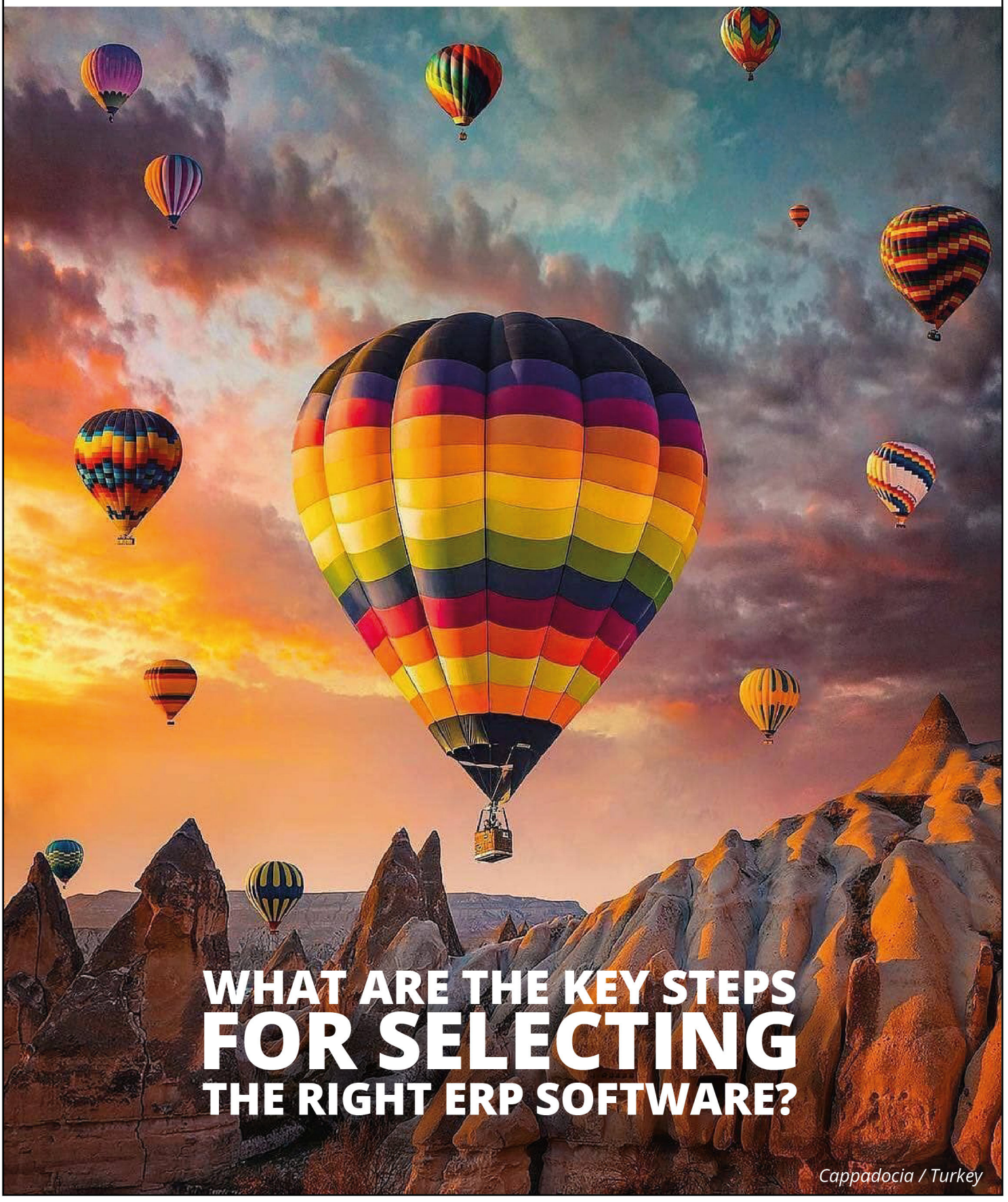
ERP NEWS
MAGAZINE
ISSUE #12 • 10 / 2020



WHAT ARE THE KEY STEPS FOR SELECTING THE RIGHT ERP SOFTWARE?

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Yagmur Sahin

EDITOR'S NOTE

ERP News Magazine is 1 year old!

When we first started this journey, we did not know that a worldwide pandemic would have shaken the whole world in less than a year. At ERP News Magazine, our goal has always been to ensure that businesses and software vendors are aware of the latest advances in the ERP industry. But in this unprecedented crisis environment created by the pandemic, this goal has turned into the responsibility of providing the most up-to-date information that would enable our readers to survive these uncertain times.

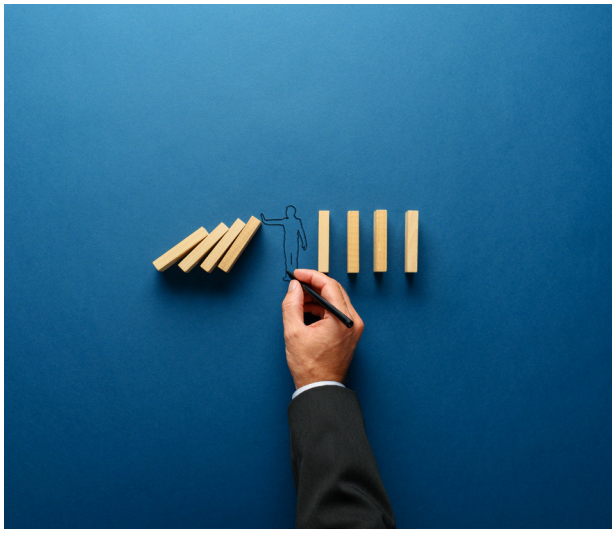
Thanks to your participation, ERP News Magazine has been reshaped and turned into a living community. We can't describe the pride and happiness that it brings to us! This is not just an anniversary we celebrate as a team, but the anniversary of a growing community every day! So happy anniversary!

In this issue, we have dug deeper into the ERP selection process. As we all know, ERP selection is always a very challenging and critical process for businesses. Especially, if it is the first time you are looking for an ERP system, then several obstacles are awaiting you during this thorny and complicated journey. We have compiled several suggestions and articles from industry experts to enlighten your selection process. And as in every issue, the latest news and events are ready for you to explore.

Thank you for being part of our community and hope to see you in our next issue!

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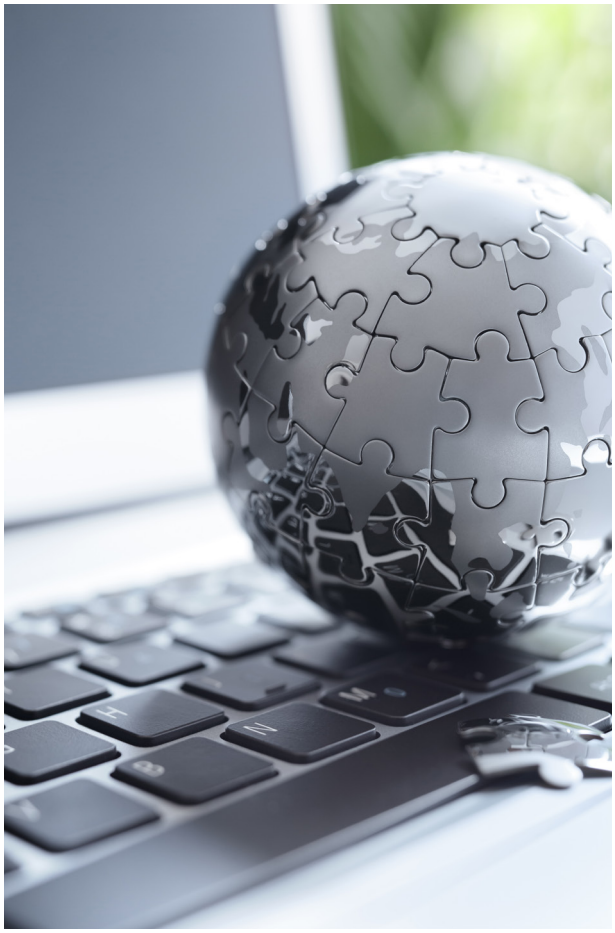
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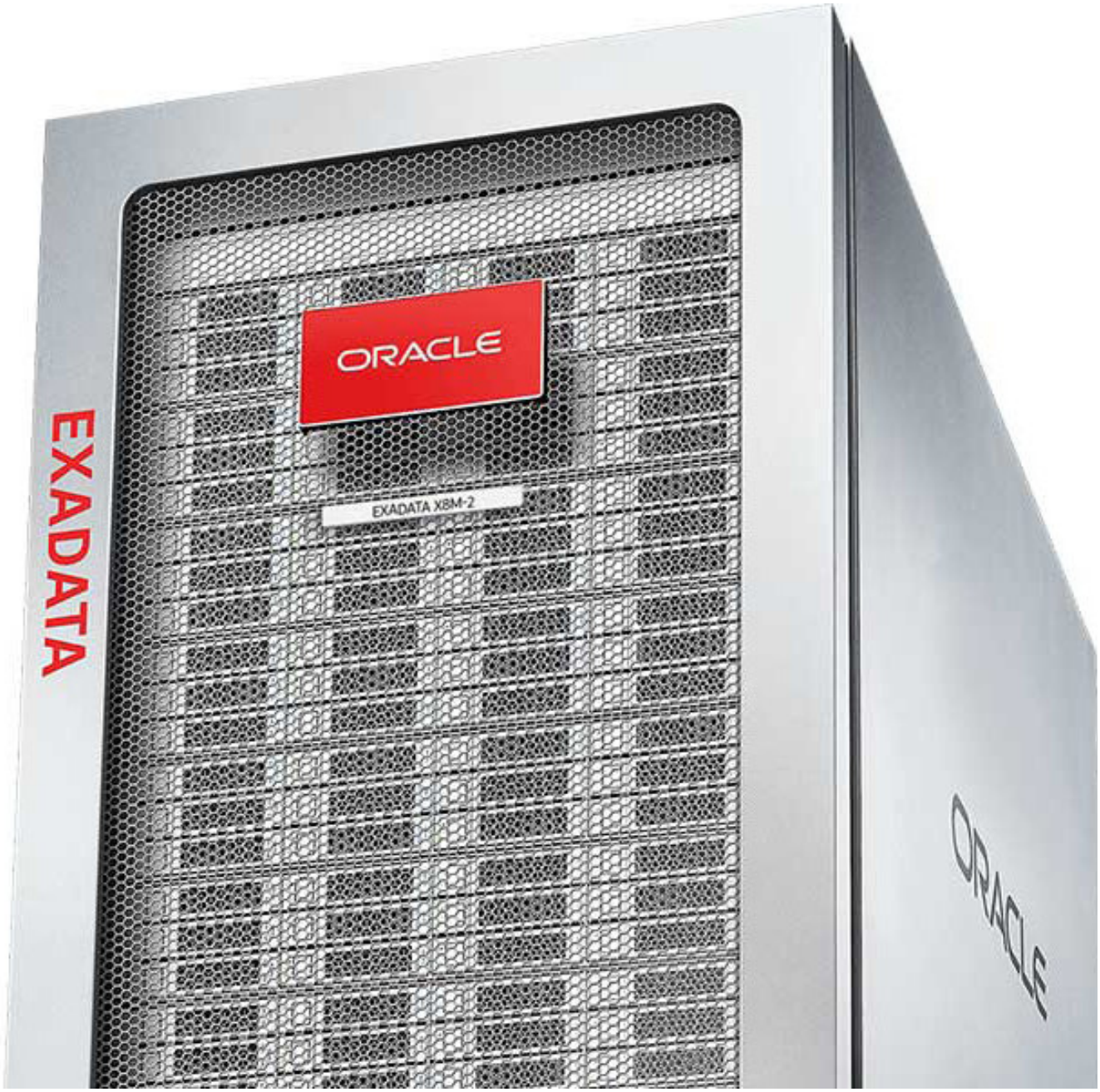
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Aptean, Stevie Hay

Sage Software Solutions Pvt Ltd., Kalyani Chaudhari





ORACLE INTRODUCES EXADATA CLOUD SERVICE X8M

New generation Exadata Database Cloud Service is the fastest, lowest latency, and most scalable in the industry

No database or workload is too large for Exadata Cloud Service X8M

Oracle announced the new generation of Oracle Exadata Cloud Service, now based on the Exadata X8M platform, available this month on Oracle Cloud Infrastructure. Customers can accelerate their most challenging transaction processing and data analytics projects with Exadata X8M in 26 global cloud regions and Dedicated Region Cloud@ Customer. With architectural identicality across cloud and on-premises, Oracle Exadata Cloud Service X8M makes it easy for customers to move even the largest and most demanding databases and workloads seamlessly to the cloud with no changes to applications. Breakthrough performance, scale and elasticity enable Exadata Cloud Service X8M to run applications needing multiple workloads and data types in a single converged Oracle Database. In contrast, AWS users need to perform complex and costly integration of multiple different database services. Start here.

"As an increasing number of organizations shift their important workloads to the cloud, they have found that many cloud databases have performance, availability and scaling limitations," said Juan Loaiza, executive vice president, mission-critical database technologies, Oracle. "With today's announcement, Oracle enables customers to run any business-critical database workload—including the largest and most compute and memory-intensive workloads—with dramatically faster performance, higher scalability and

elasticity, and lower costs than any other cloud provider. The new generation of Oracle's Exadata Cloud Service is based on the proven Exadata platform that is already in use by 86 percent of the Fortune Global 100 to run their most demanding workloads."

Cloud-Automated Extreme Performance and Availability

Oracle Exadata X8M, the new platform for Exadata Cloud Service, features Remote Direct Memory Access (RDMA) from databases to Intel® Optane™ Persistent Memory in smart storage servers, completely bypassing the OS, IO, and network software stacks. This enables 2.5 times higher transaction processing IOs, and 10 times better IO latency than the previous industry-leading Exadata Cloud Service release. Database IOs are 50 times faster than Amazon AWS Relational Database Service (RDS) using all-flash storage. RDMA runs over a new, ultra-fast, 100Gbs RDMA over Converged Ethernet (RoCE) network fabric for the highest analytics throughput.

Exadata Cloud Service X8M also features a new generation of Oracle Real Application Clusters (RAC) that delivers greatly enhanced application transparent database scale-out and high availability for all types of database workloads. In addition, fully-active Oracle Data Guard database replicas offload SQL reads and writes while providing cloud-automated disaster protection within and across regions.

Breakthrough Scale

With Exadata Cloud Service X8M, no database or workload is too large. Oracle Databases deployed on Exadata Cloud Service X8M can scale up to 4,600 CPU Cores, 44 TB DRAM, 96 TB persistent memory, 1.6 PB flash, and 25 PB of database capacity. Exadata Cloud Service X8M supports relational databases that are 20X bigger than possible to run on AWS today with RDS or Aurora—and bests both AWS RDS and Aurora by 25 times in CPU scaling.

Breakthrough Elasticity

Exadata Cloud Service X8M is fully elastic. Customers can start small with a minimum-sized HA configuration with as few as four CPU cores enabled, and expand by adding compute or storage as needed with no downtime. In contrast, AWS lacks true online elasticity as AWS RDS offers no scale-out capabilities; Aurora DB instance scaling "will have an availability impact" according to Amazon; and AWS Redshift offers no read-write elastic scaling. None of these AWS database services offer true online patching and maintenance like Exadata Cloud Service X8M.

Breakthrough Low Cost

The breakthrough performance of Exadata Cloud Service X8M enables customers to support more users, deploy more databases, execute more transactions, and accelerate analytics on less hardware and in less time, saving costs. In addition, customers pay only for what they need. Organizations can scale Database and Storage independently online as needed, and reduce costs with by-the-second pay-per-use.

What Customers are Saying

Burns and McDonnell is a leading US$4B design and construction firm, currently ranked #1 in the power industry. "We chose Exadata Cloud Service so that we could easily and immediately scale up to meet demand spikes without having to buy and deploy additional infrastructure in our data center," said Joe Kor, PMP, department manager, IT Enterprise Applications, Burns and McDonnell. "With Exadata Cloud Service we've been able to reduce costs by 35 percent and seamlessly move databases from on-premises to the cloud with Exadata's architectural identicality. Of course, we can always use more performance to support real-time analytics and deliver superior customer experiences, so we look forward to using Exadata Cloud Service with X8M's orders of magnitude improvements in latency, IOPS, and throughput."

Manappuram Finance Limited is a $2B financial services company based in India. "Manappuram is helping customers transform their dreams into reality. We rely on modern technologies to help us serve customers better, quicker and more efficiently. As we embark on our next growth phase we wanted a secure modern cloud platform," said B.N. Raveendrababu, executive director, Manappuram. "Taking into account all our business objectives, we choose Oracle's Gen 2 Cloud along with Exadata Cloud Service for their enterprise grade features, such as superior security and high performance capabilities. We anticipate 30 to 40 percent in cost savings over the next 5 years and performance improvements in the range of 2 - 3x times than what is available currently."

What Analysts are Saying

"Oracle Exadata Cloud Service X8M combines the high throughput and recoverability capabilities of the Exadata X8M platform with Oracle's second-generation Oracle Cloud Infrastructure to deliver an optimal database cloud experience," said Carl Olofson, research vice president, Data Management Software, IDC. "Faster performance translates into less time spent on the cloud and lower cloud usage costs. Moreover, with architectural consistency across all Exadata deployment models, Oracle customers can move from on-premises to cloud or from cloud to cloud with no application changes. They also can query multiple types of data within the same database using their choice of access models. This capability can eliminate additional, excessive cloud costs and management headaches."

David Floyer, CTO, Wikibon, said, "OLTP systems of record are growing more complex. Analytic systems are growing bigger and answers are needed faster. Data-driven businesses are combining both in real-time. The cloud database technical requirements to meet these challenges include the ability to combine row and column access, integrate SQL and NoSQL databases, and support ultra-low latency and high-bandwidth IO. The Oracle Exadata Cloud Service X8M has been upgraded to provide best-in-class IO latency (~20 µsecs), a hefty data warehouse (25 PB), together with excellent vertical and horizontal scaling. Wikibon assesses this service to be the highest-performance cloud database service available."

Read what analysts have to say about the new Oracle Exadata Cloud Service X8M on Oracle Cloud Infrastructure.

About Oracle

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



ACUMATICA CLOUD ERP LAUNCHES AGGRESSIVE UK EXPANSION

Pinnacle Joins the Acumatica Channel

Acumatica, the world's fastest-growing cloud ERP company, announced a significant increase in the investment and focus of its award-winning business management solution in the UK. Ranked highest in usability and customer satisfaction, Acumatica Cloud ERP is the leading alternative to legacy ERP solutions and Oracle/NetSuite. Now available in a UK datacenter, Acumatica Cloud ERP is prepared to meet the rising demand for its industry-specific products.

"There is strong interest in ERP delivered over the cloud in the UK," said Jon Roskill, CEO, Acumatica, "and the market is very fragmented, with a large variety of legacy ERP vendors. The demand from prospective customers and partners for a cloud-based Acumatica product was quite clear, even overwhelming."

As an ERP provider that is committed to selling solutions though a channel of high-quality and well-trained Value Added Reseller (VAR) partners, Acumatica is pleased to announce the addition of Pinnacle to its partner network. Pinnacle is a proven, successful UK VAR partner with more than 25 years of market experience, over 100 employees, and more than 1,000 customers throughout the UK and Ireland. Pinnacle consultants have the industry knowledge and expertise required to provide customers with the most up to date solutions, ensuring maximum return on investment, regardless of size of business or industry sector.

"We recognized several years ago that Acumatica was developing a flexible and innovative platform, but they were mainly focused on North America," said James Spencer, managing director of Pinnacle. "Since the acquisition by EQT last August, we now see much broader investment and dedication to the UK. We attended the annual Acumatica Summit in Las Vegas in January and were really impressed with the comprehensiveness of the Acumatica solution and their customer-friendly culture. Pinnacle is very proud to be a part of the Acumatica channel in the UK."

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



EPICOR ECM RECOGNIZED AS A LEADER IN THE NUCLEUS RESEARCH CONTENT MANAGEMENT TECHNOLOGY VALUE MATRIX

As the shift to remote work becomes more prominent, Epicor ECM valued as Leader in Nucleus Research matrix highlighting content management vendors

Epicor Software Corporation, a global provider of industry-specific enterprise software to promote business growth, announced it was named by Nucleus Research to the "Leaders" quadrant of its Content Management Technology Value Matrix published in July 2020. The position is based on the evaluation of the Epicor ECM platform, formerly known as DocStar ECM.

According to the report, Epicor ECM customers can gain better control over documents, improve retention, and increase efficiency through the platform. In addition, Epicor ECM is accessible to organizations of any size, making the appeal widespread. A complimentary copy of the full report is available for download from the Epicor website.

Epicor ECM enables customers to automatically capture and route key data, automate workflow and transition to electronic forms versus paper. Masters Gallery Foods, a food manufacturing company, deploys Epicor ECM to help streamline document processes and reduce errors. "I would definitely recommend this software to others," said Shelly Weidig, a software developer at Masters Gallery. "It makes it easy for our employees to access the documents they're looking for—both the retrieval and the searching of documents. It is all very easy to use. And we love DocStar's customer support."

"One of our primary goals at Epicor is to create flexible, scalable solutions that deliver the highest return on investment for our customers," said Epicor President Himanshu Palsule. "That is why the Epicor Team is proud to be named a 'Leader' by Nucleus Research. This recognition is a result of our consistent dedication and innovation we have pushed for in the content management space – and we will continue that focus and drive on behalf of our customers."

For a full copy of the Nucleus Research 2020 Content Management Technology Value Matrix, please visit this link. For more information on Epicor ECM, please visit: https://www.epicor.com/en-us/business-need/enterprise-content-management/docstar-ecm/.

Nucleus disclaimer

Nucleus Research is a global provider of investigative, case-based technology research and advisory services. The company's ROI-focused research approach provides unique insight into the actual results technology solutions deliver, allowing organizations to cut through marketing hype to understand real operational value and select or renew the best technology solution for their environment. For more information, visit NucleusResearch.com.

About Epicor

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.



ONE OF WORLD'S LARGEST PEPSI BOTTLING PLANTS GOES LIVE WITH INFOR WMS IN SAUDI ARABIA

MenaBev successfully deploys Infor supply chain software with SNS

Infor announced that MenaBev, a multinational franchise organization of PepsiCo, has implemented Infor WMS warehouse management solution at its more than 300,000-square-meter bottling facility in Jeddah. Underpinning MenaBev's end-to-end operation, from raw material receipt through production, storage and shipping of finished goods, Infor WMS will increase automation across the organization, optimizing business processes to boost capacity and support continued growth. The project was successfully managed by Infor alliance partner SNS, a leading provider of supply chain consultancy and software implementation.

Learn more about Infor WMS: https://www.infor.com/products/supply-chain-management/warehouse-management

With eight production lines and thousands of transactions daily between different systems, MenaBev's facility is the largest operation of its kind in the world. The automation at this MenaBev facility is state of the art: LGVs (laser-guided vehicles) manage raw materials put-away and replenishment to the lines, while a high bay AS/RS (automated storage and retrieval system) with capacity for more than 36,000 pallets receives finished goods from the production lines via elevators and monorails; an automatic truck-loading platform delivers the goods to outbound vehicles.

MenaBev solicited the expertise of SNS consultants in WMS software to complement its offering for this green field project, drawing on the SNS team's vast experience in managing such large, complex implementations to ensure the right solution to fulfil MenaBev's specific needs.

The warehouse management solution integrates with seven other systems, including enterprise resource planning (ERP – including Infor LN), manufacturing execution system (MES), laboratory information management system (LIMS) and original equipment manufacturer (OEM) systems, providing real-time integration and featuring monitoring screens to identify any integration issues. The full production module enables messages to be sent to LGVs to feed lines and notifies the high bay warehouse about finished goods pallets, and a customized yard management solution manages dock assignments and access to the facility.

"We can receive raw materials using supplier multi-field barcodes, trigger replenishment to production based on live consumption and load pallets onto trucks without a single paper printed," comments Tamer Salem, MES and automation manager at MenaBev. "Thanks to the new system, we have visibility over all our warehouse processes. We've worked very closely with the SNS team to ensure we implement the best solution for our extensive operation. We pride ourselves on our commitment to using state-of-the-art technology in manufacturing and sales & distribution, and this implementation certainly fits that brief. We look forward to this next chapter in our business, readily embracing the benefits this new way of working will bring."

"Facilities of this scale rely on the very best digital capabilities to optimize operations and maximize performance," comments Wael Mabsout, senior manager at SNS. "Infor WMS will integrate with all of MenaBev's key systems to facilitate end-to-end visibility, which is crucial in generating real-time insights, and enhancing decision-making to support future growth. Our team's experience in setting up logistics processes of this scale was invaluable in making the right recommendations, especially when it came to integrate with OEMs."

About MenaBev

MenaBev is one of the leading franchise bottlers for PepsiCo and a leader in the liquid refreshment beverages (LRB) market. MenaBev has repeatedly topped the charts in all business indices across the region. It has a mega-production facility with a capacity to produce 160 million cases. The mega-plant is one of the largest Pepsi bottling plants in the world covering an area of more than 300,000 square meters. It would take only two hours of production to create a finished-goods pallet stack one kilometer high. The total beverage produced per eight-hours shift is sufficient to fill an Olympic swimming pool, which has the capacity of 2.5 million liters.

About SNS

SNS is a leading provider of supply chain services whose customers and partners are spread geographically across the globe. With offices in Dubai, Singapore, Melbourne, Johannesburg, Riyadh and Beirut, SNS offers a wide range of services and is recognized in the market by its proven track record of successful projects.SNS services range from consulting and training to solution development, implementation, systems integration and support. These services are delivered by an expert team of operational and technical consultants, highly knowledgeable in the supply chain and logistics domain. For additional information, visit the SNS website at www.sns-emea.com

About Infor

Infor is a global leader in business cloud software specialized by industry. With 17,000 employees and over 67,000 customers in more than 175 countries, Infor software is designed for progress. To learn more, please [visit http://www.infor.com/](http://www.infor.com/).





WHAT ARE THE KEY STEPS FOR SELECTING THE RIGHT ERP SOFTWARE?

Article by ***Zoran Radumilo****,*
President, Global High Potential Markets and COO, Western, Southern Europe & LATAM at IFS

Working on a daily basis with a wide spectrum of companies, I believe there are a set of fundamental considerations for ERP selection that hold true regardless of company size—large enterprises with thousands of employees across the globe will face more complexities compared to smaller organizations—industry, and business model.

The first step is to conduct a holistic process review across the business. This analysis will help you determine urgent pain points, bottle necks hampering productivity, and general areas of improvement. Depending on the resources at your disposal, my recommendation is to involve an external consultant to help you arrive at a truly subjective and unbiased conclusion.

Only when you understand the problem can you start scanning the market for a solution. However you choose to approach this phase—whether a selection consultant is brought in or whether you rely on in-house expertise—I would strongly advise the following criteria are met:

> **"WHEN THE SELECTION HAS BEEN MADE, IT IS CRUCIAL TO WORK WITH YOUR SOFTWARE PROVIDER AND IMPLEMENTATION PARTNER, IF ONE HAS BEEN SELECTED, TO ESTABLISH A REALISTIC IMPLEMENTATION PROJECT THAT ALL PARTIES CAN COMMIT TO.**

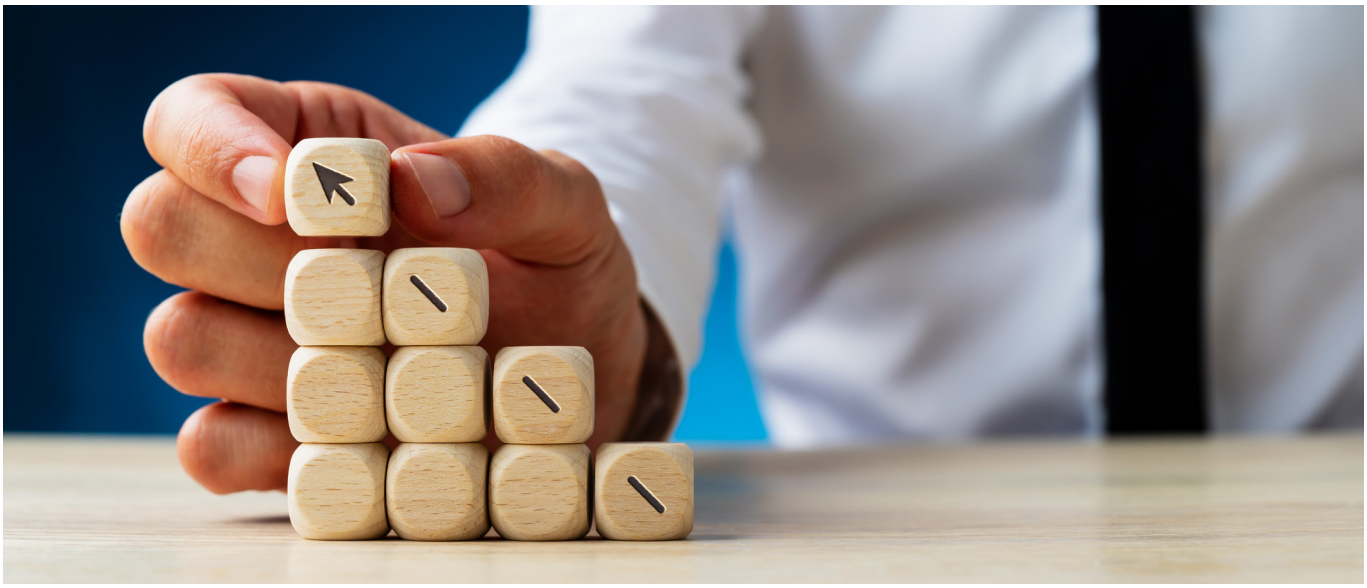
• A software vendor that is willing and able to engage with the different stakeholders in your business to assess the potential value that can be derived from the investment along with the total cost of ownership. Working towards a shared goal will dramatically increase the likelihood of achieving success. I recommend asking questions about the projected time-to-value of any ERP investment.

• The software itself should be evaluated to ensure an ideal technical fit, delivered in a solution that is easy to use. Key questions to pose are: How quickly can the software be deployed? How easily can the software be configured to support my unique needs, now and in the future? Is the solution scalable to accommodate future growth? How well suited is the solution to handle the national and/or international laws and restrictions that regulate my industry? How easily does the solution integrate with third-party, best-of-breed systems?

• The software vendor should be able to produce multiple reference customers that are willing to help you validate the claims in the steps above. These reference customers should ideally be active in your industry and therefore be able to give you an earnest assessment of the solution's industry fit.

When the selection has been made, it is crucial to work with your software provider and implementation partner, if one has been selected, to establish a realistic implementation project that all parties can commit to.

Ultimately, it will be transparency and frank communication that will determine the outcome of your ERP project. Just like in any complex transformation project, there will likely be compromises and unexpected developments to deal with. These eventualities will be much easier to handle if you are working towards a shared vision of success with a vendor that you trust.





Zoran joined IFS in January 2020 as President of Global High- Potential Markets to expand the company's success in Latin America and EMEA South. A passionate mentor, he is Ing, MSc & MBA graduated from ETF University of Zagreb in Croatia, the CEFRIEL - Polytechnic University of Milan and SDA Bocconi in Italy as well as Wharton University in the USA. Currently, a HenkelX global mentor, visiting professor of digital transformation strategies and Internet of Things (IoT) at the Polytechnic University of Milan, Zoran also serves as an advisory board member to CIOnet and board advisor to startups. Previously Managing Director at Workday, Zoran also worked as General Manager, SAP Leonardo for EMEA - responsible for launching the strategic corporate business unit. He held other roles at the Company including General Manager Industries, Corporate Vice President EMEA & MEE and Head of Innovation Sales. Zoran also draws on more than 14 years' experience in Cisco in various senior leadership roles, most recently as Managing Director, Emerging Markets Region. Born in Croatia, he lives in Milan, Italy and is fluent in Croatian, English, Italian, Serbian and Slovenian. A ski instructor and former volleyball player for the Yugoslavian national junior team, when not at work he enjoys spending time with his wife and two sons and is a keen mountaineer.

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
Follow us on Twitter: @ifs
Visit the IFS Blog on technology, innovation and creativity: blog.ifs.com



Enginatics
simple ERP reporting

SELECTING OR REPLACING YOUR ERP SOFTWARE

*Article by **Andy Haack**,*
Managing Director, Enginatics

When selecting or replacing an ERP system you need to plan in detail or you could struggle with endless change requests and spiralling support costs.

A properly planned ERP project mitigates risks and dramatically increases the chances of success.

Choosing the right ERP requires a full analysis of business requirements and processes. You will need a team responsible for gathering requirements and preparing tender documentation.

For process mapping and requirements gathering it is important to have a systematic approach with experienced resources that are fully versed with the company's current and future directions.

Five keys steps:

1. Establish exactly why you need a new ERP system

2. Define clear goals and research best processes using process frameworks

3. Select the software and integrator, utilizing ERP comparison sites like erpfocus.com

4. Implement and go live, monitoring outcomes against goals

5. Factor in training, on - going education and improvement

> **CHOOSING THE RIGHT ERP REQUIRES A FULL ANALYSIS OF BUSINESS REQUIREMENTS AND PROCESSES. YOU WILL NEED A TEAM RESPONSIBLE FOR GATHERING REQUIREMENTS AND PREPARING TENDER DOCUMENTATION.**

Why do you need a new ERP? - There are often multiple reasons; perhaps the current system is no longer supported and it is now becoming a challenge to maintain a competitive edge. An older ERP is difficult and expensive to manage and is heavily reliant on IT to keep transactions flowing. In addition, licence costs will increase as the system become trapped on older versions making it important to assess the costs of maintenance versus a new system. Finally, an old ERP may struggle to meet evolving compliance needs or it simply won't integrate with the latest software systems.

High level assessment

• Map out processes that your new ERP needs to support. Use a process framework such as APQC to compare with industry best practices.

• Identify key areas where your current ERP is falling short, e.g. CRM or Supply Planning

• Forecast your existing growth and the functionality you'll need to support this.

• Prioritise functionality and ensure that these functions will be future proof.

Should I choose cloud or on-premise ERP? - There has been a major shift in interest towards the cloud model from those selecting an on-premise ERP. Whilst cloud is new and exciting, especially in the ERP space, don't overfocus on it. If it meets your requirements, great. If not, there are plenty of excellent on - premise ERPs that will.
Cloud offers lower upfront costs since computing resources are typically leased monthly, but as the software is off premise it can be more challenging/costly to make changes, so you need to be sure that your processes are optimised.

Selecting your Vendor

Shortlist potential solution integrators - This is one of the biggest steps during the ERP selection process. There are numerous ERP integrators so making a shortlist should be easy, especially as you will be seeking references from comparable business types. ERP software comparison engines are available that will help you produce a shortlist of potential systems from the mainstream ERP suppliers. They're also helpful for researching what your competitors are using!

Demonstration of understanding - Once decided on your final three ntegrators, invite them to demonstrate their products. Use a script to control the direction of the demo. Invite representatives from all key business streams since they have to assess the usability of the solution. Mark each area against a scoring metric to ensure that any gaps are weighted accordingly.

Project planning - Be realistic in your project planning to avoid milestones that are simply not achievable. For example, data conversion often takes longer than expected due to legacy data complexities.

Go-Live and ongoing training – Basic user training is usually provided just prior to user acceptance testing (UAT). In addition to the solution integrators' personnel, consider hiring specialist software consultants to coach your internal teams and to provide training throughout all of the project phases rather than waiting for UAT. Once your new ERP is live, do not make the mistake of thinking you are finished, it is essential that training and operational feedback is ongoing until stability and ROI goals are met.





Andy is an E-Business Suite specialist with two decades experience working on EBS implementation projects across various industries. During his consulting career, he covered various functional and technical roles and soon discovered his passion for lean and efficient technical designs. As a specialist for performance tuning and database optimization, a big part of Andy's job included writing SQLs for custom data extracts from the Oracle EBS. The lack of efficient and flexible reporting solutions inspired him to found Enginatics and to build Blitz Report™, the world's fastest reporting for Oracle E-Business Suite. Andy now works as Managing Director of Enginatics and helps EBS clients to achieve maximum performance from their systems.

About Enginatics

Enginatics was formed in 2010 and has grown to become a leading global technology company specializing in reporting and performance tuning for Oracle E-Business Suite (EBS). Our team of highly experienced Oracle experts has created the world's fastest EBS reporting solution, Blitz Report™, which is in use around the world across a wide range of industry sectors. Blitz Report™ produces operational reports directly into Excel, and there is an extensive on-line library of SQL scripts for customers to adopt and adapt, some of which are designed specifically to enable rapid performance audit and tuning. Company founder and Managing Director Andy Haack has worked in the Oracle community for over 20 years, gaining extensive experience with EBS. He created Enginatics to provide advanced operational reporting, making it faster and easier to access the data that supports decision-making.



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SELECTING CLOUD ERP SOFTWARE? TAKE A NEW PERSPECTIVE IF YOU WANT TO BE SUCCESSFUL

Article by ***Tim Oberschlake,***
Vice President of Consulting Services, Avaap

Selecting the right ERP system is one of the most important decisions business leaders may make but getting it right can be daunting. If you have selected an ERP in the past, you may recall the process: define the pain points, complete a future state analysis, document a detailed list of functional/technical requirements, and develop a list of potential solutions for consideration. While some of the basics remain unchanged, in the world of cloud ERP, the selection processes of the past will not deliver the best results for the future.

Innovation has introduced an array of technology solutions, and not every platform will meet the needs of all organizations. Some systems are strong on financials but less mature on human capital management (HCM) and supply chain. Others have excellent HCM functionality but lack in finance or supply chain. Some are industry-specific with the same essential tools for accounting, finance, and HR management but with built-in enhancements and modules specific to the business vertical.

Understanding the greater corporate strategy, how to compare solutions in the cloud world, what is to change operationally from a people and process perspective to drive business transformation, and how to strategize governance are critical in achieving success. There are plenty of options available, so how do you drive a better process and result?

Know what you're trying to accomplish.

The selection processes of the past won't deliver the results needed for the future if the focus is solely on building what

you have today with a different set of tools or technology. Understanding what your stakeholders need to do is important, so everyone is aligned with what they want to get out of the system. You need to avoid documenting how things get done because that will be dependent upon the solution that is selected. The conversation then needs to move beyond what the software needs to do to why you are making an investment. Is it to improve internal efficiencies, achieve synergistic savings following a merger or acquisition, the lower total cost of ownership (TCO), or support business expansion in new markets? Or perhaps all the above? Knowing what your business goals are will help in defining the system that is right for your organization.

> **SELECTING THE RIGHT IMPLEMENTATION PARTNER IS A VITAL PART OF SELECTING THE RIGHT PLATFORM AND PREPARING YOUR ORGANIZATION FOR CHANGE.**

Be willing to embrace the opportunities for business transformation.

Cloud brings best practice business processes that help your organization keep pace with innovation. Adopting processes that have already been implemented at hundreds of other organizations will allow you to focus on strategic business activities that will help drive the things that differentiate your organization. How you process a journal entry or pay your employees does not differentiate you. Improving productivity, collaboration, and teamwork across the organization may allow you to attract and keep the best talent which is strategic. Cloud can scale business processes when needed and offers the flexibility to implement what you need now and other solutions in the future with the same software. A well-planned iterative approach to implementation and emphasis on change management can substantially increase user adoption and productivity while easing the journey to the cloud.

Think about other systems that you have in place.

As part of the evaluation process, look at processes and systems that are part of your technology footprint and how they will integrate with the new solution. You may find that processes can be handled within the new system, decreasing the number of systems you need to support while improving overall system efficiency and reporting capabilities. If the new cloud ERP system can meet 80 percent or more of what needs to be done, and the gaps are processes not used frequently or by a smaller group, consideration needs to be given to the greater impact a consolidation solution would deliver to the organization.

Be deliberate about bringing people together from various departments.

An ERP solution touches nearly every department in the organization. So, it is important that those involved in selecting a new platform align with the organization's strategic vision as well as consult with those who will be impacted by a selection from end-users to senior managers. Unlike legacy ERP systems, the selection and implementation of cloud ERP systems are typically driven by the functional areas of the organization. These systems are typically pre-built with best practice business processes that can be leveraged in design sessions to show functional users the system and ask "why not" in lieu of developing long lists of documentation and going into a back room for six to nine months before the core users see any results. This shift from technical to functional leadership heightens the need to ensure that functional subject matters experts with appropriate experience and authority to make implementation-related decisions are essential to project team members during a selection and subsequent implementation. They can also serve as the conduit between the department and project team, ensuring their business unit's needs are well-represented in the process.

Get familiar with deployment options.

Cloud delivers faster, more affordable implementations and simpler upgrades, and there are options available to you. Leveraging vendor-provided best practices or predetermined configuration choices can support a faster deployment at a lower cost but it also requires a culture that embraces change and the ability to absorb new processes quickly. In contrast, all major cloud ERP systems are highly configurable. More time can be spent during implementation in areas where strategic differentiation makes sense. Spending time in the selection process determining the right approach for your organization will be dividends long term. Cloud ERP vendors have also taken different approaches to build their systems – multi-tenant, isolated-tenant, and multi-instance. These differences will impact how releases are managed postproduction and systems are implemented. Understanding these differences will allow business cases that justify your selections to be much more accurate and comprehensive.

Plan to address the technical and the people's sides of change.

The journey to the cloud brings significant change to how people inside the organization consume and operate technology. Transparency in decision-making and communication has a significant impact on the implementation through ongoing operations. It is important to recognize that the way work gets done will change and that team members need support in learning new processes. Change management and training are the cornerstones for successful transformation. This can be an area of differentiation during a Cloud ERP selection process. The available core team and end-user training options, pre-built job aides or inline help, and the application of artificial intelligence vary from vendor to vendor. An analysis of each vendor's training and adoption support options in the selection process may help clarity a decision to implement a new ERP and how it is expected to deliver improvements.

> **UNLIKE LEGACY ERP SYSTEMS, THE SELECTION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF CLOUD ERP SYSTEMS ARE TYPICALLY DRIVEN BY THE FUNCTIONAL AREAS OF THE ORGANIZATION.**

Selecting the right implementation partner is a vital part of selecting the right platform and preparing your organization for change. An organization that has done cloud implementations understands the nuances of how to select and implement the market-leading ERPs can create a process that helps evaluate the best vendor for your transformation initiative and uncover the benefits of the system for your organization during the selection process.



Tim Oberschlake is a visionary and results-oriented leader with 30+ years of experience in multiple unit management as a military officer, manager, director, vice president, and CIO. Tim opened Avaap's Cleveland office in 2015, has played a key role in building Avaap's Workday and Oracle Cloud consulting practices, and updated Avaap's assessment services approach and collateral for Cloud ERP solutions.

Tim excels at leading organizations through strategic change, building peak performing teams, process improvement, solving complex business issues, communicating complex technology concepts, managing crises, and applying technology to improve business efficiency. He provides expert consultation on all aspects of IT business system analysis, strategic planning, solution design, innovation, leadership, collaboration, and fiscal planning. Tim brings 13 years of experience as a CIO as well as experience with numerous large-scale program/project implementations to include large business intelligence programs, multiple cloud and on-premise ERP systems, a full suite clinical information system, and many more. Tim has controlled very large operating budgets and capital budgets over $50 million.

An active community leader, Tim served on the board of directors for the Northeast Ohio Chapter of PMI for many years and currently leads the Executive Council for the chapter. He holds a B.S. degree in Electrical/Computer Engineering from the United States Military Academy at West Point and a Master's degree in Leadership from Walsh University. Tim also holds multiple industry certifications, including Workday Project Manager, Project Management Professional (PMP), Program Management Professional (PgMP), and Change Management Practitioner.

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.



WHAT ARE THE KEY STEPS FOR SELECTING THE RIGHT ERP SOFTWARE?

The key steps to selecting the right software are starting with the end in mind, bringing the right people together to align stakeholders and others in the organization on what they want to get out of the system, embracing business transformation opportunities, understanding the processes and systems that are part of your technology footprint, familiarizing yourself with your cloud ERP deployment options, and planning to address the technical and people side of change. Selecting the right software is a complex process. An experienced consulting partner will have in-depth knowledge of software options that will help the organization achieve its goals, experience in deploying each of these software options and understand the optimization opportunities and best practices that are essential for success.

Tim Oberschlake,
Vice President of Consulting Services, Avaap

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6 STEPS FOR A SMOOTH CLOUD ERP SELECTION

Article by ***Lucy Thorpe,***
Head of Content, InCloud Solutions

Many of us have been forced to change the way we work due to COVID 19 and huge numbers are choosing to keep it that way - working remotely from wherever they happen to be, even while some return to the office. This has required businesses to think differently and has resulted in many digital transformation plans being accelerated. At the very least it means all staff must now have access to cloud technology as without it remote workers will struggle to access shared databases and collaborate on tasks.
So, with this in mind, businesses may need to change the way they approach the task of selecting ERP software. For our money, this makes the cloud a no-brainer – even more so if you are in the small to medium-sized business bracket. For large complex enterprises there will always be people who favour on-premise solutions - in which case there are products out there for you – but let us proceed on the basis that you are looking at cloud for now.

Picking the Right ERP Cloud Solution

1. Scope

Ask yourself what you need your ERP software to do? A clear understanding and breakdown of your company's needs and existing processes will give you a good start. Out of the box cloud, ERP software is designed to run your day-to-day business processes based on best practices so you may have to adjust what you do now to fit the best practice approach.

2. Customisation

Are you happy to fit your standard business processes to this model or will bespoke changes need to be made? Talk to your potential software providers and find out how long it would take and what the costs are as it can really bump up budgets and wipe out the gains of going out of the box in the first place. At In Cloud Solutions we think this is a moment for honesty with customers who reflexively want to make the solution bespoke without realising the real benefits of making changes now – with the prospect of greater efficiencies in the future.

> **"ASK YOURSELF WHAT YOU NEED YOUR ERP SOFTWARE TO DO? A CLEAR UNDERSTANDING AND BREAKDOWN OF YOUR COMPANY'S NEEDS AND EXISTING PROCESSES WILL GIVE YOU A GOOD START.**

3. Control

How much/little control are you comfortable with when it comes to your ERP? A cloud-based system will not live on your own servers and your IT people won't need to get access to it. Ask your partner/vendor about any automatic updates, how often they happen, and how much support you will get with learning about new functionality.

4. Features

Out of the box, ERP comes with a range of standard modules like financials, projects, CRM, and supply chain management. Some basic ERP has the option of opening up the financials module only to start off with before expanding as time goes on.
In addition to all the basic modules, you will want to investigate extras like analytics which either come built-in or can be bought as an extra. Then there are other features like the hugely popular automatic invoice recognition function which learns as it goes using artificial intelligence. The only warning here is that it is wise to select on the basis of basic functionality first – rather than shiny "toys". Get the basics right and don't get distracted by bells and whistles.

5. Pick the Right Implementation Partner

Your implementation partners can make or break your ERP project. Here are some questions to ask when deciding who to work with;

Does your implementation partner:
Have experience in your industry?
Understand your end goals?
Have values that correspond with those of your company?
Have expertise with your chosen cloud EPR software?
Meet your needs regarding service delivery? Your partners don't only help with the system implementation but can also help you get the most from it afterward.
Industry experience, skills, and previous case studies all need to be taken into account to ensure that your implementation partner is the best choice for your company.

6. A name you can trust?

When it comes to software selection you will want to know about the company that has designed and created it. How big are they? Are they new or well established? What is their reputation? Don't get swayed by prejudice and rumour. It is worth remembering that cloud software for smaller companies is still relatively new and a given vendor's reputation in that sector may not yet be well established. If you associate some well-known names with huge projects like SAP or Oracle it may surprise you to know that they now make very good products for small and mid-sized businesses. By the same token, the well-known names in small business solutions are setting their sights on bigger companies and have a growing portfolio of more complex offerings – it really is a busy market out there!

> **"YOUR IMPLEMENTATION PARTNERS CAN MAKE OR BREAK YOUR ERP PROJECT.**

Still confused?

Make sure your internal management team gets involved in meeting the potential candidates. At the end of the day, it is the implementation team that will help you to make your project a success. Go with the team you like – in our experience it really is the key. You need a team that you can trust to give you the best advice. The actual software is not going to differ that much between brands but a team that delivers will make all the difference.

Time to be bold

Now is not the time to wait it out, as cloud solutions are conferring advantages on your competitors now. This is an opportunity to be bold and pull ahead while others delay. Digital change is not going away but many businesses sadly will not survive the continuing uncertainty. Which one do you want to be?



Lucy Thorpe is the chief content creator for In Cloud Solutions – a Platinum SAP partner as part of the United VARs network offering expertise in SAP Business ByDesign.

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.



WHAT ARE THE KEY STEPS FOR SELECTING THE RIGHT ERP SOFTWARE?

Top 5 steps for selecting the right ERP software

- Be bold and make up your mind to do it.
- Take the first step and keep going.
- Do your research, read everything, talk to previous customers.
- Find partners you can trust.
- Get the right post-implementation support.

Lucy Thorpe,
Head of Content, InCloud Solutions

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THE ADAPTIVE ERP IMPERATIVE FOR GHSP

*Article By **Terry Onica**,*
Director of Automotive, QAD

In today's manufacturing environment, the need for digital transformation is paramount. It is vital to the viability of today's businesses, serving as a blueprint for growth and ability to stay ahead of the competition, implement advanced technologies, identify and capitalize on strategic market opportunities, and message and communicate with key stakeholders in the best (and worst) of times.

The Many Hats of Adaptive ERP

At the heart of digital transformation lies adaptive enterprise resource planning (ERP). ERP is foundational, representing the first and most important step in the digital transformation process. To take it one step further, using adaptive ERP, manufacturers can rely on data to drive their product development, identify industry trends and enhance their operational efficiency. In addition to providing basic platform functions, such as data entry and reporting, an adaptive ERP system supports the strategic direction of the company by allowing it to respond quickly to change in the business environment. With the pace at which the world is progressing, speed is now one of the most important business core competencies. It's the job of the ERP solution to be agile enough to align with the business, to enable new technologies and improve the company's chances of success. An adaptive ERP must:

- Simplify the adoption of advanced technologies
- Enable the company to deploy rapidly and allow for faster upgrades
- Have real-time data visibility to enhance operational efficiency
- Enable companies to quickly adopt and implement industry best practices
- Allow for global scaling and the future growth of the business

A few things to consider for creating an agile and adaptive ERP system to pave your digital transformation journey:

Choosing the Right Partner

Long gone are the days when companies suffer through lengthy implementation projects with monolithic software suites that come with high project costs, business disruption and IT frustration. More and more, CIOs want their ERP solution deployed rapidly to mitigate costs and boost time

to benefit. Manufacturers now realize how vital implementation speed is in support of their ability to minimize costs and risk to the business.

For GHSP, a global supplier in the automotive, high-end appliance and innovative technology industries, selecting an ERP partner with a proven ability to rapidly deploy a global adaptive ERP implementation was critical. The ability to discover, align, and deliver complete solutions in a manner maximizes value for customers is a part of GHSP's heritage. The company started out as a stamped metal components company early in the 20th Century when stamped metal was the best way to build things. It then moved to precision injection molding when the cost and design advantages of composites began to shine. GHSP adopted systems thinking because it allowed them to solve more problems and create more value for its customers. To this day, it continues to lead integrating mechanical, electronic and software elements into solutions that meet 21st Century demands for products that anticipate the needs of the people who use them.

> "FOR MANUFACTURERS, VISIBILITY INTO THE BUSINESS IS NO LONGER A NICE TO HAVE, BUT A NECESSITY.

As an innovative company with the need to be nimble and move quickly, GHSP executed against an ambitious 18-month timeline for its adaptive ERP global deployment. Selecting a partner whose company's values, strategic and operational mindset aligned with theirs was key to the program's success. The collaboration enabled GHSP's employees to participate in the integration efforts and get comfortable utilizing adaptive ERP on a day-to-day basis, resulting in modernized processes and IT capabilities that were heralded across the business units, corporation and even up to the board level.

Upgrading to a More Adaptive Enterprise

For manufacturers, visibility into the business is no longer a nice to have, but a necessity. Rapid access to business data and analysis enhance business efficiency, deliver operational performance improvements and ensure industry regulatory requirement compliance. Making the right decisions at the right time based on the right data and analysis is achievable. With greater access to real-time production, financial, supply chain and other data, manufacturers



and their trading partners are in a better position to deliver innovative products, drive critical manufacturing processes and provide a positive customer experience.

GHSP updated its nearly 20-year-old ERP system rapidly by aligning processes and creating efficiencies across its business to help drive global innovation, product design, development and manufacturing. A few key elements instrumental to the initiative's success included:

- a successful project design phase relying upon key decision documents
- engaging key SME's in process/data decisions
- setting pragmatic timelines and a particular focus on third-party involvements
- team management and routine check-ins
- focusing on the testing of data and processes and ensuring finish line objective was in sight

Throughout the entire scope of the upgrade, there were no business, EDI, customer or supplier disruptions resulting in zero missed shipments.

By developing an adaptive ERP, GHSP can now view its manufacturing capacity globally as opposed to at a localized regional level. Automating accounts payable systems increased productivity and enhanced reporting. With its implementation of QAD workbenches, GHSP's material planners have seen a reduction in about 5% of their daily work in efficiency gains. With adaptive ERP, GHSP enhanced its EDI capabilities to its supplier base resulting in a savings of about two hours per day for a material planner. GHSP was also able to benefit from visibility into its inventory and supplier environments during the current pandemic business environment which is absolutely crucial in a successful restart.

For companies like GHSP, information technology has to be adaptive. Without the ability and agility, companies can be hamstrung when attempting to enter markets, take on different process models and embrace the industry of tomorrow.



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.



As Director of Automotive at QAD, Terry is responsible for global marketing activities which includes strategy and positioning, product and offering, people and knowledge, and field and sales marketing support for the automotive vertical. Terry works in close concert with customers to drive best practices and earn preferred supplier status. She also is an industry leader in the development and global adoption of supply chain industry standards and best practices. Prior to joining QAD, Terry worked at GM, Ford, and Johnson Controls. She has been immersed in the automotive supply chain and technology space throughout her entire career. Currently, Terry is an active member of the Automotive Industry Action Group (AIAG) Supply Chain Steering Committee. Terry is one of the authors of the Global Materials Management Operations Guideline/Logistics Evaluation (MMOG/LE) which is used by thousands of automotive suppliers globally. She has been awarded several times by AIAG and Odette for driving the development of global supply chain standards in the areas of assessments, key performance indicators, supplier agreements, and EDI. Additionally, she has been named a Pro to Know by Supply & Demand Chain Executive magazine on multiple occasions. The Pro to Know award is given to the manufacturing industry's leading innovators who are working to advance supply chain performance and related technology. In 2018, Terry was a recipient of Crain's Detroit Women in Technology and the Stevie Bronze Award for Women in Technology. Terry is a mentor at Wayne State University for Supply Chain students to help students who are first-generation graduates in their families. Onica has a Bachelor of Science degree in Computer Information Systems from Lawrence Technological University.



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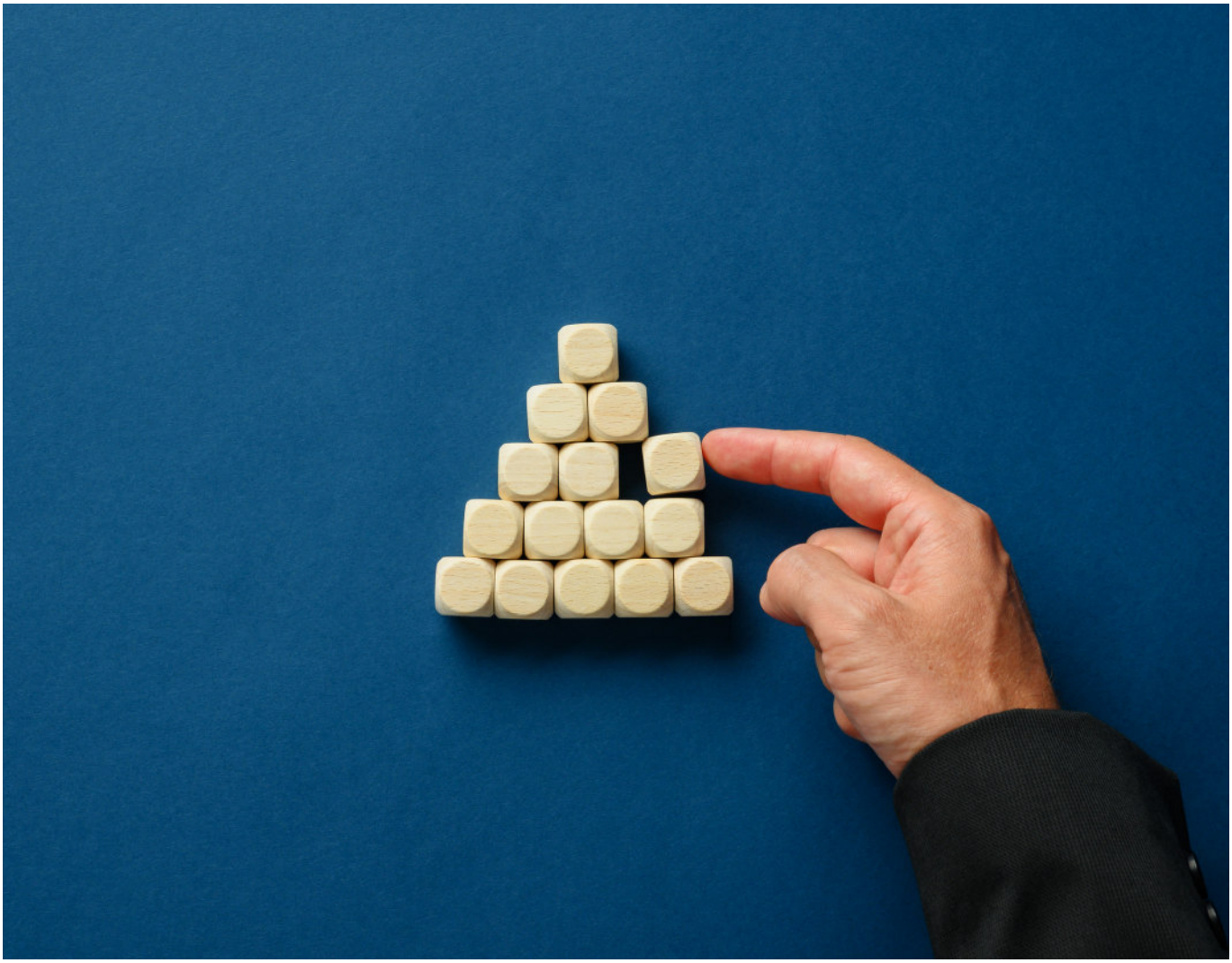
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WHAT ARE THE KEY STEPS FOR SELECTING THE RIGHT ERP SOFTWARE?

Article By ***Steven Otwell,***
Director of Payments, Kyriba

Selecting the right ERP software is a critical and daunting task for any business leader who takes on the responsibility to enable greater access to resources and information from which the company is sustained and thrives. Paramount to this equation is secure and scalable global bank connectivity, as connectivity is the lifeline where all liquidity flows. An ERP that is architected with optimized connectivity across finance, supply chain, HR, sales and key business functions enables a company greater clarity around key decisions that impact growth.

While there are many criteria to consider, the global pandemic has accelerated the need for ERP solutions which provide transparency and financial controls over liquidity from remote locations. However, many CIOs aiming to gain greater value out of bank connectivity solutions, are compromised by existing manual processes and format transformations. In fact, when asked about specific ERP challenges, 91% of CIOs agreed that bank connectivity is one of the most complex aspects of an ERP project.

The three areas detailed below will help ERP transformation leaders prioritize decisions about their project.

Value of Planning or Optimizing for Visibility

For IT professionals and system architects who interact with CFOs, CHROs and CROs, the value of an ERP is to eliminate inefficiencies from the market and to consolidate the primary KPIs of the company into one hub or location. The fundamental criteria for an effective ERP solution should include cost optimization, global scalability, ongoing innovation, and business continuity. During a time when remote work and transparency is crucial, companies can use ERPs to gain visibility into receivables and payables to better plan for cash deployment in the near future.

Time to Market

The time to market is frequently cited as the hurdle which prevents many enterprises from updating or launching a new ERP solution. For the utilization of an ERP's financial applications such as payments and cash management, the ERP will typically need to interface with the client's banks. These bank integrations can be complex and time-consuming, often taking 500-1,000+ hours to have a single bank interface with the ERP. When a multinational corporation employs modern solutions like those offered

by Kyriba, significant time savings are captured with more pre-packaged payments formats, eliminating the need for onerous formats development, testing, and ongoing IT support.

Eliminating Key Risk and Business Continuity

Those implementing an ERP solution for the first time or consolidating inherited ERP solutions are most likely looking at a cloud program. Among the risks of integrating old ERP systems into the business environment is an inability to connect systems, automate workflows, and reduce payments fraud. Payment fraud has been on the rise for years; 81% of organizations were targets of payments fraud in 2019, according to the Association for Financial Professionals report. Many companies are now looking at solutions like Kyriba's Payment Fraud Management to apply protection for ERP payments with sophisticated audit reporting and real-time fraud prevention.

In summary, companies who are planning ERP transformations to capture greater value for their organization, should start with modern connectivity solutions as the backbone of their design. IT leaders demand new solutions that are optimized for visibility, can be implemented with little to no customization or maintenance, and that enable greater operational value from their ERP across business units. Keeping in mind lessons learned from the recent pandemic, robust pre-packaged connections to banks that offer blind or dynamically routed payments, track receivables and payables, fraud detection and prevention, and open access to other connectivity solutions, should be prioritized considerations. The solution offering connected data in real-time is better prepared to identify and capture value, while reducing financial risk.



Steven Otwell oversees payments and connectivity at Kyriba and has been with the company since 2015. In his role, Steven consults with senior IT and finance leaders to develop enterprise-wide payment solutions that reduce risk, eliminate payments fraud, lower costs, and enable efficiencies. Steven brings 20 years of technology experience focused on enterprise software, cloud, SaaS, and Perpetual Solutions. In the previous decade, Steven was an enterprise account executive at Bottomline Technologies where he focused on supporting clients with payment hubs and SWIFT Service Bureau deployments. He also served as regional director of Sales at Travelex, a specialized hedging and derivatives solution. Steven frequently speaks at virtual events about the advantages of cloud-based payments and connectivity solutions. He has a Bachelor of Arts from the University of North Carolina, where he studied Economics.

About Kyriba

Kyriba is the global leader in cloud treasury and finance solutions, delivering mission-critical capabilities for cash and risk management, payments and working capital solutions.More than 2,000 clients worldwide rely on Kyriba to get 100% cash visibility, better manage FX losses, reduce fraud and make better, faster decisions through improved insight and intelligence.





SHIFTING PRIORITIES IN ERP SELECTION

Article By ***Tom Brennan,***
CMO of Rootstock Software

If there's one thing manufacturers want in the near future, it's stability. However, with COVID-19, a global recession, and political uncertainty, a steady-as-she-goes outlook isn't in the cards any time soon.

Even before COVID-19, manufactures faced significant challenges, including global competition, fluctuations in supply chain, shifts in consumption patterns, and a shortage of skilled workers. Today, the pandemic has exacerbated these issues and brought new challenges to the forefront, including the need to safeguard employees against infection through remote work and social distancing.

What can be predicted is ongoing, fast-paced change. To cope with this volatility, companies need ERP systems that enable them to swiftly adapt to emerging conditions. This requires an ERP with unrivaled flexibility and highly customizable capabilities. Due to these factors, we've seen priorities shift in the ERP selection process with five criteria emerging high on manufacturers' requirements:

1. Real Cloud

Believe it or not, companies are still attempting to navigate between "real" cloud solutions and those only masquerading as such. This is because some legacy ERP vendors cloaked their solutions to look and sound like a cloud system, when it's really just a hosted version of an on-premises system.

In actuality, these "mock" cloud solutions have not made any architectural changes to satisfy the essential characteristics of cloud computing. Instead, they've self-proclaimed their hosted offerings as "cloud" or "SaaS," hoping to entice those shopping for a cloud option.

Some legacy ERP providers have gone a step further, cloud-enabling some portion of their solution. For instance, they may have added cloud-based point solutions, such as travel and expense management or time reporting.

Further complicating the matter is the fact that there

is a range of cloud ERP solutions. Some are "more cloud" than others, meaning they more fully exhibit cloud computing characteristics.

As a result, the choice between cloud ERP and hosted ERP is not binary—there's a range of options, and a buyer must beware and discern where along the spectrum a vendor's cloud offering actually falls.

THE TREND IS THAT COMPANIES WANT TO PUT MORE CUSTOMIZATION IN THE HANDS OF BUSINESS USERS, WHO ARE THE ONES WITH FIRSTHAND KNOWLEDGE OF WHAT'S NEEDED ON THE FRONT LINES TO OPTIMIZE PROCESSES AND IMPROVE CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE.

2. A Platform Approach

While the benefits of on-demand, low-maintenance cloud solutions are clear, some companies have simply gone overboard with too many cloud-based point solutions. The resulting mish-mash of systems, coined a Frankencloud, can create chaos.

Companies end up with each cloud solution having different tools for reporting, workflow, and customization. The clouds have different user interfaces and aren't easily integrated with one another. Worst of all, databases are siloed, making reporting and analytics more difficult. Concepts like a "360° view of the customer" and a "single version of the truth" are difficult to attain.

To avoid this scenario, companies are now establishing a cloud-platform strategy upfront. Years ago, companies did this by deciding on a technology stack comprising of hardware, operating system and database technology for a unified approach. Similarly, companies today must standardize on a common cloud platform and implement apps on that platform when and where possible. This will minimize integration, data fragmentation, system administration and the need to manage various tool sets.

For instance, ERP should reside on the same platform as CRM, so then they can share the same data model. This works well for manufacturers, as they naturally have a need to share sales and production information for better forecasts and planning. Combining ERP and CRM on one platform goes a long way toward simplifying the cloud stockpile, especially if additional apps and capabilities can be leveraged on the same platform.

3. Low-Code Technology

We started by discussing the importance of customizations to adapt to today's volatile conditions. Customization is critical in this environment, especially as consumption patterns change, supply chains are disrupted, and customers still demand quality and service. ERP systems can help in all these areas, but only if it's fine-tuned to a company's specific needs.

The trend is that companies want to put more customization in the hands of business users, who are the ones with firsthand knowledge of what's needed on the front lines to optimize processes and improve customer experience. This is why low-code technology has been emerging as a solution. It gives users customization power because it requires little to no knowledge of software code. Instead, system administrators, power users and business users can be deemed "citizen developers" within a company. In this role, they can turn a generic system into an ERP uniquely designed for their businesses.

With low-code customization capabilities, they can create screens, mobile apps, workflows, analytic capabilities and more. Citizen developers can perform these functions because low-code ERP offers a visual approach and drag-and-drop ease to customization. The graphical interface allows citizen developers to draw from a library of tools, data, and process steps when assembling their desired ERP configuration.

THE CHOICE BETWEEN CLOUD ERP AND HOSTED ERP IS NOT BINARY—THERE'S A RANGE OF OPTIONS, AND A BUYER MUST BEWARE AND DISCERN WHERE ALONG THE SPECTRUM A VENDOR'S CLOUD OFFERING ACTUALLY FALLS.

For example, low-code lets companies embed predictive analytics and AI into apps and business processes. AI-powered analytics enables business users to automatically discover relevant patterns in the data – without having to build sophisticated models. Within apps, AI can help users determine the next best step to take in a process. In this way, users might spot opportunities, predict outcomes and get recommendations to improve business outcomes.



4. Mobilizing ERP

Manufacturers are realizing that mobile apps can help them put ERP capabilities into the hands of frontline workers, customers and suppliers, and they can even address the need for remote work required during COVID-19.

First, with low-code customization discussed above, companies can more easily build tailored apps and workflows. Mobile apps essentially make an ERP operate more like a consumer banking app than a complex legacy system. Companies can roll out apps to support a specific function, and these apps are so intuitive that users don't require much, if any, training. For instance, companies can implement the following capabilities via mobile apps:

- Provide sales reps with a smartphone app with one-tap access to their customers' most recent orders.
- Give warehouse managers detailed order information when they're out on the floor.
- Guide quality-control staff through an incoming materials inspection.

A low-code ERP vendor delivers mobile app and process flow templates "out of the box" with the solution. These starter templates can be configured to a company's needs and quickly rolled out. In this way, templates become tailor-made, and companies essentially take an off-the-shelf ERP and make it their own. Of course, companies can also create their own apps from scratch, but they have the benefit of business rules and governance guardrails to create within certain constraints. In this way, they have flexibility, but they also won't make a mess of the system.

5. Building Online Communities for Real-time Communication and Collaboration

Many companies want the ability to quickly launch and bring to life distinct communities of suppliers, customers, distributors or other trading partners. Low-code can quickly facilitate this type of community online, which is connected to the ERP's data model. As a result, it's easy for manufacturers to share appropriate information – such as orders, invoices or cases – with designated community members.

For example, high-tech products, such as electronics or computerized devices, are intricate to manufacture – and managing the supply chain is equally complex. A supply chain organization (SCO) for such products might require materials from dozens of suppliers around the world. To efficiently manage interactions and coordinate logistics, the SCO could use a community builder, which is part of a low-code toolset, to quickly erect an online supplier community.

The SCO could configure data security, so suppliers wouldn't be able to see one each other or one another's orders. So, supplier A could only view its orders, not the orders for supplier B, and vice versa. This type of security is easily configured on the backend, as the SCO defines who sees what – and what data is kept confidential.

Through the online community, the SCO can alo enable suppliers to access dashboards, so they can monitor their own inventory levels and performance. For example, suppliers can see their rate of on-time orders and late shipments, as well as the next orders they should be preparing. Similarly, the SCO can view the health of its overall supply chain.

A Custom-Fit ERP

Manufacturers have been under pressure to do more with less and to satisfy increased customer demands, all of which have been complicated and intensified by COVID-19. Obviously, the needs of a confections company will be different than that of an aerospace manufacturer. A sophisticated ERP vendor recognizes this and has built in the agility to allow such companies to tailor the system to fit their businesses.

Real cloud ERP built on a common platform offers a single solution to meet today's challenges — while low-code customization enables companies to more easily roll-out mobile apps, streamline processes, embed AI, and create online communities. All together, these capabilities maximize a company's return on investment. And as market and COVID conditions continue to evolve, companies can adapt accordingly, as they'll have the technological flexibility to help them do it.

About Rootstock

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.



Tom Brennan, CMO of Rootstock Software, strives to build awareness of the operational challenges manufacturers face and how they can leverage cloud ERP to grow and manage their businesses. With more than 30 years of experience in enterprise applications, Brennan is a frequent speaker at industry events and a thought leader contributor to many trade publications. He focuses on topics such as the cloud, customer-centric business applications and ERP software trends.

WHAT ARE THE KEY STEPS FOR SELECTING THE RIGHT ERP SOFTWARE?

As someone who's been in the ERP space for more than 25 years, I've seen both selection failure and success. Setting out to obtain a new system is a long journey – one that companies shouldn't start without proper preparation. As such, the first step should be a pre-selection checklist. To ensure you're truly ready, you should be able to confirm "yes" to the following:

- We've established clear business goals as to why we need a new ERP.
- We're ready to go through a full selection, then move right into implementation.
- Our executives are fully behind our effort and prepared to invest an appropriate budget for both the system and resources needed to make this project a success.

This checklist ensures you have strong driving forces pushing you forward, and the right support and resources to see you through. Otherwise, you could fall short of the final "go live" destination. The second milestone is determining if you have sufficient internal resources or need external assistance. Verify the following:

- We've assessed our key ERP requirements; they're documented and succinct.
- We have internal resources familiar with the ERP selection process.
- We have enough internal resources for a successful project – from selection to go-live.

If you can't check off the items above, you might consider enlisting a third-party consulting firm. These organizations specialize in ERP selection and can augment your resources and help guide you along the way. However, failure could still result if you assume a consultant will make key decisions for you.

Finally, in terms of ERP evaluation, consider what criteria matter most – for example:

- Are you looking for specific ERP functions and capabilities?
- Is it important that an ERP provider have experience with companies similar to yours?
- Is it important to have a modern cloud platform?
- Are you hoping to work with a provider you can build a relationship with?

Use these insights to build a high-level decision matrix. It should consist of your key criteria, along with their weighted importance. Having this matrix before you start the evaluation will enable you to score and rank each ERP system against objective, pre-determined benchmarks. It will also help tightly manage the process to avoid delays. In my experience, this process has led to successful ERP selections that can deliver tremendous value to your business.

David Stephans

CRO at Rootstock Software





aptean

HOW TO THINK STRATEGY BEFORE FUNCTION WHEN SELECTING AN ERP

*Article by **Stevie Hay**,*
Group Vice President, Aptean

With the increasing migration of enterprise resource planning (ERP) systems from costly installs to pay-as-you-go SaaS solutions, more small and mid-sized businesses can now leverage this software to propel them to the next stage of business growth. But SMBs coming to ERP for the first time—and those who have outgrown their existing systems—too often evaluate potential ERPs with a tactical mindset, focusing solely on functional capabilities without an eye toward longer-term, more strategic goals and the potential for business transformation. That means they're asking the wrong questions during the selection and RFP process.

Avoiding the functionality checklist

RFPs often masquerade as functionality checklists and lack the strategic context needed to shape both the questions and the responses.

How does this happen?

In one scenario, an executive is hired from a similar company where an ERP has been implemented with impressive results. He will ask his previous ERP vendor for an RFP template and adapt this to his needs. This approach suggests ERP requirements are generic. They are not.

Often, companies drive the ERP selection process with a single department leading, which can be problematic if the process focuses on current and perceived inefficiencies rather than reaching for larger, strategic advances. For instance, they may look at a group of customer service reps clacking away on keyboards all day and seek to speed the sales order entry process. But in some cases, taking advantage of the benefits of ERP might mean actually adding steps required to enter sales orders, because doing so simultaneously shares useful information with other departments in the enterprise such as accounting, marketing and sourcing.

Taking it up another level, what if the same company wants to double sales in the next five years with only a 30% increase in

overhead? The challenge then is not just about disseminating sales data to all departments, it's about how to completely streamline the order-to-cash collection process that enables businesses to collect money faster as volume grows, and how the ERP system can make this happen with a process change improvement.

If your ERP selection process myopically focuses on execution of discrete functions, you will lose out on the organization-wide advantages of changing your business processes in order to send business-critical data all over your operations, generating valuable intelligence that boosts your ability to compete.

Obviously, you can't ignore the need for ERP systems to support day-to-day tactical requirements, most usefully by deploying the MoSCoW method—must have, should have, could have and would like. But the strategic approach forces you to think how the business will be run differently in a year, three years, and five years out. If you then learn that keeping up with these future requirements will require customizing 40% of one vendor's product, you know you're on the wrong track.

What's the business challenge?

The best way to generate meaningful dialogue with potential ERP providers is to provide strategic context. Your business has a vision; your partner needs to understand that vision to enable your journey.

Let's say you're a consumer products manufacturer shifting, in the wake of COVID-19, to support primarily direct-to-consumer shipping. Your challenge, until recently, has been shipping thousands of pallets to a multinational corporation and staying compliant with the retailer's shipping guidelines to avoid fines. Now, you're gearing up to drop ship hundreds of thousands of individual products direct to consumers on behalf of the retail giant.

Your would-be ERP providers need to understand the functional and business process requirements for the transformation, and you'll want to understand how well their systems can manage this seismic shift.

Another common trigger for seeking a new ERP system is that the existing one is not well-suited to your industry. In such cases, your selection process will need to explore how providers will handle specialized processes like managing regulatory compliance in pharmaceutical distribution or tracking food products by batch and lot in case of a recall. Today, SMBs have many more choices when it comes to industry-specific ERPs. Aptean, for instance, provides a family of specialized ERP solutions for the mid-market in several significant verticals such as food and beverage, industrial manufacturing and distribution and retail.

There are advantages to working with an industry-specific ERP provider that has demonstrated success in your industry with other customers who look just like you. You'll avoid the steep costs and time involved in customizing the code to support specific industry functionality. Further, you are likely to benefit from improvements made in response to other customers in your industry that are then made available to you.

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> **CHOOSING AN ERP SOLUTION IS ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT DECISIONS YOUR BUSINESS WILL MAKE.**

Think strategy, think change

ERP implementation will inevitably involve new business processes that require change management across the business. That's why everyone in your company must be onboard, right from the beginning—from the boardroom to the end-user. Before you approach any ERP vendors, your first question needs to be: am I willing to change processes? If the answer is no, you're wasting your time and company resources.

Choosing an ERP solution is one of the most important decisions your business will make. Take your time and think through all the strategic issues before rushing to market with an RFP that's nothing more than a functionality checklist. Think of the RFP as an invitation to ERP providers to partner on your company's journey of growth and change. The best partners are the ones who have the reliable resources to innovate and continually scale the solution as your requirements evolve, to get you where you want to go.



Stephen "Stevie" Hay currently serves as Aptean's Group Vice President and is responsible for the strategic direction, customer satisfaction and business performance of distribution and plant management products. With over 30 years of international experience performing various leadership roles in both engineering and software, Hay holds Production and Mechanical Engineering qualifications from Napier University. In his spare time, he likes to play board games as well as watch, discuss, coach and play soccer. Hay is based in the Greater Chicago Area (Illinois, USA) and can be contacted via LinkedIn.

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.

WHAT ARE THE KEY STEPS FOR SELECTING THE RIGHT ERP SOFTWARE?

CHOOSING THE RIGHT ERP SOFTWARE

"Many SMBs make the mistake of evaluating potential ERP software vendors with a siloed and tactical mindset, focusing solely on short-term needs without an eye toward longer-term, more strategic goals. When you're distracted by today's challenges, you run the risk of missing out on the organization-wide transformation that ERP can bring. Choosing the right ERP software starts with having a clear vision of where you want your business to be in one, two and five years from now. You need a partner that will help you envision the future and enable that journey—both tactically and strategically.

To make the most of ERP capabilities, you need to be willing to change business processes across the board and do so without getting swamped by costly and time-consuming customizations. In that light, the best options could be industry-specific ERP software providers that have both proven success in your industry and the unique functionality you need, already built-in. Ultimately, the right ERP software will come from a vendor that has the industry knowledge and functionality required to jump-start your business transformation, but also the resources to innovate and continually scale the solution as your requirements evolve."

Stevie Hay,
Global Vice President , Aptean

aptean



CHOOSING THE RIGHT ERP SOFTWARE

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

The market is full of ERP systems of various shapes and sizes. Each of them boasts unique features that can help companies increase efficiency and touch new heights. Therefore, it isn't hard to believe that the global ERP software market will hit $78 billion+ by 2026. Although ERP software offers myriad benefits, not all of them serve every business.

There is a widespread belief that companies should first purchase the ERP software and then adapt themselves to the software's functionality. But lack of attention can prove to be a very costly affair.

ERP software can completely transform how businesses function. So companies have to lay down a well thought-out strategy before making the final purchase. They must weigh the pros and cons and check whether the ERP software provides them a competitive advantage over other industry players.

Let's see 5 critical factors that companies must keep in mind while selecting the right ERP software for themselves.

1. Get a 360-degree perspective of your business needs.

Different businesses have different needs. If you are a manufacturer, then your primary need is to process raw materials into finished products. If you are a supplier or distributor, your principal need is to maintain a good logistics network. If you provide customer support, your primary need is to have a quick and robust communication network. Thus, it's necessary to prepare a list of your challenges before you start looking for vendors.

2. Involvement of senior management is a must.

Does your company follow a top-down hierarchy where the senior management takes all decisions? Does the end-user have a little/no say in decision-making?
Well, you cannot do much to change how your company functions, but you can give positive inputs in the following ways:

• Critical features that an ERP software must have as per your industry.

• The extra benefits that the ERP software will provide.

• A detailed cost-to-efficiency analysis of different ERP systems in the market.

• A list of the best vendors in the industry.

• Which ERP software are your competitors using?

• What benefits your competitors have gained after installing the ERP software?

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> **DIFFERENT BUSINESSES HAVE DIFFERENT NEEDS. IF YOU ARE A MANUFACTURER, THEN YOUR PRIMARY NEED IS TO PROCESS RAW MATERIALS INTO FINISHED PRODUCTS.**

3. Get a clear understanding of all the costs involved in implementing the ERP software.

Once you begin your search for the ideal ERP software, you will talk to many vendors. Here is an advice that you should always keep in mind. ERP vendors, like other vendors, will try to downplay the costs and risks related to the ERP. Some of them will also try hiding associated costs — hardware upgrades, software updates, employee training programs, implementation costs, etc.

Before making the final purchase, you should browse through multiple vendors and check what features they provide and the associated costs. The famous idiom "Precaution is better than cure" applies perfectly over here because you cannot backtrack once you purchase the ERP software. So it's better to base your decisions on data and customer reviews rather than false advertisements and gut feeling.

4. Develop a realistic ERP implementation plan.

Once you have selected the vendor and have purchased the ERP software, it's time to build a full-fledged implementation plan. The plan should consist of the following:

• The implementation cost of the entire project

• The time required for the full implementation

• Employee training cost

• Resource allocation

• Functional and business commitments

• Time and cost required for data migration

• Pilot projects

• Workflow designs

• Significant organizational changes associated with the implementation

Apart from the points mentioned above, companies should also conduct end-user analysis to know whether the new ERP software has brought a significant change in their work. You should also periodically check whether the ERP software is performing well as per the set metrics. If it doesn't fulfill your business objectives, you should call the vendor for assistance and bring the necessary changes.

5. The search for the ideal ERP software never ends.

The business landscape is like a flowing river that keeps changing. Yesterday's "wants" become tomorrow's "needs." What appeared like a revolutionary feature a few years back becomes the norm today.

Improving over the past is what the future is, right? But the problem lies somewhere else.

Many technical breakthroughs happen globally, but not all ERP vendors embrace them. Traditional vendors play safe and don't change with time, making it all the more important to search for new vendors that welcome technology with open arms.
Most companies keep only a handful of attributes while searching for vendors such as:

• Name and popularity of the vendor in the industry

• Which vendors are their competitors working with?

• Market share of the vendor

• The price the vendor charges

The above-described features are non-essential. Companies should consider them after including the following essential elements:

• Relative strengths and weaknesses of the ERP vendor

• Which vendor provides an ERP software that fulfills all your business requirements?

• Which vendor offers an up-to-date ERP software?

Remember that business-critical attributes change with time. So don't have the wrong impression that once you have purchased the ERP software, the search is complete. It is an indefinite search that only becomes challenging with time.

Takeaway

ERP software will enable your company to become blazingly fast and efficient. It's the surest way to increase your production multiple times, perform transactions at a lightning-fast speed, and provide immense value to your customers.

What are the Key Steps for Selecting the Right ERP Software?

Choosing the Right ERP Software is the most crucial step in the entire process as it actually decides what you can expect as an outcome towards the end. Some of the most important steps you would want to focus on at are

1. Doing an extensive market research about some vendors that have a proven track record

2. Understand the ownership cost

3. Create a goal aligned implementation plan

4. Set a product demo and ask for trial

5. Be clear on the pros and cons of On-cloud and On-premise setup

> **MANY TECHNICAL BREAKTHROUGHS HAPPEN GLOBALLY, BUT NOT ALL ERP VENDORS EMBRACE THEM. TRADITIONAL VENDORS PLAY SAFE AND DON'T CHANGE WITH TIME, MAKING IT ALL THE MORE IMPORTANT TO SEARCH FOR NEW VENDORS THAT WELCOME TECHNOLOGY WITH OPEN ARMS.**





Kalyani writes about upcoming technologies like big data, machine learning, virtual reality, AI and robotics. Her expertise lies in growing the 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.



ORACLE NETSUITE

NETSUITE DELIVERING SMART FINANCIALS FOR TODAY AND TOMORROW

*Article by **D. Scott Beaver**,*
Senior Product Marketing Manager, Oracle Netsuite

Last week's kickoff of the NetSuite Now On Air virtual conference gave participants a chance to learn about NetSuite's latest product enhancements and get a glimpse of features in the works for 2021. With the changes businesses around the world have experienced this year, NetSuite is focused on helping companies become more agile, operate more efficiently and collaborate more effectively to improve performance across their organizations.

This first week of this monthlong event showed how NetSuite's financial management, budgeting and planning solutions give organizations the tools and insights they need to balance their short-term priorities and long-term objectives.

"NetSuite's strategy is based on automation and intelligence throughout the suite," said Andrew Hery, director of product management at Oracle NetSuite. "Automation and intelligence reduce the need for staff to perform mundane, repetitive tasks, increase data accuracy and allow teams to spend more time on data analysis, planning future growth and making long-term strategic decisions."

Hery explained how the combination of automation, intelligence and a unified technology platform improves finance and accounting operations by enabling team members to focus on managing exceptions instead of performing time-consuming manual tasks. He then showed how these components come together within NetSuite, demonstrating several new features and product enhancements that will increase financial visibility, increase accounting efficiency and vastly improve the monthly close process.

Smart Automation

NetSuite automates the movement of cash into and out of your business with intelligent, rules-based workflows for managing check runs, reconciling bank and credit card accounts, and allocating customer payments to open invoices.

NetSuite's Bank Feeds SuiteApp automatically collects bank account and credit card data from thousands of financial institutions in North America and EMEA. Automated reconciliation compares transaction data against the general ledger, matching existing entries and flagging exceptions for review. Enhanced workflows use machine learning to improve matching results over time as more transactions are processed.

The Accounting Cycle

NetSuite is reimagining the accounting cycle. While many accounting professionals dread the words "month-end close," NetSuite helps eliminate the headaches, overtime and intensive effort required to close the books.

• Automated account reconciliation, intelligent accruals and enhanced intercompany accounting features save time by limiting the need for manual journal entries.
• A pro forma dashboard provides all of the information needed to review the current state of the business. Visibility into financial details, including transactions that haven't posted, and automated exceptions allows accounting managers to address issues as they occur, rather than waiting until the end of the month.

• New period close management features give accounting leaders the ability to develop custom closing task lists, assign responsibilities, track the status of pending tasks, attach documents to individual tasks and collaborate with staff members to ensure the close process runs smoothly.

Better Budgeting

NetSuite Planning and Budgeting brings together powerful analytics tools and comprehensive, department-level budgeting to help organizations develop effective, adaptable plans that reflect short-term business realities but don't ignore long-term objectives. A new dedicated budgeting solution adds capabilities for revenue and expense projections to help finance teams automate the budgeting process, eliminate manual data collection and reduce budgeting cycle times.

Grow Your Business with NetSuite

NetSuite's financial solutions help companies make more informed decisions about how they use their financial resources. Intelligent automation increases accounting efficiency and accuracy, and solid governance, risk and compliance features give stakeholders greater confidence in business results. These capabilities combined with a unified platform that spans the entire organization provide a solid foundation for building a successful business.

"By focusing on visibility and intelligence," continued Hery, "NetSuite will become a trusted advisor, offering insights and recommendations throughout the everyday decision-making process."

NetSuite Now On Air presentations are scheduled throughout October. Simply register to view product keynotes, presentations and customer stories live or on demand.



About Oracle Netsuite

Oracle NetSuite pioneered the Cloud Computing revolution in 1998, establishing the world's first company dedicated to delivering business applications over the internet. Today, it provides a suite of cloud-based financials / Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP), HR and omnichannel commerce software that runs the business of companies in more than 100 countries. For more information, please visit http://www.netsuite.com.



WHY IOT IS NOT A SOLO SPORT

Article by ***Juergen Kraemer,***
General Manager, IoT & Analytics at Software AG

Let's be honest: Any successful Internet of Things project is a team effort.

You need both your OT and IT talent to reach your IoT project goals. But did you know that even internal teamwork isn't enough?

Beecham Research, in "Why IoT Projects Fail," found that 57% of companies who relied solely on in-house resources for their projects fell short of expectations. The ones who "won" at IoT (among the 25,000 IoT adopters surveyed) worked with external vendors. In other words, they didn't try to win the game on their own. They got outside coaching from someone who really knew the IoT game.

There are many companies out there positioning themselves as IoT experts. How do you know who is the right "coach" for your project?

My suggestion is to look for an IoT partner who can:

• Bring IoT experience in your industry, and solution accelerators based on industry best practices to accelerate your project

• Assist in building your business case and advise on just about every aspect of your project, from scoping, architecting and testing to scaling your solution and measuring outcomes

• Offer an ecosystem of partners to assist you in meeting the goals of your specific IoT use case

If you're going to use an IoT platform, don't over-complicate IoT. Look for one that makes IoT simple.

Your time is well spent researching:

• Whether key components, like device connectivity and enterprise integration, come pre-integrated

• If the platform locks you into a specific cloud infrastructure, deployment options, proprietary standards or hardware

• If a lot of custom coding is needed to connect your "things" and your enterprise systems

• If you can deploy the platform in the cloud, on-premises, and/or at the edge close to devices

• How easy it is to do IoT analytics, i.e. will you always need a data scientist to help?

You, as your team's star player, can champion what your company dreams of achieving with the IoT. And together with the right IoT partner and internal stakeholders you can do amazing things on the Internet of Things, whether that's reducing plant downtime, operating real-time stores or launching new digital business models.

So don't go IoT alone. Put together the right team and score big.

Now ... onto victory! Achieve your goals faster with help from the consultant-led Cumulocity IoT QuickStart program.

See why companies struggle with IoT—and how you can overcome those challenges—by clicking below to see the complimentary report from Beecham Research.



Dr. Juergen Kraemer is General Manager for IoT & Analytics at Software AG. As an experienced entrepreneur and technology thought leader, his mission is to harness technology to drive business innovation and create sustainable growth, which includes co-innovation partnerships. He has written numerous articles for journals, magazines and specialist books; he is a speaker at international conferences, a strategic advisor in business workshops, and a member of the Corporate Venture Investment Committee of Software AG.

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THE CIRCULAR ECONOMY IS HERE ARE YOU READY TO EMBRACE IT?

Article by ***Colin Elkins,***
Vice President Manufacturing Industries, IFS

Use the manufacturing slowdown to prepare for the circular economy with a sustainable approach to manufacturing and reverse logistics

The disruption taking place in supply chains globally is putting a pause button on vast swaths of the economy, and smart manufacturers are using this time to re-examine and reconfigure their operations so they can come back faster, better and stronger than their competitors.

As we recover, manufacturers may do some things differently because, under duress, they learned to do them more efficiently. But other things will be different because smart executive teams have retooled their operation to better meet the needs, expectations and wishes of the market. One thing the market has been paying increased attention to is the environmental impact of what they buy.

According to a study published in March 2020 by the Journal of Sustainability Research, while consumers have historically claimed sustainability was important, researchers now are finding they are following through on this and changing their purchasing habits to reflect their stated values. This is no longer a corporate feel-good program or a showpiece ... it is a key element of competitiveness.

A circular approach to manufacturing

Recycling, refurbishment, repair and overhaul—mastering these disciplines can help manufacturers reduce the environmental impact of their product lifecycles and position themselves as sustainability leaders in the process. Documenting these practices is one challenge, but a surmountable one as proved long ago in the paper industry, where certified percentages of post-consumer waste have served as a guide for paper buyers for decades.

The role of reverse logistics

For simple post-consumer recycling, the problem is limited to the collection of waste, and then turning it into useable raw material for manufacturing. For this straight-through process, even a mid-sized business like guitar string company like guitar string manufacturer D'Addario can contract with a third party like Terracycle to run a recycling program.

Things become much more complicated though when items retain some value and can be repaired, refurbished or just entered back into inventory. Most manufacturers are woefully unprepared from a technology and systems standpoint. A 2018 study of industrial executives conducted by IFS found that Only 10 percent of respondents said their software handled reverse logistics "very well," and more than 37 percent said their software was an impediment to successful reverse logistics processes.

Manufacturers will need to make investments here simply due to projected increases in the volume of material being returned by consumers. According to research from logistics and supply chain expert Bob Trebikcock:

• By 2027, customers will return nearly $1 trillion in merchandise annually

• Today, about 30 percent of e-commerce merchandise is returned, while the brick and mortar return rate is more like 10 percent

• 50 percent of returns cannot be sold at their full price

Whether a manufacturer takes back into inventory a consumer electronic device, a control module for a paper converting machine or a piece of commercial telecom equipment, there are a number of challenges the business will need to contend with.

Creating separate approaches for new product returns and after-use returns

While new product returns can often be simply returned to inventory, after-use returns involve a complex process that might include tracking whether the customer retains ownership, handing reimbursement for the customer or a third party that is taking the item back into its inventory, and then often product replacement or refurbishment.

The unique challenges of reverse logistics in a service environment and high-volume inbound logistics

While many reverse logistics operations strictly take items back into their location, some products like industrial equipment must be serviced in the field, creating a flow of returned parts, components and subcomponents. In many cases, service work is performed by a third party, and the manufacturer must track and manage inbound inventory and reimburse contractors for each one depending on agreements or policies that may be unique to each one. Many of these may go through a component repair and overhaul process at the manufacturing plant. In other situations, large quantities of items may come back from a channel of distribution—creating a fresh set of difficulty in receiving, triaging and remanufacturing at scale.

Serialized core management

In some cases, manufacturers will recycle the core of a product, stripping wear parts and less durable components and rebuilding the item and sending it back to the customer. Often, the customer is entitled to get the exact same items back after refurbishment, which necessitates serialization. Serialization may also become important if the customer is entitled to reimbursement for the core because it will be important to ensure the core is covered by a specific service contract, warranty or agreement.

A new paradigm

The progression towards an environmentally responsible, circular economy will not take place overnight. But forward-thinking manufacturers should be preparing for this now so they can come out of the current downturn several steps ahead of competitors. As this trend manifests itself, it will change more than the reverse logistics process. The way products are designed, the materials they use and how they are sold will change to reduce the total impact and in many cases improve re-manufacturability. But reverse logistics are probably the most universal discipline manufacturers will have to master. You can learn more about the four reverse logistics challenges we cite here—and the role of enterprise software in surmounting them—with this whitepaper.





Colin is Vice President of manufacturing industries and has over 25 years' experience in ERP software solutions for the sector. Colin has been a professional consultant and senior pre-sales consultant for much of this time and has extensive knowledge of the business issues and requirements faced by manufacturers. This covers many industry sectors, from process manufacturing - Food and Beverage, Chemicals, Life Sciences and Mills and Metals, to discrete manufacturing, industrial and high tech. He is a key member of IFS Product Development and plays an instrumental role in the decisions regarding IFS product strategy. Colin completed a Mechanical Engineering apprentice and holds a BSC degree in Production Technology and Management with a further endorsement in Metallurgy. He has held senior positions within a large engineering company of Works Manager, Production Director and Global Group Systems Manager.



SAP S/4HANA: A TAILOR-MADE THIRD OPTION

Article by ***Andreas Schmitz***

In making the transition to SAP S/4HANA, most customers are still opting for a fresh start or sticking with the status quo in terms of their processes. Meanwhile, a third option is drawing more and more interest: SAP Services calls it a ***selective data transition.***

Most companies that switch to SAP S/4HANA choose one of the two standard methods. As market researchers at Luenendonk discovered last year, more than 80 percent maintain their existing process and IT architecture and corresponding modifications (brownfield approach) or choose to leave their historical data behind and make fundamental changes to their processes (greenfield approach).

That said, a third option has grown increasingly intriguing – the selective data transition.

"Companies are recognizing the advantages of pinpointing the historical data, organizational units, and processes they want to keep while modifying and innovating other specific workflows and structures," reports Alexander Rombach, director of Consulting Practices at SAP Services.

Selective Data Transition: Mapping New Business Models While Retaining Proven Practices

There's an entire spectrum of individual approaches in between the two standard models. While a system conversion takes place on the basis of established data and processes, a new implementation uses fresh or migrated data and the processes provided by SAP S/4HANA – along with innovations like fast close, finance ledger solutions, and new features supported by artificial intelligence (AI).

"The greenfield or brownfield approach isn't always a good fit for a given customer's requirements," Gregor Staubach, an SAP software architect who oversees selective data transitions on the customer side, points out. He cites a number of examples of why access to historical data might be necessary or required by law, including in connection with product returns, complaints, or warranty claims, or with the documentation obligations common in the aviation and defense industries.

Choosing Between Shell Conversion and Building from Scratch

Companies can therefore tailor the third option to their particular strategic goals. Those that want to gain flexibility and implement new business models will likely tend toward a fresh implementation. Meanwhile, a system conversion is probably the better fit for organizations that prefer to stick with their existing business models and processes. In order to take individual preferences into account, the selective data transition approach includes several different levels. Here, SAP Services uses the terms "shell conversion" and "building from scratch."

While a shell conversion largely preserves a customer's particular processes and structures and only comes up with new developments in specific cases, the build-from-scratch approach focuses on redesigning processes and retaining those from the past only when they fit right into the new template at hand. In the real world of business, it is common for companies to carry over around two-thirds of their processes and data while seeking to start fresh with the rest.

"That's when it's faster and more cost-effective to go with a selective data transition instead of a full greenfield implementation," Rombach says.

Typical Scenarios for a Selective Data Transfer

The software architects at SAP Services face an array of common situations in this regard. These include maintaining certain company codes or requirements, converting charts of accounts, and needing to integrate a company in short order. For SAP Services experts in particular, the following areas are important:

- **Redesigning financial accounting**

Companies want transparent business figures, and some of those making the transition to SAP S/4HANA decide to limit their efforts to implementing a modern financial system based on the standard suite. The goal here is to apply the corresponding finance template, which might include the

cloud version as well, while preserving all other processes and histories in areas like supply chain and logistics. A redesign project in accounting and controlling could lead to a uniform, ledger-based chart of accounts, for example, or simplified controlling structures and hierarchies.

• Cleaning up after acquisitions and split-offs

Many companies have a system landscape that has grown and evolved over the years. Other companies have been bought and sold, integrated new enterprise resource planning (ERP) systems, expanded or adjusted processes, and implemented other systems in parallel. In these cases, it makes sense to identify company codes and data that are no longer needed and exclude them from an upcoming migration to SAP S/4HANA in order to start with a new system that's streamlined and up to date.

• Multitasking during preparatory projects

Those who first need to harmonize systems and start preliminary projects for SAP S/4HANA may end up committing many employees to these activities and losing time they need to move to their new suite. Here, carrying out selective data transition projects at the same time in targeted areas – to modernize a financial system or pare down the data to be migrated, for example – can be a good idea. Preliminary transformation projects involving things like financial harmonization or modernization can, in other words, be completed in the same step while transitioning to SAP S/4HANA.

• Bringing IT landscape architecture up to speed

There's no shortage of companies with landscapes that have grown over time and no longer provide the best possible support for their business models and strategies. In such cases, establishing split architectures during a selective data transition is one way to move on. Doing so involves integrating financial and logistics systems into a central instance of SAP S/4HANA. Consolidating several systems – for specific regions, for instance – into a single SAP S/4HANA installation can also be a very valuable step. "It's an efficient and streamlined method that combines with the innovations of SAP S/4HANA to bring dynamic growth to a company's business," Rombach explains.

• Utilizing data from acquired companies

After purchasing another organization, a company has to import its IT into a new infrastructure. At the same time, however, access to business-critical data – figures and trends from years past, which the company's controlling department will continue to need, for example – should still be ensured after the systems in question have been merged.

Selective Data Transitions: A Catalyst for SAP S/4HANA

In the experience of SAP Services, the ability to use the innovations SAP S/4HANA offers is not enough of an incentive for many companies to make the move.

"When it presents the opportunity to update their architecture, put it in order, and perhaps even harmonize it to provide optimal support to their new business model, however, a selective data transition can act as a catalyst for SAP S/4HANA," Rombach says.

He compares the transition to renovating a house: There's no need to rebuild everything from the ground up if you can just replace the heating, but what if that's not the only issue?

The third option might include new windows, some roof insulation, and maybe even a new addition. "It's the entire renovation and modernization effort that needs to be consistent and worthwhile," Rombach continues.

Keep What Fits and Focus On Implementing Specific New Components

For a good example of what the third option might look like in IT, look no further than a paper producer that was already using SAP S/4HANA, but then purchased a company that hadn't yet made the transition.



"We integrated SAP ERP into the system they were running," recalls Thorsten Spihlmann, another solution architect at SAP Services. "In another project, we modernized the landscape and proceeded with an incremental rollout, which is also typical of selective data transitions."

As a positive side effect, the customer is now using only around 10 percent of the old vendor data from its previous heterogeneous system. In this case, the third option proved to be the right one.

Selecting Historical Data for the Transition

A selective data transition is meant to strike an ideal balance and enable companies to choose what historical data and processes they want to keep going forward.

"It's often the most cost-effective way for companies to switch to SAP S/4HANA, particularly when they plan to retain around two-thirds of their established processes," Rombach reveals. In other words, it's about keeping what fits and focusing on implementing specific new components.

The notion that this approach will be a popular one in the future is also born out of Lünendonk's research. According to its analysts, most companies see "integrating local IT systems into SAP S/4HANA" as their biggest challenge – and it's one that will probably continue to be very specific to their situation.

Learn more about the possibilities the selective data transition approach offers in moving to SAP S/4HANA during the webinar "Lean Selective Data Transition for SAP S/4HANA." Register for this webinar and explore the concept behind selective data transitions and the prerequisites for a lean selective data transition.



About SAP

As the Experience Company powered by the Intelligent Enterprise, SAP is the market leader in enterprise application software, helping companies of all sizes and in all industries run at their best: 77 percent of the world's transaction revenue touches an SAP system. Our machine learning, Internet of Things (IoT) and advanced analytics technologies help turn customers' businesses into intelligent enterprises. SAP helps give people and organizations deep business insight and fosters collaboration that helps them stay ahead of their competition. We simplify technology for companies so they can consume our software the way they want — without disruption. Our end-to-end suite of applications and services enables more than 440,000 business and public customers to operate profitably, adapt continuously and make a difference. With a global network of customers, partners, employees and thought leaders, SAP helps the world run better and improve people's lives. For more information, visit www.sap.com.



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CONXION: ALL TOGETHER NOW

Article by ***Dr. Isabella Holst****,*
Senior Vice President Strategic Initiatives, Software AG

It won't be long now before we can all come together at conXion, our digital global event with regional flair.

On November 3-5 we have some amazing product innovations and upgrades to show you. Here is a sample to whet your appetite:

• New Adabas & Natural innovations on IBM Z, Linux and in the cloud, as well as a 5-year roadmap for Adabas & Natural on z/OS and Linux

• Learn how Alfabet will make your decision-making and IT delivery fast, flexible, better-informed and consistent

• Take a dive into ARIS innovations that support your organization's journey towards operational excellence

• See an action-packed 45-minutes of interactive presentations and demos on Cumulocity IoT

• Experience the role of self-service analytics in the overall analytics landscape with TrendMiner

• Get to know webMethods 10.7- specifically APIs and Microservices.

Tech stars

As if that wasn't enough, we now have some fabulous customer stories to share some free training, virtual showcases and some of our trusted partners will be on hand. conXion is going to be spread across three time zones: DACH/EMEA, Americas, APJ, and subtitled in multiple languages.

An all-star line-up - which includes TV's tech expert Katie Linendoll, disruptor extraordinaire Netflix's Marc Randolph, and tech super-evangelist Guy Kawasaki – will motivate you to sit, listen, relax and enjoy the show.

conXion may be a digital event but it's is a living expression of our brand—championing the potential for a new era of enterprise empowered by a truly connected world.

Next, I will give you a rundown on some of the amazing showcases you will see at our virtual conference. Let's get together!

About Software AG

Software AG began its journey in 1969, the year that technology helped put a man on the moon and the software industry was born. Today our platform makes a world of living connections possible. Every day, millions of lives around the world are connected by our technologies. A fluid flow of data fuels hybrid integration and the Industrial Internet of Things. By connecting applications on the ground and in cloud, businesses, governments and humanity can instantly see opportunities, make decisions and act immediately. Software AG connects the world to keep it living and thriving.



CLOUD ERP IMPLEMENTATION: HOW (AND WHY) TO GET LEADERSHIP AND IT BUY-IN

Article by ***Todd Kuhns***

Getting buy-in for a cloud ERP implementation seems like it should be easy, but is it? Acumatica's Senior Director of Professional Services explains why it may require some convincing and how to go about it wisely.

If your organization is considering undergoing a cloud ERP implementation, then you already know that you will be embarking and investing in a time-consuming, multi-step project. It involves researching and evaluating your ERP options before finally selecting a solution that meets your business needs.

However, if the journey begins without first consulting and ultimately receiving the nod of approval from your company's IT and leadership teams, then your efforts will have been for naught.

Cloud ERP implementation: Leadership buy-in is critical

Beyond ERP implementation, leadership buy-in is critical to the success of any kind of organizational change. In general, big ideas will never reach their potential unless the team is supportive, says Dr. John Kotter, an author, thought leader, and Harvard professor.

"Our research has shown that 70% of all organizational change efforts fail, and one reason for this is executives simply don't get enough buy-in, from enough people, for their initiatives and ideas," he says.

While his comment is focused on failure because executives don't garner buy-in from the organization as a whole, it is equally true that failure can be attributed to lack of buy-in from the C-suite, and in the specific case of implementing ERP technology, from IT team. Their support is the only way a cloud ERP implementation will ever come to fruition.

For example, as Sean Chatterjee previously wrote on the Acumatica blog, an implementation requires a champion, manpower, and staff support—and all three require leadership involvement. A champion is the central figure that keeps the ERP project moving forward, and it is someone that comes from the leadership team. It is the leadership team who provides the people to help throughout the implementation process. And staff support—or buy-in—is often influenced by the leadership team's own response; if leadership support is not there, then organizational buy-in is unlikely.

IT buy-in can make or break a cloud ERP implementation before it even begins.

Cloud ERP implementation: Leadership and IT buy-in how-to

Knowing how critical leadership and IT buy-in is for successful ERP implementations is important. Knowing how to get the buy-in is equally important. The following suggestions can help pave the way to getting your leadership team's approval.

First, do your homework. You must be able to explain why your company should replace your current legacy solution with a modern, cloud ERP solution, which includes a thorough look at the possible return on investment (ROI) as well as providing a list of significant benefits and features. While the solution you choose will dictate what those benefits and features are, Acumatica's cloud ERP software provides:

- A future-proof platform
- A single source of truth
- Customizable application and dashboards
- Fully integrated industry editions for Manufacturing, Distribution, Construction, Field Services, Commerce, integrated Customer Relationship Management (CRM), and more
- Mobile responsive screens and a native mobile app for iOS and Android
- Secure data
- Unlimited, role-based user licensing
- Business expertise and support

Second, doing your homework dictates that you do not shy

away from the risks. As you gain knowledge on the topic of ERP solutions (including the costs, such as licensing, implementation, training, and maintenance), you must prepare for push back.

There will be those who hear the facts and see the data, but they may not see the need to change the status quo or may have concerns about the complexity of the implementation. Addressing any negatives—real or imagined—head on and being open to IT and leadership's concerns will keep communication lines open.

Third, recognize that members of the IT team will have insights and the expertise that can help guide you through the research, evaluation, and selection process. Ask them for their input on ERP options even as you are in the middle of courting their favor. The IT team will appreciate being included in the decision making and easier to get their approval.

Cloud ERP implementation: Leadership and IT buy-in success

The road to a successful cloud ERP implementation may include conflict, but conflict can be good.

Says Dr. Kotter: "Conflict engages. Conflict shakes people up and gets them to pay attention in a novel way. This gives you the opportunity to say why your idea really is valuable and explain it in a way that wins over hearts and minds—securing their commitment to implementing the solution."

In your case, a cloud-based ERP solution. By no means does this mean leadership or IT buy-in guaranteed. There are many factors that affect the final decision, but if you follow the aforementioned suggestions, you can be confident that you have given the leadership and IT much to consider. This is especially true in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Businesses that embrace a new way to work through the power of cloud ERP technology during this crisis are ensuring business continuity and connection. Businesses that have not are struggling to make the move to a remote workforce successful.

Contact the Acumatica team today to discuss how our award-winning cloud-based ERP solution—which provides rapid integrations, scalability, and ease of use to your business needs in order to succeed in these unprecedented times—can help you secure your IT leadership buy-in.



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



ORACLE NETSUITE

3 SUCCESSFUL ERP IMPLEMENTATION CASE STUDIES

Article by ***Suzy Strutner,***
Marketing Specialist, Oracle Netsuite

What do a maker of grooming products for men, a fast-growing moving business and a specialized shipping logistics provider have in common? All three had intractable challenges that were addressed by an enterprise resource planning (ERP) system.

In all cases, their journeys started with ERP implementations. Once up and running, these disparate companies got the results they needed: more sales without adding new employees, faster and more accurate payroll processing and the ability to deliver tens of thousands of orders per day without delays or errors, respectively.

What is an ERP implementation?

An ERP implementation is the process of installing enterprise resource planning (ERP) software, and then making sure your team is making the most of the technology. The process includes three main phases:

• Installing onsite software and/or contracting with a SaaS provider. Often, companies seek help from the vendor or an implementation partner specializing in ERP, the vertical industry or specialized use cases.

• Migrating data from your previous system or systems into the new ERP.

• Training the finance team to use the new software. That process may include knowledge transfer from employees who previously used the system or formal education from your implementation partner.

The success rate ERP implementations is improving thanks to a focus on user experience, specifically simpler interfaces, more configuration flexibility, mobile functionality and increased automation. In fact, IDC's 2020 SaaSPath Survey showed that "ease of use" is the most important vendor selection criteria for those purchasing finance applications.

Best practices to ensure success include organizing a strong implementation team of leaders from all areas of your company, from sales to accounting to operations. Ask them: What problems would we like this new system to resolve?

When choosing the ERP, it's important to ensure it can easily integrate with other financial systems, and those of your key partners, and that you can be up and running in a reasonable timeframe, preferably 90 days or less. Finally, make sure your finance policies and procedures are aligned to make the most of the new system.

Key takeaway:

An ERP implementation is a process: ERP vendors and reviewers alike recommend carefully evaluating ERP vendors and/or partners before beginning, as well as taking things one step at a time, setting expectations with realistic planning timeframes and a comprehensive checklist mapped to your company's goals for the system.

3 Successful ERP Implementation Case Studies

Let's look at three companies that found success with their ERP implementation projects, and their key lessons learned.

ERP Case Study #1: Fulton & Roark

Fulton & Roark, a retailer of men's grooming products, is an example of a successful ERP implementation.

Prior to upgrading to full-featured ERP, the North Carolina-based business tracked its inventory in a spreadsheet and its financial data in desktop accounting software, Sage Live. When the company began doubling sales year-over-year, leadership felt its current processes weren't keeping up. Spreadsheets couldn't account for changing inventory costs, and the accounting software didn't have the workflows necessary to record the cost of goods sold (COGS), an important financial metric.

As a result, the Fulton & Roark team did double data entry—manually.

To centralize all work in one place, the company's co-founders implemented NetSuite ERP. After a three-week implementation process, changes were immediate, according to team members. Finally, the Fulton & Roark team was able to:

• Catch and correct bookkeeping mistakes related to inventory.

• Stop working with external accountants, growing both unit and dollar volumes significantly with no extra headcount.

• Increase sales roughly 50% year-over-year without increasing headcount.

• Get a more accurate picture of margins and inventory, which helped grow its ecommerce operation.

Key takeaways:

• ERP implementations don't have to drag on—Fulton & Roark's team was up and working in about 20 days.

• The company's story also emphasizes a major success factor: Getting management committed to an ERP project. In this case, the co-founders initiated the project, which consultants say often spurs employee adoption.

ERP Case Study #2: N&N Moving Supplies

N&N Moving Supplies, a family-run distributor of moving equipment and supplies, successfully implemented an ERP system after expanding from one location in Georgia to three locations in multiple states and more than quadrupling its workforce.

Running on QuickBooks and a third-party payroll provider, it was nearly impossible to keep accurate time records and reconcile payroll with general ledger accounts. So, N&N turned to ERP to manage its accounting and payroll processes. During the implementation process for NetSuite ERP, N&N worked with a NetSuite partner, NOVAtime, to add a time-clock solution to the main system.

With this in place, N&N was able to:

• Reduce payroll processing time by 84%.

• Balance accounts faster.

• Improve the accuracy of hours and vacation time counts.

• See labor-cost trends across its three locations.

• Give employees access to personalized ERP dashboards on iPads at each of its sites.

Key takeaways:

• N&N's case study nods to another major implementation success factor: managing employee morale. ERP projects often fail when execs and other employees don't feel a sense of buy-in. By providing personalized dashboards—and ideally explaining their benefits to employees before the implementation—N&N avoided this pitfall.

• The case study also shows that a third-party partner can be helpful in tailoring the ERP system to precisely fit your company's needs.



ERP Case Study #3: Green Rabbit

Once upon a time, two friends launched a candy wholesale business. Then, they ran into a problem: shipping melt-prone chocolate bars during summer months. After the pals designed a heat-sensitive supply chain, other food companies turned to them for help. The duo rebranded as Green Rabbit, a supply chain logistics provider specializing in fast delivery of perishable goods.

That shift in strategy tested the company's current processes, which relied on QuickBooks, Excel and email. Green Rabbit's multiple databases couldn't communicate with one another, making real-time data analysis impossible. The warehouse was often waiting on help from the IT team, too.

Green Rabbit chose NetSuite ERP, and the NetSuite professional services team got the company up and running on the system in three months.

Green Rabbit now:

• Helps customers ship candy, snacks and more across the country in 24 hours from one of three different warehouses, without inventory errors.

• Delivers tens of thousands of orders per day, without delays.

• Gets guaranteed error-free data from its ERP system, instead of risking errors from manually entered data.

• Could triple its order volume, if desired, without impact to its systems.

Key takeaways

• When implemented correctly, ERP makes it easier to manage a complicated supply chain, as Green Rabbit's case study shows.

• ERP is pivotal to growth. Green Rabbit implemented ERP after it grew substantially and because it anticipated further expansion

Many growing companies like those profiled here ask: "What is the business case for ERP?"

Besides the takeaways from our case studies, it boils down to agility. When finance teams stop peering at dozens of spreadsheets and paper records, they can get strategic. By helping executive and business colleagues visualize data, growing firms can forecast future trends and adapt quickly to beat competitors.

What are the Challenges of ERP?

Implementing an ERP can mean overcoming obstacles. Two of the most commonly cited ERP challenges are:

• **Choosing the right vendor.** Obviously, choosing an ERP system that doesn't fit your company's needs will likely result in a failed implementation. Many advisers recommend evaluating around five vendors before choosing which ERP to purchase.

Companies should choose a vendor that has experience with your company's vertical, type (product or service) and size; can provide a hands-on demo; understands the tax laws and regulations that apply to your business; and is sure to be in business in five years.

• **Getting employees to support the change.** As mentioned, teams may resist the transition to ERP if you don't show them why the new system will be helpful to them. Explain how ERP will make each team's everyday tasks easier before the implementation begins and ensure plenty of time for training during the process.

Why Do ERP Implementations Fail?

ERP implementations can fail without proper risk management. In other words, leaders need to anticipate what might derail the project, then plan.

In one often-cited case, for example, a multinational distributor's implementation epically failed, resulting in major shipping delays and lost sales. It turns out the company had operational issues before the implementation even began, as it had just acquired another company and was having trouble integrating the new subsidiary's operations into its own. Company leadership should have managed that risk by identifying and fixing those operational issues before the ERP implementation began.

Conclusion

ERP implementation is a process. It requires lots of planning to ensure success. However, your company isn't the first to go through it. Consider case studies of successful implementations, choose the right partner and your business will enjoy the benefits of the system, quickly.

If you're considering an ERP implementation, schedule a consultation with NetSuite.



Suzy Strutner is a Marketing Specialist at Oracle NetSuite specializing in media and customer storytelling. She has a zest for detail and finding real-life examples of business principles in action. As a storytelling specialist at NetSuite, Suzy sources advice for up-and-coming entrepreneurs from business leaders who've been in their shoes. She has a zest for detail and finding real-life examples of business principles in action. Previously, Suzy was a Lifestyle Editor at HuffPost covering trending topics in travel, food, health and style.

About Oracle Netsuite

Oracle NetSuite pioneered the Cloud Computing revolution in 1998, establishing the world's first company dedicated to delivering business applications over the internet. Today, it provides a suite of cloud-based financials / Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP), HR and omnichannel commerce software that runs the business of companies in more than 100 countries. For more information, please visit http://www.netsuite.com.



NEW RESEARCH PREDICTS SAP PARTNER REVENUE OPPORTUNITY WILL NEARLY DOUBLE BY 2024

SAP announced that a new IDC economic impact model predicts the revenue SAP partners generate will nearly double over the next four years.

The IDC Vendor Spotlight, sponsored by SAP, "Partner Opportunity in a Changing World," forecasts that partner revenue could expand from US$141 billion this year to $260 billion by 2024.

Cloud Revenue to More Than Double as Companies Advance Digital Transformation

SAP debuted the research at its "What's Next: Business Insights for SAP Partners" virtual event.

In conjunction with the expected SAP partner economy expansion, IDC estimates new employment in the ecosystem will rise to 1.6 million employees by 2024, up from 1 million in 2020. Of the 600,000 new employees to the SAP ecosystem, 280,000 will be net-new consultant roles.

The data shows that due to the pandemic-driven increase in remote work, digital transformation efforts are advancing, and companies are expected to spend more on cloud-based solutions. This translates into a $204.4 billion cloud market opportunity for SAP partners from now until the end of 2024. This cloud revenue figure represents 68% of the total net-new opportunity for our partners over that period of time.

"The pandemic has driven digital transformation into every corner of the enterprise to allow businesses to adapt and continue operating as usual," said Steve White, program vice president, channels and alliances, IDC. "As the economic situation continues to unfold and businesses move their focus from resiliency to recovery, those that leverage digital and cloud-based solutions will be more agile and future-proof, and we're seeing that acknowledgment drive significant adoption."

SAP commissioned the research to explore the impact of the current economic landscape on the partner ecosystem. Throughout the pandemic, SAP partners around the world have created new solutions to better serve customers and end users.

For example, U.S.-based Rizing integrated SAP SuccessFactors solutions and global COVID-19 data into its proprietary data analytics app, Lyra, to provide insight to drive employee wellness, create localized communication and response plans as well as support business continuity and risk management plans. Fujitsu announced its "Open COVID Pledge" to allow free access to the intellectual property rights of participants, including SAP, to help curb the global spread of the disease.

"This research confirms the vast and continually growing market opportunity for SAP partners," said Karl Fahrbach, chief partner officer, SAP. "SAP's next-generation partnering movement drives partners' sustained growth by establishing partner-centric sales and service and connecting with customers in new ways across their life cycle. This higher level of ecosystem engagement can increase customer satisfaction, lead to faster time to value and enhance customer lifetime value."

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About SAP

As the Experience Company powered by the Intelligent Enterprise, SAP is the market leader in enterprise application software, helping companies of all sizes and in all industries run at their best: 77 percent of the world's transaction revenue touches an SAP system. Our machine learning, Internet of Things (IoT) and advanced analytics technologies help turn customers' businesses into intelligent enterprises. SAP helps give people and organizations deep business insight and fosters collaboration that helps them stay ahead of their competition. We simplify technology for companies so they can consume our software the way they want — without disruption. Our end-to-end suite of applications and services enables more than 440,000 business and public customers to operate profitably, adapt continuously and make a difference. With a global network of customers, partners, employees and thought leaders, SAP helps the world run better and improve people's lives. For more information, visit www.sap.com.



HOW SAAS HELPS ACCELERATE SMART IOT ADOPTION WITHOUT BREAKING A SWEAT

*Article by **Jai Suri**,*
Vice President, Product Management, IoT & Blockchain Applications, Oracle

Digital transformation enabled by emerging technologies is driving fundamental change in nearly every industry, with new entrants that are completely disrupting traditional business models. In order to stay competitive, incumbent companies must embrace a new digital culture and drive innovation powered by technologies, such as internet of things (IoT), machine learning (ML), artificial intelligence (AI), and Blockchain—and they must do so quickly.

To help organizations meet these demands with agility, Oracle has developed five IoT Intelligent Applications. They allow organizations to overlay new capabilities on top of their existing enterprise processes with minimal risk, while continuing to keep their existing business stable.

5 Operational Solutions, 1 Enterprise Data Backbone

Decades of growth in industrial automation has led to massive amounts of data getting generated every minute in industrial systems. However, the real challenge is collecting, synthesizing, and analyzing this massive high-velocity stream in real time to create insights that drive rapid decision-making.

Only a small fraction of operational data makes its way to analytical systems, and even this data is likely to arrive in batches by manual methods, such as FTP, and in some cases even email. This is because operational applications, which are maintained by operations technology (OT), and business applications, which are maintained by information technology (IT), rarely share a common data backbone. As a result, business applications receive outdated operational information and can't respond proactively. This is often referred to as the OT/IT divide.

Oracle has bridged the OT/IT divide with a new layer into our software-as-a-service (SaaS) application suite that provides secure real-time visibility into operational data.

The applications use IoT, ML, and AI to establish a secure bidirectional channel with the operational systems. This allows the operational data from IoT-connected devices to be processed in the same way the company's financial, human resources, and supply chain data is. As a result, business users can gain fresh insights from real-time operational data for more informed decisions and richer predictive planning scenarios.

The ready-to-use IoT applications extend a company's primary enterprise solutions with the ability to monitor assets, production, fleets, worker safety, and service activity. They exchange data seamlessly with Oracle business applications, such as enterprise resource planning (ERP) and supply chain management (SCM), and easily integrate with third-party enterprise applications. A cloud-based SaaS deployment model minimizes the need for on-premises infrastructure.

Let's take a closer look at each of these solutions:

Connected assets: From robots on the factory floor to heavy equipment deployed in the field, companies can have hundreds if not thousands of assets that are critical to their business. By equipping these assets with IoT sensors, you can

monitor the location, health, utilization, and availability of your moving and stationary assets for up-to-the-minute tracking, predictive maintenance, usage metering, and many other use cases that reduce cost and downtime. Built-in automatic fault detection and failure prediction algorithms enable business users to use advanced ML and AI capabilities without the need for data scientists.

For example, Noble Plastics uses Oracle Connected Assets to detect equipment failure and miscalibration of industrial robots on its factory floor, so it can address production problems before they become significant.

Smart manufacturing: Industry 4.0 capabilities monitor production and product quality and track work-order progress across production. With Oracle's IoT Intelligent Applications, you can manage your manufacturing equipment and production lines, evaluate product output, and leverage ML and AI to proactively predict production rates and make needed changes in real time.

As an example, **Titan**, a manufacturer of wheels, tires, and tracks for agricultural and construction machinery, uses Oracle's IoT Intelligent Applications to manage inventory challenges. Finished parts were coming off the production line faster than they could be reported in the system, causing a data lag of up to two hours. The new IoT system tied into the company's Oracle ERP and SCM applications to provide Titan with real-time visibility into inventory, improving its shipping performance and customer satisfaction.

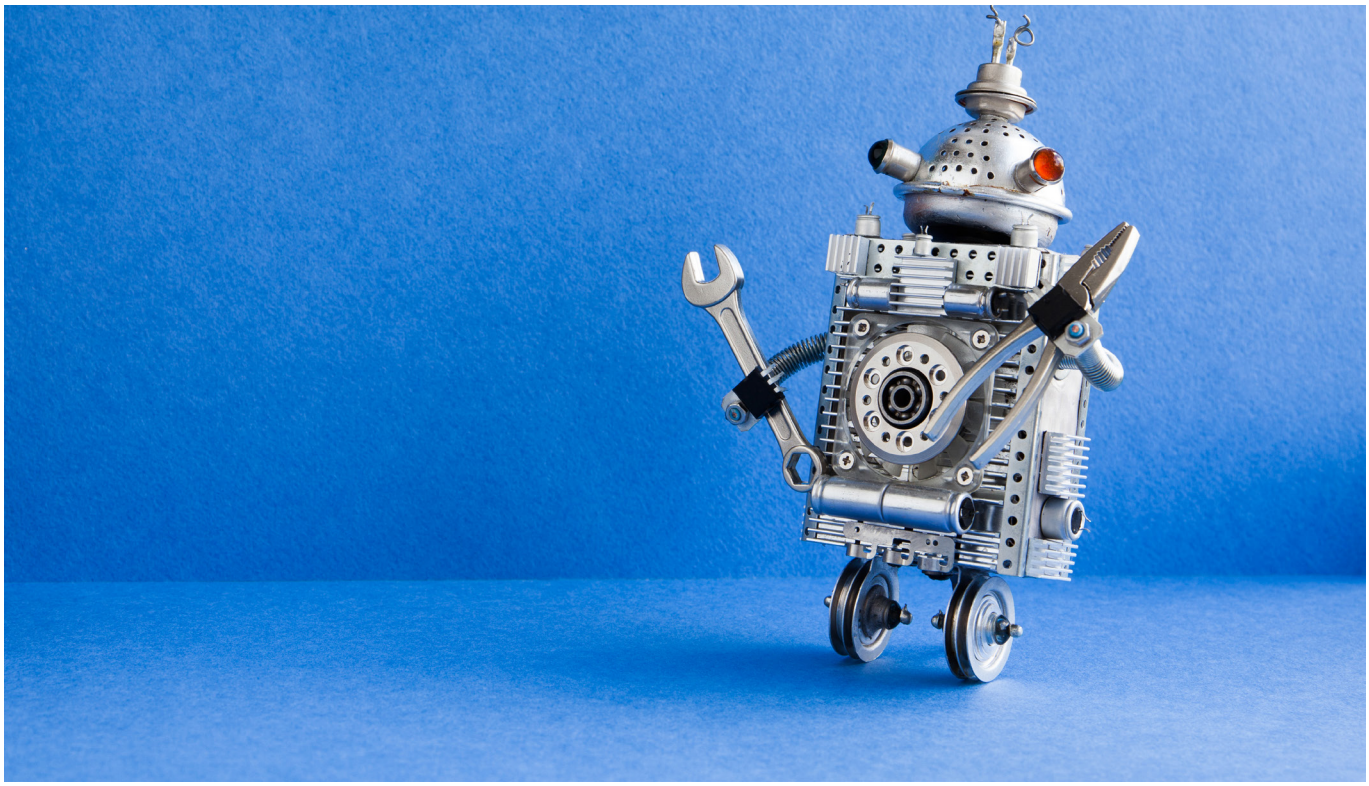
Connected logistics: Heightened logistics visibility across the supply chain helps companies respond quickly to unexpected disruptions, such as road closures, traffic, and weather, among other things. They also monitor the condition of shipments during transit for quality and cost control. Shippers can monitor shipments and fleets with data on freight location and ETA tracking, in-transit condition monitoring, and warehouse yard monitoring. Managers can monitor fleet vehicles, shipments, and driver behavior to optimize route costs and reduce shipping losses.

Worker safety: Companies can use IoT to make workplaces safer by monitoring people and their environments to reduce injuries and productivity loss. This system offers several relevant potential use cases. Imagine, for example, monitoring real-time location and movement of workers in a facility. Should a hazard occur, the system can alert supervisors to any nearby workers at risk. It can also monitor occupancy and raise an alert should the number of a building zone's occupants exceed safe limits.

Service monitoring: Combining customer experience (CX) data with IoT enables you to deliver a predictive customer experience. Empower your service team to use insights from asset data and knowledge bases to customize service recommendations. Create and manage service orders proactively. Provide field service workers with the information they need to resolve issues on the first visit, thus reducing truck rolls. Service monitoring can also support product-as-a-service subscription business models, in which customers purchase value-added asset-based services.

Oracle IoT Intelligent Applications provide a full-featured technology stack that connects operational data with analytical computing, allowing for predictive modelling that supports smart decisions and proactive response. They can provide you with greater visibility, insights, and efficiencies by capturing sensor data from connected devices using smart manufacturing, predictive maintenance, connected logistics, workplace safety, and connected customer experience.

To learn how Oracle IoT Intelligent Application Cloud can accelerate your organization's digital transformation, visit Oracle.com/internet-of-things.



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