ERP NEWS
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Interview with

ZORAN RADUMILO

President of LATAM & EMEA South Regions

IFS

The Impact of Covid-19 on ERP Industry

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EDITOR'S NOTE

Hi Everyone,

In our last edition, my only concern was to be able to deliver the latest news and articles to you. Now every morning we wake up to a world of uncertainty, worrying about the state of our businesses and the health of our loved ones. We are experiencing such a situation that could be a subject to textbooks someday. Businesses that were relatively ready and have the best technological tools are suffering slightly less from the crisis.

As everyone continues to face these extreme measures, we have decided to postpone the publication date of our April edition to 21.05.2020 and turn the May edition into a Covid-19 special edition.

As ERP News, we aimed to shed a light on this uncertain period in this issue and gather the opinions of ERP executives from different companies. You will also find different thoughts about the effects of the pandemic on the ERP industry and other businesses. Also we will together explore the ways that our lives might change and what the new normal will be like.

Also we had a special guest in this edition on the cover story. The interview we had with the President of LATAM & EMEA South regions at IFS, Zoran Radumilo will help us all to evaluate the unprecedented circumstances.

Don't give up on hope and finding the most creative idea for your business!

Stay healthy!

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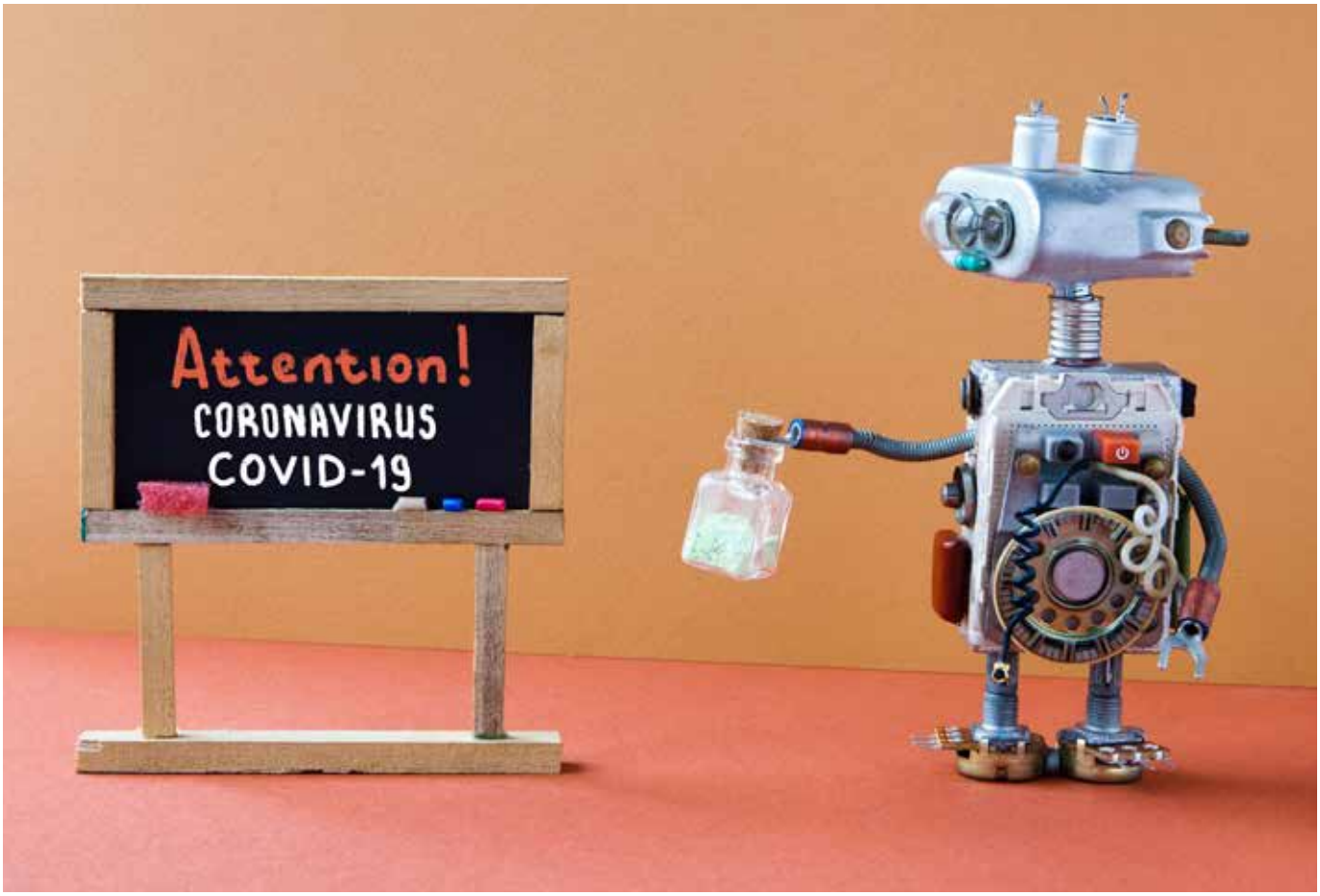

EPICOR.

THE FUTURE WITHIN THE ERP INDUSTRY

Article by ***Mark Hughes***,
Regional Vice President UK and Ireland at Epicor

Unpredictable impacts of the outbreak and the disruptions in the supply chains of the businesses are causing a big change in the manufacturing industry worldwide. The Covid-19 outbreak, during which the currently used ERP systems are going through a test, causes us to question the accuracy of the decisions that we have made in the past. ERP systems are now at the center of all developments in the business world.

Three Different Scenarios of the Industry

In unforeseen challenges like the ones we face now, one thing we know for sure is that the way people work is changing. As an ERP business, we are seeing three different scenarios for our customers. Firstly, there are factories deemed as essential continue to soldier on—but often with a much-reduced workforce—meaning many are incredibly busy. Businesses in food distribution or medical equipment, for example, have had to rapidly adapt their businesses to deal with the demand for the 'new now.' Little time is left to think about procedure or process—everything is going in to support the country. For many manufacturers, taking on temporary staff has been essential to keep up. And to support this, additional ERP software licenses have been required.

There are also businesses at the other end of the spectrum who have seen a decline in demand and have had to furlough staff as a result. There are also those in the middle, who are taking the downtime to upgrade existing processes in order to emerge stronger. Some manufacturers are taking this time to accelerate internal projects using ERP software. Here, ERP software that can be installed and set up remotely will be pivotal in putting those plans into action.

The future within the ERP industry is certainly intriguing. Sectors such as builders' merchants and food manufacturing and distribution will be critical for the recovery of the UK economy and are already starting to adapt their business models. New contactless initiatives such as click and collect will become increasingly necessary, as well as the growing use of mobile licenses so that manufacturers can access business information wherever they are.

Manufacturers Will Become Much More Vertical

One of the top impacts of COVID-19 on enterprises is undoubtedly the realisation of how vulnerable supply chains can be. People have been surprised at what little distance you need to go down the supply chain to go overseas. These supply chains—as we have witnessed—are inevitably open to disruption, and manufacturers will be keen to reduce this risk in the future.

As we come out on the other side of COVID-19, I anticipate that manufacturers will become much more vertical. A lot

> THE FUTURE WITHIN THE ERP INDUSTRY IS CERTAINLY INTRIGUING. SECTORS SUCH AS BUILDERS' MERCHANTS AND FOOD MANUFACTURING AND DISTRIBUTION WILL BE CRITICAL FOR THE RECOVERY OF THE UK ECONOMY AND ARE ALREADY STARTING TO ADAPT THEIR BUSINESS MODELS.

of people will be looking to invest in skills and technology to be able to do much more of those processes onshore. Public perceptions are also starting to alter, and consumers are beginning to realise the value of spending a little extra in order to support 'Made in Britain' produce and initiatives.

From an ERP perspective, bringing manufacturing back onshore means better control. It means mix-mode manufacturing including—make to order, make to stock, make to demand, projects, etc. Many manufacturers will need to have these capabilities within the business.

Robots and Cobots Will Be Major Players of the New Normal

The whole world wants this situation to end as soon as possible. Right now, everyone is wondering how long it will take for the virus to diminish and for business to return to normal. What the new normal will look like after the pandemic is still a matter of curiosity. The next 3-6 months will be around how to drive efficiencies within the business. Technology—when combined with an effective ERP system—will be a crucial enabler for this.

We are already starting to see accelerated adoption of robots and cobots across the factory floor. Many manufacturers are already beginning to realise the benefits of robotics as a way of autonomously running their factories, without the need for a complete human workforce. That being said, there are limitations when it comes to robots—they need to be told exactly what to do and programmed in order to do it. There is, therefore, an underlying need for a technology backbone, for detailed planning, data capture, etc., to bring the benefits of technology to life. This is where ERP comes in.

Striving Towards Smarter Supply Chains

It will not be wrong to say that all the investments and hard work that businesses have put into their digital transformation in recent years, it really paid off. Now is the time to better position the business for the new digital normal, post-pandemic.

Where UK manufacturers had previously lagged in the Industry 4.0 revolution, there is now a real opportunity for technology such as automation to be brought to the forefront, as manufacturers strive towards a smarter supply chain.

Tools including AP invoicing, document management, and alternating workflows, are becoming an increasingly popular topic of discussion amongst our customers. Businesses are really starting to see the benefits of digital transformation in terms of cost and time savings.

Ultimately, the acceleration of technology will be driven by the availability of funds over the coming months and years. After all, cash is king, especially at a time like this. Thanks to proposed asset procurement loans from the government, businesses can now take an interest-free loan for up to two years. This means that more and more businesses are now in a position where they can invest in digital transformation.

Mark Hughes joined Epicor Software in 2018 as regional vice president UK and Ireland. He brings with him more than 20 years' experience within the technology sector—using his extensive expertise within the supply chain and manufacturing space to help over 1000 manufacturing businesses take advantage of the latest advances in technology.

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.

Acumatica HOW COVID-19 WILL IMPACT ERP

*Article by **Jon Roskill**,*
CEO at Acumatica

In the middle of a global health crisis, the COVID-19 pandemic threatens a drastic shift in the future of work. In a matter of a few weeks, businesses across the country have shuttered their doors and implemented telecommuting protocols for employees. This sudden transition has tested the global workforce's ability to work remotely and threatened digital transformation efforts.

With the right tools, however, businesses can weather this storm and continue to drive innovation forward despite the uncertainty they face in their respective industries. Having a cloud-based ERP system at its core allows the business to continue day-to-day operations via a mobile browser, with round-the-clock access to business tools and functions. The office is no longer a fixed location – rather, it's wherever employees are. Team members can collaborate in a single system and access real-time data for decision making.

In light of the outbreak, business processes are being re-evaluated. Research shows that 70% of companies already had a digital transformation plan in place or were working on one before COVID-19 took hold of the world. However, the pandemic has been an eye-opening experience for business leaders everywhere, as they realize operational weaknesses and areas of improvement. For example, without processes built on the cloud, companies struggle to collaborate, access analytics, support remote employees, and much more. For many businesses not used to working digitally, COVID-19 might have expedited their timeline for a digital transformation.

As the modern workplace changes in response to these uncertain times and leaders consider how they can improve their business, the enterprise resource planning (ERP) industry will need to adapt to meet customer needs. Outlined below are four predictions for how the ERP industry will evolve in response to COVID-19.

Enterprises will embrace the cloud

Organizations in every sector have been gradually recognizing the benefits of the cloud. With today's unforeseen circumstances, this shift toward the cloud has kicked into high gear. ABI Research forecasts, for example, that the supply chain impact of COVID-19 will spur the manufacturer's investment in ERP to reach $14 billion in 2024.

Enabling remote employees is no longer just a possibility, it's fast becoming a requirement, and cloud technology is a necessary component of a connected and successful remote workforce. On-premise solutions are obsolete. In the future, we will see more enterprises leave their legacy systems behind in favor of agile, scalable, and cost-effective cloud alternatives. By leaving on-premise solutions in the past, they will gain access to their ERP data and connected modules from anywhere, at any time, from any device, and perform their unique business management processes without disruption.

Security will be top of mind

One of the major benefits of cloud ERP is security. Cloud vendors offer sophisticated and secure hosting environments, including network management by specialized personnel, automated patching, enhanced monitoring, access controls, and the latest encryption standards. As more companies flock to the cloud, they will seek out ERP providers with proven security protocols. Further, they will seek out systems that can safely and securely support remote workers and offer geo-redundancy and automatic failover in case of emergencies.

> **CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT (CRM) HAS PROVEN CRUCIAL DURING THE GLOBAL HEALTH CRISIS. BUSINESSES HAVE HAD TO QUICKLY INFORM CUSTOMERS OF PRODUCT SHORTAGES, CANCELLATIONS, AND POTENTIAL REFUND PROCEDURES, ALL WHILE BALANCING THE INTERNAL TRANSITION TO REMOTE WORK.**

Leaders will prioritize CRM

Customer relationship management (CRM) has proven crucial during the global health crisis. Businesses have had to quickly inform customers of product shortages, cancellations, and potential refund procedures, all while balancing the internal transition to remote work. Modern management software is critical in understanding how recent disruptions impact customers. Going forward, we will see customer support teams rely on CRM tools to gain a complete view of business operations to deliver accurate information to customers. To deliver top-notch customer care, they will need true mobile solutions, with full Android and Apple support as opposed to just browser support. CRM will give support representatives a consolidated, 360-degree view of all customer records in a single database.

Personalization will be the cherry on top

Personalization is a means of adjusting the ERP software to fit the customer's needs. Low code, no-code personalization allows users to affect change within their cloud ERP solution – no programmer or developer needed. Without writing a single line of code, users can tailor their cloud ERP to the business' precise, unique requirements. During this time of uncertainty, organizations need solutions that will quickly and nimbly mold to their needs. In the coming weeks, months, and even years, more and more business leaders will seek out ERP solutions they can take control of and tailor to their specific needs and objectives.

Cloud ERP software is adaptable, intuitive, collaborative, automated, and insightful, providing users with a single source of truth in real-time and with access at any time, from anywhere. It eliminates the cost of IT infrastructure as well as the responsibility for hardware and software updates, opens the door to innovation, and allows for easy personalization. As the world continues to reel from the effects of COVID-19, enterprises will turn to the cloud to drive forward digital transformation efforts and deliver on business objectives. As they do so, they will prioritize secure solutions that will empower their remote employees, enhance customer relationships, and adapt to their individual needs.

Jon Roskill has 25 years of leadership experience in the software business. He joins Acumatica after a 20-year career at Microsoft, where he led efforts in many areas including product development for developer tools, as well as business operations, strategy, and marketing for all of Microsoft US. Jon's most recent role was Corporate Vice President for the Worldwide Partner Group where he led a global sales and marketing team of more than 5,000 employees and Microsoft's 640,000 partners.

About Acumatica

Acumatica Cloud ERP provides the best business management solution for transforming your company to thrive in the new digital economy. Built on a future-proof platform with an open architecture for rapid integrations, scalability, and ease of use, Acumatica delivers unparalleled value to small and midmarket organizations. Connected Business. Delivered.
For more information, visit www.acumatica.com

THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON ERP INDUSTRY

Interview with ***Zoran Radumilo****,*

president of LATAM & EMEA South Regions

We had the opportunity to talk to Zoran Radumilo from IFS at the "Role of the CFOs in Digital Transformation Event" of IFS. After taking many different roles in the software industry, Zoran Radumilo thinks it's a fantastic opportunity to be part of the IFS community as the president of LATAM & EMEA South regions . "It's the company itself and the leadership of Darren Roos, which is extraordinary and inspiring," he says. Radumilo has embraced the company and its people very quickly and he has set his mind to deliver all the value he can to his region as the president.

Build & Deliver

We discussed his motto " 'It's better to be optimistic and to be wrong, than pessimistic and to be right", from Albert Einstein and he says that there are no obstacles to digital transformation because it is just a necessity that should be realized. He thinks if you have the right people in your team to be able to confront the challenge and understand the business and everything that you can bring to life within months not years like we have been used to, then you can build up to something very important and meaningful.

The time frame we are in is unique, fast, and full of opportunities. In order to seize these opportunities, companies need to find the right way to reflect the speed of today's technology to their businesses. And this is where the ERP software comes into play. Radumilo says, "We are on the way of transformation in the ERP industry and this is the right moment to be!". He mentions that the motto means a lot for the region he is responsible for and adds "We need to help companies to embrace the digital transformation with confidence to start thinking about the products to go to market, the business processes, leveraging all the technology that today exists. The high potential markets are those markets that are full of opportunities in different industries which are just starting to go through this transformation."

Today, we are experiencing a period in which the alternatives are increasing day by day in the software industry. You can find thousands of alternatives to the technological tool you are looking for. However, very few software vendors guarantee that these alternatives can fully adapt to your business processes. Here is IFS, one of the software vendors that provide this warranty. IFS operates specifically at 5 different industries where they are certainly successful, and they bring the industry to know how to their customers. Radumilo indicates "And those 5 industries, we bring the industry knowledge and this industry knowledge is what companies are looking for. They want to talk to people who know and who knows to deliver the value, not to extract the value. To build and deliver it!" LATAM & EMEA South regions are all high potential markets as the IFS calls them and Radumilo and his team are organizing themselves to capture the opportunities there and deliver the value to companies that they will be serving.

Role of the CFOs in Digital Transformation

"CFOs are the important players to make it happen," he answers when we ask how deep the CFOs should be involved in the digital transformation journey of the companies. He explains that successful companies should analyze their supply chain well and they should keep doing innovations. "They need to connect the innovation to the numbers and those numbers will represent the changes that will take place in the future."

> **"CFOs ARE THE IMPORTANT PLAYERS TO MAKE IT HAPPEN. THEY NEED TO CONNECT THE INNOVATION TO THE NUMBERS AND THOSE NUMBERS WILL REPRESENT THE CHANGES THAT WILL TAKE PLACE IN THE FUTURE.**

And he points out another important issue which is sustainability, "Especially when we talk about sustainability, CFOs should take part in it. We are witnessing that more CFOs are starting to interpret those innovations in digital transformation throughout the sustainability projects and transformed them into the numbers which make everybody happy. So, you have the sustainability, you have the processes for the future evolution, you have the numbers which are sustaining this. CFO's are one of the principal players to make it happen."

Challenger Mindset Amid the Pandemic

As the Covid-19 outbreak unfolds, it's quite clear that we will have to experience the disruptions it caused in the business world. Radumilo keeps his positive attitude and interprets the effects of the pandemic, "Despite the numerous challenges ahead, I'm pleased to observe that the 'challenger mindset' continues to thrive at IFS and in the customers, I speak with every day. Projects are moving forward utilizing remote delivery, and digital business value assessments are increasingly replacing face to face sessions."

He also mentions his worries about the workforce, "In the slightly longer-term, the ERP industry can expect to be impacted by people and skills issues. With the health and wellbeing of staff a priority for everyone, there's potential for the IT skills gap to widen. We are mitigating this by supplementing IT workforce resources with application management services. It is an offering that is helping to overcome rapidly changing competency requirements and freeing up IT teams to focus on managing the challenges ahead."

> **"IN THE SLIGHTLY LONGER- TERM, THE ERP INDUSTRY CAN EXPECT TO BE IMPACTED BY PEOPLE AND SKILLS ISSUES. WITH THE HEALTH AND WELLBEING OF STAFF A PRIORITY FOR EVERYONE, THERE'S POTENTIAL FOR THE IT SKILLS GAP TO WIDEN.**

IFS Remote Assistance

Having proved its success in certain industries, IFS offers its customers many advantages in the period of COVID-19. Radumilo briefly touches upon these advantages as follows;
''In these exceptional times, we are taking an active part in helping our customers cope with increasingly stringent restrictions on travel and work while ensuring the health and safety of their people. For example, one field service customer is deploying the merged reality features of IFS Remote Assistance to share expertise from remote working locations, enabling them to continue to provide their service in a manner that is safe for customers and employees.

"Being close to your customers is always a sound strategy, and this comes into sharp focus during a crisis. The ERP industry has been changing for several months now, as the legacy vendors fail to deliver true customer-centricity with any consistency and the mid-market players continue to disrupt, innovate and raise the standard of business software behaviors. I expect the current crisis to accelerate these changes in the vendor landscape, as user organizations re-evaluate their spending, their contracts, and their business objectives."

"Over the next few weeks, we should all continue to help customers navigate their way through the immediate crisis while simultaneously planning for recovery through innovation, diversification, and ongoing transformation."

Thinking beyond the culture of ERP suppliers, while people will still want real-world interactions, working practices, and how we interact with customers may also change. We introduced an online customer community last year to power self-service, collaboration, and access to expertise and experience. I expect this style of working to gain even further traction after the 'lockdown' experience of recent months.
While this crisis is not the same as the financial shock of 2008, there will still be an impact on organizational behaviors, working styles and vendor landscape''

Demand Will Increase to Advanced Technologies

In this unforeseen uncertainty, not only the industries but also the expectations of customers will continue to change. We are all wondering what awaits us in this changing world and here are the predictions of Zoran Radumilo;

''Labor, logistics, and business uncertainty to name a few. What's unique about the business challenges of this crisis is the availability of people's labor and skills. Not only are businesses concerned about the safety and wellbeing of their employees, but as consumers stay home, businesses lose revenue and must act to reduce their expenditure.

Global supply chains have suffered, and the vulnerabilities of many organizations have been exposed. Fortunately, technology can help by delivering end-to-end visibility across the supply chain that can mitigate the effects of the crisis by breaking down silos, improving agility, encouraging collaboration, and optimizing operations. More advanced technologies such as the Internet of Things, artificial intelligence, robotics, and 5G, digital supply networks may also feature in future solutions''

The Key Learnings from COVID-19

As the world struggles through the tragic COVID-19 pandemic, we can say that it has taught everyone a lesson that will never be forgotten. Here is what Radumilo thinks organizations have learned from COVID-19;
"We're regularly consulting with organizations to help them stay tuned to their business reality and shifting competitive landscape, but also how to spot the opportunities too. Some organizations are evolving and transforming already. Some are servitizing their offerings or diversifying in order to stay relevant. So far, the key learnings are around the importance of business agility, data, and business insights for effective real-time decision-making, supply chain visibility, and human capital management.

History shows us that following every big recession is a shift in how technology is used in business – from cloud to collaboration. I expect this crisis to trigger a similar outcome.

As well as the virtual working element we've already talked about, what inspires me is the pace and scope of innovation that gets triggered when organizations are forced to do things differently, to adapt and to challenge their own norms End-users of enterprise software will continue to look to technology vendors that are also innovating themselves - not just to understand the role of enabling technologies in

> **"WE'RE REGULARLY CONSULTING WITH ORGANIZATIONS TO HELP THEM STAY TUNED TO THEIR BUSINESS REALITY AND SHIFTING COMPETITIVE LANDSCAPE, BUT ALSO HOW TO SPOT THE OPPORTUNITIES TOO.**

uncertain times, but also for better ways of doing business. Being able to flex and stay agile and relevant is key. As is being ready for the return to 'normal' because they will need to be ready to take action against a clear plan. So, this will mean a review of their ability to realize value quickly, then stay technically up to date without a series of major re-implementations"

Behind the Scenes of Success

IFS has been maintaining its position in the industry for many years. We see that they are one step ahead of other ERP solutions especially in some industries such as manufacturing, services organizations, energy utility resources & telecommunications, engineering, construction & infrastructure business, aerospace, and defense.
"This know-how is profound. We do talk about 30+ years of experience. Those are the industries where there is an indisputable recognition of IFS. In recent years, particularly after the arrival of Darren Roos, what we have seen is how this know-how was positioned and articulated in a company's strategy."
"One thing is absolutely clear; where to go, how to do it! You can see that focused concentration on business value results in quality and the support that you can provide throughout the entire life cycle of engagement with a customer." He also explains how far IFS had come "For the last eight quarters, we have had double digital growth of online businesses. And tripled the number of the cloud. Something very impressive." Industry 4.0 is one of the rising trends in the software industry in recent years. This trend, which rewrites the ways of doing business, will probably become a must for companies to survive in a competitive environment very soon. We witness new technological developments every day with the introduction of Industry 4.0 to our lives and we asked his opinion about the role of these technologies in the future of ERP, Radumilo's answer was quite simple "These technologies are integrated with the solutions we have, but this is not what we are selling. It's the journey that matters and all of these elements are playing their part when it's necessary.

IFS Turkey has been named as one of the high potential fastest-growing countries by IFS and Radumilo explained their strategy as "Today we do express ourselves differently with the globalization of the entire company, with our strategy, which is clear and straight forward; with communication and that is appropriate communication to the market." And he continues with the facts in Turkey "Turkey is a market with thousands of customers. And all of those customers, they do deserve to choose. So, there are many industries we just know "where to do it, what to do it." And this the phenomenal opportunity for IFS in Turkey, to capture this opportunity in the right way."

About IFS

IFS develops and delivers enterprise software for customers around the world who manufacture and distribute goods, build and maintain assets, and manage service-focused operations. The industry expertise of our people and solutions, together with a commitment to delivering value to every one of our customers, has made IFS a recognized leader and the most recommended supplier in our sector. Our team of 4,000 employees and growing ecosystem of partners support more than 10,000 customers around the world challenge the status quo and realize their competitive advantage. Learn more about how our enterprise software solutions can help your business today at ifs.com
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KEEPING PACE WITH THE NEW NORMAL

Article by ***Claus Jepsen***

Deputy CTO at Unit4

We woke up one morning and everything has changed. Although we do our best to understand and adapt to the changing environment, there seems to be no other way to survive this crisis without having the right technological infrastructure. By recognizing the value of digital transformation in advance, some companies are a bit more fortunate in this process, but some are in a difficult situation because they have not taken a step yet.

The Transition of Work

In the people-centric business of ERP, the transition to working remotely has been among the most immediate. Where and how work is getting done has changed overnight. While businesses in every industry are coping with drastic changes and new challenges, the importance of engagement tools has never been more apparent. Adapting to these shifts requires solutions that enable leaders to connect, understand, and take action.

Enterprise software companies are relatively well-positioned to weather the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak, with digital team processes already well-established. To some extent, many ERP customers are shielded from the worst effects of the shutdown, because much of the work can continue remotely. However, the customer base for each provider will be a big determinant in overall economic impact.

Businesses Should Have the Right Infrastructure for Remote Communication

Due to this unexpected situation we are experiencing, many businesses around the world had to close their offices. This situation showed how the working model from home, which has gradually become a trend in recent years, can actually become our reality.

Following the shutdown of offices globally, many CEOs and top management are turning to the internal communication tools to communicate with their employees and discuss plans for future operations. Different applications, among them email, have become the primary form of communication for uniting employees and setting standards for what might be the future of the workforce.

Keeping people connected and engaged will be one of the most important responsibilities leaders have. In these times of increasing uncertainty around COVID-19, remote work increasing exponentially, and maintaining employee wellbeing, this responsibility becomes even greater. Organizations and leaders that have a history of putting their people first – and the infrastructure to make it happen in today's environment – will be the most successful at keeping them connected and engaged.

> **ORGANIZATIONS AND LEADERS THAT HAVE A HISTORY OF PUTTING THEIR PEOPLE FIRST – AND THE INFRASTRUCTURE TO MAKE IT HAPPEN IN TODAY'S ENVIRONMENT – WILL BE THE MOST SUCCESSFUL AT KEEPING THEM CONNECTED AND ENGAGED.**

New Dynamics of Business

The way people consume technology in business will be different moving forward, as leadership will have adapted to the new ways of working and changing situations of the workforce. As the dynamics of business are shifting to ensure companies are taking care of employees, changes in how businesses go to market will be brought on by COVID-19 as well.

Businesses will be changing working practices both internally and in its interactions with customers, with customer engagement and quality of service at the forefront. The digital community will become the center for creating engagement, as online interactions and digital tools will become an essential part of delivering value.

COVID-19 Has Expedited the Timeline of Digital Transformation

Digital transformation, which was seen as the key to success before the pandemic, is now the only way to get through the crisis with minimal damage. Businesses, who have not taken the first step for digital transformation yet, are in a rush, while those who have started their digital transformation journey by acting more cautiously are trying to make their tools much more advanced.

The goal of digital transformation is to use technology to solve traditional problems, which means integrating technology into every area of business. Many companies do have digital transformation programs or initiatives in place or were in the process of establishing it, however, COVID-19 has forced enterprises to expedite this timeline.

The drastic change to this new way of working has made digital transformation essential. The companies that have adapted are able to manage new workplace practices and keep business processes running. Enterprises that did not understand its importance or begin to revamp their digital approach are now at risk of being disrupted and replaced. This new reality will force all business to rethink these initiatives and implement a transformation, so they are able to continue service and provide value to customers.

Claus Jepsen is a technology expert who has been fascinated by the micro-computer revolution ever since he received a Tandy TRS model 1 at the age of 14. Since then, Claus has spent the last few decades developing and architecting software solutions, most recently at Unit4, where he is the Chief Architect leading the ERP vendor's focus on enabling the post-modern enterprise. At Unit4, Claus is building cloud-based, super-scalable solutions and bringing innovative technologies such as AI, chatbots, and predictive analytics to ERP. Claus is a strong believer that having access to vast amounts of data allows us to construct better, non-invasive and pervasive solutions to improve our experiences, relieve us from tedious chores, and allow us focus on what we as individuals really love doing.

ERPNEWS

"IS THE CLOUD RIGHT FOR YOU"

Today's IT executives have more choices than ever before when choosing an enterprise resource planning (ERP) solution. In recent years the use of cloud ERP's has boomed due to the flexibility, scalability and cost efficiencies they offer. However, for an organization to decide if a cloud-based ERP system is right for them, they have to consider several features and functions that will impact their overall business.

- Innovation Cycles: On-premise solutions can be demanding in cost, time and resources and require in-house teams to manage and monitor them continuously. This makes updating the solution a daunting task slowing innovation and development. Cloud ERPs remove this barrier, meaning on-site management teams are no longer necessary while also guaranteeing the latest versions at all times. These capabilities enable businesses to refocus time, resources and funding to boost innovation cycles.

- Resiliency: As modern consumer demands are evolving, organizations need to be available 24x7. Many on-premise ERPs are not built for that and are used for data safe keeping, in which case a hybrid approach might benefit a company. But as regular updates and maintenance are required, Cloud ERPs provide intrinsic, constant operation resiliency so that organizations have full access to all systems anywhere and anytime.

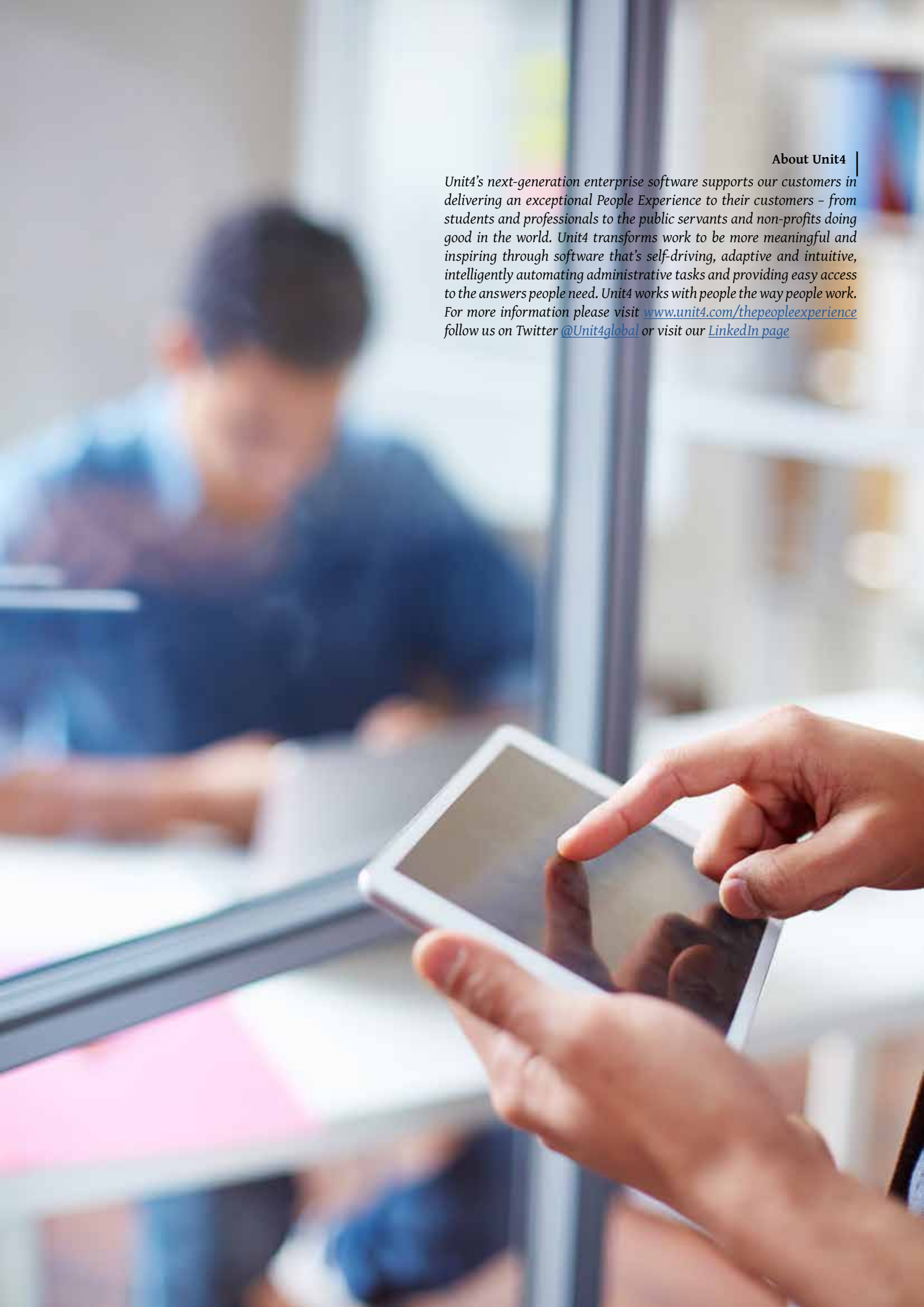
- Elasticity: Compared to legacy and hybrid approaches, with a full cloud solution enterprises only pay for what is used, and usage can be instantly scaled up and down. This is becoming increasingly important as demands from capabilities like AI and machine learning continue to grow. With cloud platforms, managing fluctuations around demand and data come without the intensive resource planning needed to do the same for on-premise solutions.

- People Experience: People have a better user experience as consumers than as employees, and that difference is leading to an engagement gap. Organizations, no matter their size, need to enable better human relations, empowering employees with the tools they need to optimize their productivity and service delivery across the organization.

Cloud-based software has been developed to solve the needs of project-based, people-centered organizations and designed to enable flexibility, accessibility, and functionality. These capabilities can help determine what is most important when implementing an ERP system.

Claus Jepsen,
Deputy CTO at Unit4

UNIT4



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 www.unit4.com/thepeopleexperience follow us on Twitter @Unit4global or visit our LinkedIn page

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THE IMPACTS OF THE COVID-19 OUTBREAK ON THE ERP INDUSTRY

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

The severe outbreak of Covid-19 and its subsequent transmission to other countries have brought almost every industry to a standstill. Global and domestic supply chains are experiencing disruptions and manufacturers are under more pressure than ever to create the most out of the least. Manufacturers are contributing to fighting the pandemic by producing hand sanitizers and respiratory systems. Yet, the ripple effect of the novel Coronavirus is resulting in downstream industries and the nationwide economy. However, the government has been on its toes since the outbreak and is constantly supporting local businesses to industry giants sustain their position in every way possible.

Specifically talking about the supply chain industry, businesses need to maintain scalable processes. ERP Software plays a vital role in supporting the supply chain businesses by maintaining supplier and vendor relationships along with the availability status of the materials. To meet quality and consistency standards, this information serves as a guidebook to vendor and material details. An approved supplier list saves time in striking out the need to hunt alternate vendors should there be a supply chain crisis or unavailability at the last moment, as the alternatives are already vetted and logged with the solution. The ERP software system provides tracking and revision control with the Bill of Material (BoM), which enables the manufacturers to choose from the relevant raw materials in case the original ingredient is unavailable.

The Covid-19 Pandemic has forced manufacturers to shift their physical offices into remote working setups. Right from drafting the work from home guidelines to managing uncertain demand and supply, manufacturers are on a constant swing and the ERP has continued to show its potential amidst the crisis. ERP systems play a vital role in ensuring business continuity through remote access, automated data processing, online data transaction, and real-time controls.

The impact of Covid-19 on the ERP industry has been quite challenging in many positive ways. The ERP systems have evolved in their existing capacity of offering remote access, keeping a check on the production facility, and managing unpredictable demand patterns.

Covid-19 Impact on ERP Industry

Covid-19 has helped modern ERP systems capitalize its full potential by enhancing its functionalities to support remote working.

Here's how the Remote Desktop Functionality works:

- With Remote Desktop Connection, users can connect to a computer running Windows from another computer running Windows that's connected to the same network or the Internet. Users can use ERP applications from their own computers and it's no less than regular office setups.

- To connect to a remote computer, a home computer must be turned on, it must have a network connection, Remote Desktop must be enabled, the user must have network access to the remote computer (this could be through the Internet), and permission to connect. For permission to connect, the user must be on the list. Before a user starts

> **COVID-19 HAS HELPED MODERN ERP SYSTEMS CAPITALIZE ITS FULL POTENTIAL BY ENHANCING ITS FUNCTIONALITIES TO SUPPORT REMOTE WORKING.**

a connection, it's a good idea to look up for the name of the computer being connected to and to ensure Remote Desktop connections are allowed through its firewall.

Powerful Accounting and Financial Management

Modern ERP Software aims at offering real-time data access across an entire business without the costs or complexity of traditional ERP software. To help combat Covid-19 slams, ERP software will ideally respond in the following ways:

- Break down departmental silos for companywide transparency and improved collaboration
- Tap into a real-time, unified view of your company's finances and operations
- Reduce inefficiencies and redundancies so you can optimize company performance and productivity
- Integrate front to back-office processes such as marketing, sales and customer service

To fight back Covid-19 impact ERP industry will help the manufacturing sector gain complete control over stock movements, track inventories, effectively handle purchase order requests, and material scheduling.

Summary

Covid-19 has caused severe business disruptions in multiple industries. People across the globe are under strict lockdown to contain the virus and government has been on its toes since day one. IT industries are supporting other industries like healthcare and manufacturing by creating solutions that will ensure business continuity through remote working. The impact of Covid-19 on the ERP industry will help it become more scalable and robust in terms of modern technology adoption and precise process planning.

Kalyani writes about upcoming technologies like big data, machine learning, virtual reality, AI and robotics. Her expertise lies in growing business opportunities by market qualified lead generation through inbound and outbound practices. Kalyani works for Sage Software Solutions Pvt. Ltd. is a leading provider of ERP and CRM software to small and mid-sized businesses in India.
You can learn more about her on Twitter | LinkedIn

About Sage Software

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

THE IRRESISTIBLE RISE OF CLOUD ERP

Article by ***Russell Harper,***
Co-founder / Chief Marketing Officer

During this period of uncertainty, businesses are trying to carry out operational processes as efficiently as possible without knowing what will happen tomorrow. The only way to pass this exam is to keep pace with the new "normal".

As we are all struggling to deal with the pandemic, we had a very informative talk about Covid-19 and its effects on the ERP industry with Russell Harper, Co-founder and Chief Marketing Officer of NexTec.

New Normal is on the Cloud

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused every organization to reassess their current strategies about digital transformation and the ERP software that they are using. Russell evaluated the effects of Covid-19 on the ERP industry.

"We have heard from so many customers who wished they moved to the Cloud for their ERP system last year." As a lot of people are staying home under some variety of lockdown, he explains why it is much easier to work from home with a cloud ERP, "The transition to COVID-19 safety guidelines would have been so much easier with a Cloud ERP because insight into the business is available even when you work from home."

"It is much easier to predict cash flow and profit when you have a Cloud-based ERP to assist you. You can also look for areas of cost reduction and efficiency when you have access to accurate data about your business. We believe we are going to see a significant increase in cloud adoptions as we start to get back to the "new normal."

Companies will evaluate what applications can be moved to the Cloud and will be looking at ERP consulting firms like NexTec to help them with those decisions.

On-Premise Systems Will Fade Away

If there is one thing that the pandemic teaches the business world, it is remote work. Many firms have found a way to adapt to the remote working model, although they are caught off guard. Russel explains the biggest impact of Covid-19 on businesses and says, "We have seen the largest impact around the remote worker. Many companies had to scramble very quickly to figure out how to get the new workforce access to the mission-critical applications used to run the business. These applications that were on in house servers (on-premise), made it very difficult to give access to the remote workers. This caused some IT panic to quickly resolve that for the company in order to keep the business moving forward in these very different business climates. It is much easier to enable remote work when you have a single source of truth that is current and accurate. When you have disparate systems that are managed by individuals, it can be difficult to get real-time, accurate information that can be accessed by multiple stakeholders."

Pandemic Unrevealed the Limits of Insufficient Software

We all wonder how the pandemic will shape the future of technology and how it will affect our businesses. Russel answers the question very clearly, "In some industries, the pandemic will be transformational with respect to ERP – pressures put on manufacturers of items such as food,

> **"MANY ORGANIZATIONS HAVE TESTED THE LIMITS OF THEIR ERP AND VENDOR/ PARTNER AND WILL BE LOOKING TO BUILD A MORE ROBUST INFRASTRUCTURE ONCE THE PANDEMIC HAS PASSED.**

paper products, and medical supplies have seen supply chain challenges and variable demand that has required them to adapt quickly and at scale," and he continues "Many organizations have tested the limits of their ERP and vendor/partner and will be looking to build a more robust infrastructure once the pandemic has passed. It will be up to the ERP software vendors and partners to develop solutions that can rise to meet these challenges."

The Lesson We Must Take From The Pandemic

This extraordinary experience has taught the business world a lot. The most important lesson is definitely the vital value of digital transformation. "Companies that were hesitant about moving toward Cloud-based services may now see it as critical to moving key applications to Cloud in order to solve the issues that arose during the crisis and be prepared for the possibility of COVID-19 coming back in the future," he explains. "Companies that had already made the move to the Cloud will have seen the benefits and be proactively thinking about other functions that can be transformed. Companies that prohibited telecommunicating in the past may realize that some staff can easily work from home without losing productivity and the company can save money on unnecessary office space and instead invest in online productivity tools."

The saying "There is a little good in all evil" is very suitable for this whole situation. Although it is a difficult and challenging experience, there is a lot to learn from it!

Russ Harper is one of the Co-founders at NexTec Group and serves as Chief Marketing Officer. He oversees all of NexTec's marketing efforts, directs the CRM team, and manages the internal systems. His involvement in marketing has spanned 15 years and NexTec's transition from direct mail and no employees to digital marketing and an industry-leading team. Prior to co-founding NexTec, Russell consulted at several companies, including Harper and Pearson and Andersen Consulting. He has a BA in Liberal Arts from the University of Texas. His interests include mountain and road biking, reading, and cooking.

About NexTec Group

NexTec Group is an award-winning business technology consultancy offering ERP, CRM, BI, Cloud and On-premise solutions to small and mid-sized businesses for over 25 years. We specialize in working closely with you to find the right technology and solution to fit your growing business. We do it by offering a Canada / US network of consultants with deep industry experience in food and beverage, manufacturing, distribution, pharmaceuticals, nutraceuticals, agriculture, cannabis, chemicals, medical devices, professional services and more. NexTec is a Sage platinum partner and gold-certified Microsoft and Acumatica partner. We have over 600 customers across Canada and the US and a 95% customer retention rate. Embrace technology, transform your business. Learn more at www.nextecgroup.com.

OptiProERP® MANUFACTURING

THERE IS NO PLACE FOR NON-DIGITAL IN NEW NORMAL

Article by ***Shivani Shelke,***
Member of The Product Marketing Team at OptiProERP

COVID-19 pandemic, which affects the whole world, continues to deeply affect the business world and the economy. It's been certainly demonstrated how critical technology is to businesses. Although most of the office workers are working from home due to social distancing regulations of the governments, cloud-based applications are supporting them effectively.

End of On-Premise ERP Era

COVID-19 is not only affecting people's health around the world, but it is also having a significant impact on businesses and the economy. To help industry and frontline workers control the outbreak, companies have faced severe supply chain disruptions because the business software they used was not capable of handling such disruption.

- In these challenging times where the business world is suffering from a slowdown, a modern ERP supports manufacturers by maintaining a list of approved supplier relationships, and detailed vendor information. ERP helps them document accurate vendor information to assure quality & consistency standards.

- To meet the demand of the healthcare industry, there are some manufacturing companies such as Tesla, Volkswagen, GM, L'Oreal, etc. that have made a transition in their production lines. Companies are retrofitting their plants to level up the production of ventilators and hand sanitizers to aid the medical sector.

Manufacturers have to adhere to strict compliance regulations to produce quality medical goods. During this transition period, ERP supports them by tracking the Bill of Material (BOM), listing quantities required to manufacture the finished goods and the requirement of alternative ingredients.

- Detailed vendor information empowers manufacturers to meet quality standards assuring that harmful chemicals, impure ingredients, and undeclared substances are unable to enter the supply chain.

ERP supports automation, the Internet of Things, Robotics, and other technologies that ensure up and running production by refilling store shelves.

With COVID, we are seeing a tale of two sides:

A.Certainly, smaller companies that were planning on purchasing a new ERP system.... many of them have put their ERP selection and projects on hold because of the uncertainty and adverse impacts on their business. Some are holding off on their IT investments

B.However, a good number are moving forward because:

I. They have seen an increase in their sales (medical devices, equipment, etc.)

II. Many are looking to adapt to new revenue streams and business models. For example, this has accelerated companies to adopt eCommerce sites because traditional ways of selling like brick and mortar have slowed. Companies are quickly moving to eCommerce, even B2B, and B2C companies. And are able to launch an eCommerce business because of software like Shopify and of course ERP to manage the back end of orders, sales, inventory, etc.

III. In both scenarios, companies are looking for an ERP system to manage this growth and backend functions to manage increased sales, orders, inventory movement, shipping, logistics, and fulfillment. ERP is needed for these crucial functions and to manage growth.

The 3rd scenario is that companies have more time now to research and select an ERP so they are accelerating their ERP projects.

So, in sum, we are seeing some companies, mostly smaller companies, pause on their project because of uncertainty. But we foresee these companies moving forward once there is more certainty and lock-downs end. But many are moving forward because of the above.

But overall, COVID-19 will result in a boom for the ERP industry because many companies will adapt to new business models and see the importance of having business management software that can help them navigate disruptive times, help them be more resilient, and help them adapt more quickly. More companies will see the importance of having a strong technology foundation to navigate disruptive times. And these disruptive times will not end. Disruption in the digital economy is constant, maybe not to this degree, but it is constant. Companies with stronger technology will fare better than the rest. So this will be a boon for the ERP industry now and once the COVID situation settles.

Also, because of COVID-19, cloud solutions and cloud ERP solutions will be solidified. This might be the end, or close to the end, of on-premise ERP solutions. Companies will want cloud ERP so that their employees can work remotely, they don't have the risk of housing their data in physical locations, and for the reasons mentioned above – to be more resilient and able to adapt to changes.

> **"COVID-19 WILL RESULT IN A BOOM FOR THE ERP INDUSTRY BECAUSE MANY COMPANIES WILL ADAPT TO NEW BUSINESS MODELS AND SEE THE IMPORTANCE OF HAVING BUSINESS MANAGEMENT SOFTWARE THAT CAN HELP THEM NAVIGATE DISRUPTIVE TIMES, HELP THEM BE MORE RESILIENT, AND HELP THEM ADAPT MORE QUICKLY.**

COVID-19 has disrupted the supply chain in the world. ERP is the silver lining that will help businesses recover from losses by building resilient supply chains. Let's conclude it, COVID-19 pandemic will positively take up the ERP industry. Those who are using ERP will upgrade it to the next version and those who've never invested in ERP or those who are relying on multiple software for managing HR, accounts, inventory, eCommerce, etc. will shift to a single ERP system for assured growth.

Companies Are Facing a Tough Time

The rapid outbreak of COVID-19 has covered the entire world with an alarming health crisis. As this crisis mounts, every business owner urges to protect their employee's health and build their companies' resilience.
Talking about the enterprises, they've embraced virtual payment methods for vendors and suppliers. Companies are active on social media platforms to retain their customers, they are promoting virtual campaigns, and webinars that can help them guide their staff members.

The pandemic has increased the demand for healthcare equipment such as ventilators, masks, respirators, sanitizers, etc. for helping the frontline workers. Therefore, many manufacturers took the initiative to repurpose their production lines to produce standard healthcare equipment.

- Some of the leading organizations such as GM, Volkswagen, L'Oreal, LVHM, etc. have changed track and retrofitted their plants to meet the demand of the medical industry.
- Companies are repurposing their production lines by manufacturing required medical equipment to join the force to combat COVID-19.
- Instead of shutdowns, manufacturers aim to serve their country by supplying products that they need.
- These companies have never made such a big transition before. Yes, they are facing supply chain disruptions but a reliable Enterprise Resource Planning solution can help them manage the change.

Companies are facing a tough time. With the cancellation of events, travel restrictions, fluctuating demand, and work disruptions, enterprises across the globe are impacted by COVID-19. Some of the positive impacts of COVID-19 on enterprises are streamlined coordination and work from home practices among employees via online platforms, events, and conferences are going virtual, and more.

> AMID THIS GLOBAL CRISIS, IT IS THE TECHNOLOGY THAT IS HELPING THE WORLD TO FIGHT THIS CRISIS. THE WORLD HAS STARTED NEW WAYS OF CONNECTING WITH THEIR CO-WORKERS AND DEAR ONES.

Essentials of the New World; Ai, Machine Learning, Digitized ERP

COVID-19 pandemic has crashed the global economy, broken health care systems, and disrupted modern societies. No living person on this planet has witnessed this earlier.

Without technology, none of us could save lives in this world. High-end healthcare equipment, ventilators, medicines, and best-in-class hospital infrastructure play a great role in fighting the pandemic.

Amid this global crisis, it is the technology that is helping the world to fight this crisis. The world has started new ways of connecting with their co-workers and dear ones. Thanks to the technology, that has made self-isolating a not-much-difficult to do the task. Cloud technology has enabled remote management of the business, a flexible workforce. The dire need to address COVID-19 has triggered innovations in vaccine development, biotech, and regulatory regimes.

The pandemic is already changing the definition of innovation. A new emergency ventilator, hands-free door pull (which can be 3D printed) and a virus-killing snood are the new inventions in Wales that aim to help the victims of COVID-19.

The obvious demand for tech-driven tools will facilitate digital performance in the world. Companies will embrace AI, machine learning, digitized ERP and supply chains, and other shores of industry 4.0 to meet the customer demand easily and perform faster operations.

Silver Lining in COVID-19

COVID-19 has indeed created ruckus in every sector of the world and it will have a long-lasting impression for humanity. But when we talk about finding the silver lining in it, organizations are going digital and embracing industry 4.0 like never before. From the IT sector to manufacturing and banking, technology is playing a great role in surviving amid this outbreak.

- Many businesses that didn't support remote working are now inspiring their employees to work from home.
- Cloud technology is promoting flexible workforces, virtual payments, and social media marketing.
- Lesser physical human interaction is one of the key things to keep in mind during these challenging times of COVID-19. And we don't know how long will it take for us to reconvene in normal lives. Till then, offering easy to use digital tools to your employees is the only way businesses can continue their operations in the future.
- Manufacturing sectors are adopting intelligent ERP solutions that can help them create a resilient supply chain that can promote accuracy, quality, and quick deliveries.
- Technologies like 3D printing, Artificial Intelligence, IoT will be used on a large scale on shop floors to reduce manual intervention

We've never seen such pandemic ever in our lives. So, it is difficult to tell its aftermaths with accuracy. All we can say is – yes, we are thankful for technology and inventions that are helping us continue the way we work. Many companies have been slowed down and are in an idled state. But once this virus vanishes from the world, the business will get back to normal with digital transformation.

Shivani Shelke is a member of the product marketing team at OptiProERP where she has a focus on ERP and business management software space, digital transformation, and technology topics. She is a go-getter who's always eager to read on new topics.

About OptiproERP

OptiProERP is an industry-leading ERP solution for manufacturing and distribution. OptiProERP delivers best-in-class industry functionality embedded into SAP Business One, the market-leading business management platform for small and midsize enterprises. Customers gain an end-to-end business management solution, including financials, accounting, sales, CRM, and industry-specific functionality that fully leverages deep industry expertise of over 20 years dedicated to serving manufacturers and distributors.
OptiProERP is an eWorkplace Manufacturing solution. eWorkplace Manufacturing is SAP's strategic industry partner for manufacturing and distribution and its first OEM partner as part of SAP's global PartnerEdge Program. Serving manufacturers and distributors for over 20 years with OptiProERP and BatchMaster as its two ERP solutions, eWorkplace Manufacturing has gained the trust of over 3,000 customers globally.
For more information, visit www.optiproerp.com.

PREPARING OPERATING SYSTEMS FOR A POST-PANDEMIC WORLD: THE ANSWER IS IN THE INDUSTRY SPECIALIZED CLOUD

*Article by **TVN Reddy**, CEO of Aptean*

Realizing the benefits of how a SaaS solution designed specifically for your industry can help manage the realities of today's current climate with the promise of tomorrow.

Change can seem risky during precarious times, but despite being amid a pandemic, now is the time to prepare, plan, and identify operating solutions before the inevitable hits—another crisis. If now seems like the worst time to think about investing in your enterprise management systems, you're not alone, but the reality is that there is no better time than the present to shift to the cloud and to a system that's been designed particularly for the needs of your industry.

Pre-pandemic, many businesses were already finding their business systems rapidly outpaced by the speed at which economies and markets change, and the current global health crisis has shone the spotlight firmly on a business's ability to cope with unprecedented challenges. For those who have yet to shift their systems cloud-ward, the shadow of COVID-19 is looming large, and they're seeing their SaaS-based competitors much better equipped to deal with the resulting fallout of the situation in which we all find ourselves.

Pandemic or not, every organization needs to be able to pivot rapidly through unexpected disruption, which is all around us. If you want to stay afloat and equip your organization to outlast the competition, the plan to adopt or migrate to, a hyper-niche cloud operating system must take place immediately. It's predicted that $1.3 trillion of IT spend will be impacted by a shift to the cloud by 2022, with Gartner forecasting a 17% growth in the worldwide public cloud services market by 2020 alone, reaching a staggering $266.4 billion (up from $227.8 billion in 2019). By far the largest market segment is Software as a Service (SaaS), which is due to growing to $116 billion over the next year and proving to be the strategy of choice for an increasing number of businesses when investing in new software. Today's current crisis has significantly accelerated digital transformation in businesses around the world and when the crisis is over, this pace will become the new trajectory.

While it may seem like the most challenging time to invest in SaaS systems, launching these plans to invest in an industry-specific system during crisis times can pay big benefits—namely, anytime, anywhere system availability, scalable on-demand infrastructure, enterprise software, and support through seamless upgrades and service packs, and disaster recovery and security protection through their upgrade. Industry specificity builds on those advantages and

> **"PANDEMIC OR NOT, EVERY ORGANIZATION NEEDS TO BE ABLE TO PIVOT RAPIDLY THROUGH UNEXPECTED DISRUPTION, WHICH IS ALL AROUND US.**

typically produces a faster time to ROI, as the software not only requires fewer modifications but is also designed to report on key value drivers for your specific business. The answer to seamless operations and minimal disruption through evolution and expansion is in the combination of cloud and specialty focus, and here's why.

Centrally managed operations

With a cloud-based SaaS deployment, everything is centrally managed by the SaaS provider, facilitating remote system access by end-users via the internet in real-time. So, providers are responsible for maintenance, updates and upgrades, security, and taking care of resolving any issues that arise. Not only does this mean that new solutions are easier to implement, but they're able to go live quicker, speeding up ROI, and shortening the deployment window. Higher levels of resilience combined with a system availability of 99.9% result in considerable improvements to uptime—reducing the cost, inconvenience, and risk of both unforeseen and planned downtime—with updates carried out centrally with minimal disruption for the business.

Some specialized providers, like Aptean, facilitate a pre-production offering, too, with the ability to view and operate an upgraded version in tandem with existing versions, before upgrading fully. This customization window serves to further mitigate disruption and risk in a rapidly-changing landscape, reducing the adversity associated with training and familiarization for end-users, allowing them to acclimate to new functions and features before a full go-live. It reduces the risk from a technical perspective, too, increasing business confidence in the stability and quality of the upgraded version before leaving behind everything they've known.

> **"THERE'S NO QUESTION: SAAS IS THE WAY OF THE FUTURE. A SAAS DEPLOYMENT THROUGH VERTICAL SOLUTION SPECIALISTS ALLOWS BUSINESSES TO HARNESS THE POWER, FLEXIBILITY, AND SCALABILITY OF SYSTEMS, ALL WHILE OPTIMIZING OPERATIONS, AND REDUCING COSTS AND RISK.**

Flexible scalability

The scalable and flexible nature of SaaS offerings makes them a versatile choice. Users can access systems wherever they have an internet connection, with browser-based solutions accessible on mobile devices or when working from a remote location, something that's become crucial in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. Having the ability to scale and flex to suit business requirements, specialized SaaS offerings can grow with the business, ensuring that development isn't hindered by the very solutions designed to boost efficiency, as well as scaling things back to suit any seasonal or situational changes in demand.

Unexpected disruptions have the potential to severely impact growth. Even in times of stress and uncertainty, businesses want to be able to keep up with industry challenges and changes while also remaining scalable. In terms of scalability, having the opportunity to easily grow or shrink operations is huge. During times of success, being able to easily expand and stretch is key, and during times of uncertainty, the cloud allows organizations to become as lean as necessary and adapt quickly to remain successful. Naturally, during a busy time when production is high, bandwidth must follow. However, being able to scale that back when demand lessens, to reduce unnecessary spending on unused bandwidth, is critical.

Further, cloud security is no longer the concern it once was, again something that's come to the fore in light of

COVID-19, as geographically dispersed teams are required to access secure data and business systems from home. SaaS providers put security front-and-center, responsible for the watertight security provision for multiple customers. The most reputable host their data in ISO 27001/SOC2 accredited data centers, with advanced DR and back-up capabilities as standard, surpassing the security measures that the majority of businesses have in place when done in-house.

Lower TCO

When it comes to cost, a SaaS deployment like Aptean's—designed specifically for your business—is often a preferable option for risk-averse businesses, which will be the vast majority emerging from this pandemic. Lower upfront costs when compared to traditional software models, and a rapid ROI, mean that opting for a SaaS solution is potentially more financially viable for businesses of all sizes, with less indirect IT expenditure resulting in real cost efficiencies and a lower total cost of ownership (TCO). Additionally, in-house resources are freed up to focus on more strategic, value-add activities, boosting profitability rather than burning time and resources on mundane, time-consuming, day-to-day issues.

There's no question: SaaS is the way of the future. A SaaS deployment through vertical solution specialists allows businesses to harness the power, flexibility, and scalability of systems, all while optimizing operations, and reducing costs and risk. As businesses face unprecedented challenges—challenges that are set to continue and evolve for the foreseeable future—nurturing and preparing for an agile, responsive organization is highest on the list of priorities. The time to invest in a specialized cloud operating system is now, to get ahead of the next crisis and prepare your company for change in a moment's notice.

As more businesses realize the benefits to be had from shifting to a cloud model, we'll undoubtedly see SaaS at the heart of more organizations, delivering real, valuable business benefits. The move from on-premise to a cloud environment is already in motion, so it's time to keep pace or be left behind.

To learn how Aptean ERP solutions can help your organization prepare for post-pandemic operational efficiency, contact info@aptean.com.

As Aptean's Chief Executive Officer, TVN Reddy leads the company to provide unrivaled service to thousands of global customers and drive product innovation in the enterprise software market. Prior to becoming CEO, TVN served as Chief Operating Officer and led Aptean's global Product, Professional Services and Support teams, and was responsible for integrating acquisitions into the company. Having joined Aptean in 2013 as SVP of Engineering, he holds more than 20 years of experience in the software and services industries. TVN earned his Master of Business Administration from the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania and Masters in Technology from the Indian Institute of Technology, Kharagpur in India. TVN resides in the Atlanta, Georgia area and is based out of Aptean's Alpharetta headquarters.

About Aptean

Aptean is a global provider of mission-critical, industry-specific software solutions. Aptean's purpose-built ERP and supply chain management solutions help address the unique challenges facing process and discrete manufacturers, distributors, and other focused organizations. Aptean's compliance solutions are built for companies serving specific markets such as finance, healthcare, biotech, and pharmaceuticals. Over 4,000 organizations in more than 20 industries across 54 countries trust Aptean's solutions at their core to assist with running their operations. To learn more about Aptean and the markets we serve, visit www.aptean.com.

CONSIDERING THE CLOUD: THE ULTIMATE PRO/CON LIST FOR ERP

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

For many organisations, now, more than ever, the move to a cloud-based ERP is front and centre. Pandemic-based stay at home orders and the rise in remote work has prompted many organisations to reassess their current on-premise ERP systems and consider a cloud-based solution. These decisions require thoughtful discussion to ensure that the system selected is the right one for the organisation and industry. Here is a list of some of the top considerations when thinking about the move toward cloud-based ERP.

Pros:

Predictable costs

Over time, costs associated with a cloud-based ERP can become predictable. Technology costs will shift to operational expenditure rather than traditional capital expenditure. Cost predictability makes planning and budgeting easier.

Guaranteed product development and support

Cloud-based systems are continually updated to provide good user experience and the latest functionality, patches, and support. With support readily available for cloud systems, challenges can be resolved quickly.

Easily scalable

As the business grows, legacy systems often fail to keep up with new requirements, capabilities, and innovations. Cloud ERP allows organisations to expand and contract the system to fit business needs, with considerably less effort than a traditional ERP.

Designed with the end-user in mind

Previously, ERP systems were designed as one-size-fits-all, forcing manufacturers to add customisations, requiring costly additional IT support. Today's market offers industry-specific ERP, designed with the end-users in mind. For example, food and beverage manufacturers can find an ERP system with forecasting and demand planning, tracking and traceability, and recipe and least-cost formulation capabilities.

Security and reliability is stronger

Cloud ERP can easily handle security for mobile devices, data is continuously and repeatedly backed up, and offers geographically dispersed disaster recovery.

Improved manageability and less maintenance

Organisations can reallocate expensive headcount to be better utilised in other parts of the business. With automatic upgrades rolled out through the vendor, cloud decreases manual testing and patch application and lowers overall maintenance cost.

Lower carbon footprint

Consumers today are growing more health and Earth-conscious. We are seeing a rise in customer loyalties shifting to businesses that are supporting a cleaner, greener future. Organizations that move to a cloud-based system can eliminate many paper systems and are better aligned to an overall green strategy, lowering the organisation's carbon footprint.

> **THE NEW ERP WON'T DELIVER INTENDED VALUE WITHOUT A CLEAR STRATEGY FOR ADOPTION. LEADERSHIP NEEDS TO BE THE MAIN PROJECT CHAMPIONS, COMMITTED TO THE CHANGE, AND TRANSPARENT ON WHAT CHANGES ARE COMING AND WHEN.**

Cons:

Planning is required

A new ERP should be seen as a new beginning: a time to clean data, review current processes to see how operations can be improved and learn the abilities of your new ERP to see where processes can be streamlined or automated. Organisations that take the old-fashioned "lift and shift" approach are likely to get less value from the new system as they could gain.

Cultural shift challenges

Any widespread organizational change requires a culture shift. With the transition to the cloud, many users will need to relearn processes, and for some, their entire job functions. Change can be hard to accept if not communicated properly. A proper change management plan requires additional planning, communication, and commitment, and a willingness to change.

Executive commitment is a must

The new ERP won't deliver intended value without a clear strategy for adoption. Leadership needs to be the main project champions, committed to the change, and transparent on what changes are coming and when.

Low adoption risk

As mentioned, acceptance of organizational change can be hard – especially for organisations that have operated on the same systems for decades or longer. While there is always bound to be a dip in productivity when change is announced, the ultimate goal is adequately preparing end users for the highest adoption rates and improved project success.

Deciding to make the move from legacy on-premise ERP to the cloud is one that can create unique challenges, but also long-term improvements. When making a decision that affects all parts of the business, be sure to weigh all the considerations before making a selection. By investing in a cloud ERP, there are great benefits, but ensure that there is the necessary openness to adoption and change within the organisation to achieve its intended outcomes.

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

About Avaap

Avaap is an industry-focused, cross-platform management and technology consulting firm specializing in Epic, Cerner, Infor, Tableau, Workday, and other applications. Avaap is also the only authorized U.S. Prosci® training partner for organizational change management. With offices across the U.S. and around the world, Avaap has deep expertise in education, government, healthcare, and manufacturing, among other industries. An emphasis on customer success, personal and professional growth, and passionate colleagues make Avaap a great place to work. Avaap has earned numerous accolades for its corporate culture and being an active participant in corporate philanthropy. Organizations ranging from medium-sized businesses to large enterprises have partnered with Avaap.

PROS AND CONS OF CLOUD ERP

Article by ***Frank Hamilton***

When companies choose an enterprise resource planning system (ERP), one of the main factors they consider is whether they should use an on-premise or cloud solution. Today, cloud ERPs are more popular than ever, and many ERP vendors offer some cloud deployment options. Some companies have even shifted their specialization to cloud software completely.

However, many businesses still have some solid reasons to choose on-premise systems. The thing is that both on-premise and cloud solutions have their advantages and disadvantages so every company needs to analyze all the pros and cons, determine their objectives, and make an informed decision.

Cloud ERP and On-Premise ERP: What's the Difference?

The main difference between these two types of systems is the way they are deployed. On-premise software needs to be installed locally so users must have their servers and computers to run these solutions. Cloud-based ERP systems are hosted on the vendor's servers. Users can access cloud software through web browsers.

Cloud and on-premise solutions also have quite different pricing plans. Usually, users subscribe to cloud software on a monthly or annual basis. On-premise software is purchased once, which is a reason why on-premise solutions are considered large investments upfront, or capital expenditure. Cloud solutions are an operating expenditure, as the organization continues to pay an additional cost when using it.

The difference in pricing approaches determines the cloud's low entry cost. This is probably the main reason why cloud solutions became so popular. According to statistics, 93% of enterprises are currently using cloud-based system architectures or software. The adoption of hybrid software, which is a type of cloud software hosted on a company's private servers, also increased to 58%.

However, as we've already mentioned above, both on-premise and cloud solutions have their advantages and disadvantages so you shouldn't use a cloud ERP simply because someone else does it. Let's take a closer look at cloud ERP pros and cons so that you can understand whether or not such software will fit your objectives and meet your requirements.

Benefits of Cloud-Based ERP Software

Easy to maintain

One of the main benefits of cloud ERP systems is that you don't need to hire an internal IT team to maintain it. The vendor will do it for you, updating backups automatically and maintaining its hardware. Given that you don't have to use your hardware, maintenance becomes the provider's responsibility. Therefore, you can save a lot of money.

Low initial costs

Another considerable advantage of cloud ERP systems is that they don't require you to make large upfront investments, as you would do with on-premise solutions. Instead of purchasing an expensive license once, you can pay a monthly or annual subscription price.

Remote access

Another advantage of cloud-based ERP software is an opportunity to access your data from anywhere, at any time. The increased visibility will be especially appreciated by big companies that have many facilities. Thanks to the ability to access your data from anywhere, you can quickly check your purchase orders, inventory, and schedule, saving a lot of time. Therefore, cloud-based solutions increase the overall efficiency of many business processes.

> ONE OF THE MAIN BENEFITS OF CLOUD ERP SYSTEMS IS THAT YOU DON'T NEED TO HIRE AN INTERNAL IT TEAM TO MAINTAIN IT. THE VENDOR WILL DO IT FOR YOU, UPDATING BACKUPS AUTOMATICALLY AND MAINTAINING ITS HARDWARE.

Disadvantages of Cloud-Based ERP Systems

Security issues

The main drawback of cloud-based solutions is that the provider can access your data. Many companies have lots of sensitive data, and accessing it requires a high level of clearance. This is a reason why many defense and aerospace vendors choose on-premise solutions. "When your data can be accessed from anywhere, there is a potential risk of hackers stealing your clients' data. Of course, most cloud services have various high-end protection systems, but it's important to always compare benefits and possible risks," notes Meg Robertson, a cybersecurity expert at a writing service reviews website Online Writers Rating.

Ownership

When you're using a cloud ERP, you don't own your software. As a result, the provider implements any updates across the board, no matter whether you want it or not. Many companies might need to prepare for updates and even provide employees with some additional training, but with cloud-based software, there's no time for preparation.

Unexpected costs

Another problem with cloud ERP solutions is that they can cost more over time. Many solutions of this type are modular, so the more modules you activate, the more you need to pay. Besides, if you pay monthly fees long enough, these costs can surpass a one-time investment that you would make when choosing on-premise solutions.

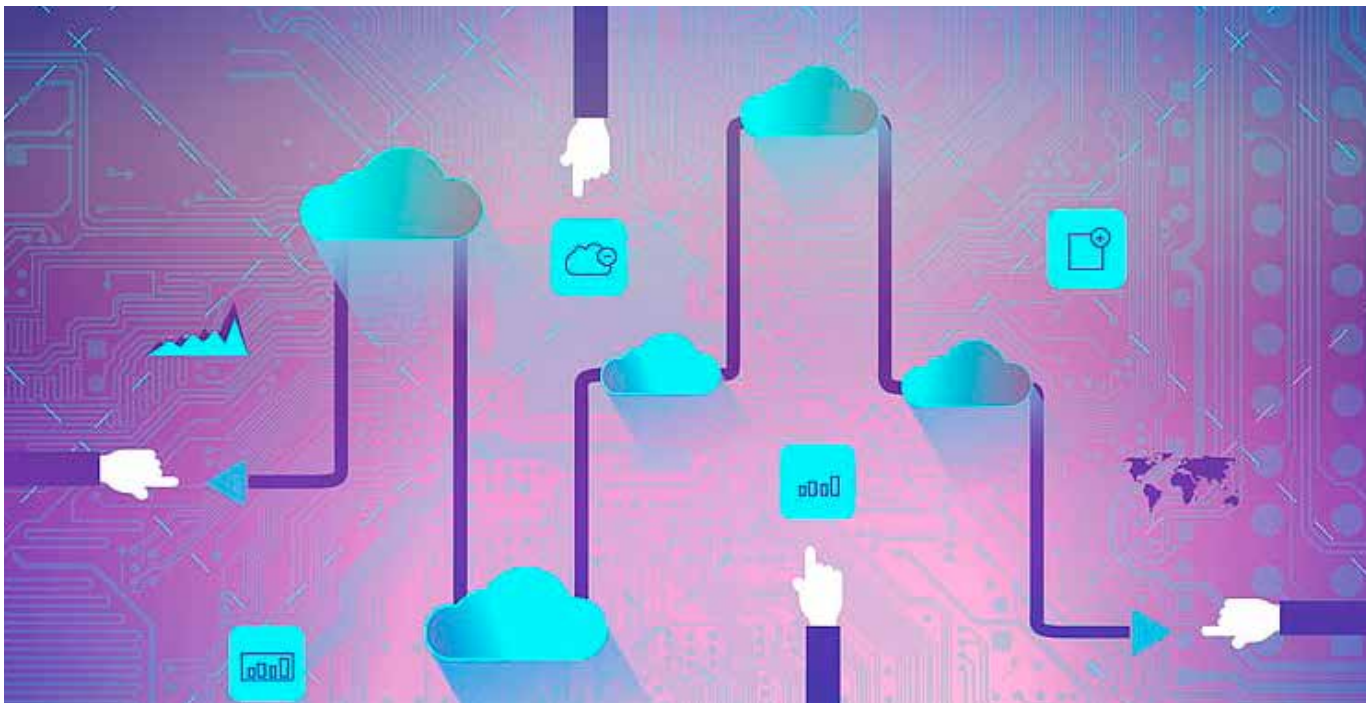
Internet connectivity

Last but not least, if you're using a cloud ERP system, you're heavily dependent on the stability of your internet connection. To access the system, you must have a stable internet connection so you must choose an internet provider carefully.

Wrapping Up

Even though cloud software becomes more and more popular, it doesn't mean that everyone must choose a cloud ERP. Choosing an ERP for your company is a very important task so you should make sure to weigh all the pros and cons before making a decision. Cloud ERP systems offer many benefits, but we recommend that you choose a system for your company based on your objectives and the specifics of your organization. Some companies will appreciate the accessibility of the cloud, while others might choose the reliability and security of on-premise solutions.

Frank Hamilton is a blogger and translator from Manchester. He is a professional writing expert in such topics as blogging, digital marketing, and self-education. He also loves traveling and speaks Spanish, French, German, and English.



ERPs WILL LIGHTEN THE LOAD FOR MANUFACTURERS

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

When I was first asked, like the other contributors to this magazine, to write an article on what the impact of COVID-19 will be on our industry, what came to pofmind was: uncertainty. While most of us are two months into physical distancing and other measures to help stop the virus, there is still so much uncertainty in how things are going to play out, and so much that needs to happen before life can return to normal.

Additionally, it is extremely difficult to predict how the COVID-19 outbreak will impact us as a whole, as there has been, and continues to be, so much geographic disparity regarding the severity of the virus.

Genius ERP works exclusively with custom manufacturers across North America—and in talking with our customers over the last weeks and months—there has been so much variation on how they have felt the effects. Some have been relatively unaffected, with their operations continuing at a somewhat normal pace, whereas others have been completely shut down and are trying to navigate how to begin to restart operations.

But the more I thought about it, the more I realized that we have always been in the business of helping manufacturers, and that is what we are going to continue to do during these uncertain times and beyond.

While so much uncertainty continues to exist around the course of the outbreak and how the economy will be impacted—and ultimately recover—we will continue to support manufacturers in the important work they do. ERPs are in a position to greatly help manufacturers meet the new challenges caused by the COVID-19 crisis, and continue to push their businesses forward.

The Impact of COVID-19 on the manufacturing industry

The manufacturing industry is already and expects to continue to be, extremely impacted by the COVID-19 crisis. In a recent survey conducted by the National Association of Manufacturers, almost 80% of manufacturers replied that they expect that the pandemic will have a financial impact on their business, which is significantly higher than a recent PwC survey of cross-industry companies that saw only 48% of respondents concerned about the same impact.

Compared to other industries, almost all manufacturing jobs are on-site and cannot be carried out remotely. Manufacturers also strongly anticipate that the slowed economic activity due to COVID-19 will reduce demand for their products in North America and globally.

Keeping workers safe and healthy will also continue to be the number one priority for businesses and governments for the foreseeable future, meaning full or partial plant closures may continue to be necessary for manufacturers in hard-hit regions for a prolonged period.

Additionally, supply chains and supply chain logistics will be of major concern to manufacturers over the next months, as supply chain disruptions already have, and will continue, to be a major issue for manufacturers.

The COVID-19 outbreak has shown cracks in countries' supply chains, especially in terms of medical supplies and PPE. Due to this, in the long-term, there may be a

> **ERPS WILL PLAY A CRUCIAL ROLE IN HELPING MANUFACTURERS ADAPT TO THESE NEW AND UNCERTAIN TIMES. ERPS CAN ALLOW FOR KEY TASKS, LIKE ACCOUNTING, FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT, AND PURCHASING TO BE DONE REMOTELY.**

trend towards increasing domestic production for all types of manufacturing. But in the short term, until these changes come to fruition, supply chains will continue to be fraught for manufacturers in all sectors. Not only can manufacturers expect to see changes to supply and demand of different materials and components, supply chain partners may experience their own challenges and may not be able to fulfill orders on time—or at all—during the crisis.

How ERPs will help manufacturers deal with the COVID-19 outbreak

ERPs will play a crucial role in helping manufacturers adapt to these new and uncertain times. ERPs can allow for key tasks, like accounting, financial management, and purchasing to be done remotely. They also offer companies the ability to monitor real-time production and other operations of manufacturing plants, meaning front-end staff, including managers, accountants and purchasers can work remotely, and still keep up with their vital tasks that keep their businesses moving. Real-time remote access and production monitoring keep production on track and can inform production, sales, and service teams on order status, shipping, delivery, and service updates.

Scheduling

But in an industry where most jobs are on-site, manufacturers will need to find ways to adjust to the new normal of social distancing and decrease the density of workers on their shop floors. ERPs will be crucial to manufacturing shops, as they can help manufacturers schedule their shops, ensuring that jobs get done while still maintaining physical distancing and having a reduced number of workers on-site per shift.

Manufacturing ERP systems minimize the number of onsite shop floor staff by precisely scheduling work. ERPs with their ability to provide real-time data to managers will give operational managers the information they need to learn how to optimize processes and production and create new schedules that will allow jobs to be completed while maintaining physical distancing measures.

Supply chain management

There may be no area that ERPs will be more influential in terms of manufacturing than in supply chain management. With supply chains becoming precarious due to COVID-19, manufacturers will need to manage their supply chains with more finesse than they have ever had to in the past. The only way manufacturers will be able to do this is with the data, visibility, and the connectivity that ERPs give them. Manufacturers will need better, real-time awareness of their supply chains, particularly those related to critical materials and components.

> **REAL-TIME PRODUCTION MONITORING, THE KIND ONLY AN ERP CAN GIVE MANUFACTURERS, WILL BECOME THE NEW STANDARD FOR MANUFACTURERS DURING THIS CRISIS.**

ERPs, again with their ability to connect and integrate a manufacturer's operation, are essential to helping manufacturers better plan and manage their supply chains. Manufacturers need to interact with numerous suppliers and partners to obtain the raw materials and resources needed to bring finished goods to the market. ERPs play a vital role in helping manufacturers access real-time operational information across multiple departments, procure goods from multiple vendors, and ensure that workers are better able to direct their efforts in sourcing essential parts and materials. ERPs provide manufacturers with more flexible supply chain solutions that may be readily adapted to meet the needs of changing circumstances.

ERPs are the future for manufacturers

I know it will be a hard road forward for many, but especially manufacturers. The past few years have already caused manufacturers to adapt to a new normal of uncertainty, with trade disputes and tariffs impacting their business. Fortunately, manufacturers are resilient and have learned how to deal with uncertainty, which will help them to move forward during this current crisis with more confidence than some other industries.

Technological solutions will continue to be important to manufacturers to help them deal with the unfurling impacts of the COVID-19 crisis, and many foresee further investments into automation solutions and the industrial internet of things (IIoT).

But even more crucial to manufacturers will be a good ERP system. Nothing can help manufacturers on so many different levels like an ERP, and enable manufacturers to better manage key elements of their businesses. AI, IIoT, and other automation solutions will help manufacturers improve production lines, but none of that matters if manufacturers do not have the raw goods and materials they need.

According to Michael Larner, principal analyst at ABI Research: "COVID-19 demonstrates that manufacturers need to be as focused on their supplier's capabilities as they are on their factory floor." ABI Research forecasts that the supply chain impact of COVID-19 will spur manufacturers' spend on enterprise resource planning (ERP), to reach $14 billion in 2024.

And as more and more ERP solutions are offered through the cloud, manufacturers will have more flexibility to implement data-secure ERP systems to meet their needs. Real-time production monitoring, the kind only an ERP can give manufacturers, will become the new standard for manufacturers during this crisis. Allowing for as many front-end staff to work from home, while still overseeing a manufacturing operation is crucial. Helping manufacturers to schedule and oversee their supply chains will keep manufacturing businesses moving forward at this crucial time.

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.

About Genius ERP

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.

ERPNEWS

"IS THE CLOUD RIGHT FOR YOU"

Now more than ever, moving to the cloud is a good idea. ERPs are proving to be the secure solution manufacturers need right now to help them face the COVID-19 crisis. ERPs are crucial for business continuity, and cloud ERPs give manufacturers more flexibility — while maintaining data security — to collaborate, manage supply chains, and monitor production from off-site locations.

Jean Magny,

President, and CEO at Genius Solutions

Genius ERP

PROS AND CONS OF CLOUD ERP

*Article by **Lucy Thorpe**,*
Head of Content for The UK Based Compan
InCloud Solutions

As a significant proportion of the world's workforce gets used to working via cloud services from home, it is very hard to make a case against the cloud.

In these past weeks, our teams have done everything from hold marketing meetings online to virtual project kickoffs in which major ERP projects have been launched with participants scattered across multiple locations.

Working from anywhere in the world on any device is a lot more compelling as a selling point when your city is in lockdown.

The truth is that the advantages of cloud fit very well with the way we live and work now, whether we are in a crisis or not and many more businesses will be wondering about moving ahead with cloud projects in better times.

However, there are still legitimate concerns about the cloud and we should honour them with our time – so here goes.

Downtime

Since cloud computing is internet-based, outages are possible – but with the majority of the world working at home for at least some part of the next few months – the pros are in your favour.

In the event of a disaster, hosting data offsite in a cloud environment guarantees its safety.

Security

You must trust your provider to take care of your data and maintain their data centres. Small and midsized businesses without hardware or access to IT specialists usually have less of a problem with this concept than big corporations. But rest assured that all reputable vendors provide information about security at their data storage centres if you are nervous. SAP, for example, has an entire website – the Trust Center – based on sharing

> **"A GOOD CLOUD SERVICE PROVIDER WILL OFFER BUSINESS ADVICE GOING INTO IMPLEMENTATION AND SUPPORT AFTERWARDS – YOU ARE IN EFFECT GETTING THE BENEFITS AND EXPERTISE OF AN IT DEPARTMENT WITHOUT HAVING TO HAVE ONE OF YOUR OWN.**

information about cloud security, privacy, and compliance.

Limited control and flexibility

Selecting a trusted partner is key here. When you work together as a team to scope and then implement your system, you are not handing over control but rather inviting in experts who can help and advise you.

You may be advised on the most efficient way of organising your processes. Our advice is always to listen to these recommendations as they invariably ensure that your ERP system runs smoothly.

Technical Issues

If you experience technical issues with a cloud system you may need to call on support from outside your organisation. Make sure you know what support is on offer and who to call.

If you understand your responsibilities and the responsibilities of the cloud vendor then there will be less scope for problems.

Partners are very useful here as they can help you escalate problems with big vendor companies because of their contacts. In many instances, they can help you directly via their helpdesk.

Lock-in

Vendors are very aware that the cloud model gives you the power to switch providers and are therefore keen to give you the very best service to persuade you to stay. This can only be positive! Take comfort in this and enjoy the updates they roll out quarterly and the education and events they offer. If you are not getting the great treatment you may not be with either the right partner or the right brand.

Terms and Benefits

The Cloud refers to data that you can send and access from a remote server. Your data and applications are hosted on someone else's server rather than the hardware on your own premises.

Benefits include:

- Flexibility
- Cost-efficiency
- Ease of use
- Backup and recovery
- Off-site access

A good cloud service provider will offer business advice going into implementation and support afterwards – you are in effect getting the benefits and expertise of an IT department without having to have one of your own.

In Cloud Solutions are a cloud first company dedicated to working closely with businesses in all sectors. They focus on SAP Business ByDesign the all in one cloud ERP for the mid-market.

Lucy Thorpe is the chief content creator for InCloud Solutions – a Platinum SAP partner offering Business ByDesign. Her conversation with Laurie McCabe can be heard in the latest episode of her podcast The Growth Business.

About InCloud Solutions

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

"IS THE CLOUD RIGHT FOR YOU"

If you want flexibility, cost-efficiency, and off-site access then there can be no doubt the cloud is for you.

INCLOUD SOLUTIONS

THIS CLOUD HAS A SILVER LINING

*Article by **Lucy Thorpe**,*
Head of Content for The UK Based Company
InCloud Solutions

We were all set to discuss the advantages of cloud in this edition of ERP News when life got in the way. The sudden change of plan knocked us all sideways and for a while, it was difficult to see how the cards were going to fall. But actually, as we move towards new ways of working it hasn't taken very long to find a new normal and to see that moving to the cloud has never been more relevant.

Towards the New Normal

As soon as the UK went into lockdown many business issues needed to be attended to – from making sure current clients were well supported and could be serviced remotely to the nitty-gritty of our business position.

Thankfully we were able to work through those issues swiftly because a lot of our client support has always been done remotely and a good proportion of our staff are already based out of the office. Those businesses with robust home working processes already in place were the quickest to get set up and we are happy to say we at In Cloud Solutions were among them.

Secondly, we quickly realised that scheduled ERP projects could still go ahead and we had our first remote kick-off meeting to install SAP Business ByDesign with new customers in week one of the lockdown. Face to face meetings can still go ahead thanks to the wonders of Zoom or similar and very little is lost except long train journeys and overnight hotel stays!

Uneven Effects

For some, there has been a bigger reckoning – with each industry being effected differently from aviation and hospitality at one end of the spectrum to medical research and the media at the other. Those industries facing high demand where cloud services are already installed have been able to rise swiftly to the challenge of greatly increased demand. Other industries, where cloud services like ERP are already embedded, have been able to innovate and pivot quickly towards where the demand now lies.

But for those with no cloud services at all, it has been hard. Basic collaborative tools have proved essential to keeping teams working well together - at a time where talking to each other is proving vital. Things keep changing and we need to keep in touch and on track.

I think teams like finance will have struggled when it was not possible to go to the office, for example, to close the books, if they had no cloud services at all. Many will have been asking themselves, is it too late to get the online services we need and maybe even kicking themselves for not acting earlier.

> **"SELECTING A TRUSTED PARTNER IS KEY HERE. WHEN YOU WORK TOGETHER AS A TEAM TO SCOPE AND THEN IMPLEMENT YOUR SYSTEM, YOU ARE NOT HANDING OVER CONTROL BUT RATHER INVITING IN EXPERTS WHO CAN HELP AND ADVISE YOU.**

Accelerating Trends

The fallout from this is that we are now seeing an acceleration of the trends that were already there.

Those organisations with plans to get cloud projects underway are now accelerating them and those who hadn't got off the starting block are now beginning to look around.

The key message here is that whatever your situation...

IT IS NOT TOO LATE!

No one knows how this will pan out but businesses who want to thrive in the future will need to think about how they would cope if this were to happen again. A second or third lockdown is not out of the question. Or even another pandemic.

It is not pleasant to have to think like this but our priorities are going to have to change. I don't believe that life is set to become unrecognisable – too much has been made of that – but, indeed, things which were happening gradually will now speed up. Projects which were on the back burner are now red hot priorities.

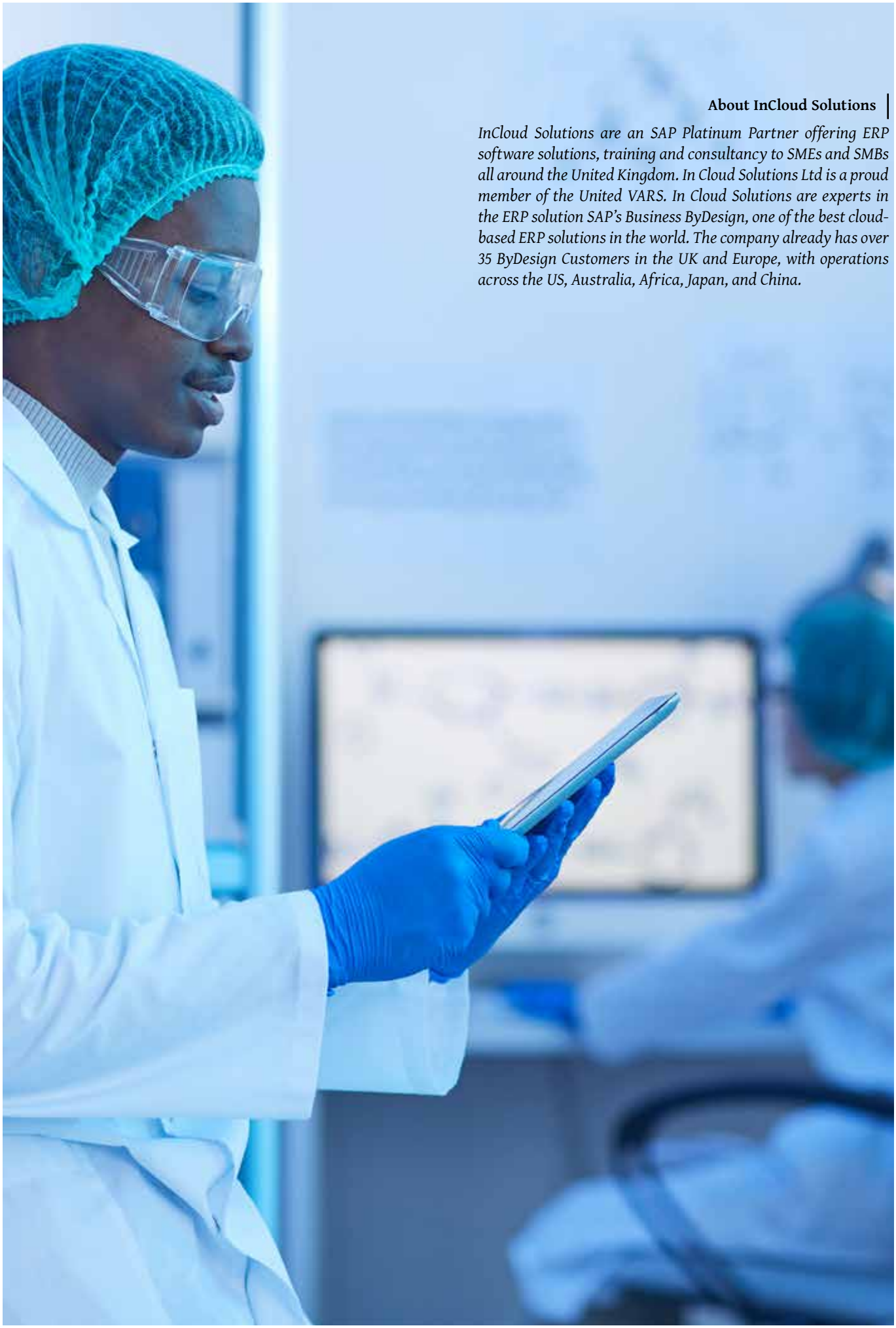
It goes all the way up through society from the way teachers and pupils might communicate in the future, to the priorities of governments. I think fast, reliable, and secure internet for all should be at the top of the list and if we pay for that with fewer new roads or one less runway then so be it.

What does the future hold?

As I have already said, InCloud Solutions was able to implement and fast Track ERP remotely for some clients, and for others, there are slimmed down quick versions like InCloud Express – a fast financials only solution which will get you off the blocks.

For anyone asking; How can I manage my business from anywhere - how can I access it remotely this is now vital technology. Without cloud you will have been stuck these past 2 months – can you afford to make the same mistake again?

Lucy Thorpe is the chief content creator for InCloud Solutions – a Platinum SAP partner offering Business By Design. Her conversation with Laurie McCabe can be heard in the latest episode of her podcast The Growth Business.



About InCloud Solutions

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

INTERVIEW WITH ROHIT THAKRAL

*Interview with **Rohit Thakral,***
The Founder & CEO of Target Integration

Would you introduce Target Integration to our readers? How long have you been serving the ERP and CRM industry?

At Target Integration, we believe that choosing the right business management software should be an easy task. We empower business owners & managers by providing business management solutions tailored to your needs, and ongoing support throughout your journey with us.

Target Integration started in 2008 and the idea was to provide 'value-based business process management systems' - to customers. Its value initially back in the old days came from the 'open-source' system. Then, you know, throughout the session and everything else we went into the saas market delivering ERP & CRM solutions. At present we are partnered with many good players in the market like Zoho, Odoo, CloudYogi, Microsoft, VTiger, SAP, SagePay etc.

In which countries does Target Integration play an active role in the ERP and CRM industry?

Target Integration has helped several organisations to implement ERP & CRM software and websites to improve productivity and their market presence. Our client base spans in various regions globally, such as Asia, Europe, and America(US), UAE & Africa in providing web-based and cloud-based business software to customer support.

Target Integration is actively developing websites and software for the Indian and Irish markets; the company was registered in 2008 to provide the same high quality and efficient service to the UK and Ireland.

What are your predictions about the future of ERP? What will change in 5 years?

My prediction is - Increase in Personalised Services! More Automation! Intelligent Integration!
An indefinite rise in external API connectivity and third-party collaboration to manage multiple operations within SMEs and large organisations. The future of ERP involves more analytics for informed decision making to create effective plans.

Wearable Technology will also come along as the market is rising for Smart Devices like a Smartwatch, Google Home Assistance, and Artificial Intelligence. It will eliminate the bottleneck of manual processes in all processes, making a room full of opportunities to utilise the cloud technology for ease of Business. Henceforth, saving time and replacing the physical work processes to go 'Remote & Live'!

> **"IN 5 YEARS, WE CAN SEE ALL THE ABOVE HAPPENING. BRINGING INNOVATIVE EDGE FOR AN INTEGRATED SOLUTION. THE ERP MARKET WILL STAKE HIGHER BY BRINGING ALL THESE "DIGITAL TRANSFORMATIONS".**

In 5 years, we can see all the above happening. Bringing innovative edge for an integrated solution. The ERP market will stake higher by bringing all these "Digital Transformations". The ERP vendors will come up with more creative and customised solutions for their customers, who are becoming more advanced and informed in their daily needs.

The CRM industry is the area with the largest share in the software industry. How does Target Integration stand apart from its competitors?

It's our team! We have a very strong team who are experts in their business areas. Who are experts on CRM products we deliver! They bring in the best experience of implementing CRM systems - at different verticals and locations and business types - into a customer-centric approach.

Our experience makes sure that our customers are on the right track! And don't fall into the same traps - that we fell into the past. And that means, when they work with us, they get us moved through one method of implementation - around the CRM systems.

> **OUR EXPERIENCE MAKES SURE THAT OUR CUSTOMERS ARE ON THE RIGHT TRACK! AND DON'T FALL INTO THE SAME TRAPS - THAT WE FELL INTO THE PAST.**

We look at 'business needs' rather than 'technology' and that's what differentiates us compared to other competitors. We look at the 'needs' of the business & review them, we come up with a plan to implement them in the system, and we bring in the experience of integrating multiple products into 'one fully-fledged system'.

And that's a key to our implementation with the CRM where we stand out most.

Why is Target Integration the right choice? How do you support your customers during the digital transformation process?

It's our approach and processes which we have set up in our experience of working with the 35+ industries across the globe. It's when the CRM is constant and, when the product is constant, for the implementation, the only thing which differentiates - is the experience and, the exposure that you can build in - for the customers to relate more about and, to make it

simpler for the customers - so that without impacting their daily business - they can easily implement the CRM systems.

We perform a series of steps to make the Digital Transformation journey easy for our customers. While implementing the product, it's very important as a service provider - that you bring both the parties on the same page! In that case, making things superbly easy and amazingly simple, for the customer - to understand - is our job and whenever we see that; we are going more technical or difficult for our customer; we try to cut down that into multiple pieces and try to make it superbly simple for that customer so he can follow our easy steps - similar to baby steps! And can reach the cliff of great implementation.

What will be the important trends in the ERP and CRM industry in 2020? Do you think you can meet your customers' expectations when you consider 2020 ERP trends? Are you ready for the trends of 2020?

It will be an all-in-one-service package. Starting from leads to accounting, project management, and much more. Target Integration - helps you in customisation, automation, collaboration, security at all levels, and third party integration of ERP & CRM products which will be essential in 2020 too.

> **IN TODAY'S COMPETITION & MARKET, THE BIGGEST CONCERN IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN - HOW A CUSTOMER THINKS FROM HIS BUSINESS OBJECTIVE AND HOW A PRODUCT IS BEING DEVELOPED.**

Yes, we meet our customer's expectations as we take in maturity inputs from the customers. So our process, along with our team, becomes the most vital thing!

Target Integration as a team -bring in to our customers - where our mindsets are not towards - what we want to sell? But upon - what the other person - that is the customer wants to say and get? I think this philosophy works most in terms of when you are offering to customers. I think there we see, we can get up in 2020 and years after!

We are trying to improve ourselves with every passing moment - where we take a lot of feedback from our customers - after each implementation. Understand! Which part they liked the most in our service and offerings to them. And we also welcome their suggestions - where we need to improve! And how easy we can make it for the customer to understand.

In today's competition & market, the biggest concern is the difference between - how a customer thinks from his business objective and how a product is being developed. So, I am confident enough to say that we are ready to take on new challenges and trends in 2020.

Could you tell us about the future plans and targets of Target Integration?

The plan is to capture more geographical enrichment and geographical reach as a Saas Vendor. So, we will be adding more cities with the physical base. All to serve the customer's requirements. Alongside the development of CRM/ ERP software, educating customers too.

While we are extending in India, and it is a very important and significant market growth for us. In 2020, we will look at other markets such as the US and Australia, which are a very mature market. And we will look at penetrating them by opening the offices around.

We have a strong & experienced team in India (Gurugram, Mumbai & Bangalore), Ireland(Dublin), UK(Birmingham) & US. Their experience can deliver a no. of CRM/ ERP implementations for our customers in 2020 across the globe. And that's where our focus would be!

Rohit Thakral is The Founder & CEO of Target Integration. He is an electronics engineer and has studied in Pusa Polytechnic in Delhi as well as in Dublin Institute of Technology in Ireland. He is also on the steering committee of Ireland, India Business Association (IIBA) and an ambassador of Dublin Chamber of Commerc

About Target Integration

Target Integration was incorporated in 2008 to provide CRM & ERP solutions to help the SME sector in UK & Ireland and now they provide their services in USA also. They are helping organizations to automate their business processes by removing paper and excel based information centers. They helped businesses across industries such as solar, energy, education, manufacturing, automobiles, construction, event, etc. Send us your ERP related query at info@targetintegration.com and we would provide you the best solutions as per your requirements.

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rootstock CLOUD ERP

COVID-19: THE UNLIKELY CATALYST FOR ERP DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

*Article by **Tom Brennan**,*
Chief Marketing Officer at Rootstock Software

During the pandemic, companies are now experiencing an unprecedented reliance on ERP software to help them maintain business continuity. ERP touches every aspect of operations and has created vital connections to business leaders and staff, who are now working remotely. And where cloud ERP exists, companies have even greater support during the volatile environment we find ourselves in – where supply and demand have quickly gotten out of sync.

This outbreak has resulted in significant loss of human life and dire economic consequences. And as we face the future – reopening the economy in phases – we must try to salvage some lessons from the wreckage. It will be difficult for business leaders to achieve a new norm, but one consequence may be that companies, long suffering under the yoke of legacy ERPs that are difficult to adapt, will finally chart a path toward digital transformation.

Tracking COVID-19's Impact

Due to COVID-19 disruptions, many companies we deal with – namely manufacturing, distribution, and supply chain organizations – were forced to put ERP implementation projects on hold and to shift priorities and resources to meet new realities.

In early February, companies began to experience disruptions to supply chains, especially those that relied on supplies from China. Now, companies are reassessing whether they should be so dependent on one country for material. They're determining how they can diversify their supply chain – even using local suppliers.

As various states issued "stay at home" orders, businesses had to enable employees to work from home. Even "essential" businesses that continued to operate wanted to minimize the number of workers entering their facilities. Companies that had already embraced cloud ERP were in a far better position to flip the switch to remote work. But some weren't set up to support remote access to their legacy systems. For example, they didn't have enough bandwidth, VPN capacity, remote desktop capability or even PCs to give employees.

Some companies realized remote work could actually be advantageous in the long term and help to reduce costs. In addition, companies could access a new pool of remote talent – a welcome benefit since recruiting and hiring experienced staff has traditionally been a challenge in the manufacturing industry.

> **"IT WILL BE DIFFICULT FOR BUSINESS LEADERS TO ACHIEVE A NEW NORM, BUT ONE CONSEQUENCE MAY BE THAT COMPANIES, LONG SUFFERING UNDER THE YOKE OF LEGACY ERPS THAT ARE DIFFICULT TO ADAPT, WILL FINALLY CHART A PATH TOWARD DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION.**

Through the Lens of the Pandemic: A Renewed Appreciation for Cloud ERP

Some companies that were close to going live on cloud ERP were able to push forward, despite government-ordered lockdowns. They were able to use remote implementation strategies to deploy new systems successfully, and in this way, they've been able to take advantage of cloud ERP benefits sooner, rather than later.

With all of these changes, business leaders have experienced a renewed appreciation of cloud ERP. Those who didn't have it in place when the pandemic hit wished they'd acted sooner to upgrade. Now, as the economy begins to reopen, these projects will likely be reprioritized as they've seen how cloud ERP can give manufacturers a leg up. With modern ERP in place, they can keep a closer eye on demand, gain better visibility into their supply chains, support a remote workforce, and track key performance indicators (KPIs), so they know how their businesses are doing in real time.

Ongoing Adaptation: The New Normal

The effects on business haven't all been negative. Companies that are manufacturing or distributing "essential" products are booming – some even overwhelmed by demand. Since these companies remained open during the pandemic, they were also tasked with creating a safe work environment for employees, taking social distancing and cleaning guidelines into account, all while increasing production.

To minimize exposure, one of our customers installed automatic doors to prevent spread via communal door surfaces. Manufacturers also redesigned shop floors to keep workers six feet apart, as well as providing employees with appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE), disinfectants, and hand-washing stations.

> "COVID-19 HAS ACTUALLY HELPED ACCELERATE DIGITIZATION AND ENABLED COMPANIES TO BID A FINAL FAREWELL TO LEGACY ERP SYSTEMS.

Some of our customers have modified their production lines entirely to manufacture much-needed products in the war against the virus, such as PPE and hand sanitizer. This required a nimble operations team and a flexible ERP in order to quickly change gears.

Deeper into the economic shutdown, companies have struggled to stay afloat. Many have issues with unpaid invoices, as well as customers asking for discounts or flexible payment terms. Keeping an eye on cash flow is critical during these times, and again, a modern ERP can help by providing greater visibility into receivables and payments.

Clearly, there's a ripple effect that's in play up and down supply chains that puts pressure on everyone. And unfortunately, some of these issues are going to be with us for the foreseeable future.

Post-COVID-19: Business as Usual Doesn't Mean ERP as Usual

Getting back to "business as usual" after COVID-19 may be over a year away, depending on the industry and, of course, how successfully the virus can be contained.

There are many indications that manufacturers – once they've regained some financial stability – will look to replace obsolete legacy systems with modern cloud ERP solutions. If there's one thing the pandemic has done is shine a light on the gaps and clunky-ness of older systems.

After the pandemic, we're also going to see the use of certain work scenarios continue. For example, many employees now have a work-from-home setup in place, which can be further strengthened with cloud, mobile, and social ERP capabilities. And if those same tools are shared across the enterprise so ERP and CRM are one platform, many of the data and departmental divides of the past can be eliminated. These modern systems provide a much more collaborative platform that will enable sales and operations to operate in lockstep with one another after the pandemic and into the future.

Farewell to Legacy ERP

COVID-19 has actually helped accelerate digitization and enabled companies to bid a final farewell to legacy ERP systems. Manufacturers that didn't take steps toward digital transformation prior to the pandemic found themselves in a tough spot.

Legacy ERP systems – many of which are 10 to 20 years old – haven't been able to effectively meet digital business needs during the pandemic. From a user's perspective, they were too difficult to adapt to remote working conditions. From a data perspective, they weren't able to provide real-time access to the KPIs companies needed to respond to market shifts. And in terms of capabilities, they couldn't provide the agility to adapt to such volatile business conditions.

Companies that chose to modify production to deliver much-needed products in the midst of the pandemic found the flexibility of cloud ERP instrumental in being able to pivot and crank up production on new product lines. Companies must continue to re-evaluate and adjust production to the most promising opportunities going forward.

In contrast to stagnated legacy systems, digital transformation aims to integrate the latest technologies – such as cloud, autonomous equipment, robotics, IoT sensors, mobile apps, and remote-enabled capabilities – to drive efficiency, data insights, and enhanced interactions among manufacturers, suppliers, and customers.

Cloud ERP is a vital part and centerpiece of digital transformation. It provides greater visibility into performance metrics and greater flexibility to manage operations in the pandemic's fast-changing business environment. In addition, it also places companies ahead of the curve as the economy begins to reopen.

Tom Brennan is the Chief Marketing Officer at Rootstock Software and has an extensive track record of helping companies like Rootstock achieve rapid growth. With more than 30 years of experience in ERP and business application software, his goal is to make the market aware of the powerful value proposition Rootstock shares with Salesforce for manufacturers and distributors.

Mr. Brennan began his career as a salesman in the computer/software industry at NCR, Xerox and General DataComm. In the early 1990s, while at CODA Inc., he played a key role in helping the company go public on London's AIM as Vice President of Sales and later served as VP of Marketing. Since then, he has held executive positions managing marketing, sales and building distribution channels at companies including The Taylor Group, ManagedOps.com, CXO Systems and Proactis.

Most recently, Mr. Brennan was Senior Vice President of Marketing at FinancialForce, a developer of cloud ERP software, where he was instrumental in driving the company from a start-up to more than $100 million in revenue and 650 employees. He is a frequent speaker at industry events focused on topics such as the cloud, customer-centric business applications and trends in ERP software. Mr. Brennan holds a B.S. in Accounting from Mount St Mary's University and an M.B.A. in Marketing and International Business from American University.

About Rootstock Software

Rootstock Software is a worldwide provider of cloud ERP on the Salesforce Platform. When combined with Salesforce CRM, Rootstock Cloud ERP offers manufacturing, distribution, and supply chain organizations a single platform to grow and manage their businesses. Rootstock Cloud ERP is a flexible, modern, and digitally connected system that transforms companies to deliver a more personalized customer experience, efficiently scale operations, and out-service the competition. To learn more, please visit www.rootstock.com.

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THE RISE OF LOW AND NO-CODE SOFTWARE

*Interview with **Colin Earl**,*
The Founder and CEO of Agiloft

The whole world is looking for a way out of the crisis. Although we do not know exactly what awaits us at the exit, we do know that we should all have a roadmap for business continuity. As governments take the necessary precautions, businesses are trying to adjust to the changing environment while coping with the financial and operational challenges.

Companies Will Tend to Protect Cash Revenues

For most of us, the first thing is to acknowledge that we've never experienced anything like this situation. The last time there was a global economic disruption on this scale was WW II. More than 30M people filed for unemployment in two and a half months. That's going from historic lows of 4% to about almost 15% unemployment, meaning every single market will see disruption. Enterprises in sectors where revenues have dropped off a cliff (such as travel) will stop investing in ERP and any digital initiatives for the foreseeable future. Other industries that are seeing increased demand, such as healthcare, will likely invest more to keep up with the surge in users.

For the vast majority, the focus will be on conserving cash and preserving revenues. So, they will invest in systems that can help them do that in the near term. ERP vendors will need to adapt to this mindset.

On the technology front, the trend towards low- and no-code software that can be quickly developed and deployed for specific applications will accelerate. Immediate ROI will be the order of the day.

Contract life cycle management (CLM) software is about reducing costs, preserving revenues, and minimizing risk, so we expect the market to continue to grow, if at a slower rate.

> **THE PANDEMIC IS DRIVING MOST ORGANIZATIONS TO RETHINK HOW THEY WORK AND STRUCTURE THEIR BUSINESS. MANY PRACTICES SUCH AS REMOTE WORKING, REDUCED TRAVEL, FEWER IN-PERSON MEETINGS WILL REMAIN.**

Crisis Invites Opportunities for Successful Change

The COVID-19 pandemic, which has affected more or less every business, actually helped us to learn many lessons from the past. Although we cannot see the complete economic effects yet once we check out things today, we see how unprepared we were for uncertainty.

In the short term, the focus is on withstanding the economic impacts, supporting both the workforce and customers, and managing the unpredictability of supply and demand.

The pandemic is driving most organizations to rethink how they work and structure their business. Many practices such as remote working, reduced travel, fewer in-person meetings will remain.

Crisis invites opportunities for successful change. Businesses need to make and execute decisions with foresight, developing intelligent IT strategies, and applying critical adaptations that can lead to more effective practices and disaster preparation in the long run.

With the resumption of economic growth, it will be the industry's most resilient players that come out ahead—those companies that best address the needs of their customers while shaping a forward-looking business continuity plan. Companies that display confidence, accelerate investments in growth, protect innovation funding, and identify their future teams will be rewarded with a sustained advantage over their competitors". And while parts shortages and unpredictability of supply and demand chains in the current business environment are impediments to performance, the software may be headed for a growth catalyst.

COVID-19 Will Change Our Lives Permanently

As everything comes to an end, this situation will not last forever. Businesses caught off guard are now preparing themselves for this uncertain end. As life and ways of doing business changes, we will all need the support of digitalization on the way.

COVID-19 will change our lives permanently, reshaping our relationships with the government, the world, and each other. The way we do business will also never be the same; traditional systems are becoming more obsolete, and remote work may remain in place for many. One certainty is that, whether for medical, government, business, or personal use, reliance on technology will continue to gain momentum and become more widespread, sophisticated, and flexible. This, in turn, will propel future developments.

Digital Transformation is the Only Way to Survive

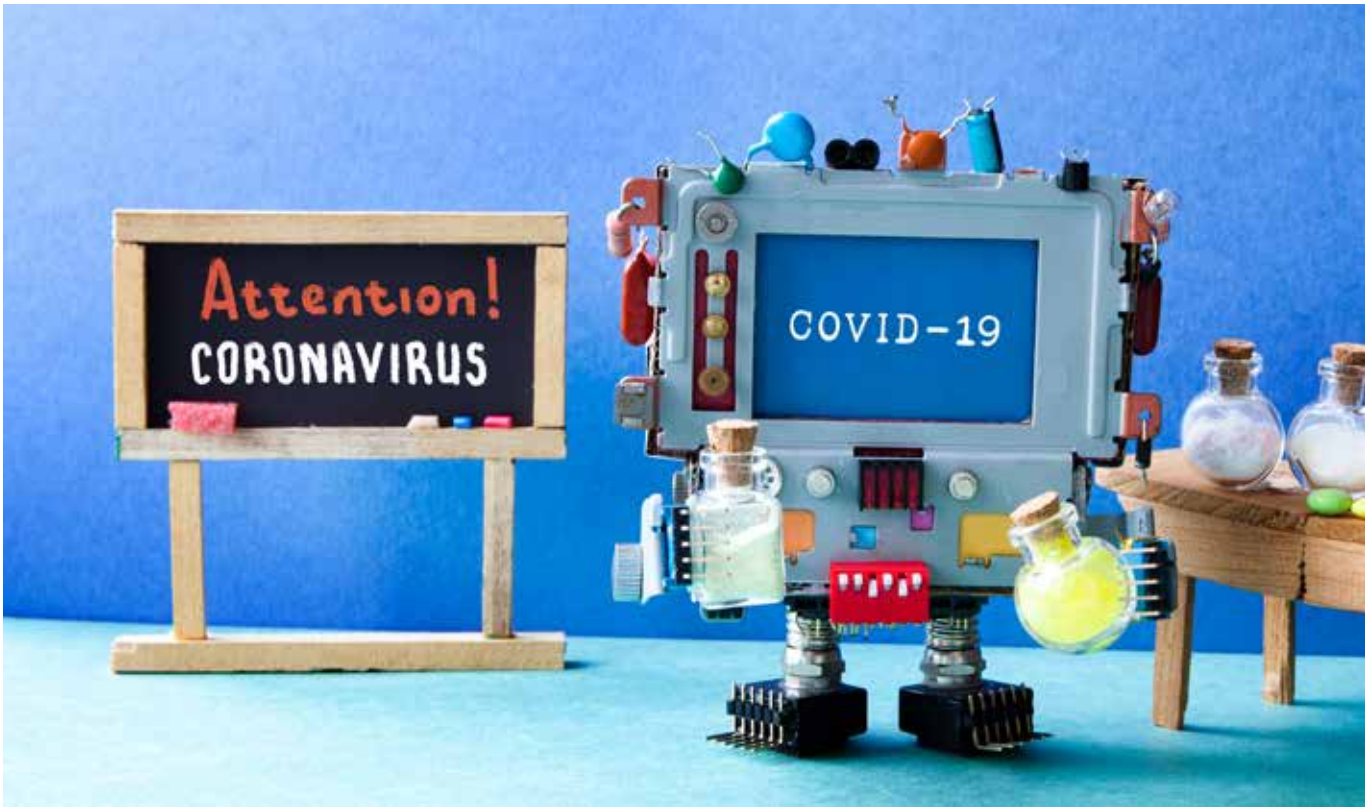
There is little doubt that COVID-19 will accelerate transformation in the digital arena. Reliance on digital technology will continue to surge across all areas of our lives—from personal to business—continually increasing demand for technologies that offer ease of use, bandwidth, space, and security.

A particular beneficiary will be no-code software that can be quickly developed and immediately deployed.

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

About Agiloft

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



PEMECO CONSULTING

TIME OF ENLIGHTMENT

Article by ***Jonathan Gross,***

Pemeco's Managing Director

As the Managing Director of Pemeco, a well respected ERP Implementation Partner in Canada and the US, Jonathan Gross is hoping to see the ERP Industry will recover by the short to mid-term after the pandemic.

"We need to look at the impacts of Covid-19 by the time horizon," he says. In the immediate-term, he thinks ERP software sales and integrator service markets are going to stall or even see declines. "For example, though we do have clients pressing forward with their projects, we have many more that have decided to hit the pause button," he adds, but he states that the short-term impacts remain uncertain.

"If the lockdown periods continue to be stretched, and if the economy slides into a deep recession, the pause period could be prolonged. As a counterweight, companies now have increased pressures to improve their supply chain management, planning, and anywhere/anytime access capabilities. Couple those with macro digital transformation pressures, we're hoping to see the industry recover by the short to mid-term."

Pemeco has been in the industry since 1978 and has managed more than 700 major transformations projects. Looking from the business perspective, Gross thinks the top concern is workforce health and safety. "Companies deemed non-essential are worried about keeping on the lights. Many have laid off their workers, have customers stretching payment terms, and have had their supply chains choked. Essential businesses – companies in the food, energy, and medical device industries, for example – continue to thrive."

Gross thinks it will also be a time of enlightenment for the businesses about working remotely. "I expect that we're going to see a much quicker adoption of remote work. Companies that might not have otherwise adopted remote work arrangements are forced to figure it out now," he explains, "and, they might soon realize that these types of arrangements – if properly enabled with technology - don't compromise productivity to the extent expected. And, they might prove to be more cost-effective than the alternative. Enterprises can cut travel spend, office overhead, and inefficient commute time."

Gross says that to succeed, they'll need to embrace a move to cloud collaboration tools such as video and web conferencing, electronic document management, and accessible enterprise software systems. And he adds "With the heaving impact on manufacturing and distribution, I'm curious to see whether we'll see quicker adoption of automation technologies and robots."

> **"USING TIME CORRECTLY AND TURNING THE CRISIS INTO AN OPPORTUNITY IS OF GREAT VALUE FOR THE FUTURE OF EVERY BUSINESS. YOU HAVE TO CHOOSE THE TOOL YOU USE TO CATCH THE OPPORTUNITIES IN THIS FOGGY SEA.**

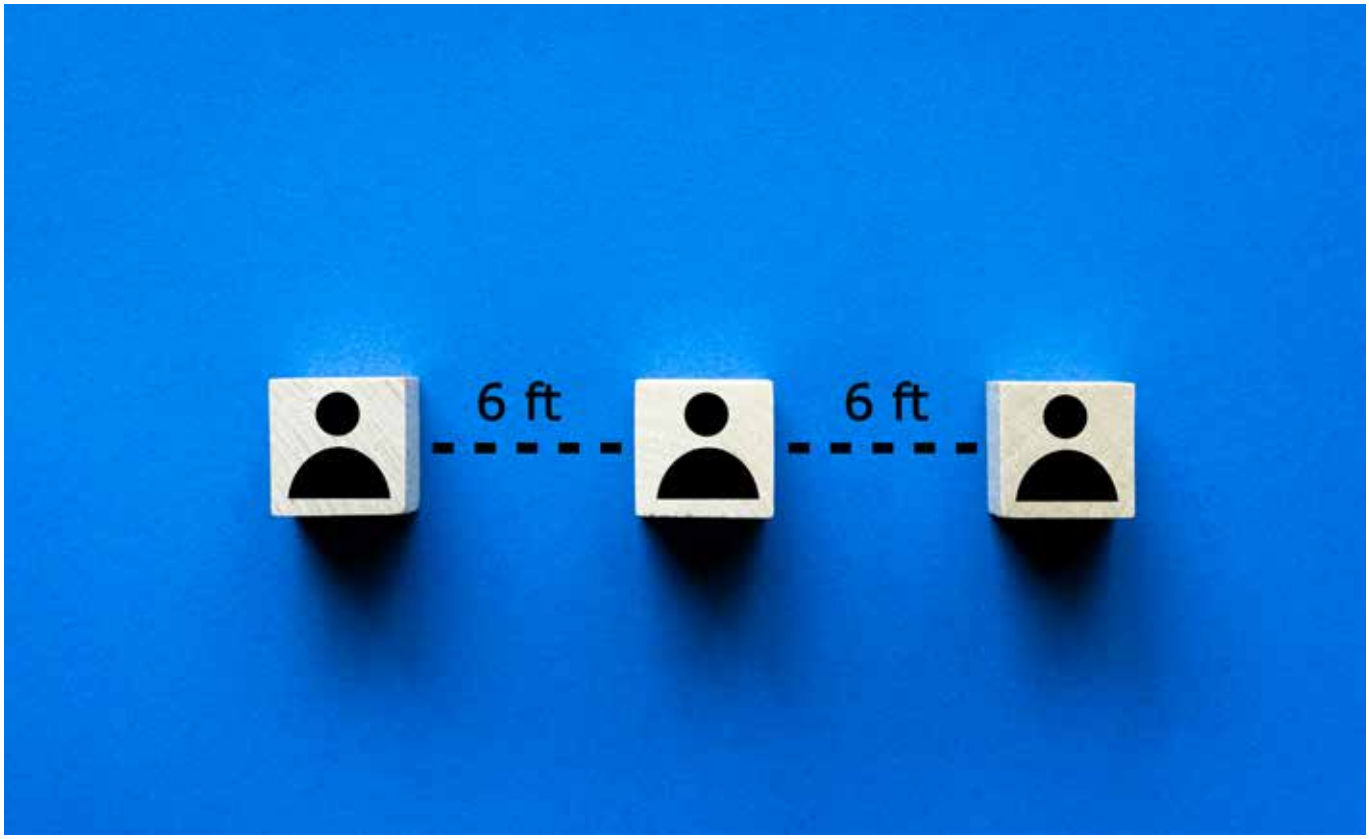
Gross is not so optimistic about the impacts of the pandemic on digital transformation. "Worst-case scenario contingency planning is usually an exercise that lives and dies on paper. Most companies don't fund expensive projects to stave off once-in-a-lifetime black swan events," he says and explains "They're going to need to rethink how they model disasters and what workloads can be shifted to technology. Interestingly, companies should also plan for the inverse – using people-based processes to workaround catastrophic disruptions to technologies."

Using time correctly and turning the crisis into an opportunity is of great value for the future of every business. You have to choose the tool you use to catch the opportunities in this foggy sea. The most important thing to keep in mind is that this fog will disperse one day, and you will be there with the right software in the next uncertainty!

Jonathan Gross is Pemeco's Managing Director. He leads the firm's digital transformation, software selection, and risk management practice areas.

About Pemeco

Pemeco Consulting is a vendor-neutral firm with a 40-year history of successfully delivering complex ERP and digital transformation projects for manufacturers and distributors.



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OLD TRENDS ARE NOW REQUIREMENTS

Article by ***Alok Ajmera,***
president and COO of Prophix

Coronavirus Pandemic sentenced the world to an uncertainty. In this uncertainty, businesses, employees, and customers quickly switched to the home model brought by the new world order. Undoubtedly, many businesses have failed to provide the same service to their customers as they did a few months ago due to local and national restrictions. If every crisis teaches a lesson, this crisis clearly demonstrated the importance of investing in the right infrastructure and software to ensure business continuity and success.

Right Software for A Happy Ending

The #stayhome hashtag, which entered into our lives with Covid-19, means much more for industries than staying at home. During uncertain times, such as the coronavirus pandemic, enterprises need to rethink the way they operate as they move to a work-from-home model, with the safety of course, of their employees and customers top of mind. As local and national restrictions require businesses to limit face-to-face interaction, serving customers in the same way as they did before can prove to be challenging. Investing in the right infrastructure and software is essential to business continuity and success. This includes tools that provide strong visualization and make it easy to share data and promote collaboration among siloed employees.

COVID-19 has introduced a high level of volatility to the market, as stay-at-home advisories and supply-chain shortages have upended several industries. This uncertainty has greatly affected corporate financial departments, as 2020 budgets and forecasts, that were just recently finalized, are likely no longer relevant. Even in the best of times, the C-suite finds it challenging to accurately budget, plan, and forecast for their business, but unforeseen market influences like the pandemic make these tasks far more difficult. Events like this can directly impact an organization's revenue planning, costs, production, headcount, and overall business performance., CFOs need to utilize their software mentioned earlier, to run "what if" scenarios for every possible scenario so they can make adjustments on the fly. This approach will help businesses to ensure continuity and minimize risk.

Technology Proves Its Power Once Again

COVID-19 has certainly forced most businesses to utilize their ingenuity, as they adapt to their new work from home models. More enterprises are developing and/or investing in digital infrastructures and fail saves to enable their employees to work seamlessly in a secure environment, while also servicing their clients. Many businesses that had previously been anxious or reluctant to interact with these technologies, now have the chance to experience them. As a result, they have come to appreciate the ease, speed, and convenience these technologies can offer.

The cloud, in particular, has been instrumental in helping businesses rapidly pivot their plans, providing instant communication, and rapid deployment of information across their network to remote workers and clientele alike. Other essential technologies, such as telecommunication tools and software platforms that make it easier to work collaboratively, have become even more ingrained in the way we do business. Even after the COVID-19 pandemic,

> **CFOS NEED TO UTILIZE THEIR SOFTWARE MENTIONED EARLIER, TO RUN "WHAT IF" SCENARIOS FOR EVERY POSSIBLE SCENARIO SO THEY CAN MAKE ADJUSTMENTS ON THE FLY.**

it's likely that businesses will continue to develop these infrastructures to provide ease of access to their clientele and to ensure that they're able to operate in other uncertain climates.

Working Remotely Without Missing a Step

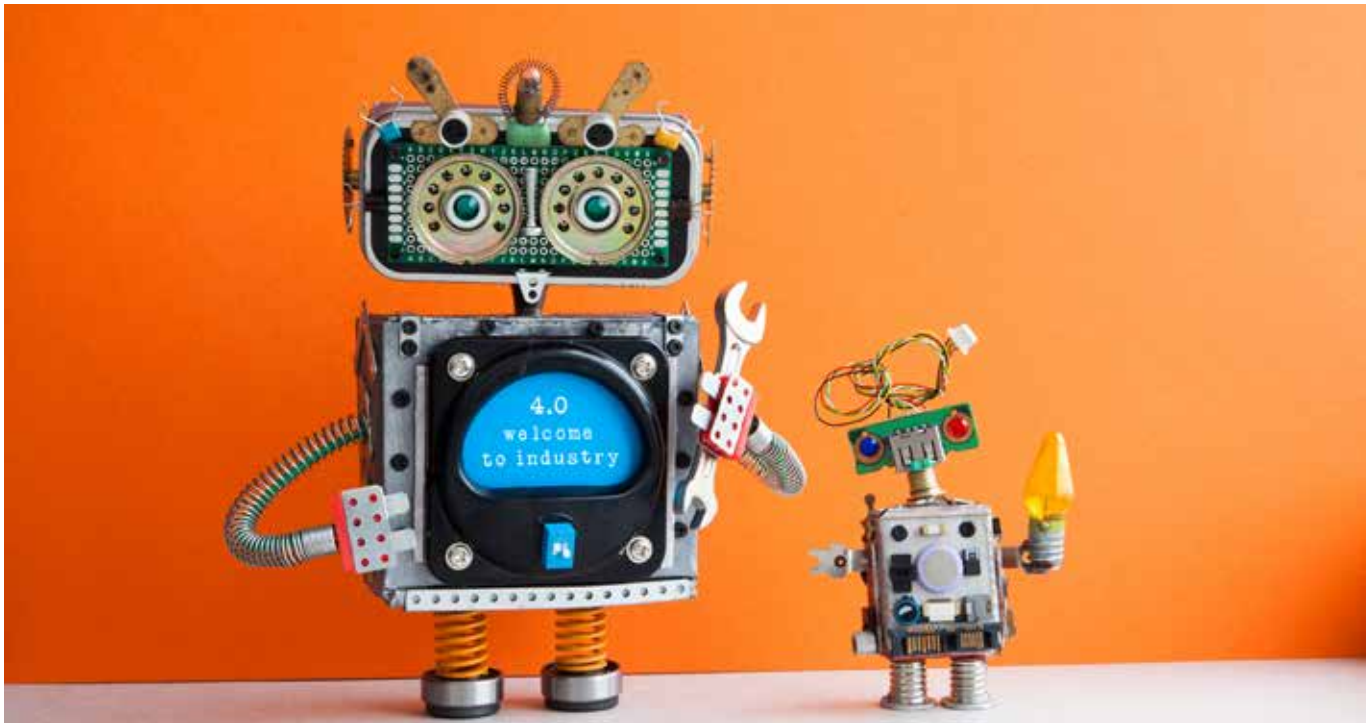
COVID-19 has forever changed the landscape of the way we work, in favor of digital transformation. While the tides were slowly moving towards a more digital world, COVID-19 has hurled us into a paradigm shift. The forced mass adaption of telecommuting due to restrictions brought on by the pandemic is undoubtedly the largest driver. While the idea of working from home was becoming more normal in today's workforce, there still remained a large portion of employees that had yet to try telecommuting. Businesses and employees alike are finding that it's not only possible to adopt this virtual model, but in some cases preferable. In the past, it could be difficult to collaborate with remote employees, but the drastic improvements in network infrastructure, continued migration to the cloud, and introduction of new collaborative software have made it possible to work remotely without missing a step. As companies look to engage larger talent pools and help reduce occupancy costs, offering employees the ability to telecommute will become far more commonplace.

Although we cannot see clearly what awaits us, we know that companies that will succeed in the 'new normal' will write the most creative scenario from home!

Alok Ajmera is President & COO of Prophix, a unified performance management solution aimed at automating financial processes such as analysis, budgeting, planning, consolidations, and reporting. Alok joined the company in 2004 and rocketed from Consultant to President. Alok's mission is to ensure that every customer, prospective client, partner, and employee around the world has a memorable and positive experience with Prophix.

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.



DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION MAY NOT MEAN WHAT YOU THINK IT MEANS

*Article by **Glenn Graney**,*
Director Industrial and High Tech, QAD

There has never been a more extensive range of technology available with the ability to significantly improve manufacturing systems. Unfortunately, it is often unclear which systems these technologies can benefit, and there is infrequently a clear path showing how to reap the benefits of their application. So what is an enterprise to do?

Manufacturing technology trends over the last several years have focused on distinct projects covering back-office productivity, improved planning, and plant-level automation. Improving individual processes is fine but the connection points between operations and business planning systems, despite endless articles written on the convergence of Operational Technology (OT) and Information Technology (IT), continue to be one of the most underserved areas of investment. All too often, "convergence" means a spreadsheet at the connection point that fills a gap but falls well short of providing true organizational collaboration.

Digital transformation one digit at a time

For the last several years, the term "Industry 4.0" has echoed loudly across the plant floor, the supply chain, the warehouse, the IT department, and the offices of manufacturing executives. It even reached the ears of distributors and customers. Industry 4.0 noise has subsided somewhat, but it has been replaced by a similar level of excitement around the term "Digital Transformation."

Not all Digital Transformation strategies and efforts are equal. Digitization and digitalization are often thought to be, inappropriately, interchangeable, but they are entirely different concepts. Digitization is defined as the automation of a process using a computer or other related technology. Digitization refers to the transition of a set of manual activities to a less labor-intensive, more efficient, and more repeatable approach. Alternatively, digitalization includes the rethinking of processes and strategies in a way that makes them more effective and adaptable. Digitalizations are the changes that deliver both immediate results, while also driving actual change in the enterprise.

Digitization should not be discouraged as it may deliver a solid ROI. Entire technologies have evolved to find ways to improve the status quo. Robotic Process Automation (RPA) is, at its core, a powerful tool that can be used to ease the burden of employees whose jobs include a high amount of repetitive manual activities. Who wouldn't want to eliminate the current endless paperwork of processing invoices that requires the opening of multiple systems and transcribing data back and forth? RPA can be used effectively to deliver improvements in the execution of specific processes

> **MANUFACTURING TECHNOLOGY TRENDS OVER THE LAST SEVERAL YEARS HAVE FOCUSED ON DISTINCT PROJECTS COVERING BACK-OFFICE PRODUCTIVITY, IMPROVED PLANNING, AND PLANT-LEVEL AUTOMATION.**

without substantially changing those processes at all. To be fair, RPA may at some point use AI and other techniques that may move it well into a digitalization project, but most current RPA endeavors are strictly digitization.

The transition of processes necessary for digitalization is by its nature a more challenging endeavor. There never seems to be time for a redesign. There are always restrictive objections to the change. The transition from existing to new processes usually introduces risk in terms of potential interruption of business execution. Given stretched capital investment budgets, short-staffed IT departments, and the cooling of the manufacturing economy, manufacturers have to ask themselves whether the time is now to take on digitalization challenges.

As is the case with so many questions, the answer is "it depends." Some manufacturers, those with highly insulated business models and no looming threat of disruption, can probably get by with an incremental digitization approach. The "just a little better" approach may not work forever, but it might for a while. Manufacturers trying to survive and thrive in sectors experiencing high levels of disruption should be considering a more in-depth digitalization approach.

Opportunities that are hidden in plain sight at system intersections

The majority of manufacturers seem to be somewhere in between. Most have at least a general understanding of the benefits that real Digital Transformation can bring. Over 90% of all businesses claim they are pursuing Digital Transformation in some form. While the pursuit of business and digital transformation is different for every manufacturer, there are undoubtedly some common themes, best practices, success stories and failures; and lessons to be learned.

There is typically no shortage of supporting systems that have aged beyond sustainability and are being held together with heroic efforts and crossed-fingers. These systems will eventually individually elevate to the top of lists and their shortcomings will be addressed. However, how does a manufacturing entity prioritize the myriad additional Digital Transformation opportunities available for systems that may not be as obviously out of date?

The friction points between systems can present attractive opportunities for true digitalization. Poor collaboration between the planning and operation disciplines restricts a

manufacturing organization's ability to meet customers' needs. Manufacturers often lack timely and accurate insight into the operational status of planned production. This lack of insight interferes with production's ability to respond effectively to unpredictable customer situations, inventory shortages, equipment failures, and supply chain interruptions.

Despite the noise about OT/IT convergence, few companies have done much to optimize collaboration between business-level systems and operations-level systems. Coordination with the execution side of manufacturing will arguably be the most significant near-term winner of Digital Transformation investing. Filling these gaps with spreadsheets may feel like progress, but it can actually keep real progress from occurring. Spreadsheet gap-fillers are system customizations that fly under the radar and do not foster actual coordination between planning and operations.

There is good news on the Digital Transformation front that can potentially help all kinds of manufacturers, regardless of where they stand in terms of transformation. Given the maturing nature of the current underlying technologies and solutions associated with Digital Transformation, there are plenty of successful projects and business use cases that offer a fast ROI yet don't require massive investments. When you start to draw together information or data from both components of the value chain and expose it to the shop floor, your operations team gets actionable insights that drive better decisions and lead to higher efficiency, lower costs, happier customers, and fatter margins.

Some examples of digitalization projects that can be initiated to deliver real results:

> **REGARDLESS OF WHETHER IT'S A DIGITIZATION OR DIGITALIZATION EFFORT, THERE ARE REAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR PROGRESS AT PLANNING AND OPERATIONAL CONNECTION POINTS.**

- **Integral Extension of Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) into Operations** – Production Execution systems based on widely available operator-centric shop floor interfaces and built-in IoT can provide insights at the pace of production. This solution replaces a myriad of manual data collection systems and complex, overly-rigid interfaces to Manufacturing Execution System (MES) or other shop floor solutions.
- **Enterprise Quality Management System (QMS)** – Too often, the systems supporting manufacturing quality efforts consist of numerous other disjointed systems that have evolved over time. A more integrated approach to quality planning and quality operations can reduce the manual effort across the organization, driving toward real root cause analysis and ultimately reducing the actual cost of quality.
- **Coordinated Material Management from Warehouse to Shop Floor and Back Again** – Automated solutions that allow for the coordinated delivery of needed component material, the identification of the material as consumed, and the labeling of finished goods for final delivery have become imperative for the adaptive manufacturing enterprise. Operational improvement in the management of materials is the baseline opportunity but this capability is critical to the growing need for traceability and product genealogy.

Many early efforts that could be deemed as digitization revolve around the automation of some existing functions or processes. It could be the evaluation of volumes of data that couldn't be evaluated with previous approaches. This digitization effort may actually be the necessary foundation that allows for the following acceleration of digitalization activity. It is essential to move forward with the greater vision of the real revolution that will come from applying the same energy and techniques to solutions that have never been previously considered. Real process change and disruptive business model changes will ultimately be the reward.

Regardless of whether it's a digitization or digitalization effort, there are real opportunities for progress at planning and operational connection points. Manufacturers who take action without major disruption might find benefits that include multiple digit returns.

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

About QAD

QAD Inc. is a leading provider of flexible , cloud - based enterprise software and services for global manufacturing companies. QAD Adaptive ERP for manufacturing supports operational requirements in the areas of financials, customer management, supply chain, manufacturing , service and support, analytics, business process management and integration. QAD's portfolio includes related solutions for quality management software, supply chain management software, transportation management software and B2B interoperability. Since 1979, QAD solutions have enabled customers in the automotive, consumer products, food and beverage, high tech, industrial manufacturing and life sciences industries to better align operations with their strategic goals to become Effective Enterprises.
To learn more, visit www.qad.com

IT IS NOT TOO LATE TO CATCH THE OPPORTUNITIES CREATED BY THE PANDEMIC!

*Article by **Michael Grace**,*
Director in The Infor Practice at RPI Consultants

We are quite sure that nothing will ever be the same again after the Covid-19 outbreak. Nowadays, uncertainty dominates all areas of life, businesses are forced to make tough decisions. Especially, companies that realize that technology is the only way out of this situation want to have the right infrastructures as soon as possible. ERP, which has been vital in terms of managing business processes for many years, now proves its benefits.

Pandemic Reveals the Importance of Cloud

While pandemic continues to cause many damages, it also shows our bottlenecks. It allows us to understand how good the decisions were made in the past. We are in a very convenient period to test the deficiencies of old systems and the advantages of new ones.

ERP remains a key and critical business component. In many industries, they have yet to move to the cloud, where it can be better secured, easier accessed, and cheaper. COVID-19 highlighted the importance of cloud software to be able to respond to the pandemic. The industry responded immediately adding functionality to better track COVID-19 supplies, account and track business expenses related to the pandemic, and helped add HR functionality to communicate and track employees. I think ERP is more critical now as the backbone of all companies to be up to date and in the cloud.

Small Businesses Have Big Problems

The pandemic is affecting all industries in some way, whether it be healthcare on the front lines or our food supply businesses struggling to keep up the supply chain. The world is a different place, with social distancing becoming the norm. Many businesses had to close while they adapted to the new CDC guidelines, balancing revenue with employee and customer safety concerns. I feel larger businesses may have the cash and credit to absorb this far more than small

> **COVID-19 HIGHLIGHTED THE IMPORTANCE OF CLOUD SOFTWARE TO BE ABLE TO RESPOND TO THE PANDEMIC.**

businesses. It is estimated that 10% of small, independent restaurants won't be able to reopen for example.

Technology has been at the center of our lives, especially in recent years. Now, with COVID-19, this position of technology has become even stronger. In particular, we can say that the demand for technological tools will increase when this situation ends.

A New Remote World

Already you are seeing changes in all aspects of our life. From limiting customers in establishments to taking temperatures as employees enter the workforce. Work has also shifted from being performed in a building to working from home for a majority of businesses. This will be a trend that will be hard to reverse. I think commercial real estate will plummet as employers realize they can operate in a remote world. To enable this, technology has risen to meet the needs, from tele-medicine applications, conference software and collaboration tools like Microsoft Teams. The biggest difference is the reliance and focus on technology has unleashed a flood of innovation around these technologies that will continue into the future. Consumers will demand an Amazon like experience of technology in all aspects of their lives.

Perfect Time for Digital Transformation

Everything needs to be rethought - work, processes, tools, technology... This IS THE PERFECT TIME for digital transformation. Companies are seizing the opportunity to bring in digital workers vs. human labor in low value, repetitive jobs. With minimal investment companies can reap large rewards over time if they act now.

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.

"IS THE CLOUD RIGHT FOR YOU"

Yes and no, or the answer might be maybe. There is a serious focus on the cloud both from a hosting solution to a software as a service model SaaS. There is also a lot of misinformation as sales folks urge customers to make the investment. They portray the cloud as a way to reduce costs, eliminate staff, become secure, and walk on water. Okay maybe the last one is a stretch, but the promises are a bit inflated.

As you look at the cloud the primary pros and cons are:

Scalability

In the cloud it is true that scalability becomes relatively easy. You can quickly get more horsepower if needed. Many folks however overpay here and if you don't have a elastic demand, this may not be a needed driver to move to the cloud.

Ease of Access

Yes if your service or software is in the cloud then typically it is easier to access via mobile, and other platforms. Typical dual factor authentication trumps logging in behind a firewall for users.

Smaller Companies

If you don't have a huge IT shop, then moving to the cloud makes a lot of sense. It typically will be more secure and maintenance will be better handled by the larger providers. The benefits are much greater for smaller companies.

Cost

This is a place of huge misinformation. Sure the monthly and annual cost may be less. But you will likely not cut a ton of staff or significantly reduce annual maintenance costs. Additionally the costs to migrate to the cloud tend to be large, unless a new install.

Security

I doubt you will say that you operate a more secure data center than say Microsoft or Amazon, so this is a huge way to move to a more secure platform. However, is a vendor hosts you be sure to become comfortable with their security protocols. If they get breached, nobody will care whether you saved money in hosting.

Software Shifting To Cloud

Even desktop software like Microsoft Office is shifting to the cloud with O365. You can't avoid some of your platform moving to the cloud, so having a strategy to accommodate cloud makes sense. Monitoring the cloud with tools such as Netskope will be important.

Large Upfront Cost To Transfer

Moving data and processes to the cloud isn't cheap, and I don't care what your sales rep says. I have seen a large upfront cost, so make sure you have a 5 year ROI that shows value or another driver to justify this.

Dependent

You must be okay with someone else having your information. You must understand the internet too and that there will be downtimes. Maybe it is the vendor, maybe a wire or switch, but downtimes will happen.

Support

Cloud hosting support generally is "evolving". Not good, not bad, but there is added complexity in multi-tenant hosted environments. So, if you want Nordstrom like service, you may be in for a disappointment.

Michael Grace

Director in the Infor practice at RPI Consultants

*Article by **Adrian Bodomoiu**, Managing Director, Wizrom Software*

HOW A ROMANIAN ERP PROVIDER DEFINES THE CURRENT CRISIS: "IT MEANS DEVELOPING THE BUSINESS, NOT STOPPING IT."

The quarantine imposed by the Covid-19 pandemic, which has frozen most economic sectors where many employees cannot work remotely, reminds us of the importance of digitalization for all companies, no matter their size or scope. The fact that many businesses use software solutions to manage their operations, gives them an even greater advantage in these challenging times.

"This epidemic has shown, beyond a doubt, how interconnected we are all at the moment, and how quickly a situation that seems isolated, can have a global impact. If we look at the glass half full, I think that the last few weeks have clearly proven that people are, in fact, extremely flexible and adaptable," says Adrian Bodomoiu, Managing Director of Wizrom Software, in a recent interview with Business MAGAZIN.

However, one of the market segments where the specific 'appetite' of other software sectors, is lacking, are companies in the manufacturing arena. "While we see tremendous growth potential, there are still companies active in this sector, an industry segment that has strongly felt the lack of a specialized workforce, and increased production costs. In this context, automating production processes has fast become a priority, and we expect to see a growing number of customers focus on demand planning and manufacturing execution systems," explained Bodomoiu. "Similarly, the flexibility of the work environment has become vitally important, as companies must be able to continue their activities by maximizing the 'engines' - the software systems they currently rely on."

"As the work environment becomes more flexible, companies need business software that can be accessed and used without limitations, on any mobile device, regardless of the location of the user. Here, for example, we expect to see a surge in mobile solutions and mobile applications usage, where even the smallest companies will choose the path of digitization, especially via accessible solutions available in the cloud," he added.

Long time Priority Software business partner, Wizrom Software, was founded in Bucharest, Romania in 1994, and is managed by Israel's Davidai, a family-run company. With approximately 3,600 active customers in the local market, Wizrom also serves an extensive customer base in Bulgaria, Republic of Moldova, Serbia, Hungary, Israel, US, Canada, Belgium, UK, Croatia, and Poland. In 2019, Wizrom achieved € 5.7M in revenues, based on company-provided figures. Among the most popular Wizrom solutions, is WizSalary, through which the salaries of over 600,000 employees in Romania are processed.

"The demand for solutions closely reflects real business challenges," said Bodomoiu. "For example, expanding the

> **"THIS EPIDEMIC HAS SHOWN, BEYOND A DOUBT, HOW INTERCONNECTED WE ARE ALL AT THE MOMENT, AND HOW QUICKLY A SITUATION THAT SEEMS ISOLATED, CAN HAVE A GLOBAL IMPACT.**

labor crisis to a growing number of industries has led to an increased demand for Human Resources (HR) software solutions, while the pressure to boost the cost-effectiveness of the consumer and retail industries, has increased the need for Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) solutions. Overall, professional services, manufacturing, distribution, and HR, had the greatest contribution to our revenues in 2019, with demand coming mostly from large companies."

What solutions are Romanian companies looking for?

In an information-led economy, some of the most important ways to effectively reach customers are identifying, analyzing, and anticipating their needs based on available data and data analysis. Taking a closer look at the Romanian market, the Wizrom team maintains that Business Intelligence (BI) solutions, namely those that help customers leverage their business data, are increasingly being sought after in the local market.

This trend is clearly reflected on a global scale, where data and data protection is so vitally important, that in 2018, the EU had to implement a General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). This same reality transcends to all economic sectors, even reaching local elections, where Cambridge Analytica used data analytics based on information collected on every American voter in the 2016 US election campaign.

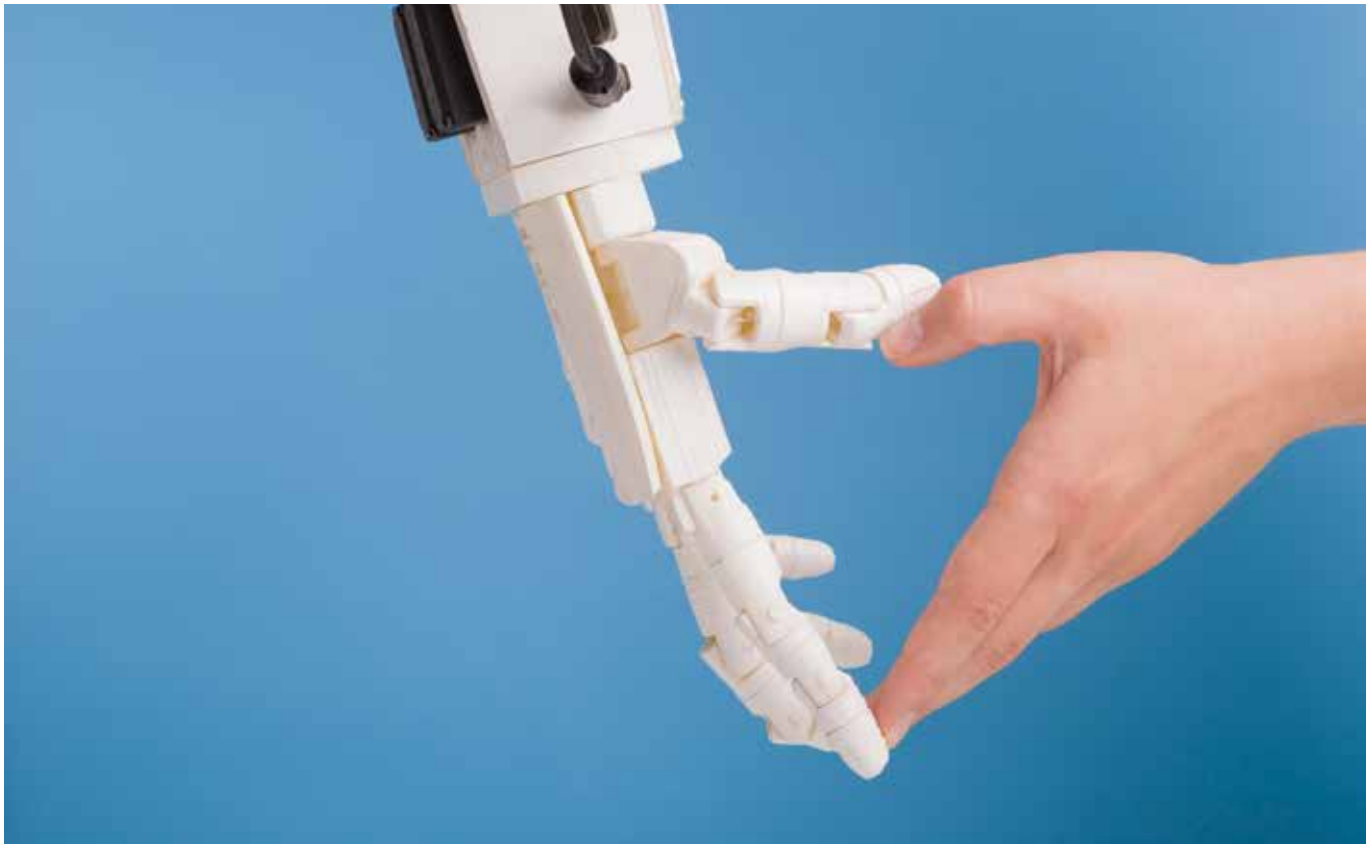
> **AUTOMATED SOLUTIONS ARE NO LONGER PERCEIVED AS SIMPLY A 'TREND', BUT AS A REALITY THAT RESPONDS QUICKLY TO LABOR SHORTAGES, IN ADDITION TO MEETING OTHER CRITICAL BUSINESS NEEDS.**

But what the market is heading for in the coming years remains to be seen, where it's estimated that Artificial Intelligence (AI) technology and its many benefits, will be a game-changer. In Romania today, AI can enhance any company's existing software technology, bringing with it, an entirely new perspective. "The next step is to streamline the solutions that integrate AI, enabling them to generate in-depth analysis in a shorter time. The benefits increase significantly when these solutions integrate with existing ERP systems since data is collected and analyzed in real-time, to support the business decision-making process," said Bodomoiu. "I would even dare to say that, in five years, it will be difficult to find a company that doesn't have a viable solution based on artificial intelligence."

The early pioneers of digitization in Romania were the distribution companies, according to Wizrom, as they perceived digitization as the answer to managing cost efficiency. "When it comes to distribution companies, we're referring to their complex operational processes, which rendered their manual administration inefficient. In fact, in general, automation has been embraced industry-wide, particularly by those with complex, multifaceted workflows, such as manufacturing or consumer goods. These industries welcomed automation into their workflows to reduce operational costs and boost productivity in a relatively short time."

Transitioning from "I want" to "I must"

Automated solutions are no longer perceived as simply a 'trend', but as a reality that responds quickly to labor shortages, in addition to meeting other critical business needs. "Today, automated solutions are technologies that virtually any company, regardless of size or market sector, should turn



their attention to, to develop their business and increase their operational efficiency. They should no longer be viewed as "nice-to-have", but rather, as a "must-have", added Bodomoiu.

Many of Romania's businesses serving the local market were reluctant to adopt automation when they were forced to invest in software solutions, Bodomoiu recalls. "For some time now, we've encountered company management's hesitation to invest in complex software integration projects, choosing instead, to invest smaller amounts in stand-alone solutions. However, as these companies began implementing business management software in their day-to-day operations, and the financial benefits became clear, we've seen considerably greater openness on their part. More and more local companies are aware of the importance of investing in IT infrastructure and business automation solutions, and as a result, have chosen to increase their budgets, which in turn, supports our objectives as well," explains Bodomoiu.

Wizrom sees competition as particularly fierce in Romania's software vendor market, as companies have become very focused on new technologies, and how they can integrate automation into their operations, from small to large companies alike.

At the threshold of digitalization?

Wizrom believes that in the last two decades, Romania has recovered much of the gap in implementing new technologies, at least in terms of the consumer and the private sector, with the business community quickly picking up steam.
"As for technological advancement, in the last 20 years, Romania has successfully competed with the most powerful European countries," said Bodomoiu. "In an attempt to make up for a lost time, local companies quickly embraced new technologies. One only has to look at the success of Romania's Fintech market or other collaborative platforms, such as Uber or Airbnb, fast becoming local market leaders."

Romania would still be prepared to adopt early technologies, such as blockchain, 3D printing, or machine learning, as demonstrated by other Romanian companies in the private sector that market these solutions. However, to keep Romania's business momentum going, the IT sector needs new investments to remain attractive, as it's approaching 6% of the country's GDP. In recent years, the contribution of education and taxation has further supported the growth of the IT sector.

"Today, the IT & Communications (IT&C) sector in Romania is one of the key contributors to the country's financial success. The economic benefits, with the relatively low cost of labor as compared to other EU countries, but also the focus on education in this sector, have all contributed to its marked increase in recent years," said Bodomoiu. "It remains an attractive offering for investors, but its development potential is limited by the size of a skilled workforce. The annual number of new graduates fails to keep up with the demand for employees. I believe that the future success of the IT&C sector will greatly depend on how well we'll be able to attract a foreign-based workforce or develop new specialists at the local level, for example, through professional retraining programs."

Author: Alex Ciutacu, Business MAGAZIN, Romania
(Translated from the original article in Romanian)

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Global Shop SOLUTIONS ERP SOFTWARE

*Article by **Nicole Meyers**,*
New Implementations Team Lead

GETTING ERP IMPLEMENTATION RIGHT THE FIRST TIME: ONE MANUFACTURER'S STORY

About Sharpe Tooling Solutions

Sharp Tooling Solutions specializes in the design and construction of CMM fixtures, check fixtures, quality assurance fixtures, prototype weld fixtures, bonding and assembly tooling, tooling models and more for the automotive, aerospace and defense industries.

At Sharp Tooling Solutions, quality is more than a measurable system; it is a fundamental part of their daily processes. They encourage their employees to innovate, go the extra mile, and to think like entrepreneurs. As a result, Sharp Tooling Solutions offers the capabilities of a world-class manufacturing facility, and the flexibility and responsiveness of a small business.

Located in Romeo, Michigan, Sharp Tooling Solutions implemented Global Shop Solutions ERP software in 2019 to improve their processes and simplify their manufacturing.

To learn more about Sharp Tooling Solutions, call 1.586.752.3099 or visit www.sharptoolingsolutions.com.

ERP software can do amazing things for today's manufacturers, including facilitating near-perfect inventory counts and tracking job costs with remarkable precision. Despite ERP's ability to simplify manufacturing, it's good business sense to wonder if there is a downside to investing in the software. Our customers will tell you there isn't. In fact, many say the only thing they would change would be making the decision to implement ERP sooner.

What held them back?

The stigma of implementation. The process takes much longer than expected, mistakes are made, and costs escalate.

Our experience, based on more than four decades of successful ERP implementations, is that none of these problems have to happen. In fact, the process can be surprisingly painless if the project is structured and run by experienced experts such as the implementation specialists that Global Shop Solutions employs.

In the last four years alone, we have successfully implemented our ERP software in more than 1,000 manufacturing facilities around the globe. To illustrate that ERP implementation can

be done on time and within budget while achieving the planned results, we would like to relate the story of our recent implementation with Sharp Tooling Solutions, as told by Brett Cisneros, IT Manager at Sharp Tooling Solutions.

Moving into the 21st Century

Sharp Tooling Solutions is a full-service supplier for the aerospace, automotive and defense industries, specializing in the design and construction of fixtures and tooling. Located just north of Detroit, Michigan they are AS9100 and ISO 9001 20015 certified and use the latest technology to manufacture high-quality products for customers worldwide. The custom tools made by the company's roughly 100 employees take anywhere from two weeks to eight months to finish, with an average of 20+ tools being shipped each week.

The company is most proud of their commitment to excellence, as exemplified by their 100% on-time delivery rate and quality product rate with Lockheed Martin. Sharp Tooling Solutions delivers a quality product on-time, every time to one of their most important customers – and you can too.

Sharp Tooling was tired of operating with multiple systems that lacked continuity and inhibited corporate growth. The management team wanted to improve production processes and forecasting, and was searching for an ERP system that would combine their existing accounting-only system and separate 3rd-party time clock used to collect payroll hours. Global Shop Solutions provided a total system that matched with Sharp's 'tool-shop' manufacturing practices, including robust inventory and scheduling modules that allowed for the elimination of redundant Excel spreadsheets. At this point, we'll let Cisneros tell the story in his own words.

What motivated Sharp Tooling to install an ERP system in the business? What was the company feeling – and what were you feeling as the IT manager – when you decided to find an ERP system?

From a business perspective, we needed to become more organized and efficient. In particular, we wanted to be able to put our manufacturing processes, accounting and logging payroll hours all under one user-friendly software package.

> **"WE LOOKED AT SEVERAL DIFFERENT ERP PRODUCTS, AND GLOBAL SHOP SOLUTIONS STOOD OUT FROM THE REST, MOST NOTABLY IN THE AREA OF CUSTOMER SERVICE. WE WERE IMPRESSED WITH THE SHORT WAIT TIMES FOR SERVICE CALLS TO BE COMPLETED, AND WE LIKED THE FACT THAT 24-HOUR TECHNICAL SUPPORT IS BASED IN THE U.S.**

Sharp has a history of continuous improvement. To help manage growth objectives, we searched for a system that would eliminate inputting redundant static data, combine processes, and help us comply with AS9100 quality requirements for control plans. Global Shop Solutions not only fit perfectly with those objectives, but we were able to commonize standard forms for quoting, material purchasing and shipping.

What led to your decision to select Global Shop Solutions ERP software?

We looked at several different ERP products, and Global Shop Solutions stood out from the rest, most notably in the area of customer service. We were impressed with the short wait times for service calls to be completed, and we liked the fact that 24-hour technical support is based in the U.S.

"GLOBAL SHOP SOLUTIONS PUT THE RIGHT PEOPLE WITH THE RIGHT EXPERIENCE IN PLACE BASED ON OUR NEEDS."

Second, we found the software interface to be simple and easy to navigate. As a company, most employees learned to use the software in a short time.

Next, we wanted to make sure the company was credible and trustworthy. I turned to Google, and all my searches returned positive results. I found video after video of customers similar to our business with positive feedback and experiences with Global Shop Solutions. A timeline on your website explained the history and growth of the company over 40 years, giving me confidence that we wouldn't have to go through this process again.

Finally, Global Shop Solutions ERP software comes with all the modules offered, whereas other ERP systems are purchased in a more a la carte manner. We wanted the peace of mind of knowing we wouldn't have to be constantly adding modules and features every time we wanted to do something new.

Breaking Down a Successful Implementation

You didn't waste any time getting started. Describe how the implementation process went for Sharp Tooling Solutions.

We began installing the server and client desktops in our facility within a week of acquiring the software. We worked with your Project Manager (PM) to set clear goals based on what we wanted to do with the software, and then set up a training schedule with the appropriate Consultants. We also set up a weekly phone call with the PM to monitor how the implementation was proceeding and resolve any issues.

We attended your ERP Boot Camp in Texas, which is free for any customer. Touring the Global Shop Solutions facility, seeing the other customers you work with, and meeting with the owner and CEO (Dusty Alexander) convinced me we made the right choice. The first morning, Dusty welcomed the entire class to the training, and spoke eloquently of his company's commitment to helping all of us have a successful implementation.

I later found out Friday Features is one of his favorite parts of the week and is

fully invested in the company that his father founded. Since then, we have developed a personal relationship with the group of people who helped us go live, and getting in touch with any of them is a breeze.

Were you satisfied with the system setup and support received from Global Shop Solutions during the implementation?

Absolutely. The consultants were all very friendly and responsive to our needs. As long-term Global Shop Solutions employees, they brought a wealth of knowledge and ideas to the table to get us up and rolling. They also put the right people with the right experience in place based on our needs, which set us up for a successful implementation.

From an internal standpoint, what worked well for you during the implementation process?

> **THE CONSULTANTS WERE ALL VERY FRIENDLY AND RESPONSIVE TO OUR NEEDS. AS LONG-TERM GLOBAL SHOP SOLUTIONS EMPLOYEES, THEY BROUGHT A WEALTH OF KNOWLEDGE AND IDEAS TO THE TABLE TO GET US UP AND ROLLING.**

I realized early on that our employees had varying levels of computer experience. The best thing I did was spend some time creating Global Shop Solutions operating instructions for our employees. I created step-by-step PowerPoints for each module and each department so people would have a quick reference guide. Some people used them briefly and then took off on their own with minimal help. Others were still using them after two months, usually if they forgot a screen or were performing an infrequent task.

The time I invested in learning Global Shop Solutions' terminology and understanding the flow charts also paid off. Once I understood how jobs process from start to finish and how each module impacts the work flow, things really began to click for me. I'd recommend new users create a folder for all their uploads. Once you create and map the correct spreadsheets, static data can be uploaded very quickly. It's easy to do once you see the process.

In hindsight, what would you do different with your ERP implementation?

I would put more emphasis on making sure everyone involved in the implementation process had flexible schedules. As time went by, we learned the importance of setting aside hours from our regular roles to ensure we stayed on schedule.

I also wish I had taken advantage of Global Shop Solutions' Real Time Implementation Portal a little more. They consist of detailed checklists of things to do that can be a little overwhelming when looking at them from the 10,000-foot level. However, they are very strategically organized, and a "must have" at Go Live. I'd also recommend getting the Shop Floor Data Collection stations out on the floor and everyone practicing as soon as the implementation plan is created. The employees that took it seriously during "pre Go Live" have had zero issues.

Onward and Upward with Global Shop Solutions ERP

Now that you've been using the software a while, how has it changed your business?

Since Go Live, we have slowly let go of our Excel spreadsheets. We're not totally paperless, but we have cut way down on the amount we use and all employees see a paperless future. It surprised me a bit to discover how hard it can be to let go of old ways of

working, even when we know they are holding us back. At times, we assumed the software couldn't replace some of the documents we relied on. Turns out we just needed a little additional training to get the outputs we needed and understand some of the advanced features.

Now that your people are comfortable using Global Shop Solutions, what is Sharp Tooling Solutions doing to increase employees' knowledge and skills regarding the software?

We encourage all personnel to review their training documents. Also, every menu item has an extensive list of help that can be very useful.

I personally attend Friday Features on a regular basis. These are live, one-hour online training classes that focus on a specific Global Shop Solutions function. It's like getting free consulting! You can also access the archived Friday Features from previous years. When you want to learn more about how to use the software, there is no shortage of resources to choose from.

> **WE ARE IN A GROWTH TRAJECTORY, AND WITH THE GLOBAL SHOP SOLUTIONS ERP SYSTEM WE REALIZE SIMPLIFIED PROCESS IMPROVEMENTS IN QUOTING, PURCHASING AND ADHERENCE TO QUALITY REQUIREMENTS. ACROSS THE BOARD THOSE IMPROVEMENTS TRANSLATE TO GREATER CUSTOMER SATISFACTION.**

Have you used any of the software's customization features to make certain screens or programs align better with the way you do things?

Yes, we have customized the software. Internally we didn't have the ability to do it ourselves, so we had Global Shop Solutions do a few things for us. For example, all our tooling is "one-off" custom tooling. During implementation, we scheduled a two-day onsite visit with Global Shop Solutions' Continuous Improvement Team. Two employees came to our plant and created special programs for us to simplify and automate some daily tasks.

And here's another thing we really like about Global Shop Solutions; the programs the Continuous Improvement Team created for us – and those they create for other customers – become available in their online Application and Reports Center (ARC) store. Think of the Google Play Store or Apple App Store and all the free apps to download and try. ARC is the place to do that with Global Shop Solutions applications. They're constantly adding new applications to make life easier for their customers.

What are you and others in the company feeling now that you have a reliable ERP system?

We are in a growth trajectory, and with the Global Shop Solutions ERP system we realize simplified process improvements in quoting, purchasing and adherence to quality requirements. Across the board those improvements translate to greater customer satisfaction.

From a personal standpoint, I love my job. I look forward to coming in to work every day and the company as a whole is moving in a very positive direction. Life is good!

Do you have any final recommendations for our readers?

When building your "test" company code for training purposes, try and get as much realistic data as possible into the system. Use part numbers and work order numbers that your employees are used to seeing. Having a nice clean company test code helped our team transition smoothly into the live code at Go Live.

Nicole Meyer is a Team Lead for New Implementations at Global Shop Solutions. She leads a team of Operations and Financial Consultants and Project Managers in the implementation, launch and continued refinement of Global Shop Solutions ERP software for new customers. Meyer earned her degree in international business from the University of St. Thomas in Minnesota and has more than 16 years of software experience.
To learn more about ERP implementation, call 1.800.364.5958 or visit www.globalshopsolutions.com.

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.

THE RISE OF DIGITIZATION DURING A PANDEMIC: MANAGING SAP DURING UNCERTAIN TIMES

*Article by **Yagmur Sahin,***
Sponsored By Protera Technologies

In today's business environment, being different is not enough. Change is constant, and businesses need to respond very quickly to stay on top. The COVID-19 pandemic proves once again that leaders should forge a change-ready business environment—not just to survive but to thrive during unprecedented times.

Protera Technologies is no stranger to change—in fact, helping others adapt to change is their specialty.

Who Is Protera Technologies?

When Patrick Osterhaus decided to create Protera Technologies in 1998—a unique company that would use technology to help SAP users run their businesses more effectively—he combined his knowledge and passion to create a different kind of SAP partner with an intentional change management strategy.

Protera Technologies continues to be a successful player in the global market and provides SAP to cloud migration and applications management services to its customers in their offices in the Americas, Europe, and Asia. They have recently opened additional offices in India and South America to serve their global customer base. Their mission is to help customers achieve their transformation objectives with improved value, increased quality, and reduced risk.

And today, amid the COVID-19 outbreak, their customers rely on Protera, more than ever to keep their businesses running and improving.

True Success Stands Out

In highly competitive markets, differentiation is hard. Protera Technologies continues to stand apart during the outbreak with their unique strategy and business model. With their focus on SAP cloud transformations, strong customer relationships, and subscription business model, combined with their technical team's unmatched skillset, they have proven that they know exactly which actions to take during a crisis.

> **"THE GLOBAL WORKFORCE HAS RECENTLY SHIFTED TO A WORK-FROM-HOME STRATEGY; HOWEVER, IT TAKES MUCH MORE THAN HAVING TEAM MEMBERS WORK FROM HOME TO IMPLEMENT A SOLID VIRTUAL WORKFORCE.**

They were the first company to run Production SAP in the public cloud, and their team leaders have over 20 years of experience optimizing SAP. They know how to design and operate during a crisis and have helped many companies transform quickly and safely.

Protera Technologies has its own unique intelligent migration and management platform called Protera FlexBridge℠ which can virtually eliminate business interruption during migration and create a stable, cost-effective, and continuously optimized cloud platform for running SAP.

The Weakest Link

It's clear that CIOs are facing a great challenge during the COVID-19 outbreak—one that may shift but may last far beyond "the end" of the pandemic. Every day they are facing something new and are looking for support to be able to conduct business as close to "usual" as possible. "The ability to conduct business is only as strong as the weakest link in their IT supply chain," says Binoy James, SVP Operations for Protera Technologies. "Several new customers have also reached out to us for cloud solutions to quick-start their business continuity requirements."

The global workforce has recently shifted to a work-from-home strategy; however, it takes much more than having team members work from home to implement a solid virtual workforce. CIOs continue to react to the challenges of working from home. While some businesses are ready for soft openings, for those who can work remotely, there is not an end date yet in sight.

> **SAP HELPS COMPANIES PLAN, ORGANIZE, AND ASSEMBLE PEOPLE AND MATERIAL IN THE MOST EFFICIENT WAY POSSIBLE TO MEET CUSTOMER DEMANDS. THESE ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS HAVE NOT CHANGED AS THE WORLD HAS SHIFTED TOWARD REMOTE WORKING—AND IT IS NOT LIKELY TO CHANGE AS THINGS BEGIN TO SHIFT BACK EITHER.**

Remote access and the underlying infrastructure and services are needed to ramp up to be able to allow a similar customer experience. Protera Technologies has proactively helped customers scale their connectivity and bandwidth as part of business continuity planning.

SAP helps companies plan, organize, and assemble people and material in the most efficient way possible to meet customer demands. These essential functions have not changed as the world has shifted toward remote working—and it is not likely to change as things begin to shift back either.
Moving to a remote work environment could increase the adoption of running ERP in the cloud as there is an increasing need for:

- Managing more intricate supply chains and extremely dynamic and fluctuating supply constraints
- Predicting and adapting more quickly to new patterns in customer demand
- Managing more complex employee work patterns to optimize what can be done virtually versus what tasks require a physical presence.

COVID-19 and Digital Transformation

While the world is experiencing an unprecedented crisis, CIOs should take advantage of necessary digital transformations to ensure business continuity. Undoubtedly, moving to the cloud environment is one advantage. With COVID-19, organizations now see continuity as a strategic issue—how to fundamentally sustain and transform their businesses through a period of prolonged impact. COVID-19 highlights to the broader business and executive community just how important digital transformation is and will continue to be.

Companies that are ready for this transition have already switched to the cloud, and the trend to adopt cloud for SAP and other business systems is accelerating. For those companies not yet running SAP in the cloud, the migration process may seem complex or risky. In fact, the process can be done quickly, efficiently, and safely with Protera FlexBridge℠. "We have had multiple customers who are in the process of global greenfield SAP S/4 transformation projects that have been impacted due to the travel restrictions," explains Binoy. "Their global teams and their SI partners are now having to meet virtually to try and accomplish

> **WITH COVID-19, ORGANIZATIONS NOW SEE CONTINUITY AS A STRATEGIC ISSUE—HOW TO FUNDAMENTALLY SUSTAIN AND TRANSFORM THEIR BUSINESSES THROUGH A PERIOD OF PROLONGED IMPACT.**

their transformation objectives. Several of them are seriously considering moving from a greenfield approach to using our automated FlexBridge℠ platform to convert their existing ERP and associated SAP systems to S/4 automatically as a viable alternative."

Another concern of companies during the outbreak is the amount of time that they would need to migrate to the cloud. FlexBridge℠ allows customers to quickly model the costs and benefits of transforming their SAP to the cloud using a virtual engagement model that takes days instead of weeks or months. With Protera FlexBridge℠, business interruption can be virtually eliminated during migration, and a stable, cost-effective, and continuously optimized cloud platform for running SAP can be created. And Protera can perform these services 100% remotely with no impact on quality.

Protera's Pandemic Action Plan

Protera considered the customer's needs during the pandemic and formed a roadmap for the outbreak. The team has reviewed and validated their business continuity plans and processes for both customers and internal systems. They have increased connectivity for their customers including access licenses, regional and global connectivity capabilities, and started using public cloud virtual desktop services with customer images to maximize bandwidth allocation and enhance work-from-home capabilities.

Customers can now move a typical SAP transformation project into a Kanban-style work plan and execute in a much more organized and efficient fashion using the many capabilities of Protera FlexBridge℠, which include automation, managed worklists, dashboard-based team strategies and activities, and a variety of additional enablers.

Protera Technologies' other specialty is to rapidly transform its customer's landscape into the cloud. Since they have been doing this safely and securely for years and for hundreds of customer projects, once the customer has made the decision, the strategy and execution are led by Protera until completion.

Predictions

The COVID-19 pandemic will definitely impact the future of the ERP industry. Most likely, on-premise technology will continue to dissolve, and the cloud will continue to grow. Those businesses that have not made investments in digital transformation will likely be displaced at a faster rate.

Most companies are considering optimizing their systems, rather than replacing their investments in ERP (specifically SAP). In many cases, their current SAP systems are sized incorrectly, not providing the service level or agility needed by the business, or not providing the right return on investment.

After the current pandemic, Protera predicts greater reliance on the cloud as the overall operating platform, greater use of analytics (including SAP HANA), and a more hybrid integration of traditional applications (such as SAP) running on the cloud, with cloud-native SaaS applications.

Staying Safe and Healthy

There are several advantages of cloud ERP systems that have helped maintain business operations amid the COVID-19 outbreak, but during these uncertain times, cloud ERP plays another, even more important role in helping ensure the health and safety of employees as well as clients by enabling the transition to remote work.

"We work with many companies providing a wide array of products and services. Many of these products and services, within industries such as healthcare and manufacturing, are crucial to the day-to-day needs of those on the front line working to mitigate the impact of COVID-19," says Patrick Osterhaus. "They rely on their critical cloud SAP systems to be optimized and performing so that the needs of first responders and others can continue to be met. We are proud to support our customers in this effort."

As we strive to go back to "normal" again, the pandemic has helped us to see the reality; we need to continue to invest in cloud transformation. When the economy slowly improves, businesses will reprioritize their investments on cloud ERP and they will continue to support remote working. Meanwhile, they will expect their service providers to be supportive and solution-oriented amidst this crisis. Companies like Protera Technologies will continue to enlighten the challenging road that will lead to normality and they will help businesses migrate to cloud ERP seamlessly and gain visibility into their business processes. Many companies already had this on their roadmap, but situations such as COVID-19 have raised the urgency to get this done quickly so that companies can focus their efforts on strategies and actions.

If you're looking to move your SAP to the cloud, HANA, or S/4HANA, Protera can create a cloud transformation plan quickly and easily. Click here to get started in just 5 minutes with only four questions.

With over 25 years of experience in SAP ecosystem, Binoy James is the Senior Vice President of Operations at Protera Technologies. In his current role, Binoy manages a global team that provides SAP managed and professional services for the over 100 SAP customers for Protera. Binoy was formerly at CenturyLink where he was the Product Owner for the SAP Portfolio, and prior to that was involved in delivery leadership at both CIBER and SAP.

As President and Chief Technology Officer for Protera, Patrick Osterhaus is responsible for driving the company's technology vision for innovative enterprise computing systems delivered to our valued customers. Prior to founding Protera, Patrick worked as a Senior Technical Consultant at SAP America. As a strategic SAP thought leader, Patrick has co-authored executive white papers, industry articles on various SAP topics including Cloud Computing, and is a sought-after presenter in the SAP ecosystem.

About Protera

Protera Technologies, Inc. is a global provider of Total IT Outsourcing Services for organizations that rely on their ERP for Big Data. We provide comprehensive end-to-end IT solutions for our Managed Services, Managed Infrastructure, and SAP HANA & SAP S/4HANA customers.

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