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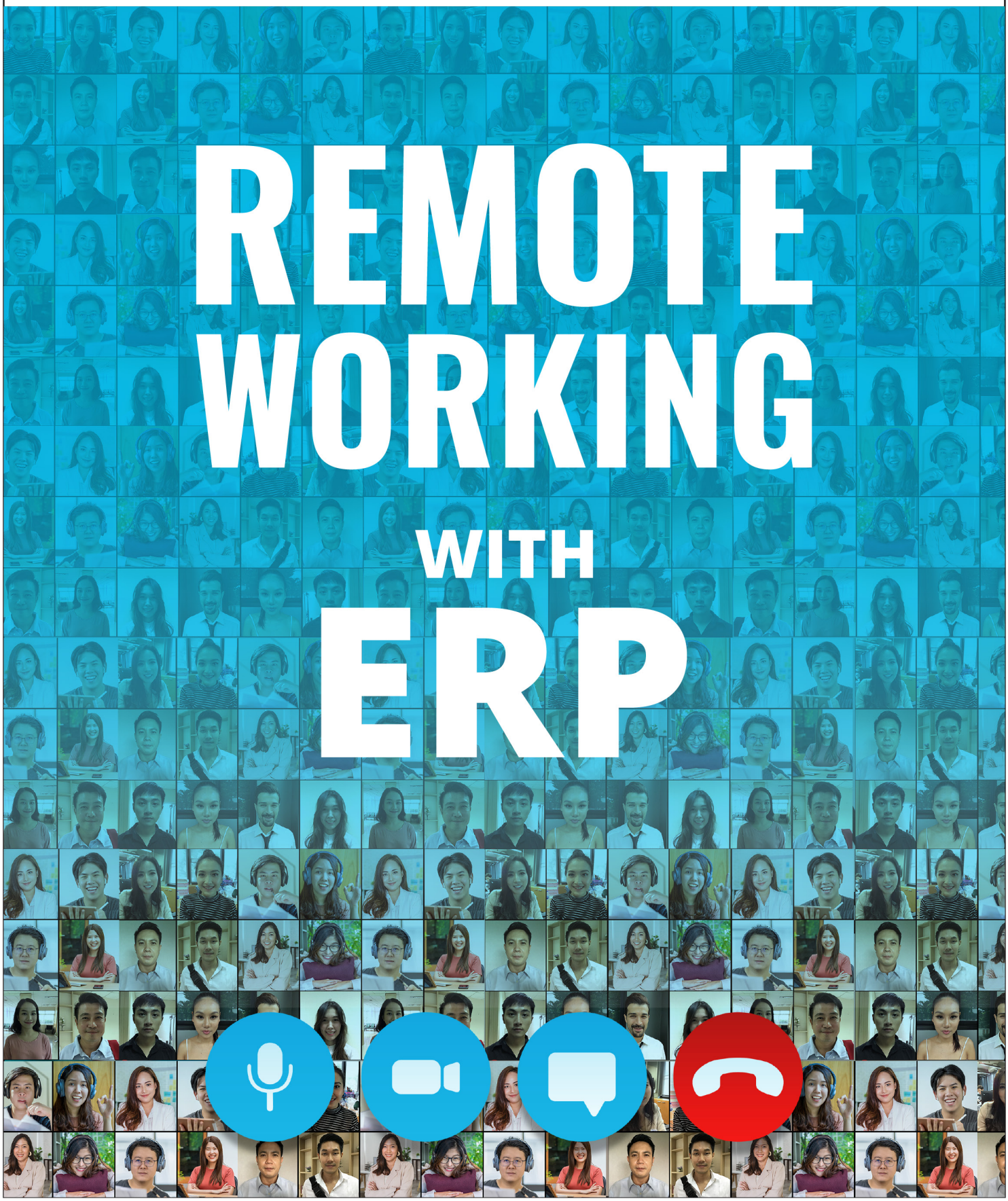
REMOTE WORKING WITH ERP



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Yagmur Sahin

EDITOR'S NOTE

We left behind a challenging year and there were plenty of tough business lessons to learn from that we should apply to this year. Above all else, we have witnessed that businesses that are hanging on to their legacy systems had to struggle for survival. Only those who could transform themselves to live with the changing technology environment around them had survived. For example, as companies had to implement remote access technologies fast enough to stay alive, companies that were already using cloud systems have encountered much fewer problems than others.

Most importantly, businesses have realized that they can accomplish most tasks remotely. As a wide variety of processes are managed remotely, from business meetings to the ERP projects go-live, the remote working model has now become a reality in our lives. In this issue of our magazine, we have explored how ERP software can help with remote working and the other ERP trends to look out for in 2021.

Also, you will find an exclusive interview with Ergin Öztürk, CEO of IFS Turkey, as well as the different opinions of many industry experts on what we can expect from the new year about ERP. And if you are in the ERP Industry, do not miss the Lumenia ERP HEADtoHEAD™ full-scale virtual event that will take place on the 23rd - 24th March, where 14 ERP vendors will go head to head to demonstrate their ERP solutions. Perfect opportunity to efficiently review and compare the leading ERP systems!

In this first issue of 2021, we have reflected on what 2020 has taught us and the lessons that we will carry with us to shape 2021. We wish all our readers good health and success for this year!

Thank you for being with us and see you in the next issue of ERPNews Magazine!

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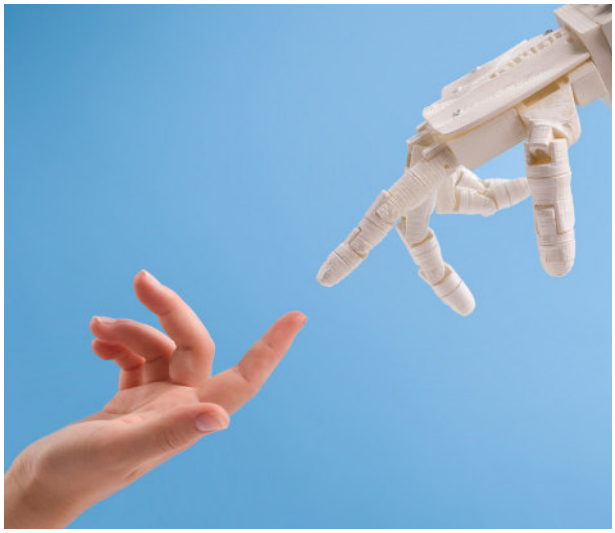

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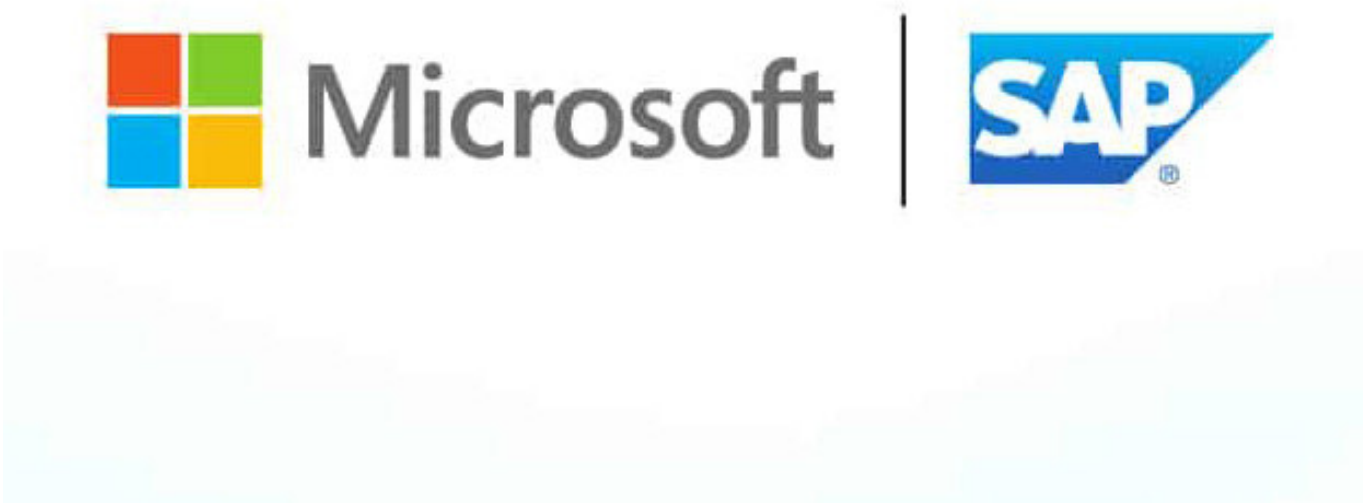

SAP AND MICROSOFT EXPAND PARTNERSHIP AND INTEGRATE MICROSOFT TEAMS ACROSS SOLUTIONS

SAP and Microsoft Corp. announced that plans to integrate Microsoft Teams with SAP's intelligent suite of solutions. The companies also formalized an extensive expansion of an existing strategic partnership to accelerate the adoption of SAP S/4HANA on Microsoft Azure. This builds on a joint commitment by the companies to simplify and streamline customers' journeys to the cloud.

"New ways of working, collaborating and interacting completely transform how we operate," said Christian Klein, SAP CEO and member of the Executive Board. "By integrating Microsoft Teams across our solution portfolio, we will bring collaboration to the next level, jointly determining the future of work and enabling the frictionless enterprise. Our trusted partnership with Microsoft is focused on continuously advancing customer success. That's why we are also expanding interoperability with Azure."

Much has changed in the last year as work has become more virtual, increasing reliance on Microsoft Teams for meetings, communication and collaboration. To facilitate these business and societal changes, SAP and Microsoft are building new integrations between Microsoft Teams and SAP solutions, such as SAP S/4HANA, SAP SuccessFactors offerings, and SAP Customer Experience. This can enable innovation, increase employee productivity and engagement, deliver collaborative learning and support global growth. These integrations are planned for delivery in mid-2021.

"The case for digital transformation has never been more urgent," Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella said. "By bringing together the power of Azure and Teams with SAP's solutions, we will help more organizations harness the power of the cloud so they can more quickly adapt and innovate going forward."

The companies also are expanding their endorsed cloud partnership announced in 2019, to introduce new offerings in cloud automation and integration for SAP S/4HANA on Microsoft Azure. Together, Microsoft and SAP are expanding the ability to run a mission-critical intelligent enterprise on Azure while helping customers modernize their enterprise applications. SAP and Microsoft will provide customers with:

- **Simplification** when moving on-premise editions of SAP ERP to SAP S/4HANA in the cloud. In addition to the industry-specific journey maps to the cloud and reference architectures, SAP and Microsoft will continue to co-innovate around SAP S/4HANA on Azure.
- **Expanded joint engagements with customers and partners.**In addition to product integration work, SAP, Microsoft and system integrator partners will continue to provide digital enterprise road maps for customers. This includes immediate and actionable reference architectures and technical guidance to help customers on their journey to the cloud.
- **Increased investments in platform and infrastructure.** The companies will further develop automated migrations, improved operations, monitoring and security.

Customers broadly favor Azure when moving on-premise SAP S/4HANA to the cloud.

"As part of our overall transformation, we transitioned to SAP S/4HANA," said John Hill, Carhartt's chief information officer and senior vice president of Business Planning. "Running it on Microsoft Azure provides the velocity, availability, scalability and elasticity we need for more visibility and better efficiency across our business. The pandemic struck as we were in the middle of our SAP implementation, so

by using Teams, we were able to continue to work on the project, stay on schedule and keep everyone informed. The combination of SAP and Microsoft was especially helpful during a challenging time."

"SAP S/4HANA has given us real-time visibility into our inventory, which is crucial for us as a pharmacy and healthcare retail company during the pandemic," said Francesco Tinto, Walgreens Boots Alliance's senior vice president and global chief information officer. "We chose to run SAP S/4HANA on Azure because of its agility and flexibility to scale up and out quickly to meet our business needs. Now we have access to our data in one place so we can offer the best possible customer experience online and in our stores. Microsoft Teams coupled with SAP solutions helped us overcome business continuity challenges and enabled our employees to collaborate very effectively despite the shift from office to remote work."

"When it comes to our customers delivering personal protective equipment, we can't be late, so we rely on SAP and Microsoft to provide the digital backbone that's essential to keeping our supply chain running smoothly," said Helge Brummer, Coats' vice president of Technical Infrastructure, Support & Operations. "The combination of Microsoft Teams with our SAP solutions has given our employees the ability to work from anywhere while ensuring orders are delivered on time to our customers, supporting the people putting their lives at risk working on the front line."

SAP's endorsement of Azure for ERP cloud migration is reflected in positive customer feedback on the collaboration between the companies. SAP and Microsoft will continue to make migration simpler and increase customers' confidence in running their digital enterprises in the cloud. At the same time, many customers express a desire to maintain multi-cloud environments. SAP continues with its long-standing policy of supporting choice for those customers who request alternatives based on business requirements.

SAP and Microsoft recently announced an update to enable customers to design and operate intelligent digital supply chain and Industry 4.0 solutions in the cloud and at the edge.

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.

infor

LINEA LIGHT GROUP CHOOSES INFOR FOR DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION AND TO CENTRALIZE THE CONTROL OF THE BUSINESS

Infor and 2WS help Linea Light Group standardize processes and define a common business management model for all branches

Infor today announced that Linea Light Group, a prestigious Italian brand of professional LED lighting and design, has implemented Infor LN as part of a digital transformation strategy. The objective of the project, which was managed by Infor partner 2WS, was to redefine the group's information processes for better business management of its individual branches for sales.

Learn more about Infor LN: https://www.infor.com/solutions/erp/ln

Founded in 1976, with headquarters in the province of Treviso, Linea Light Group specialises in the design and production of lighting systems and solutions for indoor and outdoor environments. Among the first companies in Europe to specialise in LED technology and with over 550 employees, its production activities are located in Italy, with two operational offices in Treviso, and hubs in USA and China for localized manufacturing service. The commercial activities are managed by various branches and agencies throughout Europe, the Far East and Asia, with some of them also dealing with warehouse management activities.

The ERP (enterprise resource planning) solution used by Linea Light Group in Italy, based on an IBM AS/400, was disconnected from the various systems in use in the group's branches and agencies. The company needed to define a business management model common to all subsidiaries in order to harmonize operational activities in all foreign countries in line with the head office; simplify access to data and have information tools capable of automating, streamlining and supporting intra-group activities.

Linea Light Group identified Infor LN as an ERP solution ideally suited to the needs of manufacturing companies. 2WS supported Linea Light Group throughout the decision-making and implementation phases of the project.

The Infor LN implementation was based on the definition of core models, developed for each type of branch and agency in the group, according to their specific business needs. Different models have been defined for the management of a commercial branch (reseller), for the management of an agency and, finally, for the management of a branch that also deals with warehouse management.

Process standardization, integration and simplification are among the main results achieved by Linea Light Group following the deployment of Infor LN. Since implementing a common business management model, the company has obtained better visibility of internal information with immediately accessible data. This, in turn, has enabled the company to automate and streamline intra-group activities.

The project, still in progress, began with the first commercial branch model in the UK, followed by implementation of the agency model. After launching Infor LN in its UK and Singapore offices, the branch model was developed during 2019 by integrating the functionalities for warehouse management activities for the offices in France and Poland, which started using Infor LN in 2020. Deployment extended next to the branch in Germany, in addition to the completion of finance areas in Singapore and the UK.

To meet the need for integration and automation of the data flows of branches and agencies to and from corporate, an interface was developed to integrate Infor LN with Linea Light Italy's AS/400-based system. During the spring of 2020, Infor LN was integrated with the company's business intelligence solution to allow the complete analysis of 'sell-out' and 'sell-in' for all branches that use the ERP.

Furthermore, the Infor ION integration technology used to link Infor LN with the AS/400 system in use by corporate has made it possible to automate intra-company flows by exploiting the standard business object documents (BODs) available for importing and exporting business partners, price lists, articles, sales offers, purchase orders and payable invoices.

The main features that highlight the value of Infor LN are the usability of the system, the multilingual management, the visibility of highly profiled data and the search for information.

In the future, Linea Light Group plans to optimise the general model and evaluate the extension of Infor LN to other foreign branches and agencies, such as Dubai, Russia and Spain, as well as to the Italian commercial agencies in the group. This will be done based on the already defined business models, ultimately, with a view to optimise operational, logistical and administrative flows.

"Infor LN represents an important opportunity for the group," said Manuel Minute, Linea Light Group's CIO. "It will allow the company to embrace the digital transformation necessary to better manage its worldwide operations by providing visibility and reinforcing control and support from the headquarters. The 'wave' project planning approach allows us to obtain benefits incrementally, adding further features each time and implementing the system at a sustainable pace."

"We are pleased to support a 'made in Italy' brand such as Linea Light Group. Our innovative technology, together with the great experience and professionalism of 2WS, have provided the agility and flexibility Linea Light Group needed to centralize control of the business and better integrate its branches with the parent company," said Bruno Pagani, Infor sales director for Italy.

"We are honoured to support Linea Light Group, which is a front runner in its pursuit of excellence. It has chosen Infor LN for digitalisation and standardisation of processes — an ERP perfectly suited to its industry — whilst relying on the competence and professionalism of 2WS," concluded Giorgio Borgogno, 2WS managing partner.

About Infor

Infor is a global leader in business cloud software specialized by industry. Providing mission-critical enterprise applications to 67,000 customers in more than 175 countries, Infor software is designed to deliver more value and less risk, with more sustainable operational advantages. We empower our 17,000 employees to leverage their deep industry expertise and use data-driven insights to create, learn and adapt quickly to solve emerging business and industry challenges. Infor is committed to providing our customers with modern tools to transform their business and accelerate their own path to innovation. To learn more, please visit www.infor.com.

EUROPE'S LARGEST IRON ORE PRODUCER LKAB SELECTS IFS AS PART OF ITS JOURNEY TOWARD THE DIGITAL MINE

IFS cloud solution to empower 4,000+ LKAB staff and partners as part of a historic transformation journey

To achieve carbon dioxide-free production by 2045, leading mining and minerals group LKAB recently launched one of the largest industrial investment plans in Swedish history. With digitalization and automation as key enablers for realizing its sustainability and productivity goals, the company has chosen enterprise applications company IFS to deliver a state-of-art enterprise asset management (EAM) solution capable of helping the company set a new world standard for data-driven mining.

Established in 1890, state-owned LKAB produces 80 percent of the iron ore in Europe and operates the biggest underground iron ore mine in the world.

To reach its productivity and environmental goals, the company has embarked on a holistic digital transformation journey to ensure business process transparency, consolidation and harmonization of processes and data, as well as access to high-quality insights to drive improved decision-making.

Launching a comprehensive evaluation process, LKAB scanned the market for a best-in-class EAM solution that could support its mission-critical mining operations while offering an open architecture for easy integrations. Another key consideration was to equip its workforce with intuitive, easy-to-use mobile technology to ensure a positive user experience.

Based on its robust capabilities in key areas such as maintenance and logistics, as well as its RESTful APIs based on the OData standard and browser-based user interface, LKAB opted for a cloud-based solution from IFS.

"The journey LKAB has embarked on will transform the global iron and steel industry and set new standards for how mines are digitized and managed," Senior Vice President, Market and Technology Markus Petäjäniemi said. "To lead the industry toward more responsible, resource-efficient mining practices, we need the very best technology to make sure our people and assets are working efficiently and safely. IFS is an open solution that will connect to our technological backbone and support our current and future needs."

Elni Kullmer, IFS Managing Director, Nordics, added, "This is a landmark agreement for IFS and we are honored to have been chosen by LKAB to help usher in a new era of efficient mining. We have been supporting EAM processes in asset-intensive industries since the 1980s and we are thrilled to be able to bring our experience to bear on this exciting project. We look forward to a long and mutually beneficial partnership."

The IFS solution will be used by some 4,000 LKAB employees working in Sweden, England and Norway.

About the Project

LKAB's diverse operations involves everything from customer relations to underground activities, development and transport. The smooth operation of the value chain requires clear processes and a well-functioning IT system that offers support and makes the workday easier for staff and decision-makers. LKAB is therefore launching a new application platform as an important part of its digitalization journey.

The new application platform will support:

- *3,800 employees in Sweden, 300 in England, and 200 in Norway*
- *20 LKAB sites, of which five located in Sweden*
- *10 subsidiaries*
- *12 countries*
- *4,100 active users in maintenance/purchasing*
- *90,000 purchase orders*
- *160,000 invoices*
- *140,000 work orders*

About LKAB

LKAB is an international high-tech mining and minerals group that mines and upgrades the unique iron ore of northern Sweden for the global steel market. Sustainability is core to our business and our ambition is to be one of the industry's most innovative, resource-efficient and responsible companies. The group had sales of about SEK 31 billion in 2019 and employs about 4,300 people in 12 countries. Other group business include industrial minerals, drilling systems, rail transport, rockwork services and property management. www.lkab.com

About IFS

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

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ORACLE NETSUITE

CRAFTER'S COMPANION SELECTS NETSUITE TO FUEL GROWTH

*Success Story by **Nicky Tozer**,*
EMEA Vice President, Oracle Netsuite

Perhaps one of the more unlikely trends served up in the last year has been the 'crafting revolution'. Faced with less time at the office, school or travelling, new beginners are taking up hobbies such as papercraft and sewing & needlework, while more experienced crafters are embarking on even more elaborate creative projects. Crafting has even been found to offer a useful mental distraction.

Bedroom startup to global sales growth

Crafter's Companion was established in a university bedroom in 2005 by Sara Davies MBE, who spotted a gap in the market for a tool that could create bespoke envelopes for handmade cards. After a slot on shopping channel Ideal World, the product became a big hit and led Sara to expand further into the craft market.

Fast-forward 16 years and Crafter's Companion is now a fast-growing global, multi-channel craft retailer. It stocks 20,000 products across 100 brands, sells to over 30 countries, and has headquarters and warehouse operations in both the UK and California. Its products are sold direct-to-consumer from its website, through bricks-and-mortar presence in retail outlets such as The Range, TK Maxx and Hobby Craft, and TV shopping channels QVC and HSN.
With the recent rise in crafting, Crafter's Companion is reportedly on track for its best ever year financially, stating that increased sales are contributing to a 20 percent year-over-year boost in revenue.

Continued growth presents operational challenges

But the sales boon has exacerbated some of the data gaps and efficiency challenges that meant Crafter's Companion needed to adapt, fast. The reason for these challenges? Crafter's Companion was running its operations across three isolated systems—Brightpearl for managing stock and inventory, and Sage and QuickBooks for financials.

"Because we'd hit the limits of those systems, and the fact they were patched together, getting information wasn't easy," said Max Lyne, Head of IT, Crafter's Companion. "There was a lot of duplication of tasks and trying to recognise data from one system in another. Information wasn't readily available and reporting capabilities weren't really there, which obviously causes problems as a growing business operating across multiple channels, experiencing high demand, and with big plans for the future".

After considering further investment to uplevel its use of Sage, Crafter's Companion selected Oracle NetSuite SuiteSuccess for Wholesale Distributors to deliver a single, unified view across inventory, finance, planning, logistics and operations. And thanks in part to close collaboration with the NetSuite Professional Services team, Crafter's Companion implemented its new system—remotely—in just 90 days. And the results have been clear.

Month-end is quicker than before, as its financial operations are now connected with the organisation's vast inventory management requirements, with over 25,000 (and counting) active SKUs. With NetSuite, information can flow across the department teams that are critical to delivering an excellent customer experience and shipping orders promptly. Our work orders and assemblies help enable Crafter's Companion to both manage its complex supply chain and stock levels, as well as gather demand planning insights that feed into decision-making on inventory forecasting.

NetSuite is also integrated into Crafter's Companion's Magento ecommerce platform, as well as three separate US shipping carriers—UPS, FedEx and USPS, and DG International in the UK, for continuous order fulfilment. 60 staff across multiple departments, including the company's UK and U.S. headquarters, are interacting with NetSuite and improving operations and processes as a result.

"Information is more streamlined and readily available. As an organisation, our efficiency has improved by 30 percent as we are no longer duplicating tasks across disconnected systems. The impact on our ability to report and analyse what is happening across the business has been huge. NetSuite is already achieving everything we hoped it would, and we now have a system that will help us reach the next level in our growth journey," said Lyne.

In 2021, Crafter's Companion's aim is to maintain the upward trajectory that has seen the company regularly deliver strong annual growth. Key to this sustained performance, according to Lyne, will be direct-to-consumer sales through the Crafter's Companion website, and further integration of CRM and warehouse data. Fortunately, now, NetSuite will provide the canvas.

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.

COMPARE 14 LEADING ERP SOLUTIONS AT THE LUMENIA ERP HEADTOHEAD™ VIRTUAL EVENT

Are you in the market for a new ERP? Unsure which solutions to shortlist? Or frustrated with your current ERP system? The Lumenia ERP HEADtoHEAD™ full-scale virtual event offers a unique opportunity to compare the leading ERP vendors and their products. Taking place virtually on the 23rd - 24th March, 14 ERP vendors will go head to head to demonstrate their ERP solutions. If you are in the market for ERP, it is the perfect opportunity to efficiently review and compare the leading ERP systems.

The virtual event takes place over two days and is facilitated by Lumenia Consulting. Collaborating with our event partners, this virtual event will feature live streaming, live polling and Q&A and real-time networking. The delegate platform will provide all the information needed about the event and the software being presented, it will also provide contact details for the ERP vendors, to allow for interaction pre and post-event. And most importantly, if you miss a session, content will be available on-demand post-event.

Solutions suitable for various organisation sizes, from large corporations to SME's, will be represented. ERP solutions to be demonstrated include **SAP S/4HANA, SAP Business ByDesign, Oracle NetSuite, Epicor, Sage X3, Microsoft Dynamics 365 Business Central, IFS, SAP Business One, Microsoft Dynamics 365 F&O, Sage Intacct, QAD Adaptive, Unit 4 ERP, Acumatica and Financial Force.**

At the start of Day 1, all vendors take part in an 'Elevator Speech'. During this session vendors present a summary of their USP's to convince delegates why it would be a good idea to attend their live on-line demo. Delegates can then choose to attend live sessions focused on Finance, Production, Procurement, Supply Chain, Projects or Sales. Each of these live demonstrations are based on standardised high-level scripts which makes it easier to make system comparisons.

Over the two days, attendees can also hear thought-provoking, vendor-independent presentations from Lumenia Consulting on **'Are you ERP Ready?'** and **'Characteristics of Successful ERP Projects'**. There is also a panel discussion on **'Avoiding ERP Implementation Mistakes'**, along with vendor sponsored round-table sessions on both days.

For further information, pricing discounts and how to register check out the event website www.erpheadtohead.com/virtual or send an email to info@erpheadtohead.com

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SAP Business One
SAP S/4HANA Cloud
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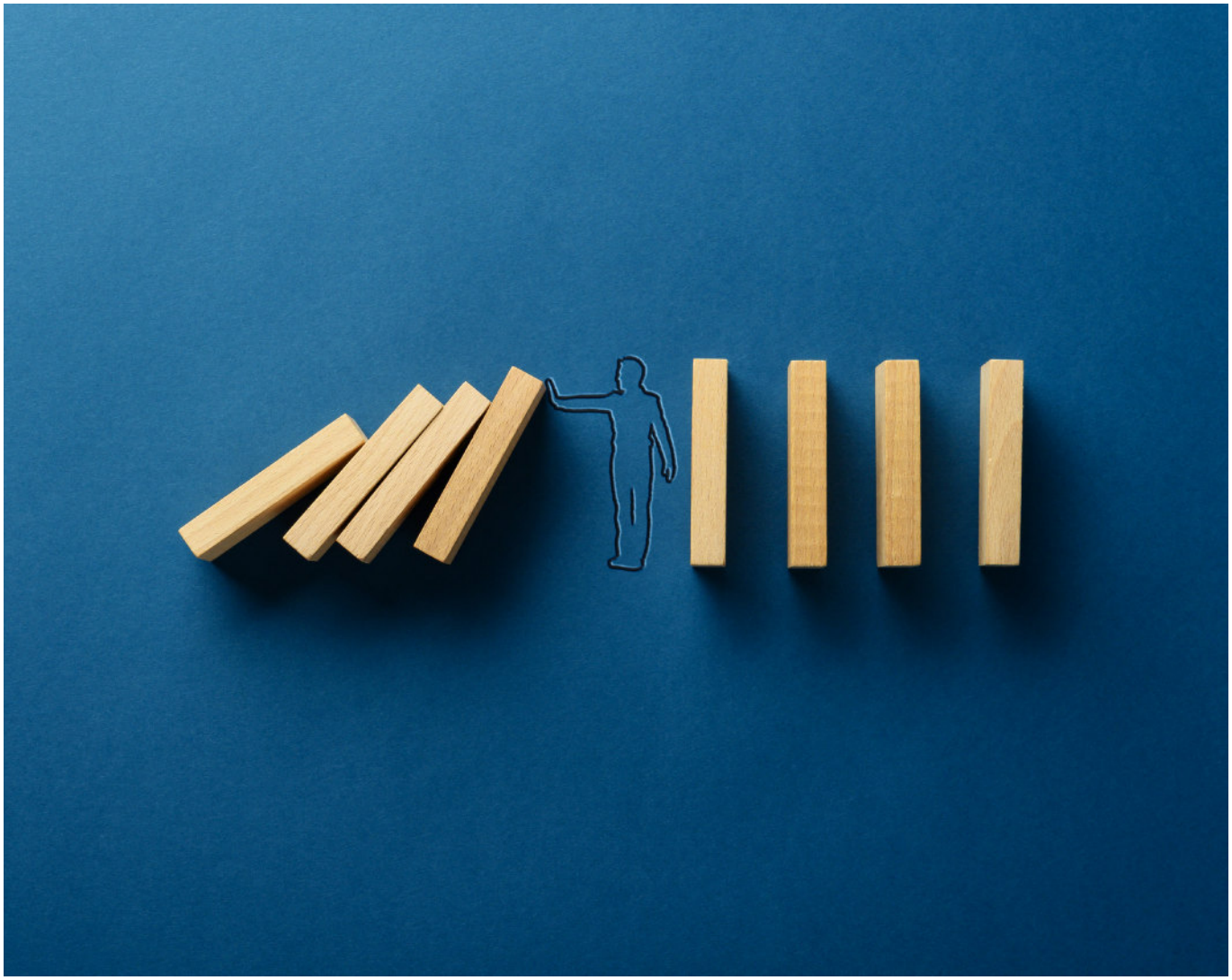


SAP DEBUTS MILESTONE OFFERING TO REVOLUTIONIZE CUSTOMER BUSINESS TRANSFORMATION

SAP announced that RISE with SAP, a milestone offering to propel customers' holistic transformation into intelligent enterprises.

RISE with SAP offers customers at all stages of digital transformation a completely new way to redesign processes for better business outcomes. Along with its robust partner ecosystem, SAP will deliver fast time to value, and flexibility to thrive amid change — all without high up-front investments. The announcement to deliver business transformation as a service was made during RISE with SAP: The Introduction, where SAP also unveiled plans to make a strategic acquisition in the business process intelligence space. Join Christian Klein and guests including Microsoft, Siemens and LIVEKINDLY at the RISE with SAP: The Introduction event. Click here to join live. Catch the replay here.

"Geopolitical tensions, environmental challenges and the ongoing pandemic are forcing businesses to deal with change faster than ever before," said Christian Klein, chief executive officer, SAP. "Companies that can adapt their business processes quickly will thrive — and SAP can help them achieve this. This is what RISE with SAP is all about: it helps customers continuously unlock new ways of running businesses in the cloud to stay ahead of their industry."

RISE with SAP is a single offering that provides a path to the Intelligent Enterprise for every customer, independent of starting point or complexity. Offered on a subscription basis, it features one responsible party for service-level agreement, operations and support. The holistic approach will help companies truly transform their business, going beyond a technical migration to the cloud to enable continual transformation. Together with its strong partner ecosystem, SAP will guide companies through their business transformation by:

Redesigning business processes

- Business process intelligence is built on SAP's business model and process expertise gained from working with over 400,000 customers across 25 industries. Customers can continuously analyze how their business processes perform, benchmark them against industry standards and easily adapt them to new requirements and business demands. Intelligence can be embedded in business processes thanks to a direct connection to SAP's workflow, robotic process automation (RPA) and other artificial intelligence (AI) services.

Enabling technical migration

- SAP tools and services support the entire technical journey with fast time to value, augmented by offerings from SAP's strong ecosystem. This includes automated services to aid the move to modular and standard solution landscapes for faster consumption of innovation in the cloud, as well as support from technical architects to help enable smooth migration and high adoption.
- Customers' cloud infrastructure of choice runs in an SAP data center or with a hyperscaler of choice to benefit from infrastructure-as-a-service capabilities without data and system lock-in.

Building an intelligent enterprise

- SAP Business Technology Platform delivers one semantic layer across an enterprise, providing the foundation for a holistic business transformation. This approach helps keep the core clean and allows for easier consumption:

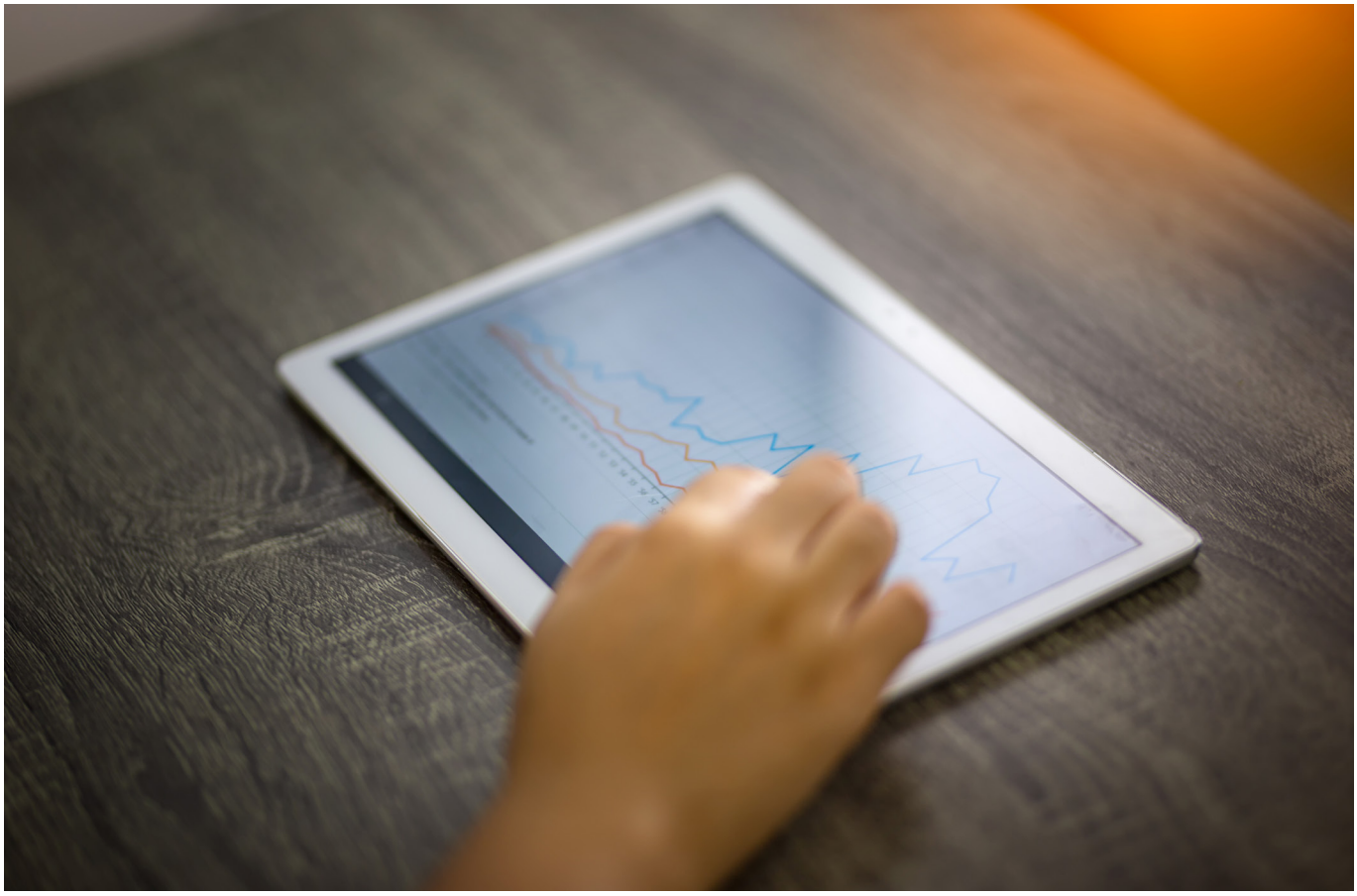
  -Easily complement, extend and integrate with SAP, partner, and third-party solutions using the same data model and platform services as SAP applications.

  -Access more than 2,200 APIs to help ensure integration to on-premise, cloud and non-SAP systems.

  -Steer and plan across the enterprise in real time, and provide high-quality data for analytics, planning and AI scenarios thanks to no one semantical data layer.

  -Gain superior low-code or no-code capabilities to extend SAP solutions, , intelligent RPA to drive automation and a world-class workflow service to change processes on the fly.

- SAP S/4HANA Cloud has embedded AI, RPA, advanced analytics and flexible deployment options, depending on customer complexity.
- Unified access is provided to one of the world's largest business networks, including SAP's supplier, logistics and asset intelligence networks, allowing companies to manage their complete supply chain to react faster to changing market conditions.



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.

ORACLE

ORACLE HELPS ORGANIZATIONS OPTIMIZE LOGISTICS ACROSS GLOBAL SUPPLY CHAINS

New logistics capabilities in Oracle Fusion Cloud Supply Chain & Manufacturing (SCM) help customers reduce costs, make better planning decisions, and improve customer experience

To help organizations increase the efficiency of their global supply chains, Oracle today announced new logistics capabilities within Oracle Fusion Cloud Supply Chain & Manufacturing (SCM). The updates to Oracle Transportation Management (OTM) and Oracle Global Trade Management (GTM), a part of Oracle Cloud SCM, help customers reduce costs, make better planning decisions, and improve customer experience.

"Last year tested supply chains to a breaking point and exposed the limitations of older, on-premises systems that don't provide the flexibility organizations need to run efficient logistics operations," said Chris Cunnane, research director, supply chain management, ARC Advisory Group. "Oracle Cloud SCM's latest update adds new artificial intelligence, machine learning, and integrated IoT features to improve real-time monitoring of shipments and enhance the efficiency of trade and logistics processes."

Oracle Cloud SCM helps organizations enhance supply chain operations, improve planning and execution across the entire business, and deliver a better customer experience. The new capabilities within Oracle Transportation Management and Oracle Global Trade Management include:

- **Oracle Logistics Machine Learning:** Helps customers leverage machine learning in transportation processes to accurately predict transit times, reduce costs associated with unplanned delays, increase logistics efficiency, and enhance customer experience.
- **Rules of Origin Qualification:** Helps customers comply with rules of origin criteria across hundreds of different trade agreements.
- **Connected Logistics:** Helps customers better predict and manage shipments and inventory, while monitoring location and conditions (such as temperature and humidity), by connecting logistic flows between Oracle Transportation Management, Oracle Warehouse Management (WMS), and Oracle Internet of Things (IoT).
- **Ocean Enhancements:** Help customers automate transactions with ocean carriers, from booking through financial settlement.
- **3D Load Configuration Editor:** Provides customers with full flexibility in managing container-based shipments and how they are loaded.
- **New Oracle Logistics Digital Assistant Capabilities:** A new accelerated access experience and enhanced conversational interface helps Oracle Transportation Management and Oracle Global Trade Management customers easily access all shipment information and send requests while on the go.

"Using Oracle Transportation Management, we've been able to get almost immediate results on the rate changes that impact our shipping costs," said Matt Kirchner, senior logistics analyst, White Cap (formerly HD Supply). "We utilize Oracle Transportation Management for export lane cost-by-carrier analysis, and when we're comparing the different costs, we're able to easily try different carrier combinations and compare the planned cost versus the lowest cost. We've found that on average, we're able to reduce costs by approximately 6 percent."

"As organizations reimagine their supply chains in the wake of 2020, creating robust and resilient logistics processes that keep the business moving efficiently should remain a key priority," said Derek Gittoes, vice president of supply chain management product strategy, Oracle. "With the new capabilities within Oracle Transportation Management and Oracle Global Trade Management, we are helping organizations streamline logistics to fulfill orders faster, cheaper, and more sustainably to ultimately meet and exceed customer expectations."

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.

ERPNEWS

IFS CLOUD LAUNCHES ON 10 MARCH. HERE'S WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT.

Article by ***Oliver Pilgerstorfer,***
Chief Marketing Officer, IFS

Making digital innovation available: Bridging the digital divide

Technology innovation has accelerated exponentially over the last 5 to 10 years. The Internet of Things (IoT), artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML) lauded ways to improve the way we run our business, but they also present ways to attract new customers and leverage insights across a company's value-chain to deliver when it matters most in the eyes of a customer.

But for many organizations, these innovations remain detached rather than fully embedded into their daily business processes. At a time when businesses can ill afford to be complacent or ignore the need to improve the way they serve their customers, technology needs to support how a company's strategic goals are achieved.

Two years ago, with this in mind, we took action.

Our development team has been working around the clock on a new platform that enables our customers to leverage digital capabilities from the outset. Appreciating industry nuances and the importance of our customers being in control of how they leverage technology, we have created a new platform with IFS Cloud that sets IFS far apart from the pack.

It's hugely exciting and we want to tell you more about it at our launch event on March 10, 2021.

What you can expect:

- Insight into how IFS Cloud works and the value it can deliver
- In-action demos of the latest innovations embedded in IFS Cloud
- Hear Pioneer Program customers talk about why they chose IFS Cloud
- Understand how you can accelerate the delivery of your own business goals with IFS Cloud
- What's coming from IFS in the future

As CMO, Oliver is responsible for IFS's global marketing and communications activities. With his team, he is on a mission to increase the company's visibility, as well as attract and retain a loyal IFS following. Oliver's experience spans founding and growing start-ups, through to leadership roles at several global technology companies; he also holds an MBA from London Business School. Outside of work he enjoys spending his time with his wife, daughter and nutcase of a dog.

About IFS

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

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IFS IS A BRAND BORN INTO A NEW WORLD ORDER

*Interview with **Ergin Öztürk**,*
CEO, IFS Turkey

This interview with Ergin Öztürk, CEO of IFS Turkey sheds light on the company's growth across the region. He answers all your questions about what to look out for and prioritize in your ERP selection process. We also talk about IFS's steady success and Ergin's predictions of the ERP industry.

1- First of all, can you tell our readers about yourself and your career in the software industry?

I was born in Karadeniz Ereğli, Zonguldak in 1970. I completed my primary and secondary education in Zonguldak. I came to Istanbul after getting accepted into Istanbul Technical University for machine automation and graduated from this department in 1991. I completed my master's degree in system engineering at the same school in 1995. I decided to do my doctorate in the field of industrial engineering and continue my career in the field of automation. I started my professional life in automation systems in a Swiss company. Then I worked as a logistics manager in a German company. During this period, I met ERP for the first time thanks to a project I managed on logistics. In this process, I predicted that ERP is indispensable for the future of companies, and therefore decided to continue my career in this field. In the early 2000s, my path crossed with the Swedish-based technology company IFS. IFS was founded in Turkey in 2004 and since its inception, I have been serving as the Co-Founder / Vice Chairman of the Board.

2- IFS has been among the leading names in the software industry for many years. Can you tell us what's behind this success and continuity?

IFS is a Swedish-based company that develops Corporate Business Applications (ERP / EAM / FSM) that helps companies solve productivity problems. It was founded in 1983 and has more than 4000 employees as of today. With more than 10,000 customers and over 1,000,000 users, it offers services in 60 countries. We have amassed over 750 companies and 25 thousand users in the Turkish market ever since entering it in 2004.

In the six R&D centers in different countries, sectoral new solutions are developed under the coordination of experienced industry experts, and many new technologies such as cloud solutions, augmented reality, artificial intelligence, internet of things, mobile applications, wearable technologies are included in our sectoral solutions.

We offer corporate business applications (ERP / EAM / FSM) that carry businesses to the future and increase their productivity and profitability. These applications offer companies the opportunity to bring their own business processes to international standards. Each of the solutions offered is commissioned by our experienced consultants with sectoral experience. Therefore, we can say that IFS

is actually a digital transformation company. We start by enabling companies to lay the right foundations in their digital transformation journey and bring them to agility where they can compete with their international competitors. Above all, we offer the infrastructure that will ensure sustainable success.

Behind the success and continuity of IFS is the "visionary mindset" that we have never compromised. Its new generation advanced technology, unique flexible structure, layered service-oriented architecture, and easy-to-use features carry companies to the future. With IFS Application 10, a complete solution that includes all the functions that a company may need covers all end-to-end processes within a standard application and can be easily adapted to company needs is offered.

> **WE OFFER CORPORATE BUSINESS APPLICATIONS (ERP / EAM / FSM) THAT CARRY BUSINESSES TO THE FUTURE AND INCREASE THEIR PRODUCTIVITY AND PROFITABILITY.**

3- This extraordinary crisis experienced by the world, brought along many changes and a necessary transformation. When you evaluate this change and transformation in terms of the ERP industry, what are your predictions about the future of the industry?

The pandemic has officially brought the whole world into a new order. This new world order has without a doubt affected all life, business, and habits in every country, politically, economically, and sociologically. All societies, with their companies, institutions, and even individual individuals, have gained great speed in digital transformation. Technologies such as artificial intelligence and data analytics have now become a necessity not only for large companies or technology companies but also for industrial companies. We have all witnessed how the organizations that succeeded in quickly overcoming the initial confusion phase took action in this direction, turning the process into an advantage for themselves. We have lots of customers in Turkey who have taken such rapid action, surpassed their global competitors with the help of IFS's Enterprise Business Applications (ERP / EAM / FSM), and emerged from the pandemic having increased their production capacity.

The results of a global study conducted by IFS make it easier for us to make a forecast for the coming years. Although the epidemic has affected the global economy with changes in supply and demand, according to a global study conducted by IFS, 52% of the participants and those who are decision-makers in the field of IT express that they will increase their digital transformation expenses. This ratio rises to 70% with the participants who plan to protect their existing investments. The data also shows that executives who indicate that their business can be affected by economic conditions will increase their digital transformation spending 20% more than the overall average.

Although there isn't research showing a net increase in digital transformation after the pandemic in Turkey yet, we know that companies have changed their priorities on this issue, and increased their investments. Demand and interest in our products and solutions have grown significantly in recent months. In such crisis periods, visionary companies have turned the process into an opportunity and started investing in technologies such as artificial intelligence and data analytics. A significant portion of our customers handled the disrupted processes from the beginning, focusing more on the processes that needed improvement. In this process, Turkish companies have also shown a much more willing approach to use cloud services to incorporate business applications compared to the past. This is because they saw that the management of business processes and operations were actually dependent on only one or two people. All of these are the subjects already known and told by us and other companies who try to make a difference in companies by using technology, improve their businesses, and to increase the benefit. User companies have now developed a better grasp of the fact that they need these technologies, and have started to apply them for the first time. Within the process, we have seen by experiencing and continue to see all this dynamism. We think that in a short amount of time, companies will prioritize digital transformation in their investments and there will be rapid growth in the Corporate Business Applications market.

4- When it comes to IFS, certain sectors come to mind. What are the features that set IFS apart from others in these sectors?

> **THE RESULTS OF A GLOBAL STUDY CONDUCTED BY IFS MAKE IT EASIER FOR US TO MAKE A FORECAST FOR THE COMING YEARS.**

Born into the new world order, IFS is a company that has been nourished by this understanding and grown. We are among the pioneers of the new world order in terms of both technology usage and customer approach. Not complying with industry standards; we offer easily applicable products that will make people's lives easier.

The most obvious difference of IFS on the solution side is that the product technology. Thanks to the deep functionality, technology, and design difference offered, it can be easily learned and activated. This ensures that IFS projects are more comprehensive, include all processes and that this content is commissioned in a shorter time. In other words, the first reason for our successful projects is the depth and technology of the product.

As IFS, we attach importance to the quality of the service we offer while implementing our solutions in projects. Another reason that distinguishes us in our projects is the competence and quality of our sectoral experienced consultancy team that provides this service. The average working hours in the IFS offices in Turkey and the world is more than twice the industry average. In addition to mastering the functions offered by IFS, our consultants constantly follow the sectoral needs and implement solutions related to them in projects. Our solution partners have also developed successful projects along with the IFS Turkey office. IFS Turkey and the solution partners have successfully taken over hundreds of projects ever since 2004.

One of the most important factors for international corporate business practices to be implemented successfully in Turkish companies

is product localization. In terms of financial regulations, Turkey is shown among the countries that are at a high level in needs and requirements within the world. As IFS Turkey, we have formed a large R&D team to develop appropriate solutions for the country's legislation and to be able to keep them relevant and manage them. Our R&D team moved to Tübitak Marmara Teknokent in 2019 for new projects. New version legislation adaptations, local human resources and payroll developments, special processes for financial affairs, e-solutions, and industry-specific solutions are designed by the R&D team in line with the needs.

In addition to consultancy and technical services, one of the most important factors determining customer satisfaction is support services. We have a support center in Turkey that has long been providing support services to our customers. Our support team consisting of experienced consultants provide support services in many areas to our customers in need, especially in e-applications and financial issues.

5- ERP selection has always been challenging for organizations. Today, it's more difficult than ever. What advice would you give relating to ERP selection for businesses that have not yet taken a step towards digital transformation?

Although digital transformation may seem like a technology transformation, it is actually a business strategy that enables businesses to exist in the future and gives them a competitive advantage. When you perform digitalization correctly, you can increase your competitive power in the domestic and foreign markets and ensure sustainable growth. We see that companies that do not prioritize digital transformation have difficulty in competition and can leave their prior good positions in the sector to new dynamic players. These examples have become even more remarkable during the pandemic process.

ERP is the cornerstone of digital transformation. The ERP selection process should be handled professionally, concrete needs should be identified and the extent and manner of meeting them should be evaluated.

In today's world, being scientific and relying on concrete data when choosing products and services are the basic conditions of a healthy product service cycle. When it comes to ERP, their importance increases even more. This is because the choice made may be a choice that will affect the company for years to come. For this reason, it is important for the future of companies to be very careful in their ERP selection and to choose the software that is specialized in the field that best suits them. Another important point is that when choosing an ERP, they should focus on ERPs that can develop their solutions with the technologies of the future, provide innovative solutions, are efficient, profitable, easy-to-use, and easy-to-apply. In this process, I think it is beneficial to examine the reports of world-famous independent research companies and to make reference visits.

> **"IFS IS A BRAND BORN INTO A NEW WORLD ORDER, NOURISHED BY THIS UNDERSTANDING AND GROWN.**

6- Lastly, what are IFS's goals for 2021 and later on?

Our primary objective is when Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP), Field Service Management (FSM), and Enterprise Asset Management (EAM) is mentioned, as a new generation company, IFS is the first name that comes to mind in Turkey. Nowadays, companies don't have as many resources or as much time as before, and they have to be much faster. Because they only can only gain a competitive advantage by being more innovative, faster, and more visionary companies. IFS will continue to be one of the most successful examples of this approach in the world by integrating its most innovative technologies into the business processes of companies.

Another goal of ours will be to focus on our projects for the service sector. According to independent research companies such as Gartner, IFS has been a market leader in Field Service Management solutions for the last 5 years. There is already a rising trend in the service area in the world. It is clear that the service sector will be one of the shining stars of the coming period. Companies are in a transition from selling products to selling services. This topic has also become a priority for Turkish companies. From white goods by Telekom to food and retail from energy producers, we aim to contribute to many companies offering services in the field with our Field Service Management application, and share the "know-how" we obtain from the world to the companies in Turkey.

Finally, our goal from the past to the present and which we never compromise is "visionaryism".
IFS is a brand born into a new world order, nourished by this understanding and grown. We are among the pioneers of the new world order in terms of both technology usage and customer approach. IFS applications' "simplicity", "easy installation", "easy use", "very fast return on investment", "high efficiency" and "innovative up-to-date" features also meet the needs of this new order. We will meet the needs of this new process in 2021 and beyond. We will continue to offer easy and truly applicable products, not traditional practices and concepts, exceeding the standards of our own industry.

About IFS

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

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TOP 5 IMPROVEMENT INITIATIVES EVERY FOOD AND BEVERAGE PRODUCER SHOULD KNOW FOR 2021 AND BEYOND

*Article by **Jack Payne**,*

Solution Consulting Director, Food & Beverage and Process Manufacturing , Aptean

While we've been inundated with predictions of industry trends these past few months, many manufacturers and producers are also reflecting on 2020—one of the most unpredictable years in history. The COVID-19 pandemic has been the defining event of the era and its impact will continue to be felt long into 2021.

Despite everything we've learned together through these turbulent times, there is so much more that the food and beverage (F&B) industry especially can glean from this year in order to make gains next year. Coronavirus may still be top of the news, but it doesn't have a monopoly on the forces shaping consumer demand, changing the world of food, and informing the next steps for F&B businesses. Here are the top improvement initiatives all food businesses should be looking at in 2021 and beyond.

1. Prepare better for unusual demand patterns

If there's one thing the pandemic has taught us so far, it's the value of being agile as a food and beverage business. Those who were able to scale production up or down at the right time and to the correct degree had a big efficiency advantage.

There will continue to be a need for this and as we all get back to normal, demand will fluctuate and follow patterns that may seem unpredictable to the naked eye. This is especially important when it comes to food wastage—a significant problem for the industry at the best of times but one it's even more vulnerable to at the moment.

Advanced forecasting methods and analytics tools will be more important than ever for demand planning, efficiency, and minimizing waste in the coming years.

2. Embrace flexibility

In 2020, F&B businesses were forced to completely upend their production schedules to cater to different sectors—often for the first time and at very short notice. Producers embraced the importance of pivoting to changes in demand by channel, for example, being able to shift portions, packaging, and labeling from food service to the grocery or retail consumers seamlessly.

While this was necessary for many to maintain some sort of trade when things were at their bleakest, it showed us the potential of many businesses to exploit new revenue streams quickly. Manufacturers are unlikely to want to pivot almost entirely from food service to retail or direct-to-consumer (as many were forced to) again, but the ability to capture a new market share when the opportunity presents itself is something all could benefit from.

3. Start taking sustainability seriously

In their recent report into trends shaping the food industry, global nutrition leaders ADM found 65% of customers actively want to have a positive effect on the environment through everyday activities. Being able to offer products that fit this brief should be a priority for all F&B manufacturers and producers. Businesses can respond in a number of ways, for instance:

• **Agriculture:** regenerative agriculture will help enrich the soil in the long-term and enhanced agriculture practices will improve crop yield per acre.

• **Packaging:** using renewable materials, or sometimes no materials at all, can negate the need for plastic.

• **Processing:** reduced waste, increased shelf life, and reduced give-away will result in more food from farm gate to table.

• **Supply chain:** improved flexibility and productivity will result in more food consumption with less waste and spoilage.

But there are so many other reasons why sustainable practices are needed right now. They will be crucial in the fight against climate change and world hunger and help give everyone in the global food and beverage industry an equitable stake. When it comes to making supply chains more agile and flexible the pandemic showed how this can benefit everyone in the supply chain, from the farm or plant to the table.

4. Consider expanding your nutritious product ranges

In November of this year, Aptean and Reuters Events co-authored a research report on food and beverage industry trends showing that food categories such as fresh produce, health foods, and meat and seafood will have the strongest growth over the next five years. With this in mind, one of the more striking changes taking place in food demand right now is one towards plant-based meat replacement, ranking as the fourth food category projected to have the strongest growth. Nestle also reported that 87% of people in the U.S. now include plant-based proteins in their diets.

Driven by a range of factors including concern for the environment, animal welfare, and personal health, consumers will increasingly be looking to the prepared food industry especially for new plant-based alternatives, fresh goods, and sustainably raised meat and seafood options. Advanced solutions like food-specific ERP are built to manage the introduction of new products and the costing, quality control, and inventory management concerns that come with them.

5. Workplace safety

With much of the world—especially North America and Europe—facing increased restrictions and lockdowns, the danger of COVID-19 outbreaks on food and beverage manufacturing sites grows again. By and large, manufacturers were able to prepare factory floors in the spring through rapid implementation of safety measures. Now is a good time to reinforce safety through physical distancing, improved sanitation, and altered production schedules. Technology like enterprise resource planning (ERP) and manufacturing execution systems (MES) can aid in tracking and protecting employee health to ensure businesses maintain their duty-of-care and can remain open and producing.

> **"IF THERE'S ONE THING THE PANDEMIC HAS TAUGHT US SO FAR, IT'S THE VALUE OF BEING AGILE AS A FOOD AND BEVERAGE BUSINESS. THOSE WHO WERE ABLE TO SCALE PRODUCTION UP OR DOWN AT THE RIGHT TIME AND TO THE CORRECT DEGREE HAD A BIG EFFICIENCY ADVANTAGE.**

The Future

Despite the difficulties of 2020, the food and beverage industry is looking to 2021 with optimism. Even still, for businesses to move beyond the recovery phase and start thriving, they must keep looking for new advantages—the five initiatives we've discussed here are just a few of the options available. Aptean's Global Food & Beverage Industry Trends Report offers further insight into the state of digital transformation in the F&B sector and what we're likely to see in the coming years.

When looking to transform a food and beverage business for the better, industry-specific ERP can help by making systems more integrated, giving better insight from a wealth of data, and extending the core features of new technology to all users.

Jack Payne is a Solution Consulting Director at Aptean, focusing on Food and Beverage ERP and Process Manufacturing. Jack originally joined the organization nearly 30 years ago with Ross ERP and spent much of that time working closely with manufacturers to understand their challenges and tailor the development of the product accordingly. Over the years, Jack has collaborated with customers, industry analysts, and developers to create a strong vision for our ERP solutions and have become a well-respected industry resource for best practices and future technology advancements.

About Aptean

Aptean is one of the world's leading providers of industry-specific software. Our enterprise resource planning and supply chain solutions are uniquely designed to meet the needs of specialized manufacturers and distributors in over 20 industries, while our compliance solutions serve specific markets such as finance and life sciences. In total, Aptean's solutions are used by over 5,000 customers around the world. With both cloud and on-premise deployment options, Aptean's products, services and unmatched expertise help businesses of all sizes to scale and succeed. Aptean is headquartered in Alpharetta, Georgia and has offices in North America, Europe and Asia-Pacific. To learn more about Aptean and the markets we serve, visit www.aptean.com.

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HOW CAN ERP SOFTWARE HELP WITH REMOTE WORKING?

Companies already running ERP software made the transition to remote working more easily when Covid hit and are now reporting better results than their counterparts.

Customers on ERP also reported winning business from competitors who could no longer fulfil commitments.

ERP not only keeps you up and running – it keeps your customers up and running.

Lucy Thorpe,
Head of Content, InCloud Solutions

INCLOUD SOLUTIONS

WHY DID COMPANIES WITH ERP ADAPT MORE QUICKLY TO REMOTE WORKING WHEN THE PANDEMIC HIT?

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

It's 2021 and companies of all kinds around the world are trading successfully from home. When the pandemic hit in spring 2020 the picture was mixed. For some of us no change was necessary as we had always worked this way, while for others a remote working minority became the majority. But there was another group who struggled as they scrambled to get hold of everything they needed to move into home working mode. These were the companies who had never embraced flexible working, and could be characterised as users of old technology. Maybe they had plans for a digital upgrade but had not got round to it. Maybe they had no plans at all. I hope that has changed now!

The ability to work remotely in an effective way is about leadership. Young companies starting from scratch usually offer remote working as standard because that's what staff want. Forward looking leaders in more established companies offer it because they want to show staff they trust them to work without supervision. Everyone else seems to have got caught out.

Many companies are now playing digital catchup to avoid that situation happening again. My advice would be to use the opportunity well. Instead of reaching for the bare minimum needed to function until the office is open again, why not use the time to do a digital audit and get ahead of competitors whose digital projects have stalled?

With the right advice companies can take the chance to streamline their back office processes – taking advantage of cloud technology which can be accessed via the internet. These leaders can join the ranks of forward thinking scale ups who already have teams working seamlessly despite remote locations. With modern ERP accessible via an app, tasks like approvals can be done from anywhere.

Those who moved easily into remote working when Covid hit are now reporting better results than their counterparts. One of our clients reported winning business from a competitor who could no longer fulfil commitments – which while great news for our customer also feels a little sad. Everyone should have access to the kind of technology that keeps you up and running come what may.

The advantage of being digitally prepared is illustrated by James Forsdyke, Head of Product Management at Lloyd's Register;

"Taking a moment to reflect on how 'lucky' we were at Lloyd's Register for having implemented an end to end cloud based ERP before the global pandemic hit. It felt really hard at the time, but ultimately meant we could keep all our lights on during global lockdowns and continue to support our customers who themselves perform such essential functions for the world at the moment."

You can read the story of Lloyd's Register's transformation journey here.

So here are some bullet points on how ERP has helped in the crisis.

Agility

The initial lockdown came with very little notice and those who had digital infrastructure in place moved quickest. As this recent academic study states;

"Companies that have adopted cloud-based ERP are much better at working from home, and therefore ahead in maintaining continuity during the COVID-19 pandemic crisis. Therefore, interest in the adoption or acceptance of cloud-based ERP has become important at this time."

WITH THE RIGHT ADVICE COMPANIES CAN TAKE THE CHANCE TO STREAMLINE THEIR BACK OFFICE PROCESSES – TAKING ADVANTAGE OF CLOUD TECHNOLOGY WHICH CAN BE ACCESSED VIA THE INTERNET.

Factors Affecting Intention to Adopt Cloud-Based ERP from a Comprehensive Approach Byungchan Ahn and Hyunchul Ahn Graduate School of Business IT, Kookmin University, Korea 2020

Make better decisions

Good customer service keeps customers onboard and with the insight to action data analytics offered by ERP products in the cloud you can spot and correct failures without leaving home.

Stay compliant

With Brexit, vat and taxes changing so frequently during the pandemic, finance leaders need to stay on their toes.
Cloud ERP providers keep their customers compliant even in the most testing times. Brexit webinars have reached key stakeholders in their homes and updates have been fed through remotely.

Collaboration

Working remotely in teams has been facilitated massively by a plethora of collaboration tools. We can now do more than just talk and share screens. SAP Business ByDesign are developing a feature which will allow you to bring live ERP data into your Microsoft Teams call. Respect to @janmatthes and co

Growth

Cloud ERP is a growth enabler – helping you to scale and become more efficient. With ERP there is no need to put your growth on hold just because you can't get to a workplace to do it in.

It's not all roses – I know that. These are tough times. But trying to do it with one hand tied behind your back is not fun for anyone. You need to give your staff the tools they need to work effectively from anywhere because that's the future now.

This is what one customer said;

"Being able to seamlessly work remotely and deliver remote audit work to clients, through already established systems and solutions, has made a big difference to our global brands."

Global Head of Commercial at Lloyd's Register Quality Assurance Limited

Don't tell me you don't wish that was you?

THE INITIAL LOCKDOWN CAME WITH VERY LITTLE NOTICE AND THOSE WHO HAD DIGITAL INFRASTRUCTURE IN PLACE MOVED QUICKEST.

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.

sage

NEW ERP TRENDS & FORECASTS FOR 2021

*Article by **Nishant Joshi**,*
Technical Writer, Sage Software Solutions Pvt Ltd

Enterprise Resource Planning systems allow companies to realize their maximum potential. They help with all business functions from finance and sales to marketing and customer support. They destroy information silos that enable companies to function as a cohesive force. But the problem with legacy ERP systems is that they rely on spreadsheets, store business-critical information in silos, and have various security issues. But the current market trends show that ERP systems are undergoing rapid transformation, and 2021 will see the emergence of new upgrades and integrations.

1. Cloud-enabled ERP systems

Cloud-enabled ERP systems are not new in the market. They have been there for quite some time. But businesses, especially small scale ones, are implementing it rapidly. Earlier, companies implemented on-premise ERP solutions that were expensive and required a highly skilled IT staff to operate. But with the emergence of cloud-enabled ERP systems, the implementation cost has come down, and anyone can conveniently use the ERP system. Also, new ERP upgrades can be installed 24/7. Companies are now opting for a hybrid model — a combination of on-cloud and on-premise ERP systems — that cover each other's weaknesses. Accenture reports that 51% of CIOs use cloud ERP, 35% prefer on-premise ERP, and 10% use hybrid models.

> "INTELLIGENT ERP SYSTEMS COMBINE HISTORICAL INFORMATION WITH CURRENT DATA THAT HELPS THE SENIOR MANAGEMENT TO FRAME BETTER STRATEGIES.

2. AI and other hi-tech integrations

With the surge of data, it has become essential to have tools that gather, analyze, and provide actionable insights. The digital world is full of unstructured data, and companies need a tool/technique to extract useful data. This is where AI-integrated ERP systems come into play. They auto-populate information, observe changing market trends, keep an eye on the competitors, and reduce information loading time. It helps your employees as it provides them more time to focus on issues that require human ingenuity.

Intelligent ERP systems combine historical information with current data that helps the senior management to frame better strategies. Overall, when ERP systems are integrated with advanced technologies, it improves business productivity, maximizes revenues, cuts expenditures, and makes processes efficient. Reports suggest that new technologies such as Robotic Process Automation (RPA) will grow about 12.7 times by 2021.

3. ERP systems will become more mobile

A few years back, salespeople could add or update customer-centric information only after reaching their offices. But when ERP systems became mobile, they could do so from the customer's place itself. There was no need to jot down notes and carry bulky diaries. Today, salespeople can work from outside their offices and during non-office hours because of mobile ERPs. Mobile ERP applications can be accessed from mobile phones, tabs, or any other electronic device.

Mobile ERPs also help employees to communicate with their team leaders and managers easily. They can ask for essential resources at any time and from any place. Another advantage of mobile ERP is in the inventory department. Whenever the quantity of raw materials goes below a certain threshold, the information can be shared with the concerned authorities in real-time, and appropriate measures can be taken to lessen the negative impact. Research by the Aberdeen group tells us that companies that implemented mobile ERP systems saw a 40% increase in their operational efficiency.

4. ERP systems will have a robust data analytics feature.

ERP systems are excellent in collecting unstructured data, but they aren't outstanding when analyzing and extracting business insights from market trends. As powerful analytics becomes an essential part of ERP systems, companies will gain the ability to draw actionable insights. The data visualization capabilities and access to business-centric information in real-time will allow organizations to make decisions related to finance, manufacturing, and marketing without much effort. It will also enable them to draw useful insights from customer feedback and make necessary product changes. Data analytics will allow managers to understand the market swings and devise an effective strategy. According to The Hackett Group, companies that use automated reporting require 49% fewer reports and save 20%-40% of their closing time.

"

ERP SYSTEMS ARE EXCELLENT IN COLLECTING UNSTRUCTURED DATA, BUT THEY AREN'T OUTSTANDING WHEN ANALYZING AND EXTRACTING BUSINESS INSIGHTS FROM MARKET TRENDS.

Conclusion

The Enterprise Resource Planning software has made it easy to do business. It has broken information silos so all departments can work as a united force. Authorized personnel can add, update, and access business-critical information from anywhere and at any time. Frontline executives can contact their managers from any place and demand the required data. The CRM (Customer Relationship Management) module of the ERP system allows companies to interact with customers in real-time, solve their queries instantly, and understand their needs, wants, and aspirations. In 2021 and beyond, ERP adoption will only rise. Companies prefer on-Cloud solutions that are mobile, agile, have powerful data-analytics features, and can be integrated with other hi-tech solutions.

What are the ERP trends to look out for in 2021?

ERP systems have never been more critical than they are now. And the massive adoption rate signifies that the trend is only going to increase in 2021 and beyond. Some of the essential things to look out for will be:

a. Cloud-enabled ERP systems
b. IoT-enabled ERP systems
c. Personalized ERP solutions
d. Digital marketing solutions for ERP systems
e. 3D printing support

Nishant Joshi likes to read and write on technologies that form the bedrock of the modern-day and age like ERP, CRM, Web Apps, machine learning, data science, AI, and robotics. His expertise in content marketing has helped grow countless business opportunities. Nishant works for Sage Software Solutions Pvt. Ltd., a leading provider of CRM and ERP solutions to small and mid-sized businesses in India.
You can learn more about him on 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.

avaap

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HUNGRY FOR TRANSFORMATION: PREDICTIONS FOR MANUFACTURING ERP FOR 2021

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

The new year is a time to look forward, but also a good opportunity to reflect back. 2020 was a year of adapting: to new rules and regulations, to new ways of working, and for many organisations, to legacy technology limitations. 2021 is the perfect time to rebuild your technology stack and modernize processes for competitive advantage.
Here are a few things we see coming in the next year.

Titanic Move to the Cloud

The global shut down allowed all companies to review their technology approach and specifically at the agility needed in the current landscape. Many companies were not able to react or implement change quickly, whilst others were. What were the key differences? Cloud and the ability to access mission-critical business software from anywhere at any time. Flexible technology in many cases would have provided the agility to change and react quickly, illustrating the need for modern solutions that allow for response to changing business conditions and future demands. We'll see many boards asking these questions to IT directors and CIOs and asking for a refreshed IT or business strategy to ensure agility in the future.

Improved User Experience

Manufacturers are not known for being early technology adopters. While this does delay the benefits organisations can achieve from modern ERP systems, it provides the chance to benefit from the experiences of those who have moved to the cloud before them. ERP vendors continue to improve the user experience, so manufacturers making the move now can benefit from the smaller learning curve and faster time to value.

> **"ERP VENDORS CONTINUE TO IMPROVE THE USER EXPERIENCE, SO MANUFACTURERS MAKING THE MOVE NOW CAN BENEFIT FROM THE SMALLER LEARNING CURVE AND FASTER TIME TO VALUE.**

Part of the improved experience will include more organisations choosing industry-specific software for increased agility and flexibility. These systems come with out-of-the-box functionality such as forecasting and demand planning, tracking and traceability, and recipe and least-cost formulation capabilities for food and beverage manufacturers. They also more easily connect with Industry 4.0 and product lifecycle management (PLM) technologies, which is important as these systems become more commonplace in the industry.

Remote Implementations as the New Normal

The past year has created the expectation of moving ahead, not slowing down. The ability to implement ERP software remotely has opened up new possibilities, allowing for all or mostly remote implementation teams, built from expanded geographies, and specialized talent. Even after shutdowns end and vaccines become widespread, many businesses will still take a slow approach to return to the workplace, if they return at all. The silver lining is that the delivery team can strike a healthy balance between travel and remote working and the end customer sees a significant reduction in project expenses, which can be repurposed into other budgets.

Experienced implementation teams have built upon their technology competency and incorporated novel approaches to robust communication and collaboration, to allow it to feel like the team is right there. I predict that 2020 will have a lasting effect on how services are consumed going forward.

The Art of the Possible

In an environment where it has been extremely difficult to create relationships, we have seen many ERP discussions become transactional. This is difficult to avoid when you do not have the opportunity for a physical presence. Decisions take longer and are more challenging, however, it has also made the space far more competitive. I predict decision-cycles in 2021 to be longer, more competitive, include far more vendors, and have higher customer expectations. A successful vendor in 2021 will accept this new landscape and adapt to embrace it.

While this past year has shown that it's incredibly hard to predict accuracy when looking at the future, there's no denying that cloud, digital transformation, and Industry 4.0 will continue to dominate the conversation, and experience will be the goal of optimization strategies. It will be exciting to see how the industry evolves as manufacturers begin or continue their transformation programmes through the next year.

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

About Avaap

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

FORK IN THE ROAD: COMPANIES TAKE THE LOW-CODE, CLOUD ERP ROUTE

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

2020 was a rough road for most of us. New challenges presented themselves on a daily basis, and disruption was the name of the game. Some manufacturers, distributors, and supply chain organizations were better prepared than others. More specifically, the companies that made a decision to move from on-premises to Cloud ERP before 2020 were in a decidedly better position to weather the tumultuous business climate.

Companies that had already gone down the Cloud ERP road had a flexible platform. They could easily configure changes to their system and processes while allowing many of their employees to work from anywhere.

Meanwhile, companies making the journey with an old, on-premise legacy ERP struggled to adapt and couldn't easily accommodate remote work.

2021 will bring new challenges in addition to those already brought on by COVID-19. Companies on old systems will once again come to a fork in the road. They may realize their current systems no longer meet their needs or support their business objectives. They won't want to wait long before they change course. But what will it take for them to shift direction sooner rather than later?

Cloud ERP: Travel the Low-Code Road

Cloud ERP has been around for several years, so this road offers a relatively smooth ride, especially since low-code technologies have been added. Low-code tools empower business users to become "citizen developers." This means laypeople can launch mobile apps, analytics, and AI where they're most needed in a business. They can utilize drag-and-drop tools to create screens and workflows that automate processes and improve efficiency.

By empowering users to become citizen developers, companies can quickly deploy capabilities that add value and allow them to adapt to market changes. In other words, low-code turns cloud ERP into a superhighway, accelerating the rate of digital transformation.

Companies won't need a team of programmers to tailor an ERP. This will take the burden off IT in terms of coding, maintenance, and upgrades, and lets people closest to the business create capabilities to solve business problems.

A cloud platform also enables teams to collaborate more effectively through online communities and integrated communication streams, like Slack or Teams. In this way, internal and external stakeholders work together via a secure collaborative platform to address industry requirements and customer demands.

Business Drivers: Mind the Road Signs to Low-Code ERP

Low-code, cloud ERP will become mission-critical in 2021. If companies pay attention, they'll be able to see the fork in the road coming up ahead, especially if they heed the signs.

The pace of Change - No Speed Limit

The rate of change is set to rapidly accelerate. To keep up, manufacturers, distributors, and supply chain organizations need the speed and agility inherent in low-code, cloud ERP to effectively compete.

Digital Transformation – Do Not Yield

Digital transformation remains critical. But software is the real driver behind such initiatives. Companies need to be able to leverage software in new ways, and ERP must become the core of a company's digital transformation strategy. Low-code enables companies to more easily tailor an ERP to meet ongoing customer demands.

> **"COMPANIES WON'T NEED A TEAM OF PROGRAMMERS TO TAILOR AN ERP. THIS WILL TAKE THE BURDEN OFF IT IN TERMS OF CODING, MAINTENANCE, AND UPGRADES, AND LETS PEOPLE CLOSEST TO THE BUSINESS CREATE CAPABILITIES TO SOLVE BUSINESS PROBLEMS.**

Workforce Crisis – Road Narrows

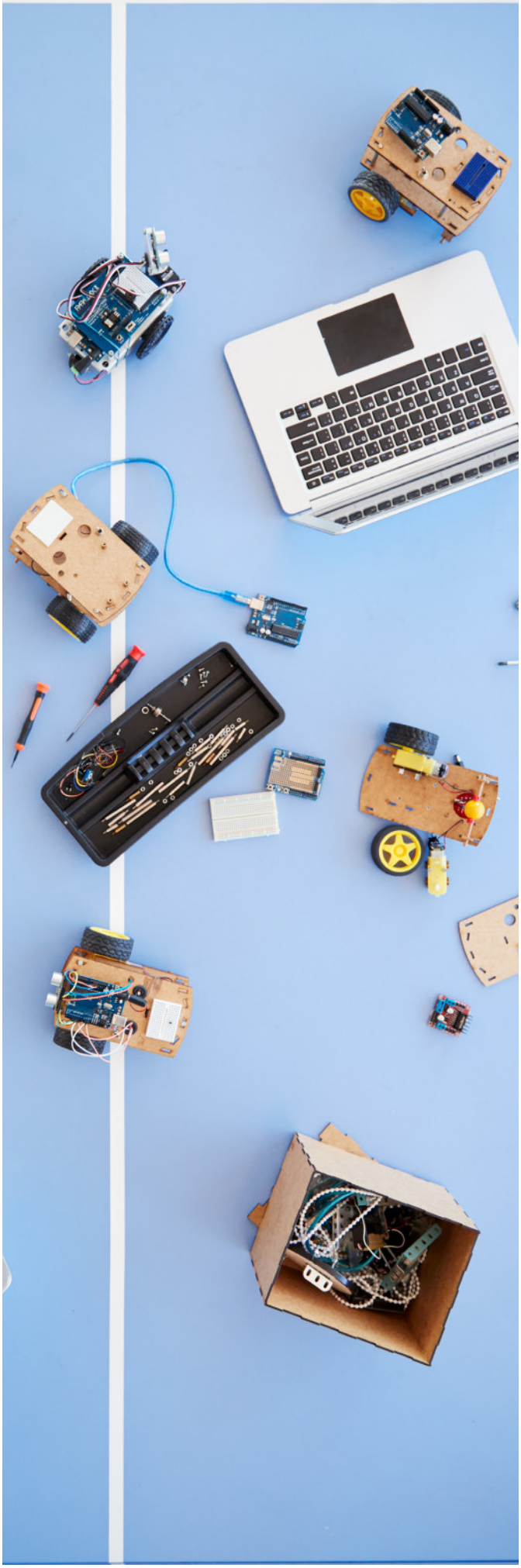
Legacy ERP systems will inhibit a company's ability to recruit technically proficient employees. In a competitive labor market, it will be difficult to find candidates who find legacy applications appealing. If a company manages to attract younger, tech-savvy workers, they'll be difficult to retain once introduced to the legacy work environment. Younger generations, including millennials and Gen Z, want to utilize cutting-edge technology with a "hip" look and feel.

COVID Catalyst – Detour Ahead

COVID-19 exposed the weaknesses of legacy ERP – too many manual processes, an overreliance on spreadsheets, and non-integrated forms of communication are just a few of the shortfalls. Not only did COVID-19 reinforce the need for speed and agility, but it also redefined what "business as usual" will look like in the future, including the need to support remote work and enable a resilient supply chain.

Competition – Passing Lane

Companies that continue down the legacy ERP road are headed to a dead-end, allowing competitors to pass them



by. They'll lose ground to companies already on the onramp to cloud ERP. And this cloud ERP road is sure to become a superhighway with the bandwidth to handle more customers, transactions, and growth.

Legacy ERP: Left in the Dust

Manufacturers that operated with a legacy ERP faced significant difficulties in 2020. COVID challenges aside, ERP systems designed over 20 years ago are not built for the dynamic nature of business today.

The crux of the problem is traditional or legacy ERP systems are difficult and expensive to customize and change, often requiring consultants to make even the smallest tweak, such as adding a new report. This drains time and resources away from ongoing innovation. In fact, only about one-third of legacy-ERP users are running the latest version of the software and are literally stuck on an old release.

Understandably, some companies might be reluctant to start down a new path. But they're getting left in the dust with yesterday's ERP. These systems don't fit their businesses anymore. Some companies are hanging onto an outdated release due to the time and effort required to upgrade and re-configure a new version to their needs. If they haven't read the signs and started to look for a more modern solution, they may be unable to compete.

IN 2020, COVID-19 MADE MANY COMPANIES ABRUPTLY AWARE OF THE PROBLEMS INHERENT IN THEIR LEGACY ERP SYSTEMS.

Case in Point: Shifting Lanes

One manufacturer faced this type of fork. It essentially had two choices. Down one path, it could perform a major ERP upgrade. This would require implementing the latest version of the software, re-configuring its unique system customizations, and coding for new compliance issues.

The second option was a modern cloud ERP with low-code capabilities. This platform was highly flexible and would better equip the company for the future, as it could easily adapt to changes in the market or regulatory environment.

In comparing the two, the company realized option one would be complex and costly, and it could cause delays and possible disruptions to their business. The second option provided a modern platform that could drive efficient operations. Making the decision to go the cloud route easy.

The Road More Travelled

In 2020, COVID-19 made many companies abruptly aware of the problems inherent in their legacy ERP systems. These systems couldn't easily adapt to volatile market conditions, couldn't support resilient supply chains, and couldn't easily accommodate remote work for employees.

Meanwhile, innovative companies already on the road to modernization with cloud ERP were better positioned to navigate the issues brought on by the pandemic. And with the addition of low-code customizations, they'll be able to adapt to the ongoing changes ahead.

With the prospect of mass vaccinations in 2021, we could see commerce rise to pre-pandemic levels. Companies on legacy ERP solutions must rethink whether they want to continue down their current road, as it could hinder their ability to respond as the economy reopens.

Although companies must read the road and signs themselves, choosing low-code, cloud ERP gives them a modern, flexible platform to compete, grow, and thrive in the year ahead.

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.

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.

"WHAT ARE THE ERP TRENDS TO LOOK OUT FOR IN 2021?"

Companies are spending more time identifying the path of change from the old way to the new state of things. They are doing this by assessing how software providers can accommodate the new state and the speed of change to get there. Assessing tools such as AI and IoT will be a huge trend next year as organizations are able to grasp 'big data' and put toolsets in place for enterprise-wide data analytics. AI and IoT are starting to come together and provide automation of processes and data flow. Companies will continue to invest heavily in the development and deployment of these applications.

Chris Devault,

Director, Selection Consultants & Influencer Relations, QAD

ERP TRENDS FOR 2021 AND BEYOND

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

What are the ERP trends to look out for in the coming year? In my opinion, no amount of crystal ball gazing into the future is going to mean anything without reference to what we have just been through – the significance of which will be felt for years to come.

The worldwide pandemic has had many effects – both inside and outside the business community, but the most notable is the way it has stripped out the insubstantial to reveal the essentials – the rock and foundations of what we build our lives on.

Socially and economically Covid 19 revealed inequalities that society urgently needs to tackle. It also revealed the key role technology is playing in both our private and working lives.

Access to basic technology like an internet connection is starting to feel like a human right – on the same level as electricity. Meanwhile, cloud business technology is starting to feel like an essential requirement rather than a nice to have.

According to the United Nations half of the people they surveyed at the end of 2020 now shop online more frequently and rely on the internet more for news, health-related information, and digital entertainment with consumers in emerging economies making the biggest shift.

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> **AI AND MACHINE LEARNING ADVANCEMENTS WHICH DELIVER IMPROVED OUTCOMES LIKE THE INVOICE SCANNING SYSTEMS WHICH ARE NOW COMING INTO USE.**

Meanwhile according to Global Workforce Analytics 25-30% of the workforce will be working-from-home multiple days a week by the end of 2021 and using digital technology to do so.

We will only be able to continue this progress if the digital infrastructure is in place. As we saw during the lockdown, those with good digital preparedness moved quickly to support customers while others had some serious catching up to do.

Thinkers, technologists, and financial experts agree.
Take for example the former Governor of the Bank of England Mark Carney, who in his BBC Reith lecture in December 2020 noted that one of the main challenges governments, regulators, and businesses now face, aside from the pandemic, is how to best use technological innovation to our advantage. He said;

"One of the challenges we have, if we step back from the Covid crisis, the climate crisis, the aftermath of the credit crisis, is something that is very positive but could also be as challenging.[This is] the fourth industrial revolution, the technological revolution, which ... has been accelerated by the Covid crisis."

As Mark Carney goes on to say, it's not just for the front runners and the early adopters;

"The question is how are we going to channel those technologies in a way that benefits most of society very quickly because the history of previous industrial revolutions is that it takes a very long period of time."

So, with thought leaders like Mark Carney on board, I can only imagine that 2021 will be about using technology to get us back on our feet and to re-establish any competitive edge that has been lost.

What does this mean for ERP?

Making digital transformation meaningful

This is my number one trend for the year ahead. If digital transformation does not translate into technology that people will use and derive benefit from then there is little point to it.

ERP technology will only continue to be relevant and helpful to companies where it delivers real results.

> **"WITH INTELLIGENT ERP, ALL COMPANIES HAVE A DISTINCT OPPORTUNITY TO DIFFERENTIATE THEMSELVES WITH BEST PRACTICES, INSIGHTS, AND AWARENESS - EMBEDDED INTO THE APPLICATIONS THAT EMPLOYEES USE EVERY DAY.**

The main areas will be;

• AI and Machine Learning advancements which deliver improved outcomes like the invoice scanning systems which are now coming into use.
• Predictive Analytics which helps businesses work out what will happen in the future, based on data today.

According to David Sweetman, Senior Director, Global Product Marketing SAP S/4HANA

"running an enterprise on data-driven technology alone is not enough to keep up with the competition. Data needs to be converted into insights and connections that fuel a system of automation, split-second fast and informed decision-making, and real-time adaptation to market dynamics."

We are talking about technology that learns from data and transaction patterns and recommends actions and changes to processes, systematically and automatically.

With Intelligent ERP, all companies have a distinct opportunity to differentiate themselves with best practices, insights, and awareness - embedded into the applications that employees use every day. That level of intelligence is going to be the basis for any real discussion on the future of ERP as we head further into the 2020s.

Lucy Thorpe is an in-house writer and content creator for cloud solutions consultancy In Cloud Solutions based in Reading & London in the UK - they are members of the worldwide United Vars network of SAP consultancies.

About InCloud Solutions

In Cloud Solutions is an SAP Platinum Partner offering ERP software solutions, training, and consultancy to SMEs. Based in the UK In Cloud Solutions are experts in the ERP solution SAP Business ByDesign, cloud-based ERP for mid-sized business. www.incloudsolutions.co.uk

"WHAT ARE THE ERP TRENDS TO LOOK OUT FOR IN 2021?"

ERP technology will only continue to be relevant to companies where it offers real benefits. That means ERP must be relevant and helpful - delivering tangible results. In Cloud Solutions believes this will include;

• AI and Machine Learning advancements that deliver improved outcomes along the lines of the invoice scanning systems already coming into use.

• Predictive Analytics which helps businesses work out what will happen in the future, based on data today.

This level of intelligence is going to be the basis for any real discussion on the future of ERP as we head further into the 2020s.

Lucy Thorpe,
Head of Content, InCloud Solutions

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REMOTE WORKING WITH ERP

*Article by **Nishant Joshi**,*
Technical Writer, Sage Software Solutions Pvt Ltd

Remote working with ERP has been on the rise since the coronavirus pandemic hit the world. Every industry is reeling under immense pressure. The stock market has crashed, the hospitals are full, and millions of people have lost their jobs. The job market looks scary and will remain so until an effective and safe vaccine comes to the market. Companies are trying to recover significant losses that they have made during the pandemic. And the most efficient way to do that is by implementing a business management software that allows employees to work remotely. ERP software has created a dent across industries by automating tasks and increasing productivity. Today, they are also allowing employees to work safely from the comfort of their homes.

This article will focus on how remote working with ERP will help companies across all industries to continue their operations without any problems.

> **BEFORE REMOTE WORKING BECAME THE NORM, BUSINESS MEETINGS, CLIENT MEETINGS, AND BRAINSTORMING WOULD HAPPEN FACE-TO- FACE. BUT THE PANDEMIC CHANGED IT ALL.**

Challenges associated with remote working with ERP

1. Employee productivity is falling.

ERPs allow companies to destroy information silos that don't allow critical business information to flow from one department to another. With ERPs, all the teams are coming on the same track and are working as a united force. But the pandemic has brought a new disruption. Since employees are working from their homes, it isn't easy to judge their professionalism. Managers have no real-time evidence of what their team members are doing in real-time. Also, employees find it difficult to ask for critical information now and then while they aren't present in the office. Many companies are complaining of falling productivity due to these reasons.

2. Social distancing has become exhausting.

During the few initial months, most employees were happily following social distancing norms. It was a new experience, and they were enjoying working while being close to their family members. But after a few months, it became an exhausting experience. There were reports from various places where people complained about boredom, dizziness, and anxiety. Psychologists say that we face such problems because, as humans, we are social creatures who detest staying alone. Business management software allows consultants to interact virtually with clients, but such interaction isn't as effective as a one-to-one meeting.

3. Face-to-face supervision isn't happening

Before remote working became the norm, business meetings, client meetings, and brainstorming would happen face-to-face. But the pandemic changed it all. Business management software such as ERP has helped to a great extent. It has allowed teams to interact virtually through different software such as the following:

a. Skype
b. Google meet
c. Zoom

Remote working with ERP is comfortable because it integrates with virtual conference apps conveniently and gives a no-lag experience. But as we know it, nothing is as good as a face-to-face meeting.

How will remote working with ERP help you?

Today, we are living in a tech-savvy world. No company can continue doing business without using top-notch business management software, like ERP and CRM.

Let's see the benefits of remote working with ERP:

1. Remote working with ERP allows businesses to store and update information.

Remote working with ERP allows employees to store information on-the-go. You no longer have to wait to reach the office to upload or update new information because you can do that from the client's place itself. Employees can ask for critical documents from their managers remotely. They don't have to carry essential documents with them everywhere.

2. Remote working with ERP allows managers to monitor their employees conveniently.

Managers need to monitor what their direct reports are doing continually. But it becomes challenging to track their tasks while working remotely. Business management software like ERP allows managers to get a detailed analysis of what the team is doing. It also provides real-time metrics that give a 360-degree outlook of a particular employee. You can also create and implement an up-gradation/correction plan for employees who require hand holding.

3. Remote working with ERP allows you to keep costs low.

There are many ways of lowering your expenses. One of them is cutting your operational costs. Since many companies, especially small and medium-sized ones, run on shoe-string budgets, they must keep operating costs as low as possible. Business management software such as ERP will allow you to eliminate redundant time-consuming tasks, improve performance metrics, and do expense management. These three factors play a significant role in keeping your expenses in check.

4. Remote working with ERP help build better relations with clients.

Research indicates that it's five times more expensive to acquire new customers than retain existing ones. ERP systems play a significant role in keeping clients. They integrate with Customer Relationship Management (CRM) software to form robust and long-lasting relationships with customers. You can also track the sales funnel, calculate the overall customer value, and understand their purchasing patterns and motivations.

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> **BUSINESS MANAGEMENT SOFTWARE LIKE ERP ALLOWS MANAGERS TO GET A DETAILED ANALYSIS OF WHAT THE TEAM IS DOING.**

Conclusion

Remote working will only increase in the coming times. Companies worldwide have announced that they have plans to make remote working a regular part of the employee-employer contract. Business management software such as ERP and CRM systems will play a significant role over here because they have the power to automate all business processes, manage employees remotely, and provide a dynamic platform for customers.

How can ERP software help with remote working?

ERP software will help you to rapidly adapt according to the remote working culture. The four most reasons why you should implement ERP software are as follows:

1. ERP software allows businesses to store and update information.
2. ERP software allows managers to monitor their employees conveniently.
3. ERP software allows keeping operating costs low.
4. ERP software helps to build better relations with clients.

Nishant Joshi likes to read and write on technologies that form the bedrock of the modern-day and age like ERP, CRM, Web Apps, machine learning, data science, AI, and robotics. His expertise in content marketing has helped grow countless business opportunities. Nishant works for Sage Software Solutions Pvt. Ltd., a leading provider of CRM and ERP solutions to small and mid-sized businesses in India.
You can learn more about him on Linkedin

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REMOTE WORKING WITH ERP

*Article by **John Peterson**,*

The current health crisis that many nations face brings several surprises to many businesses. It limits the number of employees reporting for work, and some companies have ceased their operations. Many individuals, even students, resort to doing their tasks online. Remote working is not new because even before the pandemic, some companies are already allowing some workforce to perform their daily tasks anywhere they wish.

Entrepreneurs and consultants discover the benefits of remote working with ERP because they do not have to be physically present in their offices. It provides several customization options to ensure the swift and efficient performance of tasks. Employees who work from home also use ERP because they can have seamless access to information without being in their workplace.

Businesses, universities, and companies need to work remotely because of the unfortunate global health crisis. It caught some enterprises flat-footed, and they could not adapt right away to full remote work. Some employees and students may find the experience extremely challenging because it was their first time doing things from home. The crisis has affected project decisions and business plans, but people have to cope with the rapid changes.

Challenges of Remote Working

Face-to-Face Supervision

Consultants, project managers, and even students who need to work on projects need face-to-face interaction. However, because of remote work, they struggle with support and communication with their superiors or professors.

Lack of Information Access

Because of remote work, other individuals struggle to monitor the other team members. They may not get the information they immediately need when people work from home. This issue can be challenging to overcome, especially for time-sensitive projects and problems.

Generally, a lack of mutual knowledge results in the non-willingness of the remote workers to give others the benefit of the doubt. Moreover, it can cause poor judgment about the other team member's professionalism.

For instance, a team of essay writers may have a member who cannot work remotely for a day. They may judge this person as unreliable and unprofessional without knowing if there are problems or circumstances that the other individual is facing.

> ENTREPRENEURS AND CONSULTANTS DISCOVER THE BENEFITS OF REMOTE WORKING WITH ERP BECAUSE THEY DO NOT HAVE TO BE PHYSICALLY PRESENT IN THEIR OFFICES.

Social Distancing

Remote workers may distance themselves from social interactions and gatherings in the offices. They may also face loneliness, especially if they are highly sociable people.

Providing Value Even When Remote Working

Even when people work remotely, they can still provide their best performance or service to their clients, superiors, or professors. Remote workers must resolve problems within the deadline.

For instance, graduate students who are finishing their dissertations can form a team. When I decided to write my dissertation, I had some fellow students who committed to help each other in whatever way we can.

We used digital platforms to hold meetings and conferences online instead of having face-to-face meetings. This strategy solved the issue of lack of information sharing. We communicated and shared essay writing reviews.

What we did is also doable for people in the corporate world. They can use digital platforms and webinars for demonstrations or presentations. They can even use ERP to finish their tasks while in the comforts of their home.

How ERP Can Help Remote Workers

Because more and more people are working remotely, they have to ensure that business operations are still running smoothly. Here is a list of benefits of using the ERP software in remote working.

Improved Communications

ERP is accessible even for remote workers to finish their daily tasks. It offers easy access to information wherever the employees are if there is a reliable internet connection. Employees from several divisions can communicate with each other because they have the same information as a basis. They experience a boost in their productivity, and they can collaborate efficiently without waiting for accurate data.

Streamlined Processes

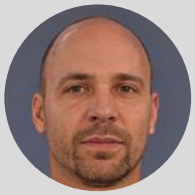
Employee responsibilities increase as the company grows, and because tasks can become intricate, business operations can slow down and become bottlenecks. Any delay in accessing accurate information can lead to productivity loss. ERP bolsters efficiency because it ensures the completion of processes even when workers have to navigate complex procedures. It also guarantees little or no re-entry data mistakes, and real-time data is available for all authorized individuals.

> ERP IS ACCESSIBLE EVEN FOR REMOTE WORKERS TO FINISH THEIR DAILY TASKS. IT OFFERS EASY ACCESS TO INFORMATION WHEREVER THE EMPLOYEES ARE IF THERE IS A RELIABLE INTERNET CONNECTION.

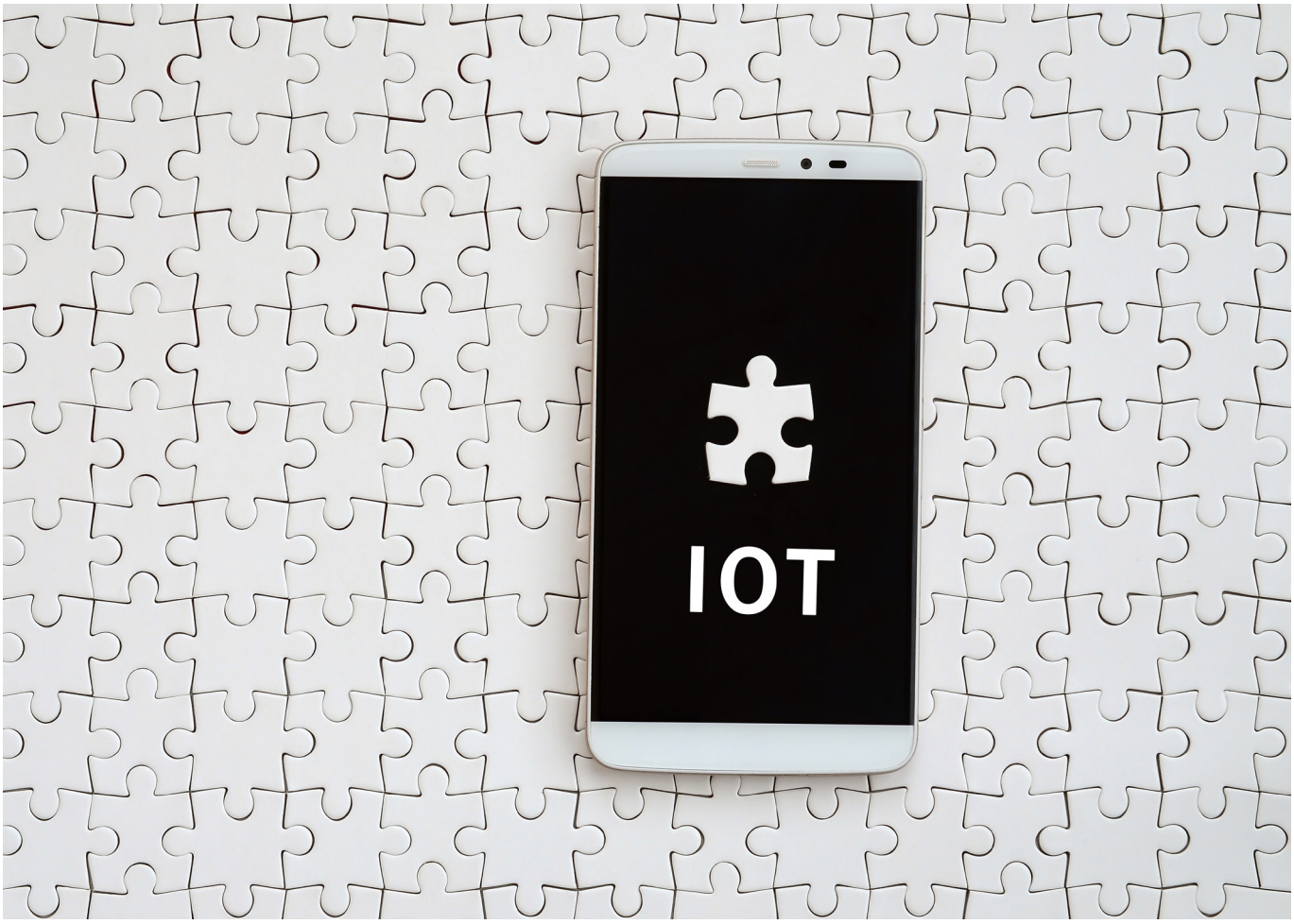
Cost Savings

Companies cut costs most of the time, but in doing so, they have to avoid making costly mistakes because they can suffer losses. Remote workers can use ERP because they need a single source of real-time, accurate data. The system effectively reduces administrative and operations costs by allowing employees to manage business activities proactively and help them make the right decision quickly.

Using the ERP system paves the way for remote working and business continuity, especially during the global health crisis.



John Peterson has a four-year working experience as a journalist for the London Magazine, "Shop&Buy." He has a novel, "His Heart," and is one of the best essay writers uk.



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HOW TO PIECE TOGETHER THE IOT PUZZLE

Article by ***Amanda Brown,***
Director, Product Marketing, IoT & Analytics at Software AG

When first looking at an Internet of Things (IoT) project, you might think it looks cut-and-dry. Then the proverbial rug is pulled from under you.

Surely, it's just about devices and keeping them connected to the Internet, right? It SHOULD be easy; but in reality, most companies find that they're facing a challenge that looks more like a jigsaw puzzle – and sometimes a few pieces have fallen on the floor.

Thoughtfulness and planning are key to solving this IoT jigsaw puzzle. You need to know how the pieces fit with your wider enterprise IT landscape (apps/data/processes).

In other words, you must become familiar with all your pieces, choose the right ones at the right time, and ensure you have a usable workspace to create your masterpiece.

From implementation to integration, the analogy fits IoT when you think about it. Knowing where all the "edges" are will make all the difference.

Start with your devices

You know what data you need to advance toward your goal, but have you found the devices that will lead you there? How do you make the most of devices you already own, while also incorporating new ones?

How will your devices connect to your IoT platform?

In order to make the most of your data, fast and reliable communication methods are needed. Will Bluetooth® be necessary? What is the best way for your devices to communicate? Wifi? 4G/5G? LPWA? LoRa? How do you get the best data communication without breaking your budget?

How will you secure and track those devices?

Knowing how you want your devices to communicate should be one of the biggest considerations for how you implement IoT– and how you'll track and audit all those devices. Authentication is a must. There are a wide variety of protocols, like MQTT, you'll need to consider when comes to message transmission and data encryption.

Lastly, how will you maintain those devices?

With potentially 1,000s of devices now connected, it's imperative that you're able to maintain and update the device firmware, especially as networks continue to make frequent security advancements. Over-the-Air (OTA) updates are necessary to keep your device firmware up to date.

The IoT platform type you choose will determine the kind of workspace for your jigsaw puzzle, as this is where all the bits and pieces of your puzzle are joined.

What kind of platform will you need?

A clean slate

This one's for the true jigsaw master. No hints, to looking at the box cover, but freedom to simply build. If you know how to write code and want the freedom to build into your own IoT solutions, this kind of platform will suit you.

"Comes with directions"

Some of us like to look at the puzzle's picture in advance. We don't want to consult it with every piece but like to know it's there if we need it. This is why some IoT platforms provide you with the building blocks to get started. Their software development tools give you a helping hand as you dive into building your IoT solutions.

"Ready to go"

You know when you open your puzzle and you jump for joy that some of the pieces are already put together? That's closer to this type of IoT platform. Maybe you're in OT (operational technology), and you require some major innovation - that's why you're interested in IoT. You're not trying to build anything from scratch. You're looking to harness the work of IoT experts and industry-specific knowledge, leveraging pre-built IoT technology to quickly find a solution.

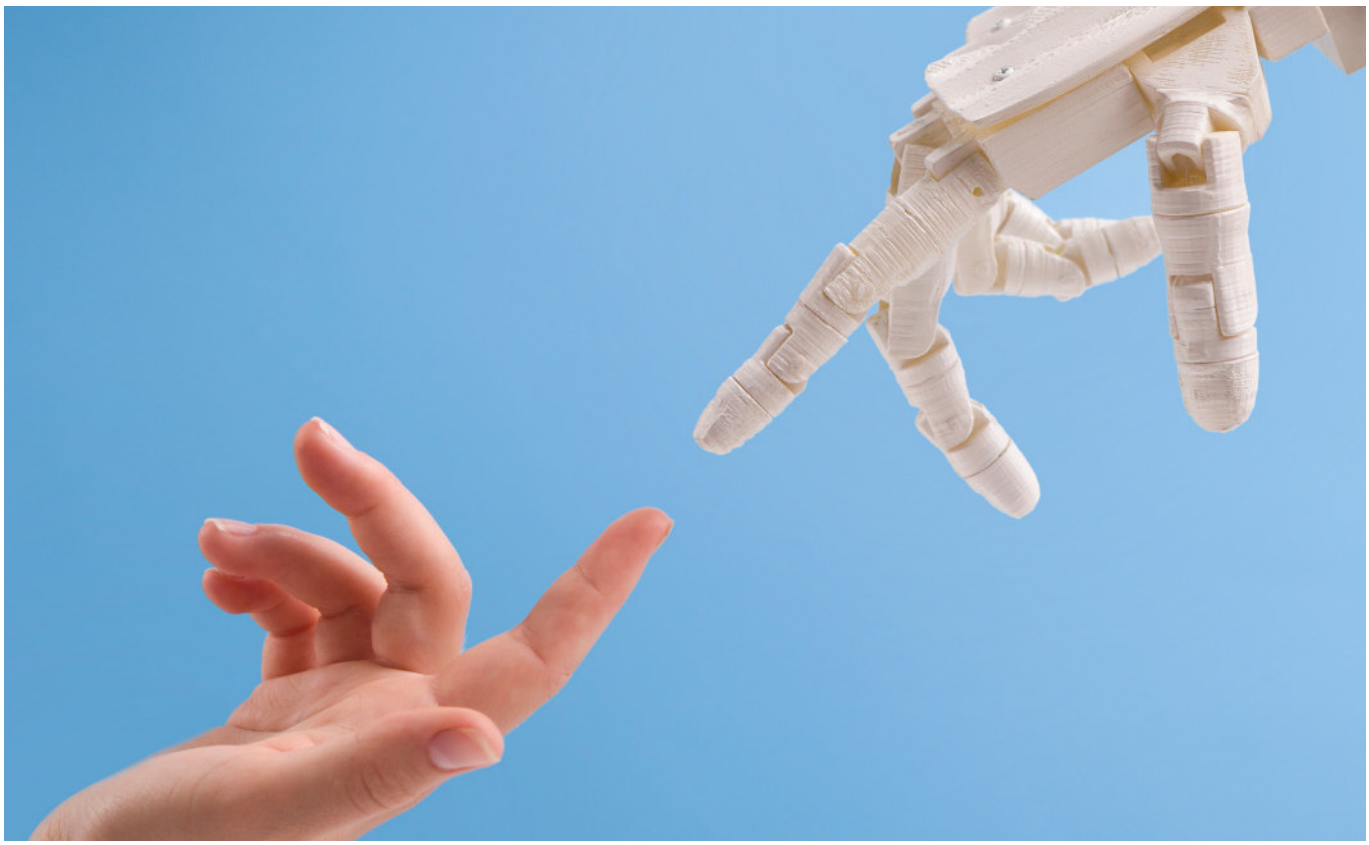
Here is the last big question:

Where will your IoT platform live?

Will it be on-premises? In the cloud? At the edge? The answer will depend on several requirements, including security and cost.

If you need complete control over your hardware, software, and data storage, on-premise is the way to go. If purchasing and managing hardware isn't something you want to tackle, an IoT platform hosted in a dedicated cloud might be the best option for you. Companies who have less stringent security requirements and want to save costs could benefit from a selecting a SaaS-based IoT platform.

Set up those first "puzzle pieces" – your edge pieces – and the rest of the picture will start to make itself known.



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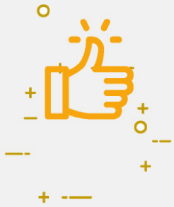

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