL TO MEDIUM-SIZED MANUFACTURERS

10 MUST DO'S

STEPS TO SUCCESS

1 CUT CYCLE TIME

Some companies have been able to cut cycle time by up to 50% by automating processes and leveraging flex schedules with their manufacturing software.

2 LOWER LABOR COSTS

Use wireless technology to track raw materials, inventory, tools and finished products from anywhere in your production plant using a handheld wireless device.

3 AUTOMATE SCHEDULING AND ON-TIME DELIVERY

Manufacturing companies that turn the corner on efficiency mostly say the same thing,"We used to spend too much time on scheduling."

4 AUTOMATE PURCHASING

Save time by managing all purchasing activities from one screen.

5 QUOTE QUICKLY AND ACCURATELY

The more jobs you can quote and the more accurate those quotes become, the more jobs you win.

6 HAVE ONE ERP INTEGRATED SYSTEM

As one Global Shop Solutions customer put it, "You don't order one cable, internet, and phone from three different companies when you can find one trusted partner that can do it all – and do it better.

7 REDUCE SPREADSHEETS AND PAPER

The more paper and spreadsheets on the shop floor, the more hunting, pecking and lost time.

8 MAINTAIN ACCURATE INVENTORY

The most efficient manufacturers rotect cash flow by knowing inventory.

9 DELIGHT CUSTOMERS

Repeat orders happen when customers are serviced truthfully quickly and accurately.

10 CONSTANTLY MEASURE YOUR BUSINESS HEALTH

With the right ERP system in place, these "MUST DO'S" become a way of life for your organization, resulting in leaner operations, improved efficiencies and better margins and profits.

Global Shop SOLUTIONS
ERP SOFTWARE

Download the full whitepaper at:
www.globalshopsolutions.com/10-must-dos-for-small-to-medium-sized-manufacturers

UNDER PRESSURE: 78 PERCENT OF PEOPLE FEEL MORE PRESSURE FROM THEIR EMPLOYER THAN FAMILY WHEN MAKING BIG DECISIONS

New study explores the link between decision-making and business growth across 12 countries and seven industries

Business executives are more anxious about big decisions at work than critical decisions at home that impact their family, according to a new study conducted by Oracle NetSuite. The new study, Unlocking Growth, which provides insights from more than 1,000 business executives in the UK, France, Germany, UAE, Benelux and the Nordics, found that 94 percent are overwhelmed by data when making decisions. Over a quarter are putting risk mitigation ahead of potential success to avoid impacting their career, and 21 percent rely on gut feel and intuition to make critical decisions.

"There's a lot of talk about a changing economic, technological and political backdrop, but when you step back, organizations across Europe have an increasing number of growth opportunities if they can focus their time and resources in the right places," said Nicky Tozer, VP EMEA, Oracle NetSuite. "To achieve that focus, organizations need to address the decision-making and planning challenges identified in this study so they can use data to adapt to change faster than their competition and unlock new growth opportunities."

A Culture of Decision-Making Pressure

Executives across countries and industries are under immense pressure when making critical business decisions and as a result, many are putting risk mitigation ahead of potential success.

- Most executives (78 percent) said they experience more pressure when making a big decision at work than in their personal life.
- Fears about negatively impacting revenue (40 percent), damaging personal reputation (22 percent), losing their job (17 percent), and adversely impacting co-workers (13 percent) are the top four areas executives are concerned about.
- Risk aversion is even higher amongst organizations that define themselves as high-performers – 62 percent admit they actively pursue risk-averse decisions, even in the knowledge their choice may not be as successful.

An Unhealthy Relationship with Data

Information overload, time pressure and a lack of trust in senior management are strangling the decision-making process and leading executives to default to 'gut feel' to inform their decision-making strategy.

- Almost all (94 percent) executives are overwhelmed by data during the decision-making process. Executives in France (99 percent) reported the biggest issues with data, while executives in the UK (92 percent) reported the least.
- Time pressure and more complex processes are also making decision-making harder. 27 percent of executives have had less time to focus on critical decisions in the last year and 28 percent note more people have become involved in the process, an issue

that was particularly prevalent in the UAE (51 percent).

- Only 19 percent – falling to 12 percent in the Nordics – of business executives noted they trust senior management when seeking decision-making guidance. Colleagues (39 percent) and industry peers (21 percent) were the most trusted.

- 41 percent of respondents expect to turn to a robot as a source of support when making critical decisions in the next year. Executives in France (51 percent) were the most likely, while executives in the UK (33 percent) were the least.

- 67 percent acknowledge they are not making highly data-driven decisions, with UK executives (73 percent) the most likely to only partially consider data or default to "gut feel".

A Positive Outlook for Growth and Message to Senior Management

Executives across countries and industries expect their organizations to grow but highlighted the need to rethink the planning process to ensure data can be used to adjust business plans and that everyone is working towards a clear plan for success.

- 56 percent of executives expect their business to grow in the next two years. Executives from the UK were the most positive (63 percent) followed by the United Arab Emirates (57 percent), Germany (56 percent), Nordics (54 percent), Benelux (50 percent) and France (49 percent).

- Retail industry executives (33 percent) were the most confident that their organizations will exceed growth targets followed by manufacturing (27 percent), distribution (22 percent), and software and technology (29 percent). Executives in professional services (16 percent) and nonprofit organizations (11 percent) had the least confidence.

- Almost three quarters (74 percent) of executives say their organization is good at capitalizing on new opportunities, but there are serious concerns about the planning process. Only 31 percent say they are proficient at adjusting business plans based on data analysis and almost one quarter (24 percent) do not think senior management provides a clear plan for success, dropping to just 16 percent in the Nordics.

About Oracle NetSuite

For more than 20 years, Oracle NetSuite has helped organizations grow, scale and adapt to change. NetSuite provides a suite of cloud based applications, which includes financials / Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP), HR, professional services automation and omnichannel commerce, used by more than 18,000 customers in 203 countries and dependent territories. For more information, please visit http://www.netsuite.com Follow NetSuite's Cloud blog, Facebook page and @NetSuite Twitter handle for real-time updates.

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Digital Transformation and Cloud ERP

*Article by **Jitendra Somani,***
CEO at Sage Software Solutions (P) Ltd.

Nowadays, digital transformation has become a necessity more than a trend to catch up on. With more and more companies redesigning their positioning strategies, digital transformation is going to be in the game for a long haul. Of all, the cloud is the most dominating part acting as a key driver of the entire process. Emerging technologies like Artificial Intelligence, Internet of Things (IoT), Big Data, and Machine Learning are encouraging real-time working, paperless transactions, and more informed decisions to drive growth and profitability.

Some astonishing statistics from last year demonstrated that 60% of companies store their official data on cloud while 90% of companies use some type of cloud services. Cloud is an alternative answer to storing data on a physical address. In order to gain more flexibility and save costs, companies prefer to cloud servers.

Alternatively, Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) software helps organizations collaborate multiple departments onto a single platform to reap operational benefits and increase profitability. When companies have multiple departments dealing with a similar task, there is a possibility that the traditional style of communication might not be the ideal approach. There is a huge plausibility of delays and information getting lost. Unlike when using ERP, multiple departments can use a single software to update their activities on a particular task without any hassle. This is then visible to all the responsible participants without having to literally communicate through traditional mediums, which are more time-consuming. Additionally, ERP automates companies' finances, supply chain, and resource management to allow excess time to focus on more important things.

Cloud ERP enables organizations to host their data on a virtual server which could be either shared or dedicated. This allows saving on the extra cost involved in setting up IT infrastructure at the company premise. Also, the number of resources required to manage such an infrastructure could be utilized in more productive jobs. Obviously, it means companies can tame their operational costs, while easily managing suppliers, vendors, partners and customers.

Digital Transformation and Cloud ERP

Cloud ERP has a very major role to play in the digital transformation. It is a complete package that companies can use to turbocharge their businesses in a 360 degree. Cloud ERP can help digital transformation for companies in the following ways:

1. Drive Efficiency: Accessing customer critical data would never have been easier. Cloud ERP lets companies empower their finance, marketing, and service teams by offering real-time solutions.

2. Business Intelligence: Companies can generate smart reports through in-built templates as per individual requirements.

> **CLOUD ERP HELPS IN COLLABORATING WITH MULTIPLE DEPARTMENTS THROUGH A SINGLE PLATFORM TO INCREASE THE EFFICIENCY OF OPERATIONS AND PROFITABILITY**

3. Accounting & Finance: Accurate and comprehensive data in regards to investments, ROI, and payables and receivables can be monitored and automated as per timelines.

4. Real-Time Operations: Regardless of where your team is stationed, they can have complete access to customer data, which can be pulled out anytime, from anywhere resulting in prompt service delivery.

5. Accelerate Your Business: Unparalleled mobility offered by cloud ERP allows businesses to run on the wheels.

Benefits of Cloud ERP

1. Gain complete control over business
2. The solution is scalable, therefore it grows as your business grows
3. All the features are included in a single software
4. Customizations available as per individual requirements
5. Lesser inefficiencies result in higher profitability

When it comes to digital transformation, Cloud ERP is the most preferred solution companies from almost all sectors rely on. Cloud ERP offers solutions to industries operating in the following domains:

1. Manufacturing
2. Automotive
3. Furniture
4. Alcohol & Distillery
5. Oil & Gas
6. Chemical
7. Construction
8. Healthcare
9. Real Estate
10. Fintech
11. NBFC
12. Trading
13. Pharma
14. Retail
15. Ecommerce and many more

Conclusion

Of all the components involved in digital transformation, the cloud dominates the list. Alternatively, when Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) solutions are deployed via the cloud, they maximize the potential benefits for any organization. Cloud ERP helps in collaborating with multiple departments through a single platform to increase the efficiency of operations and profitability. The digital transformation journey with AI, Big Data, Machine Learning, and Cloud is going to draw the dynamic business landscape within the numerous sectors.

About Sage Software Solutions Pvt. Ltd.

Trusted by thousands of customers worldwide, Sage Software Solutions (P) Ltd. is the distributor of Sage Asia Pte Ltd in India. They are one of the leading ERP software companies in India. A market leader for integrated business management software in India, Sage Software Solutions (P) Ltd., boasts of a PAN-India presence with headquarters in Mumbai and offices and channel partners spread across India. From startups to full-grown organisations, Sage Software Solutions (P) Ltd. has been helping businesses to manage all things including finances to resources with its robust suite of business software solutions including Sage 300cloud, Sage X3, Sage CRM, and Pocket HRMS.

With over two decades of experience working in the business software industry with a focus on operational best practices in enterprises, Jiten has in-depth knowledge about Enterprise B2B technologies, Cloud, and Mobile. He is passionate about leadership and digital transformation through cutting edge technologies. Sage Software Solutions (P) Ltd. is a distributor of Sage Asia Pte Ltd in India. The ideas expressed in this article are based on personal opinions only.

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"WHAT IS THE ROLE OF CLOUD ERP IN DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION"

Cloud ERP will help companies collaborate multiple departments within a single platform to enhance operational efficiencies and profitability.

Jitendra Somani,

CEO at Sage Software Solutions (P) Ltd.

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ERPNEWS

"WHAT IS THE ROLE OF CLOUD ERP IN DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION"

ERP systems have been the catalysts for business transformation for more than 50 years. ERPs have saved companies time and money and also helped them improve quality, productivity, and return on assets and inventories. However, with advances in other technologies, from IoT to AI/ML continuing to accelerate, Cloud ERPs will be the essential go forward implementation model as the technology advances alongside our broader digital business transformation.

TVN Reddy,
CEO, Aptean

aptean

HOW IOT IS DELIVERING BUSINESS BENEFITS IN MANUFACTURING

*Article by **Steve Latham**,*
founder and CEO, Banyan Hills Technologies

The Internet of Things is rewriting the rules for all major industries, and manufacturing is no exception.

The IoT connects machinery, infrastructure, products, and even people with a network of sensors, automation, and machine learning to create an environment in which business insights can be gleaned and applied virtually in real time.

Line safety can be enhanced, and the complete spectrum of tasks and processes can be automated and optimized.

In fact, there are a number of compelling business benefits for leveraging the IoT in manufacturing – here are a few of the key ones:

Predictive maintenance

Perhaps the most obvious benefit of the IoT is how it is disrupting traditional processes for performing equipment maintenance, moving businesses which embrace it from reactive maintenance to predictive and preventative.

The problem with the way maintenance is typically performed is that periodic maintenance can only be based on historical and statistical information, leading to unexpected work stoppages and a reactionary maintenance posture.

But by embedding sensors in equipment on the line, it's possible to get detailed health and status data about individual equipment. That lets managers get out in front of maintenance issues and fix problems before failures would occur, disrupting operations.

Quality control

It's almost a cliché to say that customers are demanding ever higher quality from the products they buy – and that's true both for B2C and B2B manufacturing.

By integrating IoT sensors into the manufacturing workflow, though, it's now possible to proactively manage manufacturing quality. Processes that require tight tolerances, for example, can be monitored by automated systems on a continuous basis.

Rather than discovering a problem during the QC stage after manufacturing – or worse, after the product has shipped and is in the customers' hands – the IoT can identify when equipment falls out of tolerance, affecting manufacturing quality.

This can happen more or less in real time, and regular analytics reporting can keep managers fully informed about quality control.

Safety and compliance

Every shop and production floor has to contend with safety

> **ONE OF THE MAIN REASONS THAT SAFETY AND COMPLIANCE IS OFTEN SO CHALLENGING FOR BUSINESSES IS THAT THE VARIOUS REPORTING MECHANISMS ARE SILOED AND OFTEN NOT EVEN DIGITAL. BUT THE IOT ALLOWS ALL THE DATA POOLS FROM THE VARIOUS COMPLIANCE SYSTEMS TO BE AGGREGATED, SHARED, AND SYNTHESIZED IN A WAT THAT LETS MANAGERS TRULY MANAGE THE FLOOR IN A HOLISTIC WAY**

and compliance issues. Falling out of compliance can be expensive, have adverse regulatory consequences, and – especially when it comes to failing to meet OSHA requirements – can be dangerous for the people who need to work there.

One of the main reasons that safety and compliance is often so challenging for businesses is that the various reporting mechanisms are siloed and often not even digital. But the IoT allows all the data pools from the various compliance systems to be aggregated, shared, and synthesized in a wat that lets managers truly manage the floor in a holistic way.

Real-time monitoring provided by sensors can feed compliance reporting. And emerging technologies, like machine learning AI systems which monitor camera systems can ensure workers are wearing personal protective equipment and using equipment safely and according to requirements.

Energy efficiency

Energy costs are a substantial expense in any manufacturing operation, but most businesses have only a rudimentary understanding of exactly where all the energy dollars actually go.

Even detailed billing data provided by the power company is often insufficient to make practical strategy decisions. That's where the IoT can help.

With the right instrumentation, all the equipment on the manufacturing floor can report its energy consumption, which can be turned into analytics for managers.

That means it's possible to get insights into how to operate more efficiently and where there's waste in the workflow. The IoT can reveal how to change production schedules to more efficiently use energy-hungry equipment, and even when similar machines have different energy consumption profiles – which in turn can suggest the need for maintenance or changing processes.

The bottom line is that the IoT can reduce downtime due to failures, dramatically improve regulatory compliance and safety concerns, save money energy bills, and help the end product be produced at higher quality.

These benefits are just scratching the surface, though, because the Internet of Things can also play a role in improving inventory and warehouse management, procurement, transportation, and more. And, with 5G coming over the horizon, things get even more interesting. Manufacturing faces an amazing future.

About Banyan Hills Technologies

Banyan Hills Technologies is an Internet of Things (IoT) company and a trusted partner for innovative software solutions. CanopyTM is Banyan's IoT platform and the most advanced solution for monitoring and managing any network of connected endpoints like self-service kiosks, digital signs and on-premise control systems. Canopy helps enable automation, decrease costs, increase revenue, enhance security, and leverage data for operators of large networks of unattended devices. Banyan's highly skilled team helps customers launch, scale and secure successful IoT implementations. Banyan's deep industry knowledge and strong capabilities in machine learning, transaction management, communication protocols, payments, and predictive analytics help companies realize the full potential of their technology strategies. For more information, visit https://banyanhills.com/

Steve Latham is the founder and CEO of Banyan Hills Technologies, an Internet of Things company based in Duluth, Georgia.

CLOUD READINESS: A VIEW FROM A PILOT'S PERSPECTIVE

avaap
innovation | solutions | outcome

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

When I became a pilot, it was an attempt to conquer a life-long fear of heights. After years of practice, I took the leap, obtained my license, and piloted my first plane in 2016. As a licensed pilot, I have a preflight checklist to go through before any takeoff, with step-by-step instructions to follow to ensure a safe and controlled flight.

Aviation checklists are a staple in the cockpit. They help pilots plan for normal and not normal situations to defend against failure. For ERP implementations, a preflight checklist is also a good idea to ensure the right system is selected and that the organization is properly prepared for implementation and beyond.

Checklist discipline is important. In some cases there are action items that need to be carried out, in other cases, it is to verify that the necessary steps have been completed and verified.

As digital transformation rises on the CIO agenda, many manufacturers will find themselves headed into the cloud. Considering a new ERP? Here is a preflight checklist you can use to ensure a smooth journey:

✓ Check your Controls and Determine Your Flight Plan

Before you can take off, you'll need to build your flight plan: a frame of reference for where you're coming from and where you are looking to go. It is important to look at current legacy systems, current processes, and what the goals will be moving forward. Because cloud ERP is a large investment, don't make the mistake of just looking at how current operations can be moved to a new system, but how they can be improved. Similarly, taking the time to clean your data will help avoid the garbage-in syndrome and give your team the best running start in improving the user experience in the long run and business outcomes.

Deciding the right system is complex and challenging. Manufacturing CIOs need to look at their current technology footprint and ask themselves, are we prepared to move to the cloud? How can we ensure the system meets the greater business needs? What needs to happen (and when) so our implementation is a success and does not exceed the budget? Will the application fit with our other solutions in the network? What are the functionalities most important to our users? What is a necessity versus nice to have?

From here, researching vendors and their roadmaps, and determining what will align with your current and future goals is part of planning diligence. For example, would you benefit from industry-specific software? ERP designed specifically for food and beverage manufacturers will include out-of-the-box functionality such as labeling, ingredient, and batch management; fixed and catchweight

functionality, lot traceability, food safety, and other unique business requirements. Consider if the vendor can be flexible in migration options. Organisations with many disconnected, legacy software systems may find it easier to move to a single on-premise or hybrid system, with a future goal to lift and shift to a cloud environment. Understanding the gaps and where there is an opportunity to scale can ensure the solution supports the current needs of the business as well as those in the future.

Enlist the Right Crew

Most of the project emphasis is typically on the technology itself. Often the people of the organization - the ones that will be using the system and driving ROI – aren't included until after decisions have been made. Successful project teams are built from employees that know the business, support the vision for the future and understand how the system will be used and can serve as advocates to drive adoption.

This team should include leadership, who will drive support for the initiative; subject matter experts (SMEs) who will review current processes and look at how they can be improved; and process leads, who will move the project from concept to go-live. Establishing the right team early in the planning stages and keep them involved as the project advances is critical. These team members will be your main project ambassadors to help encourage company-wide acceptance.

Prepare Your Passengers

Transparency is crucial in large-scale projects such as moving to the cloud. The mere rumor of technology, process, or other change can have negative impacts on performance and productivity when not communicated correctly. People are creatures of habit and naturally resistant to change, so it is important to communicate early and often, to explain why the move is taking place, and how it will benefit both the individual and the organisation.

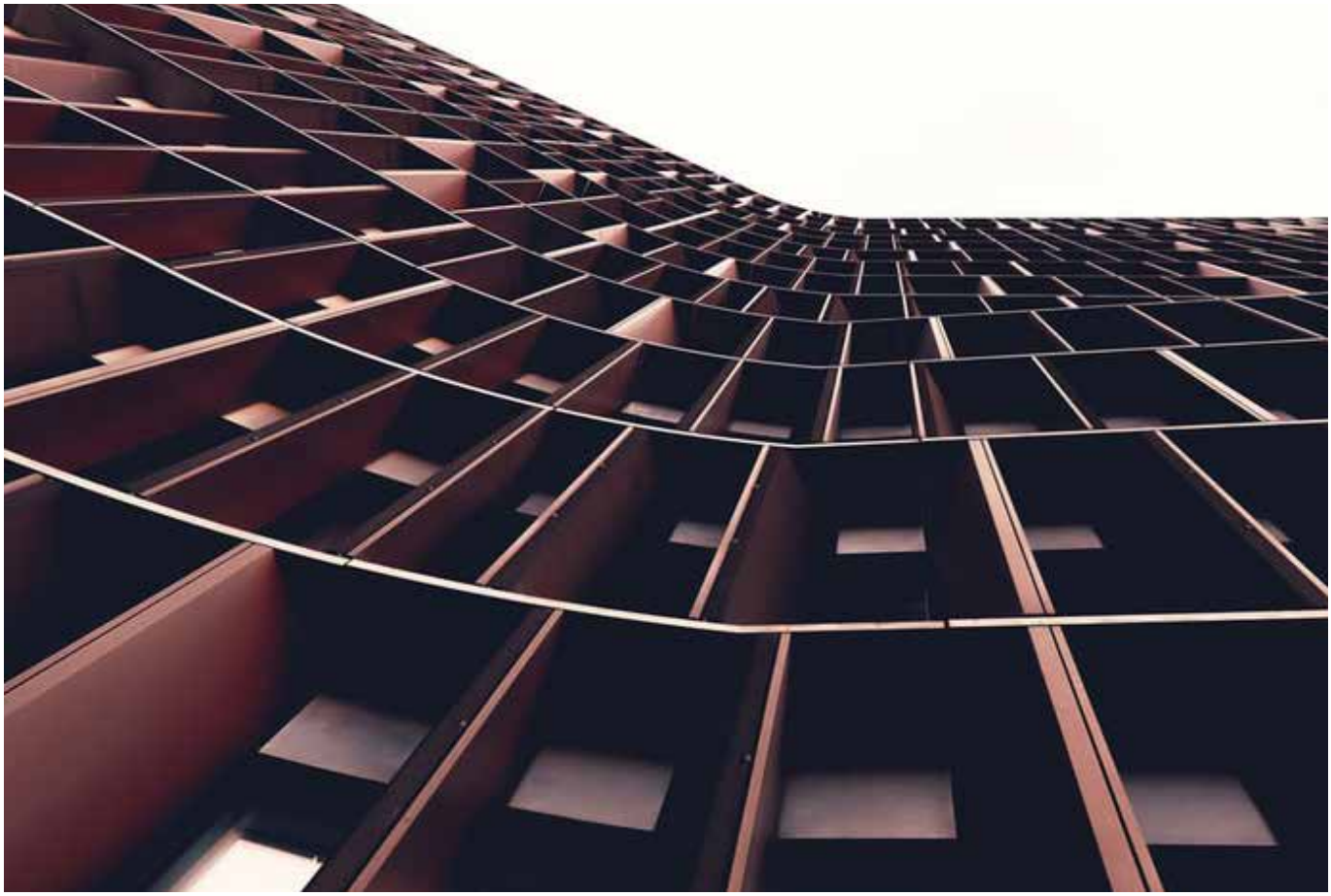
Including Organisational Change Management (OCM) in your ERP project from the start will allow for increased user adoption and overall project success. It is important to use a structured approach to manage the people-related elements of change. This can be accomplished through a blend of change impact assessments, readiness monitoring, leadership alignment activities, stakeholder engagement, ongoing communications, workforce transition preparation, training, and sustainment actions. OCM helps employees who will be impacted by the change to be ready, willing, and able to make the shift and adopt new ways of working.

Flying high in a competitive industry requires the right people, processes, and technology. Having a preflight checklist to refine the project plan and implementation is a key to successful cloud migration. Whether you're preparing for take-off or in the early stages of planning your flight, make your checklist and follow it.

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.



DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION: WHY THIS 'CLOUD' HAS A SILVER LINING

priority™

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

The importance of cloud ERP in digital transformation

Digital transformation. Today, well beyond the confines of just another buzzword, digital transformation has fast become an omniscient power that has taken businesses and industries by storm. It is the process of implementing digital technologies to create new, or enhance already-existing business and customer-facing operations that we use to meet our unbridled need – for speed, flexibility, and shifting market demands.

According to market analyst, IDC, worldwide spending on digital transformation is expected to reach nearly $2 trillion by 2022, and that during 2020, an estimated 30% of G2000 companies will have allocated budgets equal to at least 10% of revenue to fuel their digital transformation strategies. Today, digital transformation helps promote an abundance of online business and consumer transactions, and leverages our ability to work, manage, and communicate, all in real-time. Backed by the likes of IoT, AI, machine learning, and more importantly, cloud, these are just some of the technologies that drive all things digital. In a word, without a strong and reliable cloud platform, these technologies will simply, not work efficiently.

Why Cloud ERP Takes Center Stage

It is cloud computing technology, the on-demand availability of computer system resources, specifically data collection and data management, that some say, are the foundation of cloud-based ERP. Digital transformation is all about making a business accessible to company management, employees, customers, and prospects, anytime, and from any location. Flexible, scalable, automated, and insight-driven, it's cloud ERP that enables real-time data access from anywhere, in a secure, risk-free environment.

Cloud ERP empowers digital transformation by merging business data into a single, unified system, to support remote tasks, operational management, and control. Further, cloud ERP delivers measurable time and resource savings by reducing IT and investment costs, increases operational performance, boosts employee productivity, and personalizes both the user and the customer experience.

Opening the Digital Floodgate

Cloud ERP is fast becoming the defining force that conquers digital disruption, the changes that occur when new digital technologies are implemented in a business, effecting existing goods and services. This is best illustrated in the wholesale and logistics industry, where companies, from SMBs to large enterprises, opt for cloud ERP software to manage, improve and maintain their day-to-day activities.

Monitoring carrier performance, maintaining visibility into supply chains, and providing accurate and up-to-date information about shipments and supply chain performance, is a real challenge for distributors, freight forwarders and logistic service providers. Having a handle on what's in every warehouse, truck, and shipment at any given time, as well as being on top of what's in the pipeline, is crucial.

By integrating cloud ERP, wholesale, logistics, and distribution companies can integrate digital transformation workflows and procedures into their daily operations, such as purchase planning and requisitions, delivery scheduling and shipments, contracts, finances, billing, procurement, and administration. Cloud ERP also enables fully integrated supply chain management to optimize logistics networks, manage transportation and warehousing operations, and provide other value-added services to customers.

Tomorrow is Another Day

Cloud ERP has been an ardent supporter of the digital ecosystem for many years, and more recently, has enabled integration with innovative technologies, almost as quickly as they are developed and go to market. This is what gives cloud ERP a strong foothold in today's digital transformation, all of which depend heavily on cloud and mobile technologies. When it comes to the future of digital transformation, it is evident that cloud ERP will lead the pack, paving the way for new technologies to consistently change our world. As long as cloud ERP continues to deliver real-time business insights, remote data access, faster implementation, the ability to focus on core competencies, cost and resource savings, strong data security, and the list goes on and on..., rest assured that cloud ERP will too, evolve, and be around to welcome the next millennium.

About Priority

Priority Software provides flexible, endto- end business management solutions for organizations of all sizes in a wide range of industries. Recognized by top industry analysts and professionals for its product innovation, Priority improves business efficiency and the customer experience, providing real time access to business data and insights in the cloud, on-premise, and on-the-go. With offices in the US, UK, Belgium and Israel and a global network of business partners, Priority enables 75,000 companies in 40 countries to manage and grow their business.

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.

CLOUD ERP SOLUTIONS IN DIGITAL ERA 2020

Article by ***Claudia Jeffrey,***

When it comes to predicting the future of ERP for 2020 and over, most consultants and vendors will talk heavy technical jargon to throw you off the track. But the reality is that the future is now, and there is a technological shift coming as the ERP software industry moves forward.

The main reason why cloud-based software has gained significant attention over the years is because of the efficient operational capabilities it offers. No matter what your business reason might be, from centralizing main business processes for information or just simplifying the IT structural system. Cloud ERP is a game-changer in the industry.

According to recent researches and 2019 ERP trends compiled by Accenture, 47% of companies already are using an on-location ERP and use APIs to extend their cloud access. Thus, it can easily be said that digital transformation is the key to modern business, and the cloud is the newest innovation in that realm. The technology has so far advanced that it has become a one-stop business solution for providing shared network, storage, and servers with minimal input or effort. Cloud-based ERP is capable of integrations with more efficient technologies as a basis of digital transformation to drive business growth and success.

Current digital transformation and ERP industry standpoints

Right now, the ERP industry is going through a tremulous shift for the next few years. Project navigation teams are working towards cloud adoption, dealing with deficiencies of flagship ERP systems and the customer pressure that vendors feel all the time. The vendors continuously think that they need to exceed expectations because their customers are big corporations doubling down their biases. Many industry players today understand that there is a lot of money at stake. They know that gone are the days when vendors used to enjoy reeling in big industry players. Now, these industry giants manipulate these vendors according to their own will and needs. With new technological advancements, it can be a tough time for vendors to keep up with the current industry demands.

Cloud ERP Solutions 2020

Here are the top 10 predictive ERP solutions for the year 2020 and beyond.

1. Adoption of Cloud Data Storage

It can be seen that customers are big on adopting cloud at scale now. The shift of embracing these new technological changes is far more due to the increased customer demands regarding more efficient technology than about the vendors pressurizing them. The shift has come mainly because the businesses today understand that cloud storage is for their own betterment. Vendors selling these solutions may only make the profit of developing, selling, and implementing these technologies. But the corporations doing so would reap the long-term benefits of these upgradable technologies.

2. Flagship ERP software

There are many technical shortcomings of flagship ERP software. Both vendors and customers are quickly rushing towards cloud ERP without realizing that many flagship products are not yet ready to take over a bigger corporate data set as of yet. Organizations need to have an objective perspective when investing money and not start running in the race for acquiring the newest technology. It should be one of the first steps taken towards selecting an ERP software solution. Because in the near future, when these flagship technological advances would be well implemented, the software needs to be optimized for more significant new upgrades.

3. Customization of ERP systems

It is quite a dilemma for the customers when it comes to customization of ERP systems. It is like choosing the lesser of two evils as you are given a choice to either go for half-baked software or to get it customized according to your needs. Many people would say that getting it customized sound better and can be more ideal. However the truth is far from it. Customizing ERP, according to your business needs, robs you of the chance of having the full software benefits that come with taking the complete package. Therefore, the companies are stuck with a hard choice.

MANY PEOPLE WOULD SAY THAT GETTING IT CUSTOMIZED SOUND BETTER AND CAN BE MORE IDEAL. HOWEVER THE TRUTH IS FAR FROM IT. CUSTOMIZING ERP, ACCORDING TO YOUR BUSINESS NEEDS, ROBS YOU OF THE CHANCE OF HAVING THE FULL SOFTWARE BENEFITS THAT COME WITH TAKING THE COMPLETE PACKAGE

4. Choosing the best system

Just as the customers want the most advanced technology to encompass their business dealings, they also desire the best of the lot in software solutions to fill in the gaps left by preexisting ERP vendor names like SAP, Oracle, and Microsoft. It is no longer the time where a single solution is considered a one-stop for all ERP systems. Despite all the big names in the vendor industry trying to push the same stale concept for days, customer corporations don't buy the idea. They want updated systems that can easily undertake their big data needs and expand to make a place for even more necessary changes that would be made with time.

5. Prioritizing skills and resources

The newest current trend shift would see nothing more than a high increase in the demand for IT employee training to enhance skills and resources. With companies quickly adapting more modern technological changes, the employees need to be up to date with the advances too. Companies usually focus too much on acquiring new technology than practicing it with their employee teams. It is also one of the main reasons why many of the new tech-changes adopted don't sit well with the corporation, and they end up dropping their initial idea. It is why, with this new technology revolution, companies would be seen prioritizing employee skill and training resources.

6. Taking the route of change management

According to the official definition on Wikipedia, "Change management is a collective term for all approaches to prepare, support, and help individuals, teams, and organizations in making organizational change." It is why change management will now be the core of developing and implementing new ERP and digital cloud transformations happening in every corporation. It needs to be the front and center to help minimize the risks of acquiring new technology and also has higher financial risks involved.

7. Understanding failure is part of the process

As mentioned above, not all organizations will follow the protocol necessary when acquiring new technology. Therefore, it will ultimately lead to failure. Failure is one aspect of implementing any new technological change or shift of work that becomes difficult for companies to handle. However, it is a necessary part of the process that is bound to happen, one way or the other. One cannot completely mitigate the risk of failure. But what can one can do is take the necessary precautions that allow you to minimize the risk of failure.

8. Big ERP vendor's customers may get affected

Many big ERP vendors have set up subtle deadlines pushing their customers to upgrade. However, feedback take from Literature Review Help, from their global clientele, suggests that customers are not happy with how these vendors render services. Therefore, there is a high chance that many big industry names will start losing their strong customer bases to many smaller corporations gaining momentum in the software business.

9. Increased backup and support

As mentioned above, there is a fair chance of having the risk of failure involved while your company prepares to invest, develop, and implement the new ERP digital transformation. Therefore, it is highly likely that the customer will demand more technical and solid back and support from their vendor service providers. Thus, many ERP consultants have to change their business game to provide the best consultancy services to help clients navigate through these issues.

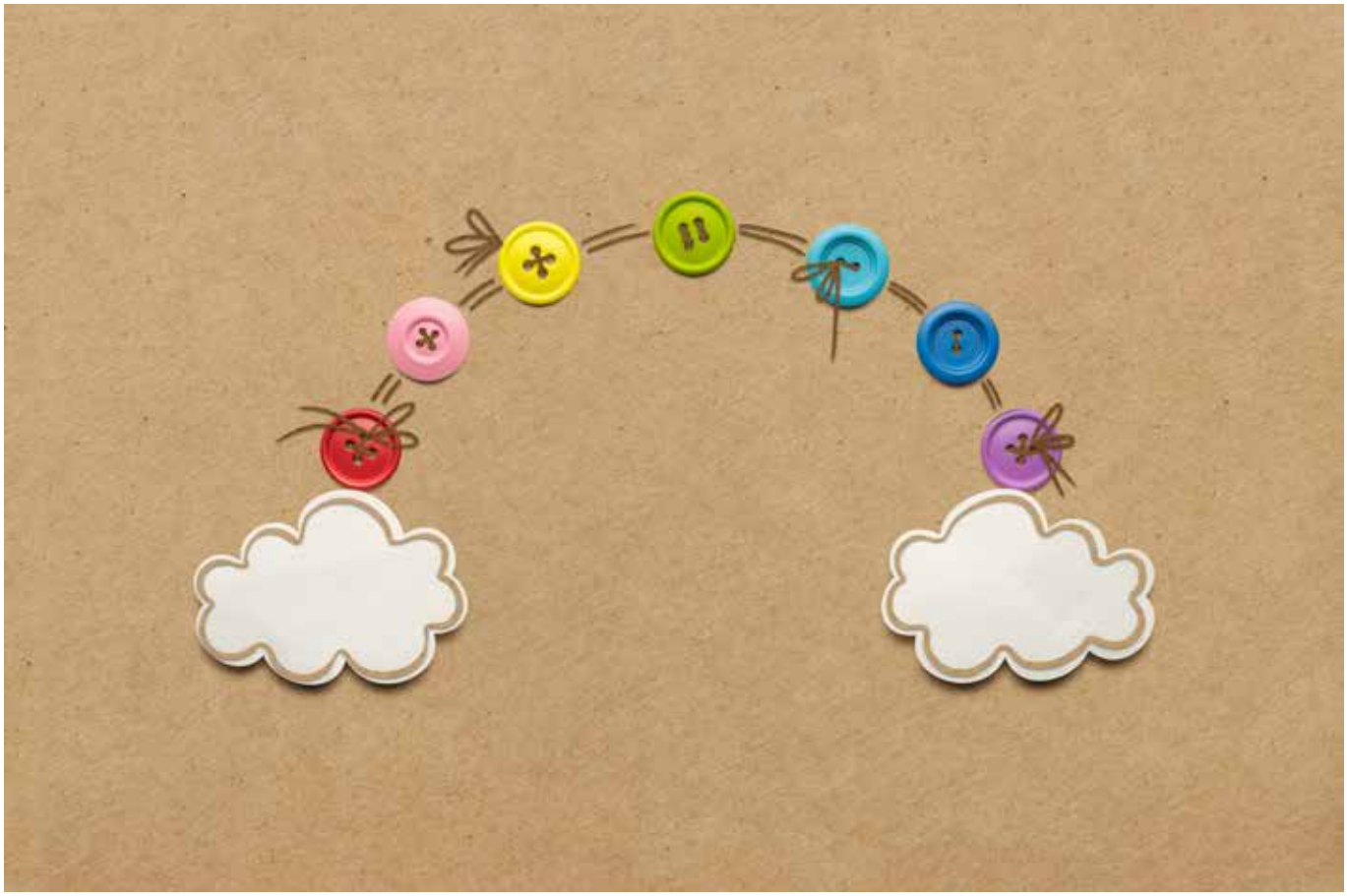
10. Independent ERP firms will empower their business

Many ERP firms wrongfully claim to be independent businesses and service providers. In contrast, they are basically just taking services from a bigger vendor and passing it forward and keeping the incentive of commission in between. It is why there is a good enough chance of many ERP firms empowering their private services to ensure that their customers don't have to deal with unofficial vendors.

Bottom Line

In conclusion, while there are distinct challenges in acquiring digital transformation today, there are greater opportunities too. Not only does it highly increase the business opportunity for the long term, but it increases your competency in the industry as well. It is just about how you decide to customize, develop, and implement your cloud ERP digital transformation that suits your organization the best.

Claudia Jeffrey is currently working as Editorial Manager at Crowd Writer, an excellent platform to buy dissertation online. She has a network of an audience who acknowledges her expertise. Therefore, she shares her personal as well as professional opinions online through her blogs.



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SHOULD YOUR MANUFACTURING BUSINESS MOVE TO A CLOUD ERP?

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

Do You Need to Digitally Transform Your Manufacturing Business?

Digitally transforming your company — that is, adopting new digital technologies in all areas of your business to change how your business operates — is going to be a necessity in 2020 and beyond. Much like the last decade, we are going to see an ever-progressing march towards new digital technologies over the next years, and businesses, especially manufacturers, are going to need to keep up in order to remain competitive.

But why, you may be asking yourself. Your manufacturing business is doing well, and you have systems and processes that have been in place for years — systems and processes that serve you well.

This is a valid question. A much missing piece in a lot of the talk about digital transformation is the 'why'. Why should you adopt new technologies? Just for the sake of acquiring them?

If you Google 'digital transformation' you will find many listicles and jargon-heavy articles telling you that it needs to be done. From reading these you can gleam that new digital technology will probably make you more agile, but they can also be huge disruptors to your business, taking up precious time you don't have to implement them and get your staff on board with using them.

Create Better Customer Experiences Through Digital Transformation

What is really at the core of digital transformation is adopting technologies that will make it easier for you to serve your customers, and make it easier to give your customers the experiences and value they want.

'Creating good customer experiences' isn't just a buzzword that your marketing department throws around at you — creating good customer experiences is at the core of your manufacturing business, whether you know it or not. Your repeat customers return to you over and over again, because you build a quality product, you deliver your products on time, and because you are easy to do business with. In other words, you deliver value to your customers and give them outstanding customer experiences.

Digital transformation is all about driving these concepts forward, giving you better tools and technologies to provide even more value to your customers and to give them even better customer experiences.

Cloud ERPS: Enabling Your Digital Transformation

But what does this have to do with the cloud, you may be asking?

As a manufacturer, you already know the value of a good

ERP system. A good ERP system helps you move jobs quickly, efficiently, and effectively through your shop, letting youdeliveraqualityproductonschedule.

A cloud ERP system will simply help you to build on this, making you an even more efficient and more productive organization.

Benefits of Cloud ERPs

A cloud ERP system will speed up the rate at which you do business, providing you with tools that will help you serve your customers better. With a cloud-based ERP system, you and your staff can instantly access everything you need to do business from anywhere, on any device, as long as you have a secure internet connection. This will make it easier for your employees to do their jobs, easier for you to build customer relationships, and easier for you to deliver exceptional customer experiences. A cloud-based ERP system gives you all of the advantages of an ERP — but in an easier to access, and quicker to use the system.

Other advantages of cloud ERP systems are:

1. Mobile technology allows for better collaboration

A cloud ERP system makes you more adaptable and makes it easier for your staff to collaborate because the system can be accessed by any staff member, from anywhere — meaning no more miscommunications between shop floor employees and front office staff.

> **A CLOUD-BASED ERP SYSTEM GIVES YOU ALL OF THE ADVANTAGES OF AN ERP — BUT IN AN EASIER TO ACCESS, AND QUICKER TO USE THE SYSTEM**

2. Better data security

Cloud ERPs provide very secure hosting environments that are always being updated with the latest security measures. As well, if your employees are working on the go, they can save all of their important data and spreadsheets to the cloud, instead of their own personal devices, meaning more document security.

3. Lower your IT costs

Using the cloud to host your ERP system means that you will not need to invest in expensive on-premise technology that requires you have to have IT staff, manage, save you money over the term of the ERP system.

4. Better business intelligence

You and your staff can easily access business data remotely from anywhere, letting your employees rely on accurate real-time data to make better decisions. Not only will this improve decisions made by the executive team, but it can also be a game-changer for your sales staff, allowing them to create better quotes and estimates.

5. Prepare for the future

Future-proof your business by moving to the cloud to ensure that you will be ready for new technologies. Cloud-based technologies are also more scalable, meaning you will be able to adapt and grow your business with ease.

Find the Right ERP System for You

Now that you are sold on the benefits of cloud-based ERP systems, and ready to start digitally transforming your manufacturing business, the good news is that you don't need to pick an ERP system that isn't right for you.

Almost all ERP systems now offer a cloud-based deployment option, meaning that you can still pick the right ERP system for you, one that is built for manufacturers like yourself. Genius ERP, built by manufacturing industry experts to include all of the functionalities that a custom manufacturer needs to successfully run their business offers a cloud-based ERP system. This means that you can take advantage of all the industry-specific features you need to run your busy manufacturing business — only faster, and from anywhere, allowing you to become an even more efficient and productive manufacturing business.

About Genius Solutions

Genius Solutions delivers a complete enterprise resource planning (ERP) solution, including software, implementation services, and field expertise for small to mid-sized custom manufacturers across the US and Canada. Genius ERP is built for SME manufacturers handling make-to-order, engineer-to-order, custom-to-order, and assemble-to- order manufacturing. Gain complete oversight of your shop, including accurate estimating, product engineering, inventory control, production planning, and accounts management. Simplify complex manufacturing with Genius ERP.

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

ERPNEWS

"WHAT IS THE ROLE OF CLOUD ERP IN DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION"

Cloud ERP enables digital transformation, by letting you take advantage of all the benefits of an ERP system anytime and from anywhere. Digital transformation is all about creating more value and better experiences for your customers through digital technology. Cloud ERP systems do just that — helping you to become more efficient and more productive, to better serve your customers.

Jean Magny,

President, and CEO at Genius Solutions

Genius ERP

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HEALTHCARE ERP DO MORE WITH LESS!

Article by ***Michael Grace,***

Enter the decade of Hospital 4.0. It would make sense that the back-office operations of healthcare across America also receive a 4.0 upgrade. Hospital 4.0 was to be realized in 2020 by most predictions and involves IoT, AI, robotics, data and analytics, 3D printing, virtual reality and ease of access. For the last few years, the pace of innovation around healthcare from a technology perspective has been fast and furious. You may think, finally, healthcare is going to change and improve. While the expenditure of all this energy into healthcare is for sure positive, many organizations are left overwhelmed and without an overarching strategy to take advantage of it.

The ERP landscape is a place of change as well. Most systems have matured to platforms that are primarily cloud-based to take advantage of the scalability and lower cost. That alone isn't very exciting, but it is when coupled with enhancements like global dynamic ledgers and robust modules such as grant management, lease applications and analytics geared to a role. Add in the layer that's being integrated such as robotic process automation (RPA), voice integration with Alexa or Google, chatbots and assistants and now you have something that can change the way we work. What do I mean by that? Change the way we work can mean so many things, but the digital transformation I am interested in relates to employing technology that allows us to take the mundane and give it to a digital worker, so our employees can do more meaningful tasks. If you picture an employee who spends the bulk of their day creating reports, moving files, or entering data, that can't be fulfilling to them. They would much rather be helping your customers and patients or working on the next new service line, etc. To understand how this benefits the organization, one must think about the cost avoidance of being able to free up current employees to do future tasks without having to hire more people. In simple terms, do more with less.

In general, ERP has evolved since the last implementation of software companies did 15 years ago to now be process-based. But, Unicorn, I was just told everything was role-based? A role relates to the function a user does within the application or in their job, for sure. What I mean by process-based, relates to how the ERP and tools like RPA look at the end to end process to create the automation necessary to free up the role to do more meaningful tasks. I can map a process, and it begins and ends across many roles. Very rarely does a process start and end with one person. The software has matured with tools beyond API and integrations to now be human-assisted or totally automated. Leveraging tools like OCR we can take forms and data and carry that in an automated fashion through the lifecycle in the ERP. We can take an applicant, from candidate to hiring to benefited, etc. without typing in our ERP. We can create a chatbot that talks to our candidates and answers most questions employees have like PTO balances, etc. thus creating capacity for our employees to help them with more meaningful tasks.

The opportunity to rethink processes now that we have technology lightyears ahead of what we had when ERP in healthcare was last implemented. In the culture when healthcare is trying to do more with less and lower overall

costs across their organization, I challenge you that the money is in the back office, not the clinical space. We just came out of the age of EHR and those processes may need revision, but they generally are newly designed leveraging the latest EHR technologies and systems. ERP has long been the stepchild and in that time the processes have been ignored. Yes, we have done upgrades but taken advantage of process redesign in rethinking all the end to end and taking advantage of 15 years of tech advancement we have not. Now some may have taken some interim steps with OCR in your AP process or perhaps you moved to digital document storage in HR. These are for sure good steps in the right direction but pale in comparison to what is possible. Yep, I am talking millions of dollars in savings if done correctly. Don't believe me, well I am a unicorn and so if you don't believe in magic, you probably are right. Keep doing what you have been doing as your competitors like Kaiser and the big systems automate and improve all their operations, then move into your market. Everyone in Healthcare needs to act now.

Within the ERP systems, they are all integrating robust process automation tools and significantly better mobile/self-service applications. Additionally, the look and feel of these systems have changed dramatically they now get the concept of usability. How this has changed is in the way of personas.

> **"IN THE CULTURE WHEN HEALTHCARE IS TRYING TO DO MORE WITH LESS AND LOWER OVERALL COSTS ACROSS THEIR ORGANIZATION, I CHALLENGE YOU THAT THE MONEY IS IN THE BACK OFFICE, NOT THE CLINICAL SPACE**

This means they understand the whole concept of delivering functionality to the person that is specific to the job they are doing. No more is it a blank slate you must try and limit by security. When users log in, it knows they are the Controller and delivers functionality like reports and analytics they want to see daily to their dashboard. Minor tweaks sure may be needed but this is a huge paradigm shift. It saves you time on the configuration of security and in custom development. The system also knows what users want and delivers robust self-service capabilities. These have the potential for the first time to allow you to insource and centralize functions probably outsourced like benefits administration. It will for sure reduce the calls coming in from employees and provide them a first-class user experience. I like to say you can't say it is a critical process, important to your employees and then outsource it. Nobody will care about your employees as you do.

Oh, I mentioned customizations, let's talk about those. Many of you have hundreds (some of you have thousands) of customizations you have made over the years. These all require a ton of maintenance and honestly are the Achilles heel that breaks. With all the advancements and the move to the cloud, these go away! Whether you like it or not, it is not smart to customize in the cloud and with the development of many healthcare-specific modules and functionality, it is rarely necessary. Some ERP's simply tell you "tough" you can't do customization and others have ways, but they don't let you know. Now, this is a process to identify all your customizations and map that to the new functionality to identify where there may be gaps still. If there are

gaps, this means everyone in the world does it differently than you and guess what, it is time to fix your process, not customize the application. Seriously the new versions of ERP allow you a lot of flexibility and the argument that you need a "differentiator", I challenge you the differentiator does not come from your back-office ERP. This differentiator will be in the policies and self-service you offer your employers and customers. As the functionality of ERP has advanced, it is time to discuss application lifecycle management. Call it whatever you wish (ALM, APM, App Management, etc.) this is the right time to address this. The first step is to ensure you have an accurate portrait of your landscape. For many, this is an Excel spreadsheet, and that is ok to start with, but we will want to really build on this. It needs extensive details to be useful in the capacity of application planning. I mean it needs to include an operating system, database, integrations, users, modules, etc. The more detailed the better. In a perfect world, you would consider a platform like Service Now or Planview to help administer this and make it interactive with the application owners to keep updated. This then becomes the hub whenever your environment changes to help you manage the impact assessment. But for ERP this helps us identify where we may be able to reduce this portfolio by consolidating into new ERP functionality and thus offset some of the cost. Things like recruitment software, travel software, budgeting and planning and reporting tools are top of mind for consideration. Governance from sponsorship is key to help here, to ensure we aren't simply keeping software with duplicate functionality because "we have had it for a long time". The rule I use is 70% of current functionality met in the new ERP you are moving. This can save hundreds of thousands in maintenance not to mention improve usability within the new ERP.

Reports are another opportunity. Many of you are still running Crystal – yes you are even if you deny it, I guarantee I'll find some Crystal reports. Worse you are using Excel like it is a key part of your processes. Maybe you have evolved to MS Access on Johns' computer, either way, this is all bad news. I can't talk about reporting without talking about enterprise content management. Where is your information and how do people access it? Now is the time to address this gorilla too and I can help. This will touch non-ERP areas such as SharePoint or O365 but making sense of your data is important. For reports, working toward an enterprise reporting strategy with a robust tool like BIRST or even Tableau can help with wasted effort creating reports that are duplicative or worse yet, just wrong. With the advent of tools such as Tableau, licenses are now distributed across your environment vs. being consolidated which creates a few opportunities. You don't know what reports folks are creating or who they are distributing them to for what purpose. What if the calculations are wrong? What if three people are creating essentially the same reports? How are they integrated into the process, and could they be automated? What are they used for? Do we need a report really? Time to take a look at what we are doing here.

> **"WHETHER YOU LIKE IT OR NOT, IT IS NOT SMART TO CUSTOMIZE IN THE CLOUD AND WITH THE DEVELOPMENT OF MANY HEALTHCARE-SPECIFIC MODULES AND FUNCTIONALITY, IT IS RARELY NECESSARY**

Given all the complexities of healthcare today, chances are you need to look at a redesign of your GL. Especially if you are on Infor and moving to the cloud, where you will now have a dimensional general ledger called Global Ledger. This is the perfect time to move away from smart numbering to a more strategic dimensional GL that reflects your business.

Spending time here really in advance of implementation to design the GL is time well spent. Watch my webinar on GL pre-planning for some helpful insight here.

The supply chain 10 years ago was where all the value in ERP implementation was realized. Well, guess what, it is a star in the show again this time. With over 1,200 enhancements made to the application within Infor and new modules coming from Workday and Oracle, this area has a lot to take advantage of. It will require some new technologies like RFID and RPA to really be optimized, however. How are you doing PO's? Are you still using a FAX? My kids don't even know what a fax is. Where are you on your EDI journey? In today's tech-filled world, there is a ton that can be done here to achieve an expedited and cost benefiting process.

Okay, we are finally at human resources in the ERP family of modules. I believe this is where the most focus of the last few years has been discussed but not fully realized. In this space, RPA and ERP combined can have the greatest reduction of costs, most improvement to the timeliness of process and greatest impact on employee experience. This really deserves its own post. However, I can share stories of customers with the correct guidance, reduced call center traffic and staff in HR/Payroll by over 50%. How you may ask? Automation and self-service now included in ERP are a huge step forward. Rethinking your best of breed strategy in HR systems is a key here as well. When you consolidate your applications, you reduce the swivel chair integration that exists even with the best integrations and creates a seamless real-time environment where data moves seamlessly. You then can begin to key off HR data in your ERP to drive all kinds of external processes like access and security or travel, etc. Not all ERP will be able to stand alone here without some spot help from RPA. Regardless of the tool (Kofax and Blue Prism are my choices) they really complement the tools in ERP and automate your end to end processes. Processes like payroll (yes may not be owned by HR, I am aware), benefits, recruiting, administration of termination, leaves, separation, etc. I could go on and on. What I am stressing is this whole area has seen a focus in the past few years that now can be realized. You can easily create a roadmap on these technologies too over a few years to make them consumable. You should be able to repurpose 30% of your HR workforce depending on the size of the department.

So, as you can see Healthcare ERP is so exciting right now. I am skipping other topics like the revolution in analytics in HR that is becoming predictive. Yes, predictive, meaning that we can tell you if a candidate is a right fit for a position or perhaps where they would be better placed. We can have data help point to why turnover is so high. Okay, let's just talk about this. There are a lot of companies in the field, with Infor having its own player Talent Science. Visier is another key player all trying to make sense of the data. The last decade was the period of data collection. Data warehouses, data lakes, data gathering, so much data. Now we created cool terms like normalization and interoperability, but can we be done with this and actually use the darn data. This is where a good analytics strategy come ins. Notice, I didn't say reporting. Reporting to me is flat, it is a printout, not dynamic and rarely is predictive. I want analytics that is preemptive and helps my front line take appropriate action. I don't care what happened 30-60-90 days ago unless it is relevant at the moment I need to act. What if I told you we could reduce your turnover by 10%? Think about this, one nurse turnover has a cost of about $59,000 and the average turnover is 17% and a large hospital has about 20% of their workforce being nurses. Now do the math and the number is staggering. I can help. Engagement is driven off by understanding data around why people are leaving. If you tell me Unicorn, we do exit surveys, I will probably chuckle. It is a pretty complex process to understand what drives your high performers and why they leave. If you don't figure it out, your competition will and then you will have a huge problem.

So now whew I am really done I promise. I could go on and discuss virtual reality, cloud, surgical scheduling, virtual visits, OR scheduling optimization, etc. All these have touchpoints to ERP and if you want to know more, I will send you a Unicorn plush to have a conversation with me about it. I get jazzed talking to my healthcare clients about these items and more and happy to help you plan and facilitate workshops to get you going. There you have it, some key topics on Healthcare ERP, now to rest my Unicorn fingers.

Michael Grace is an innovative technology leader who speaks about how businesses can achieve a transformation by leveraging technology. Several companies have called him a "unicorn" due to his ability to understand the business issue and solve it in partnership with the customer leveraging the latest technology and process enhancements. Michael is currently a Director in the Infor practice at RPI Consultants. Previously he was CEO of his own consulting company, Gravmetric specializing in transformation, enterprise resource planning software (ERP) and robotic process automation (RPA). He has created the personal brand Tech Pro Unicorn, where he regularly publishes blog posts on technology and other topics.

Michael has a history blending IT leadership, consulting, and innovation with a fierce determination to solve the root customer issues in a variety of industries. He has worked extensively in healthcare as well as finance, gaming and retail industries. He has worked for a variety of leading companies to include Dignity Health, Cancer Treatment Centers of America, Phoenix Children's Hospital, The Revere Group, Moss Adams, BearingPoint, Deloitte and The Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco.

Michael is very passionate about listening intensely to the customer and only once the problem is understood, does he collaborate on the process improvement empowered by technology. This blend of customer focus, innovation, business process and technology are what makes him so unique, thus a unicorn.

When not working, Michael enjoys his family. His wife Jennifer, mother Yvonne, 4 boys, 1 daughter, a dog, and a cat. His hobbies include cycling, cooking, keto lifestyle, reading, music, owning a DJ company and enjoying time with friends.

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4 REASONS TO MOVE YOUR ERP TO THE CLOUD

Your enterprise resource planning (ERP) solution is key to the operation of your business—that goes without saying. But when it's time to implement a new or upgraded ERP, you may have some second thoughts about the best implementation method: on premises or in the cloud.

What Will Be Best for Your Company?

Of course, traditionally, ERP solutions were implemented on premises. Before the advent of cloud computing, implementing an ERP system on your premises was your only choice. Your company bought the hardware, the software, and the real estate necessary to house them. You also provided your own information technology (IT) department and your own security. Since the cloud came into being, you now have choices.

When determining which implementation method will best suit your organization, there is a series of questions you'll want to have answered:

1. What Is the Cloud?

The cloud, or cloud computing, is an offsite service provided by a specialized, expert business. Using the power of the internet, cloud providers can offer services that are available anywhere there's an internet connection and at any time, essentially 24/7. Cloud providers must be resilient to infrastructure and software failures. They provide their services on a subscription or rental basis to end users. The cloud provider owns the hardware and is responsible for maintaining it. They are also responsible for providing all software updates, IT and troubleshooting, and industry-mandated security measures. With much of the technical side of ERP system handled in the cloud, you're freed up to concentrate on the nuts and bolts of your business.

2. How Can the Cloud Help Your Business?

Aside from the freedom of operation provided by the cloud, there are other benefits. The cloud makes collaboration across different departments or locations much easier. Anyone with the proper permissions can have access to the data they need regardless of where they are working. Updates in services or products can be made in the time it takes to type the information. By connecting your employees and offices, providing IT resources, guaranteeing security, and being available even in times of disaster, cloud ERP supports growth and business success.

3. Who Uses the Cloud?

Those who haven't yet tried cloud ERP may feel that they don't need it. If your business is predictable and you've already set up and trained your employees with an on-premise ERP, you might wonder if it's worth it to switch to the cloud. And while it's true that moving to the cloud is not necessary for certain businesses, many feel that the benefits far outweigh the effort or expense involved. The cloud is no longer a novelty—it's quickly becoming the deployment of choice. A wide array of industries have chosen the cloud and are seeing a number of benefits.

4. How Did We Get Here?

Cloud computing developed to enable businesses to make use of the growing technology of the digital age in order to operate in a leaner way, and produce more while spending less. In the 1990s, the growing IT market drove down costs and broadened access to server hosting capacities across the globe. Technical skills became widespread within the IT realm, allowing more competitors to enter the market and transform a previously specialized service into a commodity service. There's never been a better time to move to the cloud. Overall, using cloud-based software offers companies flexibility and the ability to scale. Even for companies that do not envision scaling, migrating to the cloud still allows them to improve upon current processes.

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