ERP NEWS MAGAZINE
ISSUE #26 • 04 / 2022

UNIT4

Right For Your Business

Dmitri Krakovsky
- CPO, Unit4

Avalara

Perplexed by sales tax on software?
Avalara can help

Get the guide

CEO & PUBLISHER
Harun DOYURAN
harun@erpnews.com

MANAGING DIRECTOR
Pinar SENGUL
pinar@erpnews.com

EDITOR
Yagmur SAHIN
yagmur@erpnews.com

ASSOCIATE EDITORS
Katie SLIMOV
katie@erpnews.com

Burcu Nihal DEMIRCI
burcu@erpnews.com

ART DIRECTOR
Sena Çarlık
sena@erpnews.com

FOR ADVERTISING
advertise@erpnews.com

VISIT US
www.erpnews.com

Yagmur Sahin

EDITOR'S NOTE

'The only thing that does not change is the change itself." is quite an appropriate quote for today's business world. Businesses that ignore change cannot reach the finish line on the road to success. They should understand that technology is driving the change and digitalization is inevitable.

The case is much clearer when it comes to e-commerce. Most businesses have had to figure out ways to get online and stay competitive during the pandemic but being online is not enough on its own to adapt to changing customer expectations. The compliance process is the most error-prone area and all businesses need a reliable, secure, and scalable tax compliance software. In this context, we interviewed Scott Peterson, President of Government Relations and U.S. Tax Policy at Avalara.

Also, the cover guest of our April issue is Unit4 which is one of the leading names in the ERP industry. We talked about the new trends and opportunities in the XaaS economy with Dmitri Krakovsky, CPO, Unit4.

If you don't have a roadmap yet on how to adapt to change and transformation, this issue can certainly help you.

See you in the next issue...

CONTENTS

Issue # 26, April 2022

COFINA BANKS ON ORACLE TO GET LOANS TO UNDERSERVED BUSINESSES FASTER — 6

*News from **Oracle***

SAP LAUNCHES RECRUITMENT PROGRAM TO MATCH REFUGEES FROM UKRAINE WITH JOB OPPORTUNITIES — 7

News from SAP

RIGHT FOR YOUR BUSINESS

*Interview with **Dmitri Krakovsky,***
Chief Product Officer at Unit4 — 8

A SUCCESSFUL TAX COMPLIANCE JOURNEY

*Interview with **Scott Peterson,***
President of Government Relations and U.S. Tax Policy at Avalara — 12

PEOPLE IN MANUFACTURING: PROCUREMENT

*Article By **Caleb Finch,***
A Member of the QAD Marketing Communications Team — 16

STEVE NIESMAN JOINS FORBES BUSINESS COUNCIL — 19

*News from **NTT Data Business Solutions***

ENERGIZE AND INNOVATE YOUR BUSINESS WITH THIS YEAR'S TOP DISTRIBUTION ERP TRENDS — 20

*Article By **Debra Mignola,***
Director of Product Management - Distribution at Acumatica

IMPORTANCE OF COMPLIANCE AUTOMATION — 22

*Article by **Lucy Thorpe** and **Mark Wheeler***

UNDERCOVER SNACKS HITS THE BUSINESS SWEET SPOT WITH NETSUITE — 25

*News from **Oracle NetSuite***

LOT TRACEABILITY IN MANUFACTURING: WHY YOU (AND YOUR ERP) NEED IT — 26

*Article by **Johan Pintens,,***
Managing Director, Western Europe, Priority

THE NEW FEATURES OF ORACLE EBS RELEASE 12.2.11: A MODERN UX — 30

News from Syntax

THE VALUE OF DETAILED OPERATIONAL PLANNING — 32

*Article By **Geoff Ng,***

*Chief Technology Officer for **Prophix** ,*

ODOO EXPERIENCE 2022: 5 GOOD REASONS TO ATTEND — 34

*News from **Oracle Netsuite,***

THE ERP SELECTION PROCESS: GENERATING THE SHORT-LIST — 36

*Article By **Infor,***

A NEW BREED OF FINANCE FRONTRUNNERS FACE THE FUTURE: SMBS EMBRACE THE METAVERSE AND CRYPTOCURRENCY, SAGE FINDS — 38

*News from **Sage,***

THE FUTURE OF RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AND THE GREAT RESIGNATION — 40

*Article By **Jim Reilly,***

FinancialForce Vice President of Global Professional

SAGE INTACCT PARTNER PROGRAM AWARDED 5-STAR RATING IN THE 2022 CRN PARTNER PROGRAM GUIDE — 41

*News from **Sage Intacctt***

TAXING SALES OF SAAS IN THE POST WAYFAIR WORLD — 42

*Article By **Gail Cole,***

*Senior Writer at **Avalara***

INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS: THE NEW FUTURE FOR CONSTRUCTION? — 44

Article By Kenny Ingram,

THE DEFINITIVE GUIDE: DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION IN MANUFACTURING — 46

Article By Epicor

ORACLE

COFINA BANKS ON ORACLE TO GET LOANS TO UNDERSERVED BUSINESSES FASTER

Compagnie Financiere Africaine (COFINA), an Africa-based financial group in Côte d'Ivoire and majority owned by Compagnie Transnationale D'Investissement (C.T.I.), has tapped Oracle Financial Services to enhance its banking systems. COFINA is focused on mesofinance, a relatively new concept that offers small loans starting from 1,000 Euros specifically for small-and mid-sized businesses (SMEs).

With the Oracle Banking portfolio, COFINA will bring next generation digital capabilities to the business it serves, including timely loans and a cohesive banking experience. The implementation will start with the migration of Cofina Côte D'Ivoire, one of COFINA's nine mesofinance subsidiaries.

"We selected Oracle Financial Services to help transform our operations and services," said Adiline Haykal, Group Director strategic projects, COFINA. "Building a successful digital bank requires a platform that can run efficiently while evolving with changes in the market and alongside organizational needs. As a first step, Oracle Banking solutions will provide Cofina Côte D'Ivoire the foundation needed to provide and adapt to consumers' desired digital client experiences." Listen to more on Cofina's story here.

COFINA will use Oracle Banking technologies including Oracle FLEXCUBE Universal Banking as its digital core, Oracle Banking Digital Experience, and Oracle Banking Payment Hub, among others.

A new kind of financial institution for an underserved market
While digital banking has opened the door for individuals in both urban and rural areas of Africa to access affordable, reliable banking, financing offers for SMEs remain nearly non-existent. Only 6.4% of African SMEs have access to bank financing even though they are the main providers of wealth and job creation in African economies. With SMEs too big for microfinancing and too small for commercial banks, COFINA dedicated itself to serving this segment of the market with mesofinance. Today, the organization has financed more than 121,000 projects worth nearly 1,544 Million USD (≈ 1,300 million euros).

"COFINA is a leader in providing inclusive banking services in West Africa," said Venky Srinivasan, group vice president, APJ & MEA, Oracle Financial Services. "Oracle's solutions have powered a wide variety of business models across 140 countries, from digital startups to the large incumbents. Our applications help banks differentiate with pace, agility, and responsiveness to clients. Oracle technologies will empower COFINA to deliver a more efficient, centralized, and seamless customer experience that will position them for future growth."

Oracle Banking financial services applications enable banks to offer a complete set of digital banking services to customers. The portfolio includes the digital core and applications for retail and corporate banking, real-time payments, and digital experience. Built on a microservices architecture with 3000-plus open banking APIs, Oracle Banking makes it easy for banks like COFINA to "plug in" additional Oracle and third-party services when they need them. It also provides a scalable, cloud-native environment for growth.

About Oracle

Oracle offers suites of integrated applications plus secure, autonomous infrastructure in the Oracle Cloud. For more information about Oracle (NYSE: ORCL), please visit us at www.oracle.com.

SAP LAUNCHES RECRUITMENT PROGRAM TO MATCH REFUGEES FROM UKRAINE WITH JOB OPPORTUNITIES

SAP SE (NYSE: SAP) announced the creation of a dedicated recruitment onboarding program with the goal of matching refugees from Ukraine with vacancies across its network of global offices.

The initiative aims to attract, match and retain qualified refugees from Ukraine with suitable job opportunities at SAP in Germany, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Bulgaria, Romania, Poland and Slovakia.

As part of the program, SAP has launched a dedicated landing page online to highlight relevant vacancies to refugees from Ukraine, answer frequently asked questions and provide the possibility to register interest in a special talent pool without uploading all relevant documents. This is to make the recruitment process as fast and as easy as possible for applicants.

Available roles include software engineering, sales, presales, consulting and support functions, such as HR and finance. Fixed contract opportunities and part-time job sharing in Germany are also possible.

As part of SAP's "Pledge to Flex" initiative, its employees can work flexibly. If offered a role, Ukrainian employees who have been displaced by the ongoing conflict will benefit from a host of services. They include buddy support with a fellow Ukrainian employee, mental health support, dedicated learning and language courses, childcare support (in some countries) and advanced payment options for newly hired talent.

"All SAP employees around the world have been saddened by the humanitarian crisis in Ukraine and are increasingly seeking ways to help," said Cawa Younosi, Project Leader and Head of People Germany at SAP. "We have lots of vacancies that will match the skills of some of those fleeing the tragedy. By doing what we can to accelerate the recruitment process, we can begin to offer these people security and support as part of the SAP family."

This is the latest in a line of support mechanisms SAP has launched to assist with the humanitarian crisis. Its employees have already helped to offer around 4,000 refugees from Ukraine shelter in neighboring countries. In other support measures, SAP is using its technology to help multinational organizations across a range of aid efforts. One focus is ensuring aid groups and healthcare workers can get supplies. On March 9, SAP enabled suppliers on SAP Business Network to declare their readiness to provide humanitarian aid, with some 1,500 having already done so. SAP is also helping the Ukrainian government order supplies for hospitals so that they can get urgently needed equipment as quickly and easily as possible.

Those interested in taking advantage of the initiative are being asked to visit jobs.sap.com/content/Stand-with-Ukraine.

About SAP

SAP is the market leader in enterprise application software, helping companies of all sizes and in all industries run at their best: SAP customers generate 87% of total global commerce. Our machine learning, Internet of Things (IoT), and advanced analytics technologies help turn customers' businesses into intelligent enterprises. Our end-to-end suite of applications and services enables our customers to operate profitably, adapt continuously, and make a difference.

UNIT4 RIGHT FOR YOUR BUSINESS

*Interview with **Dmitri Krakovsky,***
*Chief Product Officer at **Unit4***

ERP software not only shapes your business today but also plays a decisive role in its future. The choice of ERP software is the first step taken by businesses that realize the necessity of digitalization and plays an important role in whether this future will be bright or not. Unit4, one of the leading ERP vendors, helps businesses get the most out of "today" while shaping their "future". We talked about the new trends and opportunities in the XaaS economy with Dmitri Krakovsky, CPO, Unit4.

Could you tell ERP News readers about yourself and your role at Unit4?

I am the Chief Product Officer at Unit4, where I have the opportunity to apply my passion for technology toward building products that help companies run their businesses better. For decades, enterprise customers have been asking for flexible, light-touch systems designed for their specific needs, allowing them to move fast, be resilient and adaptable. These are the kinds of applications I've been focused on building. New-wave technologies – cloud, machine learning, micro-services, APIs – mean we have an opportunity to advance this goal in a major way.

How do you think service organizations are reacting to the new trends and opportunities in the XaaS economy? And how does Unit4 support them in their digitalization journey?

The pandemic accelerated the demand for the XaaS economy, and it will only continue to rise. In fact, it's anticipated to grow 28.2% during the 2021-2028 period. The XaaS economy demands improved business agility, increased operational efficiency and boosted employee experience. To deliver on these demands, Unit4's cloud-based applications equip institutions to work in a responsive, agile manner, bringing teams together to meet rising expectations, without needing to increase the budget.

What is the key to success in the XaaS economy in which the constant focus is on customer needs and relationships?

The two keys to success in the XaaS economy are being focused and listening. Let me explain. As vendors, we live and die by happy customers. But we cannot be everything to everyone;

“

WE DESCRIBE ERP AS EXPERIENCE REAL PURPOSE BECAUSE OUR NEXT-GENERATION SMART ERP SOFTWARE SOLUTIONS ARE BUILT FOR THE PEOPLE IN THE BUSINESS OF HELPING PEOPLE. IT’S NOT JUST ABOUT ENTERPRISE RESOURCE PLANNING.

”

Dmitri Krakovsky,
Chief Product Officer at Unit4

instead, we must choose carefully and focus intensely on the customers we think we can serve exceptionally well. Our choice was people-centric industries, such as professional services, non-profits, and the public sector. And then we must listen – listen to their needs, understand their businesses, and recognize their directions, fears and aspirations – to deliver software that helps them.

Legacy systems are not fit for the modern service economy and there are many alternatives in the software industry for businesses that want to switch from On-Premises ERP to Cloud ERP or start their digital transformation journey with Cloud ERP. Why should businesses choose Unit4 for Cloud ERP?

No one wakes up thinking, 'Oh my, I would like to change my ERP today'. The replacement can be hard, complex, and expensive. One needs to have a real reason to do this, and we give companies this reason. Ultimately, ERP is the foundation for the future. First, it needs to be modern, future-proof, and technologically cutting-edge. Last year, we introduced Unit4 ERPx - our next-generation ERP solution, built in the cloud. Secondly, it needs to fit how businesses are run. We encapsulate the decades of our experience in this space to build what we call "Right For Your Business" software. We deliver thousands of best practices – functionality, content, user experience, regulatory support, localization – to make sure that to each customer, the software feels like it was custom-built for them. And lastly, it is not just about our software – ERP is the brain of every company's IT infrastructure, and we connect and integrate it with many systems out of the box, in what we call Industry Mesh. Mesh is a set of flows designed to connect ERP to hundreds of different applications, from Microsoft Teams, Slack, Outlook to Salesforce, to very specialized, niche applications that various industries use.

Unit4 describes ERP as Experience Real Purpose. Could you explain this motto, which is at the center of all your solutions?

We describe ERP as Experience Real Purpose because our next-generation smart ERP software solutions are built for the people in the business of helping people. It's not just about enterprise resource planning. At Unit4, you can "Experience Real Purpose" with an adaptable solution that's right for your organization, now and in the future.

Unit4 distinguishes itself from many of its competitors and puts people at the center of the business. Could you share with our readers the advantages of this perspective?

"The people make the place" rings true in many facets of life. It's imperative to apply a people-centric lens to the key components of your organization, as people are the most valuable asset to a business. Traditional ERPs have been product centric. They have been very good at optimizing and tracking the flow of products, supply chains, logistics and manufacturing; however, they have not taken a people-centric view of the world. Instead, people have been viewed as the helpers and operators in this process, but not the focal point. But for the modern, people- and service-centric world, this must change. Modern companies need to shift from the 'assembly line' approach to business and be flexible and adaptable to the changing environments around them, whether it be its competitors, new business models, pandemics, or political crises. We believe that the products that enable this flexibility, both functionally and experientially, are the future of our industry.

"

OUR CHOICE WAS PEOPLE-CENTRIC INDUSTRIES, SUCH AS PROFESSIONAL SERVICES, NON-PROFITS, AND THE PUBLIC SECTOR. AND THEN WE MUST LISTEN – LISTEN TO THEIR NEEDS, UNDERSTAND THEIR BUSINESSES, AND RECOGNIZE THEIR DIRECTIONS, FEARS AND ASPIRATIONS – TO DELIVER SOFTWARE THAT HELPS THEM.

> THE TWO KEYS TO SUCCESS IN THE XAAS ECONOMY ARE BEING FOCUSED AND LISTENING.

Could you tell us about the advantages of Unit4's intelligent FP&A software and how businesses can drive success using this software?

Unit4 FP&A has the same thread that runs through all our products – flexibility of core product combined packaging in all the knowledge we have gathered from our customer base. This enables quick implementations and customers can start realizing value very fast. What really sets Unit4 FP&A apart is the system flexibility and the self-service approach since adaptations in the system can be done by the users – no support from the IT department is needed. With fully automated interfaces to Unit4's ERP system and the option to integrate any other data source, FP&A is the single point of truth for all Actual, Budget, Plan, and Forecast data. FP&A does not stop at fully integrated planning and forecasting, but also has rich functionality for ad-hoc analysis in deviation reporting and standardized, high-profile finance reporting. With Unit4 FP&A, users can focus on the valuable activities of analyzing deviations, gaining insights and steering the organization.

About Unit4

Unit4's next-generation enterprise software supports our customers in delivering an exceptional People Experience to their organization and onward to their customers – from boosting success for students and professionals, to empowering the public servants and nonprofit teams doing good in the world.

We transform work to be more meaningful and inspiring through software that's self-driving, adaptive and intuitive, intelligently automating administrative tasks and providing easy access to the answers people need.

Avalara

A SUCCESSFUL TAX COMPLIANCE JOURNEY

*Interview with **Scott Peterson**, President of Government Relations and U.S. Tax Policy at Avalara*

As a result of changing customer expectations, businesses have to refocus on digital efforts. Especially retailers must adopt a successful omnichannel strategy to create a seamless experience for customers across all the channels that they sell their products.

Automating and simplifying complex compliance interactions are the pain points of digitalization. Every step of the compliance process should be solved with a unique suite of products built for the businesses' needs. Avalara maintains its leading position in the industry by offering cutting-edge solutions to automate every step of businesses' tax compliance journeys. Scott Peterson, President of Government Relations and U.S. Tax Policy at Avalara, talked about the primary tax challenges faced by businesses and how to reduce the complexity of tax compliance.

Could you tell ERP News readers about yourself and your role at Avalara?

I'm vice president of government relations and U.S. tax policy at Avalara. In this role, I work closely with all levels of government to assist our customers with their compliance obligations. I'm also Avalara's go-to for all things U.S. tax policy. My day-to-day job is focused on understanding how the sales tax landscape is evolving in the U.S. and how it impacts Avalara and our customers.

The world went online overnight when the pandemic hit, and ecommerce adoption accelerated rapidly. What laws exist in the U.S. that made sales tax particularly challenging as ecommerce has accelerated?

Economic nexus laws, stemming from a 2018 Supreme Court decision, are the primary regulations that apply directly to ecommerce sales. The laws require remote sellers who sell goods and services in a state above an amount set by the state (called the state's economic nexus threshold), to register for sales tax within the state. Before 2018 a business would have needed a physical presence in a state to owe sales tax, they now only must meet certain sales and/or transaction volumes.

MANY BUSINESSES THAT WENT ONLINE FOR THE FIRST TIME OR EXPANDED THEIR ECOMMERCE OPERATIONS AT THE BEGINNING OF THE PANDEMIC DISCOVERED BECAUSE OF ECONOMIC NEXUS LAWS THAT THEY MUST START COLLECTING SALES TAX EVERYWHERE FOR THE FIRST TIME. BECAUSE ECOMMERCE SALES CAN GROW QUICKLY ACROSS CHANNELS AND JURISDICTIONS, IT'S POSSIBLE FOR BUSINESSES TO TRIGGER NEW OBLIGATIONS UNKNOWINGLY IF THEY AREN'T MANAGING THEM CLOSELY.

Scott Peterson,
President of Government Relations and
U.S. Tax Policy at Avalara

Economic nexus laws were made possible by a June 2018 Supreme Court decision in South Dakota v. Wayfair, Inc. that granted states the ability to impose sales tax on remote sellers. Today, 45 states, parts of Alaska, Puerto Rico, and the District of Columbia have economic nexus laws.

Many businesses that went online for the first time or expanded their ecommerce operations at the beginning of the pandemic discovered because of economic nexus laws that they must start collecting sales tax everywhere for the first time. Because ecommerce sales can grow quickly across channels and jurisdictions, it's possible for businesses to trigger new obligations unknowingly if they aren't managing them closely.

Because ecommerce happens in real-time and tax rules are constantly changing, it's nearly impossible to effectively manage sales tax manually. Automation is key to tax compliance in the digital age.

Could you talk about the primary tax challenges faced by businesses in SaaS/IT industries?

The SaaS/IT industry is particularly burdened by economic nexus laws for a couple of reasons. First, what is SaaS/IT can change very quickly, and much quicker than state laws change. That results in states finding it difficult to understand and attempting to fit new versions of Saas/IT into old laws. The Saas/IT industry often learns this during a state sales tax audit when it is impossible to pass the tax on to a customer. Second, many SaaS/IT products can be used simultaneously by multiple users in multiple states. It is very common for the buyer of a SaaS/IT product to expect the seller to collect the proper amount of sales tax based on the location of the multiple users. This increases the compliance complexity and forces the SaaS/IT seller to understand all the sales tax nuances across the country.

How does Avalara reduce the complexity of tax compliance and eliminate the time-consuming, repetitive work so that the businesses can focus on more strategic and value-added activities and grow their businesses?

Every business has tax compliance requirements for what it buys and sells. Avalara provides advanced technology solutions to automate nearly every step of the tax compliance journey. From registering your business and calculating tax on transactions to managing exempt sales and filing returns – Avalara has solutions for it all.
Avalara can reduce complexity for our customers due to our leading tax content database. Through a combination of technology and a team of tax content researchers, we maintain an up-to-date database of tax rates, rules, forms, and more. This content not only makes our tax determinations more accurate but also removes the burden for our customers to stay on top of changing rules.

Automation also significantly reduces the time businesses have to spend on tax compliance. A survey from 2021 found that small and midsize businesses spend 163 hours per month on sales tax compliance when done manually – that's a significant amount of time dedicated to a function that provides no value to a business.

By automating tax compliance, business owners, tax teams, and others involved in tax compliance for businesses can dedicate that time toward business requirements that impact the bottom line and their customers.

What does the future hold for sales tax policy? How should businesses prepare?

Sales tax is constantly changing. As we look to the future, there are a few things businesses should be mindful of and prepare for. The first is enforcement.

The passage of economic laws in recent years is indicative of the state tax authorities' desire to capture as much revenue from commerce as they can. As such, we're likely to see enforcement of these laws (and other sales tax requirements) increase over time as authorities look to close the tax gap between what should be collected and what gets collected.
Another trend in tax that businesses should be prepared for is the gradual shift to real-time compliance. While this is years away for the U.S., we're seeing the adoption of near real-time tax compliance laws around the world. Today, 60 countries have enacted or announced the intent to move to an e-invoicing system, whereby businesses must validate transactions with governments. As tax authorities in the U.S. look to cut down on the tax gap and keep pace with emerging technologies, it's likely we'll see similar legislation make its way here.

About Avalara

We're building cloud-based tax compliance solutions to handle every transaction in the world.

Imagine every transaction you make — every tank of gas, cup of coffee, or pair of sneakers, every movie ticket, meal kit, or streamed song, every sensor-to-sensor ping. Nearly every time you make a purchase, physical or digital, there's an accompanying unique and nuanced tax compliance calculation.

The logic behind calculating taxes — the rules, rates, and boundaries — is a global, layered, three-dimensional mess of complexity, with compliance dictated by governments and applied by every business, every day.

Avalara works with businesses of all sizes, all over the world — from corner stores to gigantic global retailers — to calculate tax accurately and automatically, at speeds measured in milliseconds.

That's a massive technical challenge, in terms of scale, reliability, and complexity, and we do it better than anyone. That's why we're growing fast.

Headquartered in Seattle, Avalara has offices across the U.S. and around the world, in Belgium, Brazil, Canada, India, and the U.K.

PEOPLE IN MANUFACTURING: PROCUREMENT

Article By ***Caleb Finch,***
A Member of the QAD Marketing Communications Team

Procurement, also sometimes known as purchasing, is the group responsible for acquiring components, services, and other materials to manufacture a company's products and to keep the operation running.

But corporate procurement isn't quite as simple as placing an order on Amazon or another web marketplace. Manufacturers must ensure that the materials they use meet the required quality specifications, that they arrive on time, and that they pay a reasonable price. That may still sound simple, but corporate purchasing, regardless of the commodities the buyer is responsible for, is anything but simple.

Basic Responsibilities

Procurement pros are required to purchase necessary materials of the correct quality, at a reasonable price, and to have them delivered on time. But oftentimes two items that appear identical have different specifications, and only one may meet the company's requirements. The purchasing pro must be aware that the items are different and ensure that they only place orders for the version that meets specifications.

Purchasing is also required to buy goods at the lowest possible price, consistent with quality and delivery needs. Often, these pros' performance is measured against a standard cost, and any deviation from the standard cost—known as purchase price variance—hits the company's profitability. Paying less than the standard creates extra margin, while paying more increases product costs.

Purchasing pros are also responsible for negotiating purchase order terms, such as freight methods and responsibilities, payment terms, and price breaks for quantity purchases. In many companies, they must determine the economic order quantity—the quantity that will give them the lowest per unit price without requiring them to commit to buying more than might be needed.

Corporate procurement is a delicate balancing act, requiring the buyer to juggle competing priorities.

Historical Methodologies

In the days before ERP software, material was ordered using paper requisitions, sometimes known as "traveling reqs." The inventory department kept track of item usage on an inventory card, and the inventory card had an attached

requisition form. When it seemed like time to replenish inventory, the planner sent the traveling req to the buyer to create a purchase order.

The buyer had the item's purchase history on the req, so they knew the vendor and the most recent quantities and prices. They also saw the planner's recommended replenishment quantity, but it was the buyer's responsibility to adjust that quantity up or down to achieve better pricing. The problem was they often had little or no visibility into future requirements.

In addition to future requirements, the buyer often had no way of seeing everything the company purchased from

> **TRADITIONAL ERP VASTLY SIMPLIFIED THE BUYER'S JOB BY PROVIDING MORE VISIBILITY INTO ALL THE BUSINESS THE COMPANY DID WITH A PARTICULAR SUPPLIER, SO THE BUYER COULD COMBINE NEGOTIATIONS FOR SEVERAL ITEMS TO ACHIEVE A BETTER PRICE FOR EACH ITEM.**

a particular supplier. Seeing the full range of business the company did with a vendor could be extremely valuable in eliciting concessions such as lower prices or faster delivery from the supplier.

Recent Methods Using Traditional ERP

Traditional ERP vastly simplified the buyer's job by providing more visibility into all the business the company did with a particular supplier, so the buyer could combine negotiations for several items to achieve a better price for each item.

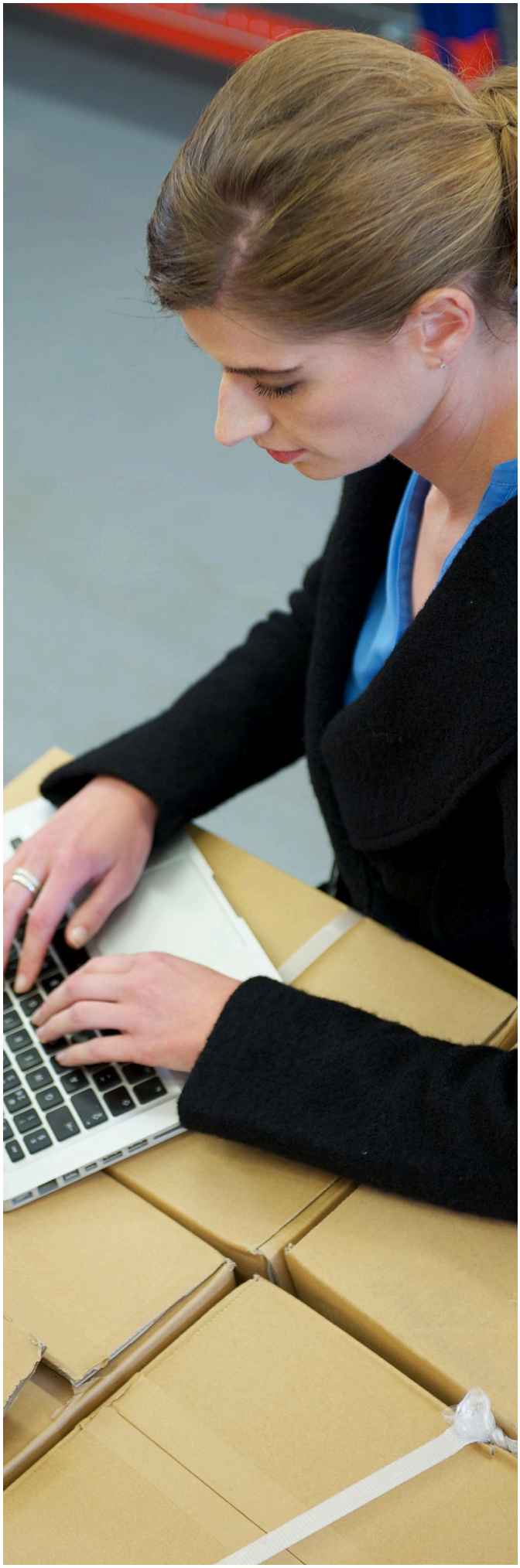
Traditional ERP also provided more visibility into total item requirements for a year, so the buyer had more insight in determining the best economic order quantity.

Supplier performance analysis could also show whether a particular supplier had frequent late deliveries or delivered poor quality product. Either situation could cause expensive downtime or require product rework, so in some cases, the purchasing pro might decide to buy from a different supplier even if the price was slightly higher to avoid these pitfalls.

But the most valuable change traditional ERP brought to the table was the buyer/planner concept. Rather than silo the information about item usage and purchase order information, a buyer/planner could see both sides of the item's history and decide on the best possible purchasing strategy to meet requirements.

Next Generation ERP Methodologies

More modern ERP solutions provide even more buying options by enabling procurement pros to join "buying groups" that could negotiate price and delivery as a block, with each company involved in the group enjoying the benefits of lower prices based on higher purchase quantities.



Next generation ERP also includes the ability to generate true blanket orders, with the ERP solution automatically calculating the remaining open quantity. Trade management solutions enable the automatic application of discounts, rebates, and pricing tiers without procurement having to track all the information manually offline in a spreadsheet.

Complete integrated supplier management helps reduce supply chain risks and build better supplier relationships while controlling costs and quality. As a result, next generation procurement teams are able to work to ensure the company more easily achieves its price, quality and delivery goals. The company can adapt its procurement strategies to reflect changes in supply and demand, or to adjust to product life cycles.

Is Your Company an Adaptive Manufacturing Enterprise?

The only thing certain in manufacturing is change, and companies must always be ready to adapt to changes as they occur. If your procurement team struggles with managing a global supply chain or ensuring you receive every benefit due through buying groups, contracts, and blanket orders, you may need a better, more adaptive ERP solution to help your procurement team achieve excellent performance.

Caleb is part of QAD's Marketing Communications team and brings a background in both Manufacturing and Enterprise Software. An avid follower of new and emerging technologies, he manages the QAD website, QAD Blog and Social Media program. When Caleb's not tied to a computer, he can be found exploring mountain biking trails, snowboarding or relaxing at the beach.

About QAD

In 1979, QAD was founded by Pamela Lopker, who was later joined by her husband Karl Lopker, as a small startup solution to address a large gap in complete, integrated business software for manufacturing companies.

We began with a few local customers, supporting them from our headquarters in Santa Barbara, California. But as our customers took their brands to the next level—international—we adapted quickly to keep up. Today we support customers in over 100 countries around the world. Our products have gone global, too, and we have spent years innovating and growing our offering as our customers expand their businesses overseas.

You'll often hear us say that at the heart of QAD is a strong and loyal customer community. We really believe that to create the best full-featured manufacturing ERP software for our customers we need to work together. We pride ourselves on our customer engagement and our commitment to continually evolve as the manufacturing industry changes.

It's been over four decades; we still focus solely on manufacturing—we live and breathe it every day alongside you. Together we are building an Adaptive Manufacturing Enterprise.

NTT DATA

STEVE NIESMAN JOINS FORBES BUSINESS COUNCIL

Steve Niesman, president and CEO at NTT DATA Business Solutions Americas Region, has been accepted into the Forbes Business Council, the foremost growth and networking organization for successful business owners and leaders worldwide.

Niesman was selected by a review committee based on the depth and diversity of his experience. Criteria for acceptance include a track record of successfully impacting business growth metrics, as well as personal and professional achievements and honors.

"We are honored to welcome Steve Niesman into the community," said Scott Gerber, founder of Forbes Councils, the collective that includes Forbes Business Council. "Our mission with Forbes Councils is to bring together proven leaders from every industry, creating a curated, social capital-driven network that helps every member grow professionally and make an even greater impact on the business world."

During Niesman's nearly thirty years in senior leadership, he has seen the rate of change for business and technology accelerate to the point where many struggle to keep up. As a thought leader, Niesman looks forward to this opportunity to network, learn and support others as they leverage technology to build better business processes and provide real-time data to employees so they can compete, learn more, and get more fulfillment in their roles.

"I am honored to have been accepted to the Forbes Business Council," said Niesman. "Forbes is a great example of how the best business leaders in the world can come together and explore how to evolve in the face of today's challenges while growing tomorrow's Fortune 500 companies."

About Forbes Councils

Forbes Councils is a collective of invitation-only communities created in partnership with Forbes and the expert community builders who founded Young Entrepreneur Council (YEC). In Forbes Councils, exceptional business owners and leaders come together with the people and resources that can help them thrive.

To learn more about Forbes Councils, visit forbescouncils.com.

About NTT DATA

NTT DATA – a part of NTT Group – is a trusted global innovator of IT and business services headquartered in Tokyo. We help clients transform through consulting, industry solutions, business process services, IT modernization and managed services. NTT DATA enables clients, as well as society, to move confidently into the digital future. We are committed to our clients' long-term success and combine global reach with local client attention to serve them in over 50 countries. Visit us at nttdata.com.

Acumatica
The Cloud ERP

ENERGIZE AND INNOVATE YOUR BUSINESS WITH THIS YEAR'S TOP DISTRIBUTION ERP TRENDS

*Article By **Debra Mignola,***
Director of Product Management - Distribution at Acumatica

We're already months into 2022, and the excitement about a fresh start has ebbed. This is normal. However, because the year itself is anything but normal (the COVID-19 pandemic, inflation, labor shortages, supply chain issues, etc.), businesses need to rev up their energy and innovation efforts to remain competitive. There are two ways to accomplish this: by staying on top of (and participating in) distribution ERP trends and by researching distribution ERP systems.

Here's why.

The term "ERP" stands for "enterprise resource planning," but you don't have to be an enterprise-sized organization to use it. Distribution ERP systems gather data from every department into one place, making it easily accessible to all team members in real time. A distribution ERP system should supply you and your teams with financial, inventory, customer, commerce, sales order, purchase order, order, requisition, warehouse, and service management capabilities. It should also provide an integrated POS system, business intelligence, and data analytics.

Sounds like a lot of "shoulds" for a single solution, but there's even more. A distribution ERP system should simplify item management, automate and streamline your warehouse needs, and rest on a future-proof cloud platform with configurable workflows and modern APIs.

Though they have many of the same features and functionalities, don't confuse distribution ERP systems with manufacturing ERP systems. Because distributors often handle larger orders and a greater volume of total orders (not to mention logistical and marketing requirements), they need an ERP that specifically addresses the fluctuating issues, measurements, patterns, and data points associated with the distribution industry.

To satisfy this need, ERP providers are integrating the top three distribution ERP trends of 2022 into their software offerings.

We'll discuss these trends in detail below.

1. Synchronizing Your Supply Chain with RFID and IoT

The COVID-19 pandemic has sparked supply chain disruptions, including increased delays, rising prices, and frustrating shortages, causing major problems for manufacturers, distributors, and their customers. It's a complicated situation that won't be resolved any time soon, which makes it one of 2022's sad but undeniable distribution trends.

On the upside, this regrettable trend points directly to what distribution ERP systems can do in terms of supply chain

AS A DISTRIBUTOR, YOU'LL WANT TO RESEARCH A FEW DISTRIBUTION ERP SYSTEMS BEFORE CHOOSING THE BEST ONE FOR YOUR BUSINESS. FOR EAGLE FENCE DISTRIBUTING, ACUMATICA'S COMPREHENSIVE CLOUD ERP SOLUTION COVERED THEIR DISTRIBUTION NEEDS, ESPECIALLY WHEN THE PANDEMIC HIT.

management. For example, they can integrate various technologies—such as Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) tags and the Internet of Things (IoT)—to help individual businesses synchronize their supply chains.

RFID tags aren't new, but their ability to transmit data from an item to a computerized reader makes them an ideal tool for tracking goods (keeping up with what's in a package/pallet, where the items came from, whether the contents are correct, if stock levels are accurate, etc.). Data from RFID tags can be synched with the IoT, which can then be synched with an ERP solution.

The information captured in this communication chain will help you manage what you have in stock, what items are coming and when they will arrive, equipment statuses, transportation conditions, and more. This boosts the visibility of the supply chain and improves decision making.

2. Increased Distribution Automation

Distribution ERP systems are also trending toward automating distribution processes. Automation is a major factor in reducing labor costs, improving operational speed, minimizing human error, and increasing accuracy—as the RFID/IoT example clearly shows. Instead of counting and locating inventory manually, employees can pull reports containing that data directly from the distribution ERP solution.

So, time is not wasted on collating and understanding the data. Instead, it is spent on studying potential bottlenecks and pain points and determining ways to get around them. Such clear workflow visibility reveals the health of your distribution processes and of your organization as a whole.

3. Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning

As with RFID, artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML) are not new. Though they've been around for a long time, many distributors have yet to recognize how AI and ML can help them take advantage of industry trends.

First, let's look at what AI and ML do. AI takes large amounts of data, and, using algorithms, it analyzes that data to provide predictions, forecasts, and calculations that would take mere humans an extraordinary amount of time to determine. ML has been defined by an MIT Management Sloan School article as "a subfield of artificial intelligence that gives computers the ability to learn without explicitly being programmed." When combined, AI and ML can take distribution data and help distributors:

Forecast demand and influence decisions.

Fill orders faster and more efficiently.

Optimize route planning for quicker deliveries.

Detect inventory and supply chain issues before they occur.

Altogether, these benefits add up to happier, more satisfied employees and customers—and to a happier, more profitable you.

How Acumatica Can Help

As a distributor, you'll want to research a few distribution ERP systems before choosing the best one for your business. For Eagle Fence Distributing, Acumatica's comprehensive cloud ERP solution covered their distribution needs, especially when the pandemic hit.

Says President Keith Ford, "When global supply chain problems caused prices on every widget that we sell to flux, we had to be nimble and quickly get replacement costs into the system overnight. Acumatica was able to handle that." Keith and his team are glad they chose Acumatica. "We've been very pleased with Acumatica...in getting us to market rapidly. And then also being very secure. Our uptime has been 99.9%. Being in the cloud and being able to be up that much and have secure data and being able to service our customers, that's invaluable to us."

About Acumatica

Acumatica is a leading innovator in cloud ERP with customers located around the world. Acumatica ERP delivers adaptable cloud and mobile technology with a unique all-inclusive user licensing model, enabling a complete, real time view of your business anytime, anywhere. Through our worldwide network of partners, Acumatica provides the full suite of integrated business management applications, designed to help mid-sized companies thrive in today's fast-moving markets.

IMPORTANCE OF COMPLIANCE AUTOMATION

*Article by **Lucy Thorpe** and **Mark Wheeler***

The Fintech industry has exploded over the past decade offering customers more choice than ever in how to manage their money. Mobile wallets and smart phones have brought banking to parts of the world which previously didn't have access to normal banking services.

But with so much of our personal data in the hands of FinTech companies, compliance is now more important than ever.
In one international money transfer start-up we spoke to, 50% of their staff are tied up in compliance and security. That is a big investment in people who are essentially doing repetitive tasks.

Step forward automation which is all about taking the pain out of repeatable processes. Automated programs not only save money but are much better at recognizing problems before they happen.
Automation can be applied to a wide range of tasks within financial compliance, for example KYC or Know Your Customer (KYC) - the process of verifying the identity of customers, either before or during the time that they start doing business with you.

Anna Maxim chief compliance officer at The Credit Thing says automation is already embedded and important to them,

"As a fintech, we have been able to embed automation from the outset. We use it for some essential compliance processes internally. An obvious use of automation is in AML, where we have bots in place to alert us to unusual or particularly large transactions. An even more exciting use for us is in quality monitoring. We now use automation to see where conversations with customers contain particular words or

phrases and use these to choose relevant samples for our review processes. We couldn't be as agile as we are without it."

> **INTELLIGENT AUTOMATION TECHNOLOGIES SUCH A RPA ARE THE PERFECT FIT FOR COMPLIANCE PROCESSES SUCH AS REGULATORY REPORTING OR KYC IN FINANCIAL SERVICES.**

One company who works with Sapphire, a car insurer, has been using RPA to automate 35% of their back-office function over the past 12 months. They have 147 different task types which add up to over 120,000 tasks a month. Based on their forecasts, they would have needed to recruit a function of 117 heads over the next 5 years but through RPA they can cap this number at 20 employees.

Mark Wheeler head of automation at Sapphire Systems says, "Intelligent Automation technologies such a RPA are the perfect fit for compliance processes such as regulatory reporting or KYC in Financial Services. These processes are by definition well-structured tasks with defined logic being executed in an environment where rigorous adherence to process is mandatory."

It really has been a massive success for this customer – from speed of implementation (first 5 bots live in 3 weeks from a standing start) to the ROI the project has delivered. Sapphire are now helping to deploy RPA across other functions (HR, Finance, Commercial) to remove low value work. This is transforming their culture towards becoming one of high performers solving complex issues. All delivered by non-technical internal resource that has been trained and deployed with the help of Mark and his teams.

Another example is a UK private wealth organisation who had multiple IFAs advising clients what they should do. One example is advise on dealing with multiple pensions. Should they leave or move them and if so to where? They need up to the minute advice based on getting the optimal return/yield based on pension value, expected investment performance, management fees, transfer fees etc. This advice used to take on average 27 days to compile because everything had to be collected manually and collated from letters sent from the pension providers. A manual calculation then had to be made in order to offer the advice.

This laborious process has been transformed following automation using Automation Anywhere to scan and extract

key data from the pension providers letters. The calculations are then run and the advice swiftly offered – shortening the process from 27 days to 4 hours!

It has also reduced risk by increasing the amount of advice that had to be checked by the Compliance team from 20% to 100%, as the compliance team was involved in setting the logic of the bots.

This piece of robotic process automation allowed them to double their business without having to add staff into their compliance team - a massive win for the company.

If this has piqued your interest that here are some more ways in which RPA can improve the financial compliance process.

•Eliminate Human Error

•Stay up to date with changing regulation

•Become more efficient – no step overlooked

•Flexiblity

•Save time and money

•Generate better data

•Continuous monitoring

Automated compliance systems remove the burden on compliance officers allowing them to focus their efforts on other aspects of company compliance.

Mark Wheeler says;

"As a customer I don't choose my bank because they're compliant – I expect that. But I do care about my user experience and therefore releasing the people within these institutions to focus on customer outcomes rather than checks, reporting and report and check checking the entire industry is becoming more customer centric. Automation is helping Banks and Insurers around the world ensure the correct advice has been given by human advisors, onboard customers quicker with automated KYC and AML checks and reducing institutions exposure to fraudulent insurance claims."

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

About Sapphire Systems

Sapphire Systems is a dynamic business transformation provider. Made up of 5 specialist companies with deep industry expertise, we have come together with a unique offering – a complete portfolio of digital services for the mid-market to mid-enterprise, enabling companies to leverage the competitive advantage of digital transformation. We offer you the chance to deliver exciting digital experiences to your customers stitching together your organization from end to end, creating new opportunities and new business models. The era of frictionless business has arrived.

ORACLE NETSUITE

UNDERCOVER SNACKS HITS THE BUSINESS SWEET SPOT WITH NETSUITE

Undercover Snacks, the innovative chocolate snack manufacturer, is using Oracle NetSuite to support its rapid expansion throughout the U.S. and globally. With the help of NetSuite, Undercover Snacks has been able to integrate its critical business operations so that it can seamlessly connect customer, supplier, production and warehouse data. Since implementing NetSuite, Undercover Snacks has gained complete visibility and control over inventory, business operations, and financial planning.

Inspired to create an incredibly delicious chocolate snack that was gluten-free and allergy friendly for two of her three daughters diagnosed with Celiac disease, Diana Levy launched Undercover's flagship line of Chocolate Quinoa Crisps in 2017. Initially making small batches in a rented commercial kitchen and personally delivering to Whole Foods stores in the northeast, as sales and demand quickly grew Diana soon realized she needed to increase production significantly. After searching unsuccessfully for co-manufacturers, Diana – joined by her husband Michael - designed and opened a state-of-the-art SQF-certified manufacturing facility capable of producing more than 40,000 bags a day. This investment enabled Undercover Snacks to expand its sales rapidly, with distribution increasing from approximately 2,000 to over 10,000 stores globally in the last two years. Undercover Snacks' ability to innovate quickly has enabled the company to expand into alternative channels wherever snacks are consumed, including United Airlines which now offers Undercover Snacks on flights across the globe. As the company expanded, it quickly became apparent that existing systems and manual processes were taking up valuable time without providing the level of functionality or visibility needed. To address these challenges and establish an integrated platform to help scale in the future, Undercover Snacks replaced QuickBooks with NetSuite.

"With a uniquely delicious taste and texture, combined with a healthier nutrition profile, Undercover Snacks is experiencing strong and accelerating demand from consumers seeking better-for-you snacks that taste even better than conventional choices," said Diana Levy, CEO and co-owner of Undercover Snacks.

"But as demand has soared, so did the complexity of our business," added Michael Levy, chairman and co-owner of Undercover Snacks. "We knew we were being held back by the systems we were using and we wanted a solution that could support our sales growth and operational expansion plans. With NetSuite, we've automated critical business functions and gained greater insight into every aspect of our business. This is allowing us to fine-tune our operations, improve efficiencies, and ensure we maintain the highest level of food safety and quality as we continue to build our business. NetSuite is a force-multiplier allowing us to punch above our weight, and is an essential part of our ambitious growth plan."

With NetSuite, Undercover Snacks can manage its entire business – from manufacturing to sales, accounting and its invoicing process – on one unified platform. NetSuite has enabled Undercover Snacks to optimize order fulfillment and invoice processing by centralizing all order and sales data from major distributors, direct retailers, Amazon and its own ecommerce site. NetSuite has also helped Undercover Snacks improve demand planning by enabling automating the inventory management process, sorting products by inventory level and expiration dates, and creating automated alerts and notifications. Additionally, NetSuite facilitates the company's programs to monitor and maintain the highest operational standards related to on-time deliveries, food quality and safety, and other important KPIs, while providing visibility into its customers, suppliers, and carriers through electronic data interchange (EDI) integrations. To build on its success with NetSuite, it also recently implemented the NetSuite Warehouse Management System to further streamline its business as it continues to expand its operations to support expansion.

"Undercover Snacks has achieved impressive growth in just a few short years," said David Rodman, SVP of Customer Success, Oracle NetSuite. "By centralizing manufacturing processes and integrating operations on NetSuite, Undercover Snacks is reaping the rewards of its business insights and is well positioned for future growth. We look forward to seeing its continued success."

About Oracle NetSuite

For more than 20 years, Oracle NetSuite has helped organizations grow, scale and adapt to change. NetSuite provides an integrated system that includes financials / Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP), inventory management, HR, professional services automation and omnichannel commerce, used by more than 29,000 customers in 215 countries and dependent territories.

priority™

LOT TRACEABILITY IN MANUFACTURING: WHY YOU (AND YOUR ERP) NEED IT

*Article by **Johan Pintens,,***
Managing Director, Western Europe

It's accountability, accountability, and today, even more accountability that's mandatory for virtually any product that travels through the supply chain – where manufacturers must be fully accountable for everything they produce and sell to their end customers.

Accountability in the manufacturing process is powered by traceability, and more specifically, lot traceability, and how manufacturers create and maintain transparent, responsible, and accountable production, from the receipt of raw materials to the shop floor and assembly lines, and distribution to the customers' front door.

So, what is lot traceability, and why is it so vitally important for manufacturers, no matter their size or scope? How does an ERP system support lot traceability in today's complex manufacturing processes, and why are some organizations still finding it inherently tough to implement? Questions duly asked, and answered, below.

What is Lot Traceability (or "How do you trace your lots?")

Lot traceability is a group or "lot" of products that were made together in the same production run and produced using the same materials. When adding 'traceability' to the mix, it allows manufacturers to track products throughout the supply chain. This is done by assigning identification labels to each production run which can then be tracked.

Lot traceability applies to raw materials, finished goods, and everything in between, where its prime objective is a batch of manufactured products that are traceable at every stage of the production process, with consistent, clearly-written, and trackable documentation, from start to finish. What makes lot traceability even more efficient, is its ability to be bi-directional. In other words, manufacturers or any stakeholder in the supply chain can easily trace (track) any lot, back upstream, to its raw materials and production process, and downstream, to its distributors, resellers, and end customers.

Vertical industries, such as pharmaceutical, medical device, automotive, electronics, and food and beverage manufacturers, rely heavily on lot traceability, to ensure their products meet stringent industry and government regulations and quality assurance procedures. Of the numerous value-added benefits of lot traceability, first and

> **ACCOUNTABILITY IN THE MANUFACTURING PROCESS IS POWERED BY TRACEABILITY, AND MORE SPECIFICALLY, LOT TRACEABILITY, AND HOW MANUFACTURERS CREATE AND MAINTAIN TRANSPARENT, RESPONSIBLE, AND ACCOUNTABLE PRODUCTION, FROM THE RECEIPT OF RAW MATERIALS TO THE SHOP FLOOR AND ASSEMBLY LINES, AND DISTRIBUTION TO THE CUSTOMERS' FRONT DOOR.**

foremost – it can help save lives. When both raw materials AND finished products can be traced along the production and distribution chain, its exceedingly easier to zero in on manufacturing defects or expired shelf-life, and recall faulty or hazardous products, faster. What's more, lot traceability enhances overall warehousing and logistics efficiency. It also fuels better customer service, by helping deliver finished products on time, and on budget.

The Meeting Point: Lot traceability, manufacturing, and ERP

Due to improving product quality, and the surge in safety awareness in recent years, lot traceability in manufacturing has never been more vitally important than it is today. Despite its urgency, there are still manufacturers out there who either have not or cannot successfully implement lot traceability into their workflow. In and of itself, lot traceability demands that reams of operational data be uploaded to a strong and viable central database, that it be seamlessly integrated into the various hardware (machines) in the production facility, and that it be easily accessible by all relevant stakeholders in the supply chain via a shared, companywide software platform.

For many manufacturers who may still be using legacy standalone solutions, this is a "big ask" to fulfil, implement, and master. But when lot traceability functionality is seamlessly integrated into manufacturing ERP, it takes on a whole new dimension, powered by an ERP system's automated and optimized operational processes. Because a modern ERP is a single unified platform that enables operational data to flow through the many stages of a manufacturing process, and be consistently tracked and analyzed by the system's integrated BI tools and functionality, only a dedicated manufacturing ERP can support continuous and reliable lot traceability.

Ode to ERP

An ERP system designed exclusively for manufacturers raises the bar on implementing and maintaining quality assurance and compliance in every production run. For starters, the software's robust search capabilities, product shelf-life management, quality tracking, supplier performance reporting, and landed cost tracking tools, enable manufacturers to consistently be on top of their production processes, with always available, always accessible real-time information at every stage.

Not only does a manufacturing ERP's integrated lot traceability tools help manage the collection and retention of process data and documentation required for highly-regulated products, such as food and pharmaceuticals, it also includes dual units of measure, upstream/downstream traceability of serialized parts, from receipt through put-away, subsequent warehouse transfers, picking, and delivery. The system's advanced lot genealogy keeps track of lot components and maintains lot attributes when lots are split, merged, or transferred within the organization.

To take lot traceability even further, modern ERP systems provide full support for mobile devices, barcode labeling, and RFID tags, where warehouse technicians are granted real-time access to relevant information from any mobile device or tablet, to facilitate better-informed decisions and handle multiple tasks, to reduce processing time, and increase warehouse efficiency. With mobile ERP functionality, system users can update task details based on actual task performance, open new warehouse tasks, scan and print barcode labels, and RFID tags, and view current inventory levels for a given warehouse or part – all from their mobile device.

The Manufacturing ERP Checklist

If you're keen on implementing lot traceability in your manufacturing processes, and if you're shopping around for a new ERP or upgrading your current system, here's what you need to look for in an ERP system, and demand from your ERP software vendor.

As a rule of thumb, your prospective ERP software vendor must be able to provide you with a system that can track raw materials when received, track materials through production, and track finished products through the distribution channel, right to the end customer. To do this efficiently, your ERP system's lot traceability functionality should include (but not be limited to):

Provide automated QA/quality control checks that flag defects/anomalies in the production process and the distribution channel

Track manufacturing and expiration (shelf-life) dates

Track third-party vendors to trace raw materials back to their original supplier

Track distribution channels to verify and document the final destination of every production lot, and every finished product received by end customers

Fully integrate system-generated lot data with production hardware/software, e.g., barcode scanners and RFID tags

But long before diving in and actually purchasing a new or replacement ERP, you want to ensure the system's lot traceability functionality can provide you with accurate and reliable answers to these questions:

Which raw materials and how many of each were used to manufacture a specific product or lot?

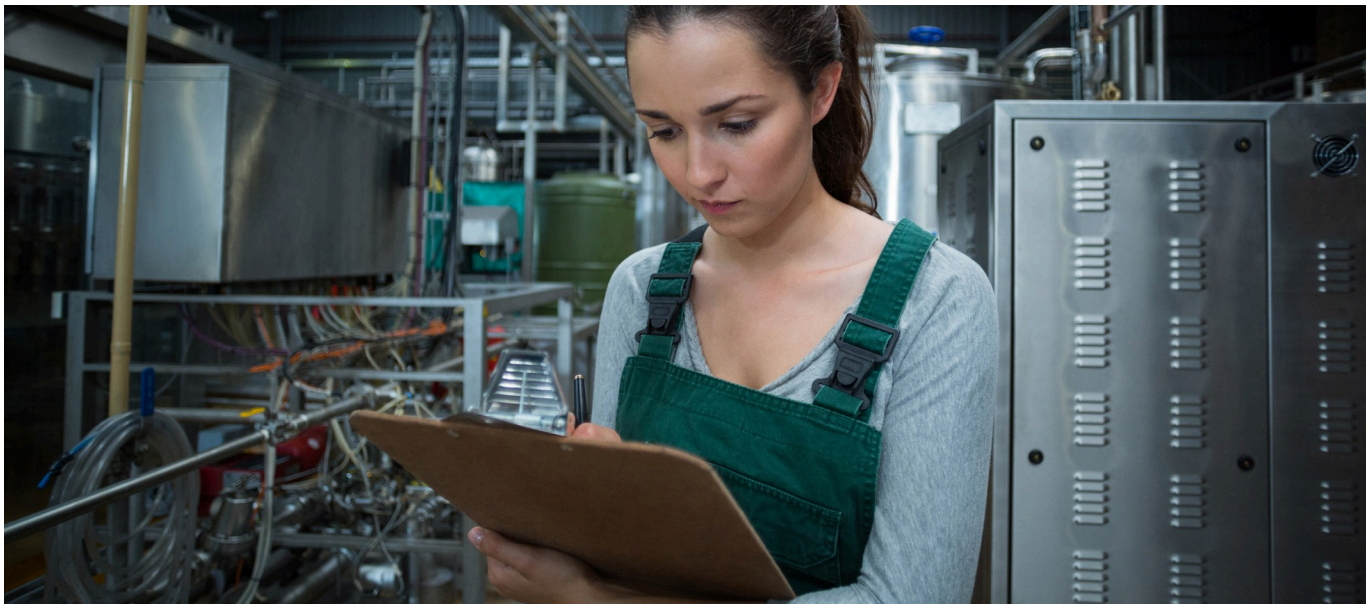
Which third-party vendors supplied these raw materials, when were they supplied, and if applicable, is their shelf-life clearly marked?

Following production, what QA procedures/quality-control tests were carried out on a specific lot, and who (in your organization) approved them?

Which distributors/resellers were sent finished products for distribution, when, and from which specific lot?

Which end customers received the finished products from your distributors, and when?

Lot traceability is an essential tool for any and all production processes, and a dedicated manufacturing ERP software will ensure timely, accurate, and reliable inventory and production workflows and reporting. In turn, manufacturers will achieve high-level, companywide traceability, to ultimately reduce time, valuable resources, and the costs incurred by defective processes or the recall of defective or unsafe products. With the surge in e-commerce and online shopping, now more than ever, manufacturers must meet tough consumer demands for a no less than "perfect" finished product, and have no choice but to implement lot traceability into their business.



A seasoned professional, Johan's colorful career in management and business development, particularly in the ERP space, brought him to Priority, where he holds the position of Managing Director, Western Europe from the company's European HQ in Pelt. Prior, Johan served as Managing Partner at Dynappco, a Netsuite's services provider. He also held the position of NetSuite Special Interest Group leader in the Benelux User Group, and for over two decades, held senior executive positions at Oracle Benelux, including Sr. Account Executive, Cloud Applications Sales, Solution Specialist Director, Fusion Applications Leader, and Consulting Director, Oracle Applications Consulting, Benelux. He holds a MSc. in Industrial Engineering & Management from Katholieke Universiteit, Leuven, and a MIT (Masters in Information Technology), from VIK, in Belgium. When he's not visiting Priority customers and partners or sparring with the people in the team, he can be found at home in Houtvenne, enjoying family life with his wife and 3 daughters, or hiking in the Ardennes – a beautiful region in every season.

About Priority

Priority is a leading provider of scalable, agile, and open cloud-based business management solutions for a wide range of industries and organizations of all sizes; from global enterprises to small and growing businesses. Recognized by top industry experts and analysts for its product innovation, Priority provides real-time access to business data and insights from any desktop or mobile device, enabling organizations to increase operational efficiency, improve the customer experience, identify new opportunities, and outpace the competition. With offices in the US, UK, Belgium, and Israel and a global network of business partners, Priority, owned by Fortissimo Capital and TA Associates, empowers 75,000 customers in 40 countries with smart and intuitive business management platforms that drive accelerated organizational growth

What does this mean for you and your business? Simply put, Priority improves business efficiency and the customer experience. We provide real time access to business data and insights in the cloud, on-premise, and on-the-go, easy, real time system access from any mobile device or tablet – anywhere, any time.

Medatech provided a complete Priority ERP solution. It covered all areas of SMI's business,integrating their departments within a single database. The solution consisted of the full Manufacturing suite, including integrated CRM and Financial modules. The Project Management module was also added to deliver the project-based processes and functionality SMI needed to support its work with defence-sector customers, among others. Since the initial implementation of Priority SMI's utilisation of the system has gone from strength to strength, with its number of system users more than doubling.

MEDATECH priority™ Authorized Partner Gold

Agile, scalable ERP, that SME's can afford.

How do complex manufacturers cope with standard ERP systems?

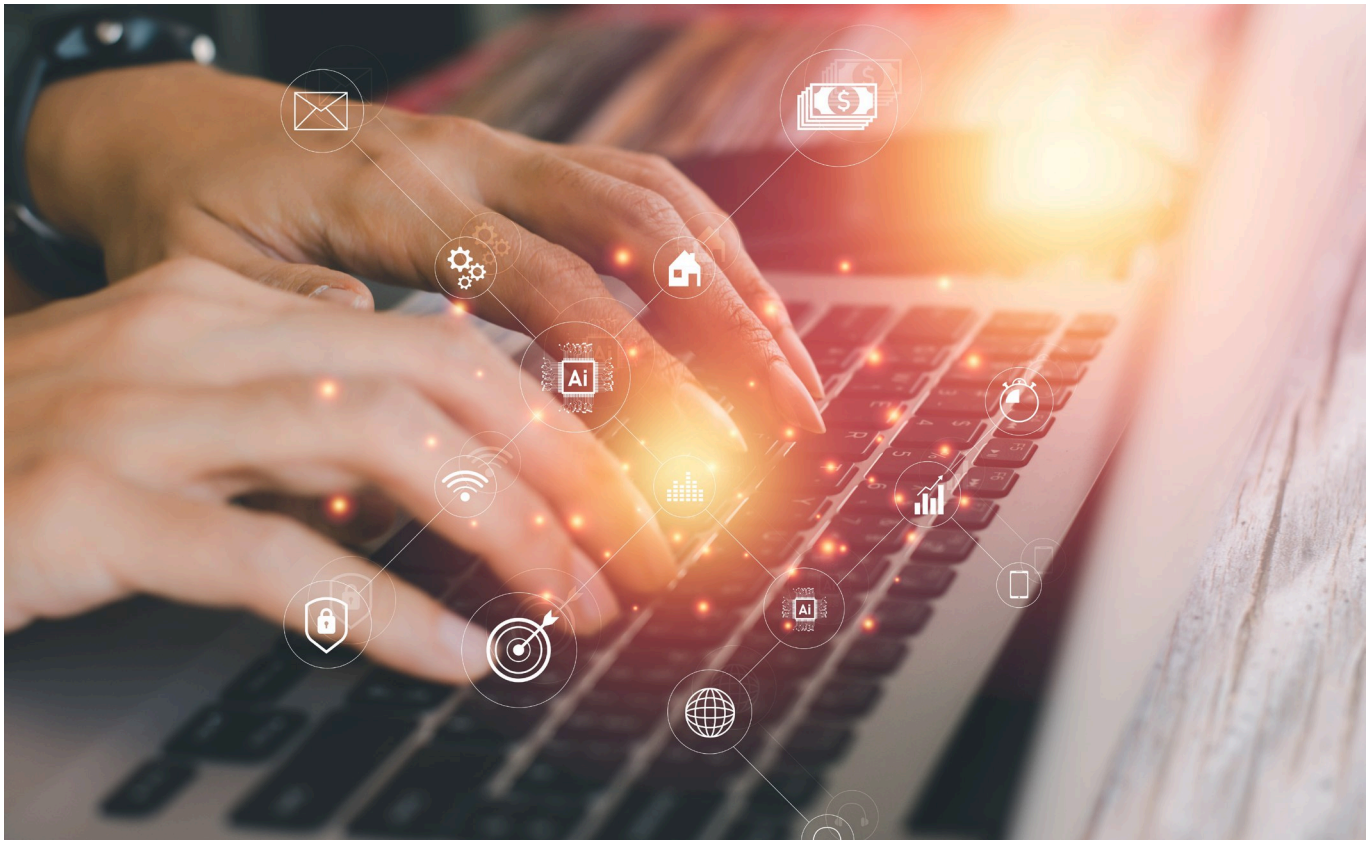
Over the years there have been many complex manufacturers that owe their competitiveness to their unique manufacturing processes but have struggled when it comes to automating via an ERP system.

Either they have stuck to the mantra of "do not customise your ERP", or they have gone ahead and customised only to fall foul of the version-lock problem which ultimately has forced them to change systems prematurely.One such example of manufacturing complexity is the type of business that manufactures from high-value materials that must:

a) Control tightly the stock of raw material (batch or serial traceability)
b) Maintain off-cut inventory to retain the maximum stock of those high-value materials.

We, at Medatech have offices in the UK and in Australia, where we have much experience of this, whether it is specialist steel production, high-value roll material (this brings its own unit of measure challenges) or special-shaped materials.

www.medatechuk.com **sales@medatechuk.com** **@Medatech UK ltd**



SYNTAX

THE NEW FEATURES OF ORACLE EBS RELEASE 12.2.11: A MODERN UX

In November 2021, we reviewed the major changes coming with Oracle e-Business Suite Release 12.2.11. This post is the start of a new series that will explore those changes in more depth. As we noted in November, the new release updates are straightforward. Yet becoming familiar with all the new changes ensures your team takes full advantage of added functionality and offers clues about where future releases may be headed.

At the release of 12.2.11, Oracle noted three main categories of updates: modern user experience (UX), functional innovation, and operational efficiency. We'll start with the changes to the UX. These may seem the least consequential of the changes, but it's the part that every user will encounter and can make a difference in their productivity and efficiency.

Updates to ECCs

Oracle introduced EBS Enterprise Command Centers (ECCs) in 2018. They provided an important functional addition to EBS and are where many of the latest UX updates come into play. The full ECC offering includes the 32 ECCs below, as well as 110 supporting dashboards:

Financials: Receivables, iReceivables, Payables, Assets, Lease Contracts (Financials), Lease and Finance Management

Procurement and Projects: iProcurement: Consumer-like Shopping, Procurement, Projects, Project Procurement, Contract Lifecycle Management for Public Sector
Order Management and Logistics: Order Management, Inventory Management, Advanced Pricing, iStore: Modern Shopping Experience, Landed Cost Management, Channel Revenue Management, Incentive Compensation

> "AT THE RELEASE OF 12.2.11, ORACLE NOTED THREE MAIN CATEGORIES OF UPDATES: MODERN USER EXPERIENCE (UX), FUNCTIONAL INNOVATION, AND OPERATIONAL EFFICIENCY.

Manufacturing: Discrete Manufacturing, Process Manufacturing, Outsourced Manufacturing, Project Manufacturing, Cost Management, Quality

Asset Lifecycle and Service: Enterprise Asset Management, Asset Tracking, Service Contracts, Service (TeleService), Field Service, Depot Repair

Human Capital Management: Human Resources, Payroll

The Payroll Command Center, under Human Capital Management, is new with the 12.2.11 Release. This new center helps manage the payroll cycle and reduces reliance on operational reports. Before a payroll run, users can now find and fix data exceptions that might cause processing errors. After a run, users can reconcile results. That includes finding discrepancies across payrolls and periods, with the ability to drill down to element and assignment details. It also simplifies tax statutory reporting by analyzing and reporting tax balances at federal, state, and local levels, but note, the current scope focuses on U.S. legislation.

Enhanced ECC Framework

The ECC Framework allows users to create and modify command centers. Capabilities added in March and November 2021 release updates include network diagrams, dashboard pop-ups, APEX integration with ECC, look-ahead visualizations in chart cascading, waterfall charts, color pinning in charts, relative date range filters, PDF exports, and default saved searches.

The dashboard pop-up capability is notable. Through these pop-ups, users can quickly complete simple tasks without the need to navigate to different transaction pages. This ability improves user productivity by reducing unnecessary tasks. Users can also build custom pop-ups. For example, in the Procurement Command Center, a pop-up allows users to reassign requisitions, in the Service Command Center users can perform task uptake, and in the Receivables Command Center, a pop-up enables cancelling disputes.

A More Useable Home Page and Theme Updates

The home page has been changed from a transactional experience to a Business Intelligence (BI) experience. Rather than only a transaction list, the homepage now includes dashboards, key indicators, charts, graphs, transactions, and task lists. This update is meant to provide a more consumer-like feel, with better search and filter options to help users more easily find and act on what matters most to their roles and responsibilities. This update replaces custom operational reporting, relieving some burden off IT teams tasked with creating and maintaining custom reports. The dashboard works directly with EBS data and offers an alternate UI for any EBS, applied on top of any 12.2.4 release or after.

With Release 12.2.7, Oracle added the ability to select from various themes as a way to provide flexibility in the UI look and feel. With Release 12.2.11, the company added the Redwood Theme, which helps create consistency with Oracle's other SaaS applications across your corporate environment.

About Syntax

Syntax provides comprehensive technology solutions to businesses of all sizes with over 800 customers trusting Syntax with their IT services and ERP needs. Syntax is a leading Managed Cloud Provider for Mission Critical Enterprise Applications. Syntax has undisputed strength to implement and manage ERP deployments (SAP, Oracle) in a secure, resilient, private, public or hybrid cloud. With strong technical and functional consulting services, and world-class monitoring and automation, Syntax serves corporations across a diverse range of industries and markets. Syntax has offices worldwide, and partners with SAP, Oracle, AWS, Microsoft, IBM, HPE, and other global technology leaders. Learn more about Syntax at www.syntax.com.

THE VALUE OF DETAILED OPERATIONAL PLANNING

*Article By **Geoff Ng,***
Chief Technology Officer for Prophix ,

During my visit to Australia and the Asia Pacific region last November, a recurring theme has been about the details required for accurate planning. There's a tendency to focus on the final profit and loss (P&L), balance sheet, and cash flow statement when thinking about budgeting and planning. However, understanding the operational side of the business is integral to this process. It requires incorporating operational drivers and key metrics. These are often non-financial measures or non-numerical attributes that are critical to proper planning.

Elements of operational planning

Your operational drivers and metrics will vary depending on the industry. For example, in Australia and New Zealand, at many agriculture, mining, and manufacturing companies, drivers and metrics are tied to production output, weather conditions, commodity prices, customer types, payment terms, and other measurable items.

Incorporating operational data during the budgeting and planning process is inherently difficult when relying solely operational_planningon spreadsheets. The granular nature of operating data, which may be daily, weekly, by customer, operating location, can turn spreadsheets into a giant mess. Customers I spoke to say their analysts may spend weeks trying to process the data using spreadsheets before they can even link it to a plan. Spreadsheet can also balloons to several hundred megabytes, making it impossible to share with others. Another limitation is the inability to make

> "
>
> **PROPHIX HAS LONG RECOGNIZED THE NEED TO INTEGRATE OPERATIONAL DRIVERS AND METRICS WITH THE BUDGETING AND PLANNING PROCESS.**

changes on the fly. These mega spreadsheets are inflexible as the slightest change can break all the links or data feeds.

The rise of Detailed Planning Manager

Prophix has long recognized the need to integrate operational drivers and metrics with the budgeting and planning process. Our Detailed Planning Manager takes the guesswork and mechanics away, making it straightforward to add operational details to any planning process. Detailed Planning Manager provides a graphical user experience for creating operational plans featuring non-financial drivers and non-numerical attributes. As it was purposely designed after speaking to hundreds of clients, and based on years of experience, there is no customization or programming involved. Effective operational models, capturing information at the required level of detail, linked to the P&L, balance sheet, and cash flow, can be developed very quickly.

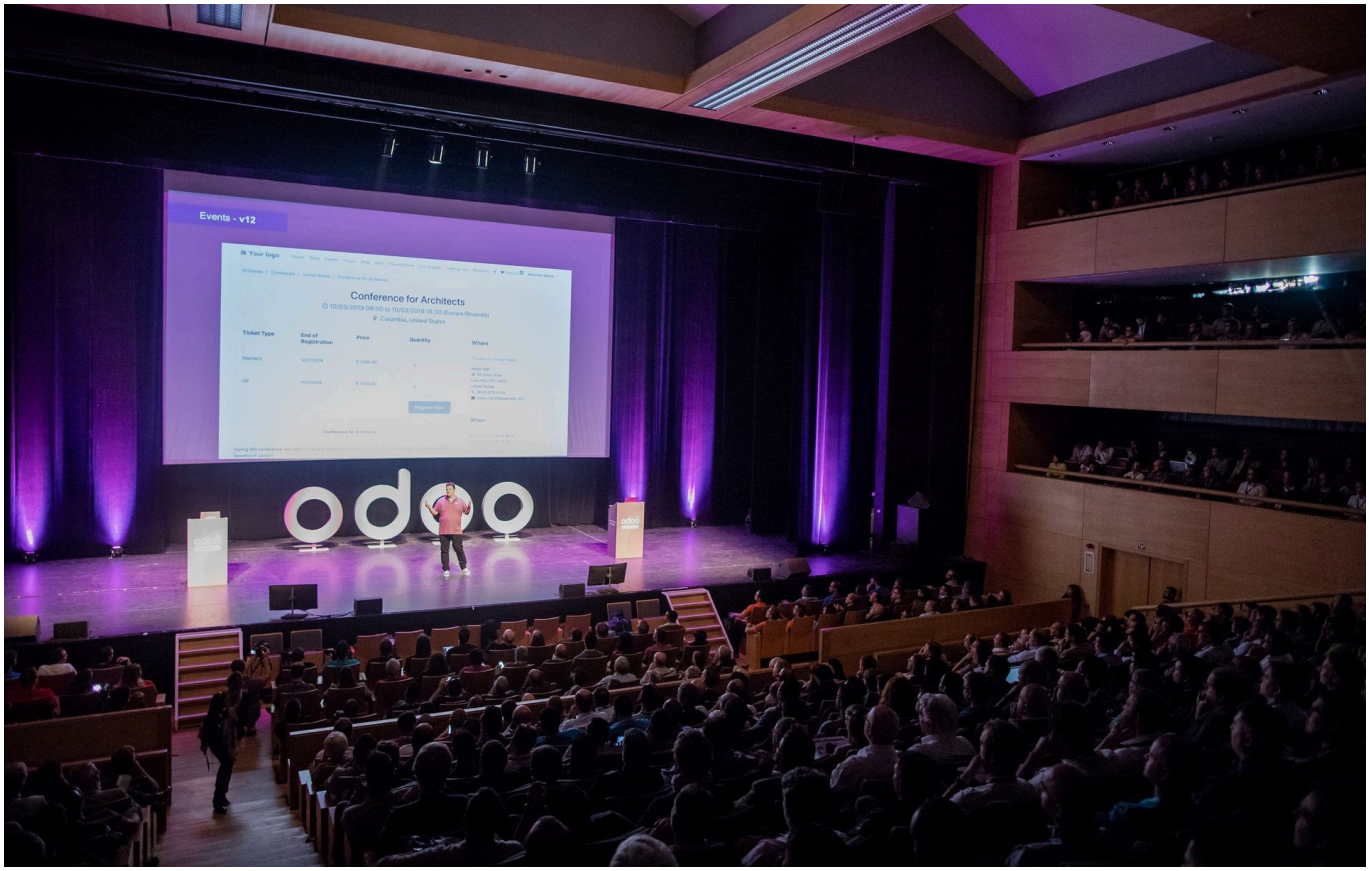
As Detailed Planning Manager is not a separate application, anything created also enjoys the benefit of workflow and process management, improving collaboration across the organization. Detailed operational plans can be assigned for completion by the operational managers who understand their business best. While data can be scheduled to be imported at automatic intervals.

I have been humbled and overjoyed at how our customers have embraced Detailed Planning Manager, with many using it for unique applications I never imagined during product development. With Detailed Planning Manager, operational details should not take a back seat during the planning process. The devil's in the details!
Odoo Experience is a three day event you don't want to miss.

Geoff Ng is Chief Technology Officer (CTO) for Prophix, a global leader in Corporate Performance Management (CPM) software based in Mississauga, Ontario. Geoff has been with Prophix for over 20 years, guiding the company's continued product innovation. As CTO, Geoff focuses on product planning strategy, engineering, information security and corporate IT.

About Prophix Software

Your business is evolving. And the way you plan and report on your business should evolve too. Prophix helps mid-market companies achieve their goals more successfully with innovative, cloud-based Corporate Performance Management (CPM) software. With Prophix, finance leaders improve profitability and minimize risk by automating budgeting, forecasting, and reporting and puts the focus back on what matters most – uncovering business opportunities. Prophix supports your future with AI innovation that flexes to meet your strategic realities, today and tomorrow. Over 1,700 global companies rely on Prophix to transform the way they work. For more information, visit



ODOO EXPERIENCE 2022: 5 GOOD REASONS TO ATTEND

Develop and deepen your knowledge of Odoo in a unique atmosphere surrounded by thousands of Odoo customers, partners and employees gathered in the heart of Brussels. It's also the occasion to discover and celebrate the launch of the brand new version of Odoo.
Here are 5 good reasons why you should attend Odoo Experience:

A unique place in Belgium for three days

After 2 years of online editions, Odoo welcomes you to a symbolic landmark in Belgium. From October 12th-14th 2022, come and participate in our event which will take place at Brussels Expo situated just opposite the iconic Brussels Atomium. It's an unmissable place in Belgium located in the heart of Europe that will give you the warmest welcome.

Advance your Odoo knowledge and skills in record time

Odoo Experience is a unique opportunity to discover, develop and share your knowledge on the amazing solution that is Odoo. Attend live demonstrations, hundreds of inspiring talks and be surprised by the new features Odoo 16 will offer you.

Discover Odoo 16 exclusively

Every year, Odoo launches a new version of our software. For 2022, we'll be launching the 16th version of the software! Odoo Experience is the key moment to inaugurate its launch and present to the public its new features and functionalities. Be the first to know all the exclusive details!

Meet new people and expand your network

Odoo Experience brings together thousands of professionals from the IT industry as well as users who've seen first hand how useful Odoo is for their company and personal projects. Come and meet Odoo partners, community members, employees, long time and potential customers and people who are simply curious about the product. You'll be amazed by how much Odoo can improve your daily life.

Join the fun in the famous, festive and friendly Odoo atmosphere

Work hard, play hard! In addition to inspiring presentations, delicious food by our chef Jacques and his team, Odoo Experience is synonymous with exceptional parties. Let yourself get carried away by the unique atmosphere of Odoo. An unforgettable evening of singing, dancing and all kinds of entertainment awaits you.

Do you want to join us? Register here!

About Odoo

Odoo ERP system is enterprise resource planning software used company-wide for the management of business processes. Odoo provides seamlessly integrated functional business apps called Odoo apps that form an ERP solution when combined. Open-source software, Odoo, is available with SaaS subscription pricing as the Enterprise edition or as the Odoo free Community version.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF AUTOMATING COMPLIANCE IN FINANCIAL TECHNOLOGY?

At TrustQuay we see compliance teams coming up against a rising tide of regulatory pressure. The constantly evolving landscape of financial regulations means that businesses run the risk of missing something critical in their ever-increasing amounts of data, which is often compounded further by the global footprint of their client base.

So how can we give the compliance officer a fighting chance? Automation in financial technology is key.

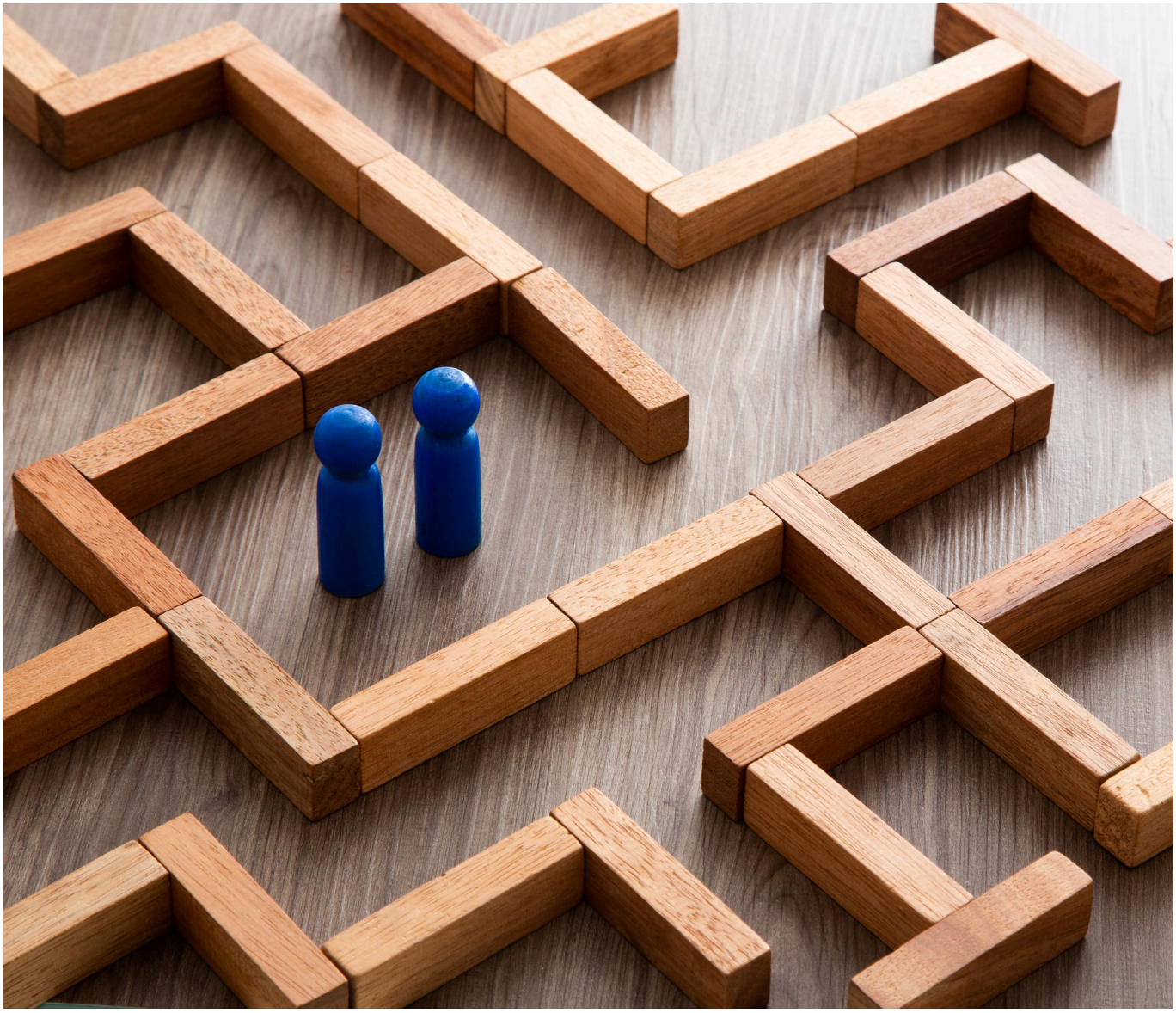
Through the use of automation, we can start to bring the concept of a 24/7 automated, unattended compliance officer to life. Someone who's there to assist and reduce the risk of things going wrong. My top 5 examples of such automation would be:

1. Monitoring when key bits of data are missing and raise internal 'breaches' to the correct people for resolution
2. Completing KYC (Know Your Customer) checks on a regular basis through name screening and sanctions checks
3. Identifying when things have changed and risks that have been introduced
4. Flagging when data has changed and the regulator needs to be advised (and, importantly, how long you have left to do advise the regulator)
5. Connecting to APIs to help you make decisions through rules engines. They'll likely understand the data points to look for better than you and I...

Adrian Akers ,

Global Head of Strategy and Innovation at TrustQuay

TrustQuay



infor

THE ERP SELECTION PROCESS: GENERATING THE SHORT-LIST

*Article By **Jim Reilly,***

Now that your ERP selection power team has identified your top-tier business drivers, what's next? The good news is that you're halfway to the finish line, and you've successfully set yourself up for the next step: generating and prioritizing the short list to help you select the best ERP system to meet your established goals.

This next step is to create a list of what features are your "nice-to-haves," which are value-added, and which are your "dealbreakers"? Many times, companies do this backwards or skip over organizational goalsetting altogether. If you have gotten to this step, your key business drivers have helped you narrow down your long list of possibilities to a short list of viable options. Just make sure that, as you begin demoing potential ERP systems, your short list includes the following five issues that could become dealbreakers:

> **"WHICHEVER SYSTEM YOU CHOOSE, ENSURE THAT IT ALLOWS YOU TO MINIMIZE DOWNTIME AND PROTECT YOUR DATA IN THE EVENT OF A DISRUPTION.**

Issue 1: Customize or Specialize?

Today, specialized ERP systems focus on industries ranging from fashion to pharmaceuticals and mid-size businesses to global enterprises. Be sure to include on your short list systems that recognize and accommodate your business's unique requirements. First assess "turnkey" systems based on what's built in, not what could be tacked on or customized. Ideally, you want a system that can adapt to your unique processes, not the other way around, but if your system needs customization to function, then add to the short list the need to select a vendor best suited for the job.

Issue 2: Location, Location, Location

If you are updating an aging ERP system, chances are your old system was run on-premises. Perhaps you have robust IT resources to help you manage the hardware, upgrades and maintenance tasks that go into system upkeep. However, if your business is growing, IT may struggle to stay ahead of the basics, often spreading themselves too thin to adequality support the organization's more strategic initiatives to facilitate change and modernize the business. Now is a good time to consider the benefits of a cloud-based ERP system. Most models allow you to license the software from your vendor at a per-user rate, and with the responsibility of IT support and complete data center management rests on your vendor's shoulders, not yours.

Issue 3: User Experience

As you begin demoing ERP systems, keep in mind the comfort level your workforce has exhibited with new technologies in the past. Yes, an ERP system is a large investment, but a successful implementation ensures more efficient processes, centralized data, and reduced errors and costs. Is the ERP interface user-friendly? Do the dashboards provide the info users need in a format they can follow? Will the platform integrate with existing programs, or will users need to toggle between windows and log into multiple systems? Remember, at the end of the day, your employees should use the system comfortably and efficiently for your organization to fully experience the benefits of a successful ERP system implementation.

Issue 4: Accessibility

Can your users access the system whenever and wherever they need it, be that on a laptop during a conference call or from their mobile device while visiting a client? A system's accessibility will depend on the servers, security mechanisms and other technologies supporting it. While some on-premises ERP systems hold their ground, the system up-time levels of cloud-based equipment is difficult for them to match.

Issue 5: Protection

Simply stated, whichever system you choose, ensure that it allows you to minimize downtime and protect your data in the event of a disruption. Now that you've narrowed down your ERP selection criteria to a short list that addresses your key business needs, it's time to move to the final stage of the selection process, so stay tuned for our next blog.

About Infor

Infor is a global leader in business cloud software products for companies in industry specific markets. Infor builds complete industry suites in the cloud and efficiently deploys technology that puts the user experience first, leverages data science, and integrates easily into existing systems.
Over 65,000 organizations worldwide rely on Infor to help overcome market disruptions and achieve business-wide digital transformation.

A NEW BREED OF FINANCE FRONTRUNNERS FACE THE FUTURE: SMBS EMBRACE THE METAVERSE AND CRYPTOCURRENCY, SAGE FINDS

A new study of 1900 finance leaders by Sage (FTSE: SGE), the leader in accounting, financial, HR, and payroll technology for small and medium-sized businesses (SMBs), has found that over four-fifths (83%) of finance leaders believe the industry needs a new breed of CFO.

"The Redefined CFO" study investigates how finance leaders today take a more holistic approach with a reliance on data to engage with the wider strategic priorities of organizations. Stepping out from the shadow of the CEO, the CFO has become a hub of business information – diversifying their expertise, recruiting the right talent, and ensuring they implement emerging technologies and purpose-driven programs to remove friction and deliver insights. The Chief Facilitative, Fairness, and Focus Officers represent this new breed of CFO.

"Finance leaders in the U.S. are redefining what it means to be a CFO," said Judy Romano, VP and CFO, Sage North America. "Through their purpose-driven approach to the role, their adoption of breakthrough technologies, and work across a range of business units, finance leaders are taking their place as forward-facing guides for organizations."

See below for highlighted findings from the report. Click here to download a copy of the full report.

Cryptocurrency and the metaverse embraced by SMBs

The research found that finance officers within SMBs are increasingly embracing cryptocurrencies and the metaverse as digital payments technology forces an evolution.

While only 17% of global finance teams reported currently accepting cryptocurrency transactions, one-third (33%) plan to accept decentralized currencies within the next 12 months. Just over half (52%) believe these currencies will prove 'extremely' viable as a long-term payment solution. The biggest hurdles surrounding adoption of cryptocurrencies were internal environmental, social, and governance (ESG) policies (22%) and finding the right talent to manage it (22%).

The research also revealed that over two-fifths (44%) of finance leaders have used cryptocurrency as payment for personal transactions, whilst nearly half (48%) have personally invested in cryptocurrency. Another half (49%) plan to invest in it.

When it came to the metaverse, SMBs may be further ahead in embracing the new technology than many anticipate. Over one-third (36%) of finance teams say their company has already entered the metaverse, while half (52%) say they plan to increase their presence over the coming year. Over half (54%) of respondents are planning learning programs in the metaverse, and almost half (42%) are purchasing virtual real estate (via NFTs).

Global findings breakdown

SMBs are accessing new capabilities all the time, supported by artificial intelligence (AI), machine learning, and blockchain, to better manage their finances and run their businesses more effectively.

Finance leaders in the U.S. were the most bullish: almost half (46%) of U.S. SMBs have already entered the metaverse, compared with only 30% of UK and 32% of Canadian businesses.

U.S. finance teams were also amongst the most likely to already be accepting cryptocurrency transactions, with a

fifth (21%) already accepting these payments. The U.S. trails only Australia – where 29% of businesses already accept decentralized payments. These figures were substantially higher than those seen in the UK (13%) and Canada (12%) which are lagging.

In terms of the long-term viability of cryptocurrency as a payment source for SMBs, 60% of U.S. finance teams believe it to be extremely viable. This compares with 44% of UK and half (49%) of Canadian finance executives.

Aaron Harris, Chief Technology Officer, Sage commented:

"I'm passionate about elevating the work of humans. By this, I mean letting the machines take the admin burden, spot anomalies, and automate repetitive tasks – freeing up humans to focus on what they do best. The metaverse is a great example of the convergence of our digital and physical lives – integrating human touchpoints through digital means to knock down barriers. And while it's still early days for most, the metaverse is normalizing some emerging technologies like cryptocurrencies for SMBs which, in turn, removes friction and delivers insights."

"Yet despite the appetite for new technologies and business models, the availability of skills remains an industry-wide issue that, as a community, we need to solve. Offering more than the traditional finance roles, I hope this will help our profession appeal to an increasingly wider demographic."

Purpose and people ahead of profit

Finance teams are now prioritizing technology skills over financial experience in recruitment, and it is impacting the hunt for new skills. One-third (32%) of finance teams say they are now looking for candidates with either coding, developer, or AI algorithmic building experience. In fact, candidates with a strong AI pedigree were even more appealing than strong finance candidates willing to train and develop AI skills (38% compared to 34%, respectively). However, both are more attractive candidates than professionals without any technical skillset at all.

Organizations are also prioritizing people and empathy in business decisions. Three-quarters of financial decision makers are encouraged by their organization to prioritize people (77%), account for empathy and understanding when making business decisions (75%) and put purpose over profits (74%).

Study methodology

This study is based on 1,900 responses from finance leaders in the Healthcare, Nonprofit, Financial Services, Professional Services, Hospitality, SaaS / Tech, E-commerce / Retail industries at organizations with less than 1000 employees and annual revenue of at least $50M for the US, UK, Australia, and South Africa and at least $5M for Canada. Survey respondents were provided by Torfac, a global market research leader with expertise in reaching niche audiences, and Op4G, a global market research panel built to support data collection while simultaneously benefitting non-profits.

About Sage

Sage exists to knock down barriers so everyone can thrive, starting with the millions of small- and mid-sized businesses served by us, our partners, and accountants. Customers trust our finance, HR, and payroll software to make work and money flow. By digitizing business processes and relationships with customers, suppliers, employees, banks, and governments, our digital network connects SMBs, removing friction and delivering insights. Knocking down barriers also means we use our time, technology, and experience to tackle digital inequality, economic inequality, and the climate crisis. Learn more at www.sage.com and www.sageintacct.com

FINANCIALFORCE

THE FUTURE OF RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AND THE GREAT RESIGNATION

*Article By **Jim Reilly,***
FinancialForce Vice President of Global Professional Services

It's being called "The Great Resignation" — the post-pandemic trend of individuals reassessing their careers (indeed, their lives) and leaving their jobs, in many cases with nowhere specifically to go. For employers worldwide, this trend is shining a massive spotlight on the need for employee retention.

Of course, retaining employees has always been a hot topic for services firms. But to solve for it amid The Great Resignation, enterprises need to take a fresh look at how they manage their resources...and how to keep them.

Balance process with people and improve resource utilization

Let's start here: Resources are people. Sometimes that can get lost on companies that focus too intently on process optimization. Sure, improving utilization is an important, profit-enhancing goal. But when process purity comes at the expense of workforce satisfaction, engagement, and development — especially at a time when the talent pool has the power to walk with their feet — then your initiative has created undue collateral damage in the form of expensive disruption and replacement costs.

The watchword is equilibrium — balancing process with people. That means accounting for your employees' career goals and desires. It means viewing open assignments and resource demands in the context of each other, rather than in a vacuum. It means identifying risks for potential burnout and making the necessary adjustments. And it means remembering that your company's most precious resources walk out the door at the end of each workday ... possibly for the last time.

Empower Resource Managers and increase employee retention

So, how do you increase employee retention? One way is with better tools to optimize workforce deployment. The right set of software tools can provide the ability to optimize deployments across multiple open assignments, forging past the limitations of one-on-one assignments to include soft booking and "what if" scenarios. That software can also help Resource Managers see and know everything about their employees, including skills, previous work experience, goals (career development), and motivation.

Empowering employees

Better resource management isn't a top-down exercise. Employees need to play an active role in the process. A successful initiative is one that matches individuals with their skill sets and professional goals. To that end, encourage employees to identify their strengths and aspirations, and flag the upcoming assignments that most interest them. Then match assignments with employee profiles accordingly.

One way to facilitate this process: Deploy project resource management software that uses Artificial Intelligence (AI) — for example, prompts based on previous assignments — to streamline the process of identifying each employee's most leverageable skills (and, to take workforce development a step further, upgrading those skills).

Future-proofing resource management

The Great Resignation represents a major shift in the labor market. The pendulum has swung to the employee side. Service-based organizations would do well to view the trend as a wake-up call or lose talent to the companies that do.

Now is the time to modernize your approach to resource management. The outcome, a more engaged and motivated workforce, will not only drive improved levels of customer success but also help you retain and develop high-value talent.

About FinancialForce

FinancialForce accelerates business growth with customer-centric ERP, Professional Services Automation (PSA), and Customer Success solutions. Run on the leading cloud platform, Salesforce, FinancialForce enables organizations to see their customers in full color to unlock customer insights, deliver innovative experiences, run a digital business, and achieve agility and resilience.

sage Intacct

SAGE INTACCT PARTNER PROGRAM AWARDED 5-STAR RATING IN THE 2022 CRN PARTNER PROGRAM GUIDE

Sage (FTSE:SGE), the market leader in cloud business management solutions, today announced CRN, a brand of The Channel Company, has awarded the Sage Intacct Partner Programs a 5-star rating in its 2022 Partner Program Guide.

This annual guide is the definitive listing of the most distinguished partner programs from leading technology companies that provide products and services through the IT Channel. The 5-Star rating is exclusively awarded to companies that offer solution providers the best of the best, going above and beyond in their partner programs.

The Sage Intacct Partner Program continues to excel in the market, growing steadily since its inception in 2010. The program has nearly 500 partners, including representation by nearly 40% of the Top 100 VARs and nearly half of the Top 100 CPA firms in the industry – the most for any cloud-native solution.

Sage's network of Sage Intacct partners delivers comprehensive, high-quality services, support, and software to help companies get maximum value from their Sage Intacct investment. Over the past year, the Sage Intacct Partner Program was responsible for delivering nearly half of the new Sage Intacct customers.

"The Sage North America partner programs continued to foster growth and offer support to the channel community as we emerge from a turbulent past two years," said Nancy Teixeira, SVP of Partner Strategy and Sales North America, at Sage. "The Sage Intacct Partner Program has been a shining star in this industry for more than a decade and this 5-Star recognition reinforces the hard work our team has done to innovate and grow this program. Partners are central to Sage's strategy, and we will continue to focus on investing time and resources to help each of our partners grow and succeed."

CRN develops its Partner Program Guide each year to provide the channel community with a detailed look at the partner programs offered by IT manufacturers, software developers, service companies, and distributors. The ratings are based on investments in program offerings, partner profitability, partner training, education and support, marketing programs and resources, sales support, and communication.

"CRN's Partner Program Guide delves into the strengths of each organization's partner program in order to honor those that consistently support and promote good change within the IT channel," said Blaine Raddon, CEO of The Channel Company. "As innovation fuels the speed and complexity of technology today, solution providers want partners that can keep up with and assist their growing business."

The 2022 Partner Program Guide is featured in the April 2022 issue of CRN and online at www.CRN.com/PPG.

About Sage

Sage exists to knock down barriers so everyone can thrive, starting with the millions of small- and mid-sized businesses served by us, our partners, and accountants. Customers trust our finance, HR, and payroll software to make work and money flow. By digitizing business processes and relationships with customers, suppliers, employees, banks, and governments, our digital network connects SMBs, removing friction and delivering insights. Knocking down barriers also means we use our time, technology, and experience to tackle digital inequality, economic inequality, and the climate crisis.

Avalara

TAXING SALES OF SAAS IN THE POST WAYFAIR WORLD

Article By ***Gail Cole,***
Senior Writer at Avalara

Companies that sell software as a service, or SaaS, may think the recent Supreme Court of the United States decision in South Dakota v. Wayfair, Inc. doesn't impact them. But it can, and in several states, it already does.
Though cloud-based services like SaaS are relative newcomers, they're already subject to sales and use tax in more than a dozen states, including Hawaii, Indiana, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Mississippi, New Mexico, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Utah, Washington, and Washington, D.C. Many of these states already or soon will require out-of-state sellers to collect and remit sales tax on their sales into the state.

It used to be that SaaS companies — indeed all companies — were only required to collect and remit sales tax in states where they had a physical presence; states lacked the authority to tax sales by remote businesses. Thus, companies that trade in SaaS, which often don't have a physical presence in all states into which they sell, have been somewhat protected from sales tax obligations in other states.

That changed on June 21, 2018, when in its ruling on South Dakota v. Wayfair, Inc., the Supreme Court found the physical presence requirement to be "unsound and incorrect." The court determined that a sales tax collection obligation (nexus) could be established through a business's "economic and virtual" contacts with a state (economic nexus).

Almost 30 states have adopted economic nexus in the few months since the decision was released. And many of these states tax cloud-based services like SaaS.

Economic nexus can apply to SaaS sales, too

Hawaii, Louisiana, Mississippi, South Carolina, South Dakota, Utah, and Washington are among the states that have adopted economic nexus and tax the sale and use of SaaS. That list is growing. On October 1, 2018, SaaS became subject to tax in Rhode Island, which requires remote sellers doing a certain amount of business in the state either to collect and remit sales tax on their Rhode Island sales, or comply with use tax notice and reporting requirements for non-collecting sellers. And SaaS will become subject to sales tax in Iowa on January 1, 2019, the same date the state's economic nexus law takes effect.

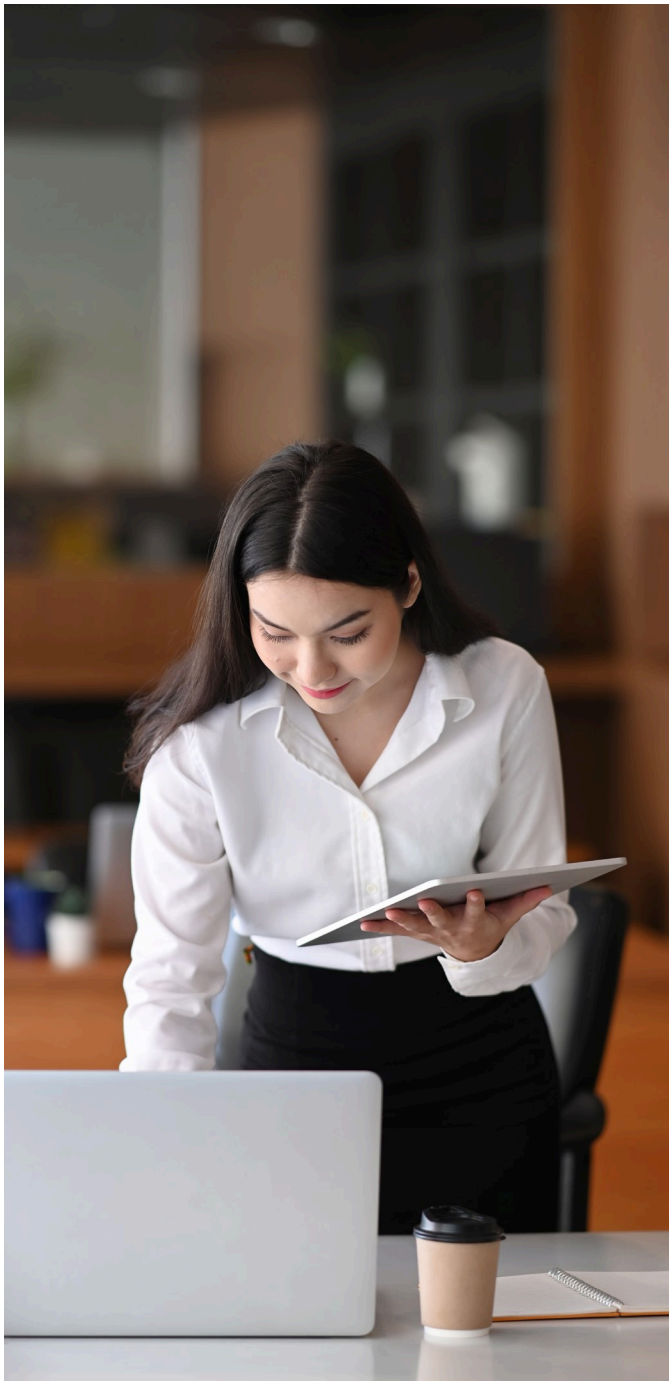
Most, though not all, of these states are emulating the South Dakota law that set the Wayfair case in motion. It maintains a business with no physical presence in South Dakota has sales tax nexus if, in the current or preceding calendar year, it has more than $100,000 in gross sales in the state, or 200 or more transactions delivered into the state.

The very nature of the SaaS business model puts SaaS companies at risk of establishing economic nexus in multiple states. Most SaaS companies use a subscription model, charging customers on a monthly or annual basis for the service, and it doesn't take long to reach 200 transactions per year when customers are billed monthly. Instead of making one sale to 200 customers in a state, SaaS sellers making 12 sales per year to fewer than 20 customers could establish economic nexus in states that have a transaction threshold.

More states could soon tax remote sales of SaaS

Information technology research company Gartner calls SaaS "the largest segment of the cloud market, with revenue expected ... to reach $85.1 billion in 2019." Thus, it stands to reason that more states are looking to tax SaaS transactions. The fact that they now have the authority to tax remote sales makes them all the more likely to do so.

> **BUSINESSES SHOULDN'T ASSUME THAT A STATE THAT DOESN'T TAX SAAS AND SIMILAR CLOUD-COMPUTING SERVICES TODAY WON'T TAX THEM TOMORROW.**



Businesses shouldn't assume that a state that doesn't tax SaaS and similar cloud-computing services today won't tax them tomorrow. As indicated by Rhode Island and Iowa, any state with a sales tax could decide to tax cloud-computing services at any time. Similarly, any sales tax state that hasn't already done so could adopt economic nexus at any time. Scott Peterson, Vice President of U.S. Tax Policy and Government Relations at Avalara, predicts all states with a sales tax will adopt economic nexus by 2020.

Assuming economic nexus laws only impact tangible good sellers is risky; with new taxing powers at their disposal, states are increasingly likely to tax remote sales of SaaS. Sellers of SaaS and similar cloud-computing products should keep close watch on state sales tax laws and consider undertaking a nexus study to determine where they have nexus now, and where they're at risk for establishing it. A good first step is to check out this state-by-state guide to economic nexus rules.

About Avalara

We're building cloud-based tax compliance solutions to handle every transaction in the world.

Imagine every transaction you make — every tank of gas, cup of coffee, or pair of sneakers, every movie ticket, meal kit, or streamed song, every sensor-to-sensor ping. Nearly every time you make a purchase, physical or digital, there's an accompanying unique and nuanced tax compliance calculation.

The logic behind calculating taxes — the rules, rates, and boundaries — is a global, layered, three-dimensional mess of complexity, with compliance dictated by governments and applied by every business, every day.

Avalara works with businesses of all sizes, all over the world — from corner stores to gigantic global retailers — to calculate tax accurately and automatically, at speeds measured in milliseconds.

That's a massive technical challenge, in terms of scale, reliability, and complexity, and we do it better than anyone. That's why we're growing fast.

Headquartered in Seattle, Avalara has offices across the U.S. and around the world, in Belgium, Brazil, Canada, India, and the U.K.

INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS: THE NEW FUTURE FOR CONSTRUCTION?

*Article By **Kenny Ingram,***
Vice President, Engineering, Construction & Infrastructure

Latest global predictions suggest that spending on new infrastructure projects has now overtaken spending on property construction and will continue to lead for the next decade. Kenny Ingram, Vice President, Construction & Engineering at IFS, looks at what this means for the sector, and why the need to embrace modern methods of construction, new technology and digitalization is even more critical.

According to the latest annual forecasts for global construction volumes by Global Construction Perspectives, 2022 will see global construction growth slow to around 3.0%, with infrastructure work usurping housing as the predominant revenue stream for contractors.

As we begin to emerge from the worst of the COVID pandemic, governments across the world are reevaluating the resilience and condition of their critical infrastructure – in particular 'hard and critical infrastructure': transportation, telecommunications, energy, water and sanitation.

The result is a widespread investment in physical systems and assets such as roads, highways, high-speed railways, tunnels and bridges. There are two factors driving this. Firstly, a desire to stimulate the economy, create jobs and, most recently, reverse the recession created by the pandemic. Secondly, investing to upgrade transportation infrastructure ultimately enables societies to operate and compete more efficiently, also offering the chance to reduce fossil fuel emissions responsible for climate change.
Investment predictions

Research by Oxford Economics in 2017 – conducted before the pandemic – estimated that the global infrastructure investment required between 2016 and 2040 was $94 trillion – an average of $3.7 trillion per year. The trends then already indicated a shortfall of some 19%, with an urgent need for counties to increase infrastructure spending as a proportion of GDP.

The recent "Future of Construction" report, a forecast produced by Oxford Economics and Marsh McLennan companies Marsh and Guy Carpenter, predicts the global construction market will grow by US$4.5 trillion over the decade to 2030 to reach US$15.2 trillion. It expects construction will drive global economic growth in the decade to 2030, with output expected to be 35% higher than in the ten years to 2020.

Analysis of global infrastructure spend by RS reveals that the US, France, India, China and Japan currently spend the most on infrastructure development. But needs are exceeding investment. The global shortfall by sector between infrastructure need and spend shows Road Transport has the largest spending gap (£7.3 trillion), followed by Energy ($2.5 trillion), Rail transport ($925.4 billion) and Telecommunications ($853.7 billion). Water, Ports and Airports all have a spending shortfall of between $597.7 billion and $465 billion each.

Opportunities: New vs. upgrade programs

In contrast to the relatively new infrastructure seen in Asia, countries like the US and the UK are now lagging behind, often 'making do' with older infrastructure, an increasing proportion of which is no longer fit for purpose or approaching end of life. Take airports, for example: major termini in China, Singapore or Dubai are typically newer and significantly more advanced than comparably sized airport hubs in the US or the UK.

One of the major advantages of new, modern infrastructure is around lifetime cost. New construction is designed at the outset to be economic to operate and maintain, whilst older infrastructure demands significant continuous investment to keep it operating, as costs rise with age. In the meantime, the opportunity for contractors to secure retrofit, upgrade and maintenance contracts for older infrastructure is significant.

Finance: meeting government requirements

Clearly, from a government perspective, there are societal, economic and political dimensions to encouraging major new infrastructure programs. In the UK, the often-controversial HS2 rail project providing new high-speed links between the South, the Midlands and the North is expected to employ over 34,000 construction workers, engineers, architects, designers and project managers, including 2000 apprentices.

But big infrastructure projects require big investment. The UK Department for Transport's latest projection for the whole HS2 program is between £72bn and £98bn. In the US, the Biden administration's infrastructure bill (the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act) will see over $1.2tr in spending, with $550bn of new federal spending over the next five years. The American Society of Civil Engineers report card estimates that $61bn a year is lost due to poor road conditions. It estimates that in California alone over $130bn will be needed over the next decade to repair and rectify the system.

Modern construction methods: full digital lifecycles

Governments are understandably keen to optimize value from their infrastructure investment. Increasingly over the last decade in the UK, Building Information Modelling (BIM) compliance has been part of the selection criteria for contractors as procurers look to achieve a full digital lifecycle process for their assets. Over the next 3 years, it's estimated 65% of the industry will implement digital asset lifecycle strategies such as BIM.

Our own research at IFS suggests that within 5 years, 50% of all construction projects will use offsite/modular manufacturing and/or 3D printing, with prefabricated modules accounting for up to 25% of the construction. Certain UK projects are already insisting contractors use these Construction-integrated manufacturing methods.

As contracting for outcomes becomes increasingly common, construction firms are expected to manage complex, but potentially lucrative, performance-based contracts and model complex whole-life costs. Governments know that contractors using modern methods of construction and a fully data-driven process offer the best way to secure the lowest cost, the optimum quality, the most efficient delivery and the lowest maintenance and operational expense throughout an asset's lifetime.

Securing new service-based revenues

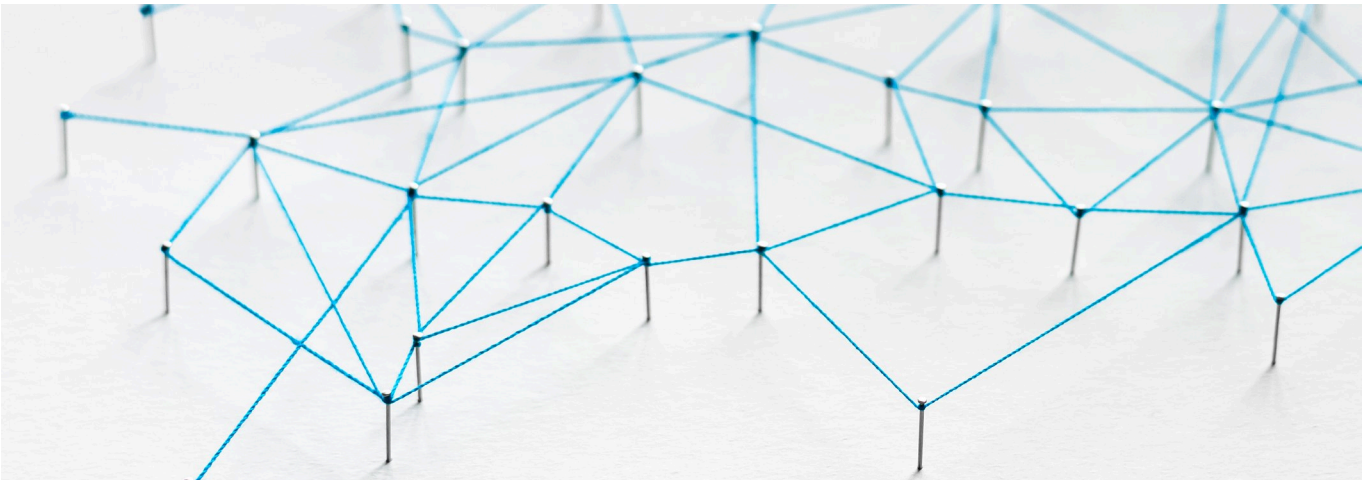
The adoption of these transformative digital technologies, and in particular industry-honed enterprise software, is playing a pivotal role in realizing a servitized (service-based) full asset lifecycle offer. Companies need real-time financial control of infrastructure projects to minimize lifetime risk and manage both construction and maintenance profitably. Contractors ignoring modern methods of construction and digital processes will simply not have a seat at the table.

IFS continues to recognize the importance of evolving industry trends and how businesses will need to react quickly to changing demands with markets. IFS Cloud provides an enterprise business system that enables users to operate smarter, meeting market requirements and remaining ahead of the industry curve, competitive and profitable.

To discover more, download our latest executive summary for Linear Asset Management where we discuss further how the construction and engineering industry can operate more efficiently in a tech-centric world.

About IFS

IFS develops and delivers cloud enterprise software for companies around the world who manufacture and distribute goods, build and maintain assets, and manage service-focused operations. Within our single platform, our industry specific products are innately connected to a single data model and use embedded digital innovation so that our customers can be their best when it really matters to their customers—at the Moment of Service™. The industry expertise of our people and of our growing ecosystem, together with a commitment to deliver value at every single step, has made IFS a recognized leader and the most recommended supplier in our sector. Our team of 4,500 employees every day live our values of agility, trustworthiness and collaboration in how we support our 10,000+ customers. Learn more about how our enterprise software solutions can help your business today at ifs.com.



EPICOR

THE DEFINITIVE GUIDE: DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION IN MANUFACTURING

Manufacturers face many challenges today that threaten their continued profitability. Global, regulation, the pace of technological change, and customer expectations are all on the rise against a backdrop of supply chain disruption, severe labor shortages, and the fallout from COVID-19.

Digital transformation in manufacturing promises to merge operational technology with information technology. By building a cyber-physical production system, manufacturers can deliver greater efficiency, create more innovative, higher-quality products, and forge stronger relationships with suppliers and customers.

This guide defines digital transformation in manufacturing and outlines the benefits, success factors, and culture essential for its success. We break down the technologies at the forefront of the digital revolution and outline the first steps manufacturers need to take on their digital transformation journeys.

The Current State of Digital Transformation in Manufacturing

The benefits of successful digital transformation in manufacturing reach well beyond the factory. Every aspect of an organization, from services and supply chains to products and customer experiences, is enhanced. Silos are broken down, expensive-time consuming processes are automated, and products are improved.

The benefits of successful digital transformation in manufacturing include:

Single Source of Truth: Digital transformation democratizes data and unites every individual and team around a centralized data repository or single source of truth. Employees can access the same clean, concise data on demand, enhancing decision-making and collaboration.

Smart Factory: Digital transformation lets manufacturers create smart factories that self-monitor and solve problems independently of human intervention (fix machinery, order replacement parts, optimize resource use, etc.). Unlike traditional factories that are great at producing identical widgets at high volume, smart factories can be "reprogrammed" to create an array of goods. This output flexibility provides agility in response to evolving customer demands and market conditions.

> **DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION LETS MANUFACTURERS PRODUCE AND SELL SMARTER, MORE INNOVATIVE PRODUCTS THAT SUPPORT THEIR CUSTOMERS' DIGITAL OBJECTIVES.**

Innovative Products: Digital transformation lets manufacturers produce and sell smarter, more innovative products that support their customers' digital objectives. These "intelligent" products are more competitive and improve customer satisfaction.

Partnerships and Supply Chains: Digital transformation lets manufacturers integrate and partner with other technologically advanced companies and participate in the most efficient digital supply chains.

Additional Services: Digital transformation allows manufacturers to sell new products and services to customers, dramatically increasing revenue. A random example: A manufacturer that sells biotech equipment can build a VR experience that lets customers design their entire lab virtually. This digital service adds value (it provides a helpful way for customers to plan the layout of an expensive lab) and allows the manufacturer to demo and sell additional products.

Digital Transformation Technologies

Here are six technologies every manufacturer should consider when planning a transformation. These technologies are often complementary. The most significant gains in

efficiency, productivity, and profitability are achieved at their intersection.

BDA (Big Data and Analytics): The ability to receive, analyze, and extract valuable insights, forecasts, and predictions from data sets so large that they exceed the limitations of earlier processing methods.

IIot (Industrial Internet of Things): Using smart sensors embedded in machinery, packaging, vehicles, and even staff uniforms to track and record every aspect of a manufacturing operation in real-time. Manufacturers can use this information for various purposes, including condition monitoring (tracking real-time conditions such as temperature and vibration to identify potential faults,) predictive maintenance (early detection of defects that could lead to future failures and downtime), and autonomous production.

Cloud Computing: Instant access to scalable software solutions and unlimited computing power and data storage via the internet.

Additive Manufacturing (3D Printing): The ability to print 3D objects from CAD models revolutionizes product prototyping and custom tooling.

Industrial AR (Augmented Reality): The ability to overlay images onto the real-world, allowing engineers and others to work faster, solve more problems, access data more rapidly, and eliminate errors.

AI and Machine Learning: Algorithms enabling computers to solve problems, make decisions, and learn from their experiences.

Digital Transformation Culture

Digital transformation is as much about people as it is about technology. Manufacturers forget this at their peril. Employees are often resistant to any change—especially when digitizing current practices—and failure to win hearts and minds usually results in time and money wasted. According to McKinsey's research, "just 16 percent of executives say their company's digital transformations are succeeding."

How can manufacturers foster a digital culture conducive to effective change? It starts at the top with strong, experienced leadership and a clear digital transformation vision communicated effectively. Leadership must embed systems to break down silos, democratize data, and empower people to work in new ways.

Nurturing a digital transformation culture requires continuous improvement. Staff should be encouraged to fail and learn from their mistakes. Digital enables rapid small-scale experimentation that can lead to valuable discoveries and a more engaged, creative workforce. Innovation is the key to future success.

Your Next Steps Towards Digital Transformation in Manufacturing

Fueled by the COVID-19 pandemic, the rapid pace of digital adoption has been staggering. Global spending on digital transformation is projected toreach $1.8 trillion in 2022. By 2025, that figure could hit $2.8 trillion. The direction of digital adoption might not have changed, but we've been catapulted forward many years (seven years according to McKinsey, to be precise.)

At present, the manufacturing sector lags way behind many other industries in digital. The majority of manufacturers still have a long way to travel along the path to digital transformation. And while there are risks inherent in any digital transformation project, the most significant threat comes from a "do-nothing" approach.

Advances in technology and the rise of SaaS solutions have made digital transformation projects less expensive and laborious. Time to value is faster, and the return on investment is more considerable. These advances have made digital transformation more accessible. But they've also leveled the playing field. Digital-first global competitors and new entrants can compete with more established businesses for the first time.

So, where to begin your digital transformation journey? These steps are a good starting point:

Recruit Digital Capabilities
The team that has taken your company to where you are today might not be the one to guide you towards a digital future. Fill skills gaps with new employees experienced in IIoT, AI, and machine learning. Choose a dynamic, passionate CIO to lead all your efforts.

Inventory Company Activities
There will already be passionate, digitally-minded employees at your company who have begun small-scale digital initiatives themselves. Others will have strong views about which direction the company should take on its digital journey. Survey these people for their ideas early.

Create a Clear and Compelling Strategy
Your digital transformation strategy has to be one that your entire enterprise understands and buys into. It should involve all the right stakeholders in its creation. Digital transformation spans long-term planning horizons. CIOs must master emergent strategies that develop and respond to feedback from many economic, social, and governmental interrelationships.

Cultivate a Growth Mindset
Any technology shift needs to be backed up by a corresponding change in culture. You need to cultivate a 'growth' rather than a 'fixed' mindset—one in which taking interpersonal risks, such as asking for help, admitting mistakes and vulnerabilities, or expressing concerns, are not only tolerated but actively encouraged.

About Epicor

Epicor Software Corporation equips hard-working businesses with enterprise solutions that keep the world turning. For nearly 50 years, Epicor customers in the manufacturing, distribution, LBM, retail, and automotive industries have trusted Epicor to help them do business better. Epicor's innovative solution sets are carefully curated to fit customer needs and built to respond flexibly to their fast-changing reality. With deep industry knowledge and experience, Epicor accelerates every customer's ambitions, whether to grow and transform, or simply become more productive and effective. Visit www.epicor.com for more information.

Epicor, the Epicor logo, and Kinetic are trademarks or registered trademarks of Epicor Software Corporation, registered in the United States and other countries. Other trademarks referenced are the property of their respective owners. The product and service offerings depicted in this document are produced by Epicor Software Corporation.

ERPNEWS