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Low/No Code ERP Environments



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EDITOR'S NOTE

Despite the increasing usage of cloud-based ERP solutions, legacy ERP systems still hold the majority of the market but these outdated ERP systems are often inflexible and can harm businesses in many ways. Businesses that resist upgrading their ERP systems can't adapt quickly to changing market conditions because of the lack of agility in their systems. This lack of agility makes it difficult to stay competitive and eventually causes a reduction in the overall success of the businesses. Whereas no-code low-code platforms are out there to help overcome the challenges of traditional ERP systems and increase the flexibility of the business operations. They allow businesses to easily integrate with other systems and technologies so that efficiency can be improved and costs are reduced.

In this issue of ERPNews Magazine, we explored the pros and cons of Low-Code / No-Code platforms and how you can extend your ERP in a Low-Code / No-Code environment.

Do not miss out on the special interview with Sujay Rao, Chief Product Officer at Sirion in which we discussed how smart enterprises can leverage AI contract lifecycle management (CLM) to adapt to inflation.

The latest news on the ERP industry, customer studies, and much more are also awaiting you through the following pages as always!

Sincerely,

Pinar Sengul



Pinar SENGUL, EDITOR

ERPNEWS

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Extending ERP Using Low-Code / No-Code

The worldwide ERP software market per year is more than $25 bilion and grows 10-20% yearly.

Businesses gained momentum emerging from the pandemic in 2022. However, currently, businesses are facing issues such as labor shortages, inventory challenges, poor supply chain management, and operational inefficiency.

Enterprise Resource Planning software is no longer reserved for larger organizations. Small and mid-size businesses use this integrated business management software to manage their core business processes. *The worldwide ERP software market per year is more than $25 billion and grows 10-20% yearly.*

The reason is simple. An ERP system replaces multiple tools for managing inventory, accounting, production, quality, etc., and provides a single platform with all of these functions in one. ERP implementation is costly and time-consuming. However, a low-code ERP solution is a less expensive alternative.



Article by
George Yankovich
Director of Customer Engagement
OptiProERP MANUFACTURING

What is low-code ERP?

Let's understand what low-code is first. Instead of complex coding, low-code platforms embrace a software development approach requiring little or no coding to design and build apps and processes. It might include visual interfaces with basic drag-and-drop capabilities that don't require tech-savvy coding experts.

No code ERP requires no coding at all. This is the difference between low-code ERP and no-code ERP. Low-code platforms might require some customization, but no-code ERPs do not.

Low-code ERP software is growing in popularity

Low-code ERP platforms rose after COVID-19 negatively impacted the global economy. The pandemic increased the need to connect suppliers to businesses remotely through real-time applications and digital communities. Businesses that have embraced digital change more easily win opportunities with increased capabilities and flexibility.

Low-code ERP software provides the flexibility to change, rebuild, and customize apps as needs change or as a business expands. It utilizes drag-and-drop features so anyone can build their custom application without IT help.

What are the pros of low-code/no-code ERP?

Low-code technology employs simple logic and allows everyone to create custom applications without having IT knowledge. An easy-to-use interface, powerful integration possibilities, and agility and adaptability make low-code ERP systems appreciated by users.

- ***Accelerated development process***

With low-code app development, people with no coding experience can create digital products with visually appealing designs in a matter of minutes instead of weeks or months. You need just one person and not an entire team.
From creating complex apps to software customization, low-code is capable of equipping the employee with operational and powerful tools.

- ***Increased accessibility***

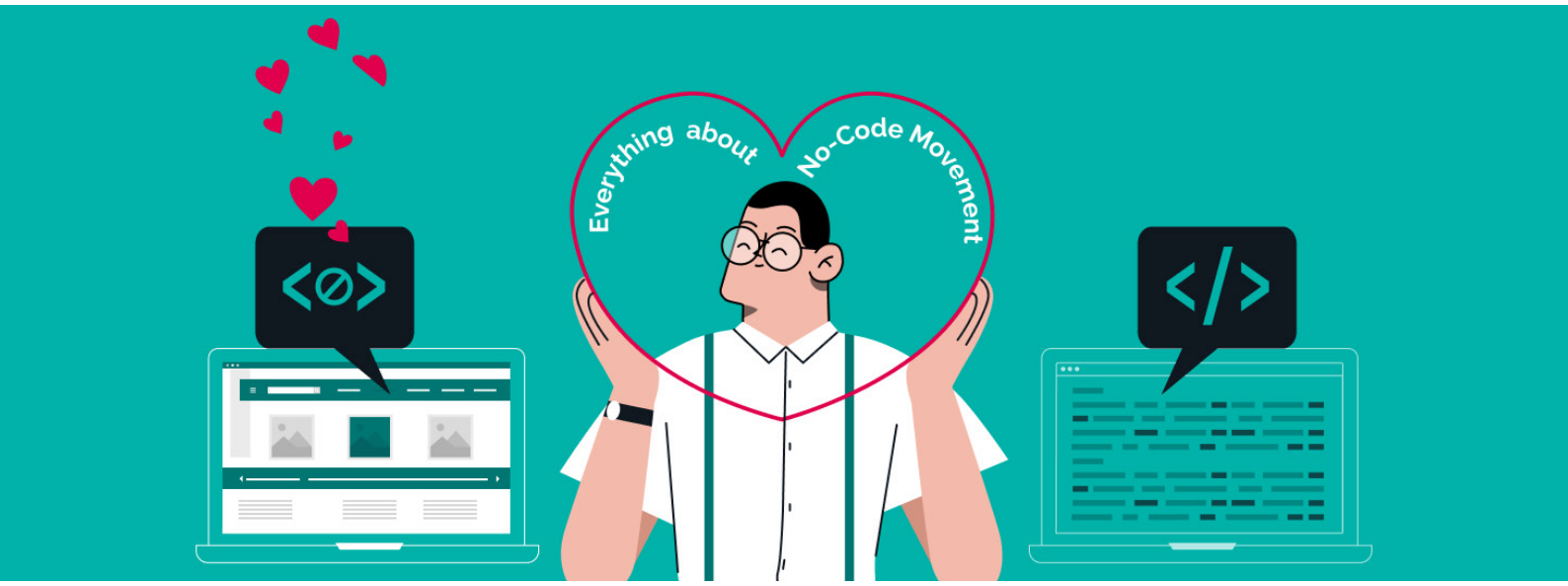
Adapting quickly to changing circumstances is paramount in today's fast-paced business environment. Low-code/no-code ERP systems offer the agility required to modify and optimize applications as business requirements evolve swiftly. Furthermore, these solutions are inherently scalable, accommodating growth without major overhauls or disruptions.

- ***Cost-effective solution***

Low-code/no-code *ERP solutions* drastically cut down on development expenses, as they require minimal coding expertise. Moreover, these systems often offer subscription-based pricing models, eliminating the need for large upfront investments. Businesses can channel their resources towards growth and innovation rather than being tied up in IT expenditures.

- ***Flexibility and customization***

Every business operates uniquely, and a one-size-fits-all ERP solution may not cater to specific needs. Low-code/no-code ERP systems provide the perfect solution enabling organizations to customize applications without diving deep into coding complexities. Tailoring workflows, interfaces, and functionalities can be done easily, ensuring that the ERP system aligns seamlessly with the organization's processes.



Article by George Yankovich

- ***The rise of citizen developers***

A unique aspect of low-code ERP is the ability to democratize app development which means even non-technical employees, also known as citizen developers, can contribute to building, customizing, and enhancing ERP applications.

This promotes cross-functional collaboration, fosters innovation at every level of the organization, and bridges the gap between IT and business units.

The rise of low-code/no-code ERP systems represents a transformative shift in how businesses approach *ERP implementations* and customization. By harnessing the power of citizen developers, streamlining implementation, and providing unmatched flexibility, these solutions empower organizations to stay agile, innovative, and competitive in the rapidly evolving business landscape.

As more businesses recognize the game-changing benefits of low-code/no-code ERP, it's evident that the future of ERP lies in simplicity, adaptability, and seamless collaboration between technology and business.

"Gartner Forecasts Worldwide Low-Code Development Technologies Market to Grow 20% in 2023."

Source:

https://www.gartner.com/en/newsroom/press-releases/2022-12-13-gartner-forecasts-worldwide-low-code-development-technologies-market-to-grow-20-percent-in-2023

Assessing the security of low-code/ no-code ERP

Traditionally, ERP systems have been known for their robust security features, ensuring the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of sensitive business data. The security landscape evolves with the introduction of low-code and no-code ERP platforms, necessitating a careful evaluation of potential vulnerabilities. While democratizing application development, these platforms may inadvertently expose organizations to new security risks.

Vulnerabilities and risks

a. Data exposure: Improperly configured data access controls and authentication mechanisms can lead to unauthorized access to sensitive information.

b. Integration pitfalls: Integrating third-party services or APIs without rigorous security assessments can create vulnerabilities that malicious actors might exploit.

c. Inadequate testing: The rapid pace of development in low-code/ no-code environments may lead to insufficient testing of applications, leaving them susceptible to bugs and vulnerabilities.

d. User-generated code: While these platforms minimize the need for manual coding, users might still introduce vulnerabilities by manipulating certain components or functions.

Conclusion

The advent of low-code and no-code ERP platforms brings unprecedented convenience and flexibility to organizations seeking to enhance their operational efficiency. However, this convenience must not come at the expense of security.

As businesses adopt these platforms, a proactive approach to identifying and mitigating security risks is paramount. By carefully evaluating vendors, implementing robust security measures, and fostering a culture of security awareness, organizations can confidently embrace the benefits of low-code and no-code ERP platforms while safeguarding their valuable data and resources. In this rapidly changing technological landscape, transformation is the key to success. It is important for businesses to switch to simpler ERP platforms that are less complex and can handle business operations smoothly.

"As more businesses recognize the game-changing benefits of lowcode/ no-code ERP, it's evident that the future of ERP lies in simplicity, adaptability, and seamless collaboration between technology and business."

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About George Yankovich

Mr. Yankovich has held several positions within OptiProERP, culminating in managing Pre-Sales operations for the company. He is mainly known for his public speaking and presentation prowess. With decades of hands-on experience in the industry with Fortune 500 Corporations, including managing Production Planning and Engineering, he is highly knowledgeable in all aspects of business operations. That, together with his more than twelve years in consulting with manufacturing companies leading them to manufacturing excellence, enables him to provide insightful service to our customers. In addition, as a founding SAP Business One Partner with countless system implementations under his guidance and wealth of experience, he is uniquely qualified to guide you in your software selection and implementation journey.

About OptiPro ERP

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

OptiProERP MANUFACTURING





Accelerate Time-to-Contract and Lower the Risk with CLM Software

We had a very informative chat with Sujay Rao, Chief Product Officer at Sirion, and discussed the ways smart enterprises can leverage AI contract lifecycle management (CLM) to adapt to inflation.

Increasing interest rates and inflation can have an impact on a company's value, operations, financial health, and as a result, overall success, and businesses should be both flexible and agile to adapt. Leveraging AI can help them protect themselves from the negative impacts of rising prices by ensuring contracts are structured to account for inflationary pressures.

While rising interest rates and inflation shake the industry, inefficiencies can cost companies 20% to 30% of revenue. What would you advise companies to do to adapt to this uncertain environment so that they won't miss out on revenue?

Sujay Rao: With interest rates rising and inflation still plaguing the global economy, businesses that can't adapt quickly miss out on critical revenue. Companies are vigorously searching for ways to defend their bottom line and ensure cost efficiency. You could make a solid argument that commercial contracts are key to achieving these goals. Poor contract management itself costs companies north of 9% of their annual revenue; so we see CLM as an essential technology that can help businesses not only optimize spend and revenue recognition but also pivot contracts quickly to respond to market signals.

What is the role of Artificial intelligence in CLM?

Sujay Rao: The current generation of AI-led CLMs is already great at data extraction and risk discovery, which are essential for the pre-signature contracting process. In addition, AI in the flow of contract drafting is now capable of drawing on past data to accurately prescribe legalese that ensures better contracting outcomes.

The launch of ChatGPT in late 2022 changed the way enterprises can use AI in contract management. The ability to generate contracts with a simple prompt does hold quite a lot of promise. The potential of generative AI models, particularly large language models (LLMs), in transforming contract management cannot be overstated. It provides valuable support for critical functions such as contract generation, contract analysis, and legal intelligence. However, LLMs without precision data are ultimately fascinating toys with limited scope for practical application in real-world problem-solving. Making LLMs enterprise-ready requires additional fine-tuning with domain and use case-specific datasets.

AI & Machine Learning (ML) tools are transforming the way operations and contract processes are managed. How can smart enterprises leverage AI and contract lifecycle management (CLM) to adapt to inflation?

Sujay Rao: We generally understand inflation to be a condition in which people and businesses are compelled to spend more to acquire the same unit of value. CLM is a powerful tool to counteract inflation because AI-led contracting automation enables enterprises to do more with less. With an AI-powered CLM in play, companies can save significant time and cost associated with consolidating, digitizing, and making their contract corpus accessible on-demand and extensively searchable. For example, a question like "Which of my contracts are set to expire over the next 3 months?" would have conventionally taken days to answer, but with the right CLM tool, we can get to the answer in mere minutes—and reap adjacent insights into renewal triggers and conditions in the same breath. Ultimately, this helps a business spend less time on solving tactical problems and redirect resources to achieve strategic growth.

"CLM is a powerful tool to counteract inflation because AIled contracting automation enables enterprises to do more with less. With an AI-powered CLM in play, companies can save significant time and cost associated with consolidating, digitizing, and making their contract corpus accessible ondemand and extensively searchable."

CLM platforms – especially the ones with AI under the hood – are more than just automation tools that will help you gain cost efficiency during a period of economic inflation. They're great at using AI to surface risk hidden deep within contracts, such as unfavorable payment terms that could adversely affect your cash flow or a missing data security clause that could lead to a regulatory fine.

However, only a select few CLM platforms have the technological depth to enable post-signature contract performance management, which is really your bulwark against inflation. Sirion automates obligation compliance and service level fulfillment monitoring. In conjunction with contracted rate cards and performance data from third-party systems, that data can be used to validate incoming invoices, discover discrepancies, and help enterprises realize hard dollar savings in tough economic times.

Can you give us some examples of AI/ML applications that Sirion offers businesses through their digital transformation journey?

Sujay Rao: A large part of Sirion's value proposition is built on meeting customers wherever they are on the digital transformation journey. That's because every customer has a unique story to tell about why they wanted to introduce CLM into their technology stack. A lot of them just needed to kickstart their transformation initiative and begin with small, measurable wins. Their goal was to break down data silos so they could gain 360-degree visibility into their buy-side and sell-side relationships. Sirion enabled them to integrate with and ingest contracts and related information from adjacent systems such as

ERP, CRM, and P2P. Sirion's AI then extracted critical embedded information from these contracts – such as metadata, obligations, service levels, and rate cards – into a centralized, searchable repository, which became their single source of truth.

Moving forward, we can work with customers to extend Sirion's capabilities to automate their contracting process, bringing in AI to drive authoring and risk discovery during negotiations. Together, Sirion's contract authoring capabilities underpinned by a no-code workflow, help enterprises reduce time to contract by up to 90%, delivering significant efficiency gains and overhead reductions.
Countless enterprises are leveraging Sirion's AI and post-signature contract performance management technology to achieve significant business outcomes. For example, one of our customers – a leading investment bank – achieved savings opportunities worth $8.8M through the identification of supplier non-compliance to contractual/ financial obligations. A leading telecommunications company in Australia identified incremental revenue opportunities worth A$5.75M through effective tracking of delivery performance in customer contracts. These are only a couple of examples of Sirion providing significant benefits that go right to our customers' bottom line.

Do you think AI and ML will replace lawyers in CLM?

Sujay Rao: No. But it will make their jobs easier. Legal teams need deep visibility into the enterprise's contract portfolio to be able to discover and assess risk before it can jeopardize their company. Sirion CLM empowers them to accelerate time-to-contract while lowering risk and leading the charge for standardizing contract language and streamlining contracting processes across the organization. This frees legal teams from repetitive manual tasks and allows them to focus on more strategic work.

"I think that lawyers at companies that have deployed a CLM platform with best-in-class AI with ML that's anchored by deeply trained legal AI models and precise training data will tell you that it's a tremendous asset for their work."

What most interests me is the next phase of AI development in CLM. LLMs that have been indexed on publicly available internet data don't deliver much value in the enterprise space. And that's what all of the CLM providers with open AI integration are bringing to the market: LLM based on a lot of indexed – and unnecessary – cloud data.

There are several issues that enterprises are carefully watching as CLM AI continues to evolve. The first is trust. Can your AI model explain why it provided you with that data? Can it cite its sources? Very few LLM models actually do that.

Another major concern from the enterprise perspective is security. Does your AI provide data protection and data confidentiality provisions? Is your data securely stored on your virtual private cloud? In addition, enterprises are in need of AI that not only offers quick time-to-value but is also cost-effective. CLM providers that promise to host your data and then retrain the model are delivering gestation periods of multiple months just to index your own enterprise data.

I think that lawyers at companies that have deployed a CLM platform with best-in-class AI with ML that's anchored by deeply trained legal AI models and precise training data will tell you that it's a tremendous asset for their work. The bottom line is that AI-led CLM enables them to work faster with better data and deeper insights into contracts, making them better attorneys.

About SirionLabs

Bringing together category-leading innovation, unrivaled Contract Lifecycle Management expertise, and a deep commitment to customer success, SirionLabs elps the world's leading businesses contract smarter. Powered by intelligence uniquely connected across the complete contract lifecycle, SirionLabs' easy-to-use, highly configurable Smarter Contracting platform brings legal, procurement, sales, and business teams together to author stronger contracts, improve risk management and strengthen counterparty relationships. SirionLabs is trusted by over 200 of the world's most successful organizations to manage 5+ million contracts worth more than $450 billion across 70+ countries. For more information, visit www.sirionlabs.com.



What are the pros and cons of Low-Code / No-Code platforms?

The rise of low-code/no-code development has empowered users and businesses with the ability to augment their technology by tailoring the application to internal processes and workflows. The consequences of this trend present clear benefits to organizations looking for greater efficiencies but do come with some broader concerns.

The popularization of low-code/no-code platforms has empowered business process experts – who deeply understand their organization's processes and operations – to automate their workflows without involving developers. They are well-positioned to identify bottlenecks, repetitive tasks, or error-prone processes and develop solutions. Through flexible platforms and process automation tools, these individuals can directly automate workflows without extensive coding knowledge.

What's the benefit to the organization? For starters, teams gain faster reaction time to changing business conditions because they can quickly implement process updates through workflow changes. They can also easily adjust approval controls when people switch responsibilities, or the organization hires new people. Additionally, there is less opportunity for miscommunication since business process experts are typically well-versed in the requirements for implementing change.

There are also benefits for end users, such as personalization, which lowers overhead costs and minimizes workloads for system administrators. Examples of personalization include organizing screen layouts to meet specific processes, which reduces clicks and increases overall efficiency, and analyzing data using reporting tools and pivot tables.

This broader trend of empowerment requires enacting processes and controls that were previously managed through the development process. The term citizen developer has been associated with low-code/no-code capabilities, and it suggests an exciting democratization of technology. But that doesn't mean everyone in the organization should be tailoring applications without clear rationale and objectives.

The synergy between no-code platforms and business process experts creates possibilities in propelling operational efficacy to new heights with great potential benefits for all organizations.

Question of the Month
Doug Johnson,
Vice President of Product Management, Acumatica

Acumatica
The Cloud ERP



Sage's Near-Term Greenhouse Gas Reduction Goals Receive SBTi Validation

Sustainability & Society Team Expands, Aligning Reporting with the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI 2016) Core Standard

Sage, the leader in accounting, financial, HR, and payroll technology for small and mid-sized businesses (SMBs), confirmed that its near-term greenhouse gas (GHG) emission reduction targets have been validated by the Science Based Targets initiative (SBTi). Sage is committed to a *50% reduction in Scope 1, 2, and 3 emissions by 2030* against a 2019 baseline, in line with the goals of the Paris Agreement of 2015.

As of the issuing of this press release, there were only 3200 companies globally with approved science-based targets. Fewer than 11% of those represented the software sector, making Sage an early responder in tech's fight against climate change. Sage has also made a commitment to set and achieve long-term net-zero targets, which are currently under review by SBTi.

The SBTi is a collaboration between the Carbon Disclosure Project (CDP), the United Nations Global Compact, the World Resources Institute (WRI) the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), and one of the We Means Business Coalition commitments. It defines and promotes best practices in science-based target setting, offers resources and guidance to reduce barriers to adoption, and independently assesses and approves companies' targets. The company is hoping to make progress against its target sets through four specific focus areas:

- ***Sustainable supply chain:***

To manage emissions across its value chain, Sage is requesting its suppliers disclose accurate and verified primary emissions data allocated to Sage via CDP, and engaging with suppliers with the highest emissions to

secure reduction commitments from them. Sage is also asking its suppliers without Science-Based Targets (SBTs) to set one.

- ***Sustainable colleague behavior:***

One of Sage's goals is to empower its colleagues to be agents of change on its net-zero journey. The company is working on engagement plans to improve climate awareness amongst colleagues, such as launching a carbon literacy program, to influence positive action.

- ***Sustainable products:***

In addition to educating colleagues, Sage is planning campaigns to make customers aware of the environmental impacts of technology usage – for example, the benefits of choosing to host products and services within efficient cloud environments. The company is also working to provide information and tools so businesses can measure, monitor, and reduce the carbon impact of their work, with *Sage Earth* being a first step in that direction.

- ***Sustainable property:***

Lastly, Sage is looking to examine the impacts of its properties such as the energy and carbon performance of its workspaces, especially in a hybrid work environment. Currently, 45% of its global electricity consumption is sourced from renewable energy, a target the business plans to build upon.

Reporting accurately and transparently on progress against targets is another area of focus for Sage's sustainability team. The company has aligned with the voluntary Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) 2016 Standards Core, which gives an overview of the information needed to understand the nature of the organisation, its material topics and related impacts, and how these are managed. In this same spirit of transparency, Sage will also be releasing a Climate Report in late 2023 that details its response to the challenge of reaching global net zero, giving stakeholders information about specific actions in its climate response plan.

This momentum is powered by Sage's well-rounded Sustainability & Society team which has grown substantially in the past eighteen months. Led by Executive Vice President Elisa Moscolin, who previously headed sustainability efforts at Vodafone and Santander, the team is comprised of climate scientists, reporting specialists, and supply chain experts, among other skills.



Elisa Moscolin said: "As a FTSE 100 corporation, we have an important role to play in driving sustainable business practices, but our ambition goes beyond our four walls: we are just as focused on empowering SMBs across the world to get to net zero. With the right plans and people in place, I'm looking forward to making progress against our targets and sharing our successes and learnings to ignite sustainable change across our ecosystem."

Luiz Amaral, Chief Executive Officer of the Science Based Targets initiative, said: "Today, the Sage Group joins the growing list of companies with science-based targets consistent with limiting global warming to 1.5°C. "We now need more corporate actors to set ambitious targets like Sage Group."

To read more about Sage's sustainability efforts, including its Sustainability & Society strategy, please visit: *Sustainability and Society | Commitment and plans | Sage UK*

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 our 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 https://www.sage.com/en-us/



3i Infotech enters a Strategic Partnership with FireCompass to Secure Enterprises

3i Infotech Limited, a global Information Technology company, committed to accelerating business transformation, has entered into a strategic partnership with FireCompass, a leader in continuous Penetration Testing, continuous Red Teaming and Attack Surface Management.

This partnership is aimed at delivering FireCompass products and services to 3i Infotech's esteemed existing clients while also venturing into new client opportunities in a collaborative manner.

FireCompass platform automatically discovers an organization's digital attack surface and launches multi-stage safe attacks, mimicking a real attacker, to help identify breach and attack paths that are otherwise missed out by conventional tools. FireCompass Attack Platform also consists of playbooks that will help to emulate specific adversary TTP to test for potential risks. Business Impact:

- Discover unknown assets that belong to the organization (like IPs, Domains, Applications, Cloud services, 3rd party SaaS services) and internet-exposed infrastructure vulnerabilities
- Continuous or more frequent testing of infrastructure and security defenses to mitigate security weaknesses and gaps
- Shorter time to execute penetration tests and scans on demand without hiring additional experts

Speaking on the strategic partnership, **Mr Sushant Purushan, Chief Revenue officer (IBR), 3i Infotech** said, "This alliance marks a significant milestone for 3i Infotech. Together, we are uniquely positioned to provide enhanced value and offer innovative solutions to our valued clients, catering to their evolving IT needs including cybersecurity. The company shares common synergies through which we will leverage this partnership to tap into the banking industry via captive, PSUs via RFPs, and enterprises via SaaS offerings. Meanwhile, it will give FireCompass the platform to leverage 3i Infotech's brand and network in security offerings".

"Organizations typically test some of their assets some of the time, whereas, hackers are attacking all of the assets all of the time," said **Bikash Barai, Co-Founder of FireCompass**. "At FireCompass, our vision is to make continuous Penetration Testing & Red Teaming available to all so that organizations can continuously discover and test all their assets at all times – just like the real attackers".

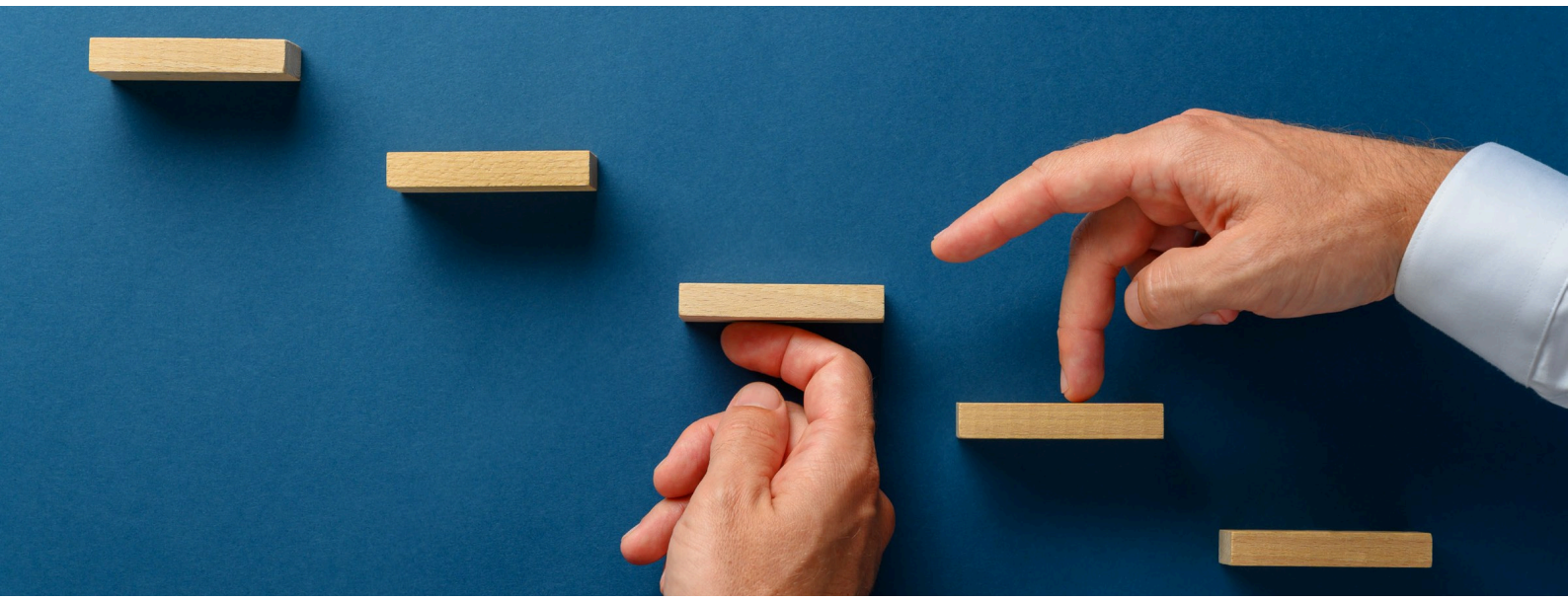
About 3i Infotech

3i Infotech Limited incorporated in 1993 and headquartered in Mumbai, India, provides information technology services and software solutions. Since its inception the company has 25+ years of experience in delivering business value to its clients across multiple industry verticals. 3i Infotech has emerged as a leading name in propelling the current wave of digital transformation initiatives, with deep domain expertise across BFSI, Healthcare, Manufacturing, Retail, and Government sectors. The company currently stands with a strength of 8000 employees and over 500+ clients across the globe. It operates through three key segments, (1) Enterprise Services (includes ADMS, ISMS, Testing, Classic BPS, MVS etc.), (2) Professional Services (includes Human Capital Mgt. Services) and (3) Digital Business Services (includes IT & Digital Consulting, Application-Automation-Analytics (AAA), Digital Infrastructure Management Services (Digital IMS), CloudFirst, Oracle COE, Global Command Centre (GCC), Cyber SOC, Digital BPS, Cognitive Computing Services, 5G Lab as Service, Private 5G, IoT, Cyber Security Services, Secure Access Service Edge (SASE), AgriTech, Telecom Media Entertainment (TME), Edge Computing, Edge Analytics, NuRe Campus, FutureTech, etc.)

Website: https://www.3i-infotech.com/

About FireCompass

FireCompass is a SaaS platform for Continuous Penetration Testing, Continuous Red Teaming and External Attack Surface Management. It continuously indexes and monitors the deep, dark and surface web to map out an organization's digital attack surface including Shadow IT blind spots. The platform then automatically launches safe multi-stage attacks, mimicking a real attacker, to help identify attack paths before hackers do. FireCompass is trusted by top Fortune 1000 Companies and recognized as a leader in GigaOm Attack Surface Management 2023 Radar Report, featured over 3 times in Gartner Hype Cycle for Security Operations, RSAC 365 Innovation Showcase and featured in over 16+ analyst reports from Forrester, IDC, and others. To know more, please visit www.firecompass.com.





Forterro expands its Swiss market footprint with the acquisition of Proffix Software AG

Proffix adds over €8M in revenue and more than 2,500 active customers to Forterro

Forterro, a European provider of software solutions to more than 11,000 small and midsized industrial companies, announced its acquisition of Proffix Software AG (Proffix), a Swiss software provider offering integrated ERP solutions suitable for various industries like wholesale & retail, services or manufacturing meeting specific market requirements of Swiss SMEs. Proffix's industry-independent, modular software enables the digital transformation of all business processes in accounting, administration, human resources, commerce, and service delivery and is already used by more than 2,500 active customers throughout the Swiss-German market.

Proffix is a further step in Forterro's expansion in the Central Europe region and underscores its commitment to the Swiss market, following last year's investment in mid-market ERP provider myfactory.

"We want to express a heartfelt welcome to Proffix, along with its employees and customers," said Dean Forbes, CEO of Forterro. "Proffix and its products align seamlessly with Forterro's vision, further solidifying our position as a provider of industry-leading software for industrial small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Europe."
Marcus Pannier, President of Forterro Central Europe confirmed: "Forterro offers a wide range of solutions tailored for the midmarket sector, encompassing various local and vertical industry solutions. Notably, Proffix excels in serving the Swiss German-speaking region, complementing our previous acquisition of DACH-focused myfactory last year."

Peter Herger, CEO and co-founder of Proffix, will step back from the business after a transition period. He will be handing over to his well-established leadership team to

work with Forterro on the next phase of growth for Proffix. “I have always been an entrepreneur at heart and proud of how we developed our company, Proffix, as an independent SME. However, with the increasing complexity, we are slowly reaching our limits, and we have decided that it’s time to bring on board a strong partner. And with Forterro, we have found that partner. We are a people business, and during the acquisition process, we realised that Forterro also prioritises its people, making the decision an easy one.”

Co-founders Baldassare Nastasi and Robert Caduff will remain part of the new Forterro team and Jürg Danuser, CTO of Proffix, will continue to lead the ERP software development part. “I am very much looking forward to working with the Forterro team, as we need a strong partner at our side to accelerate our growth and the cloud transformation of our product. Forterro brings exactly this expertise and power. I am excited about our journey ahead together.”

About Proffix

Proffix is a true Swiss SME software, developed by experienced finance and IT specialists to meet the needs of the many SMEs in Switzerland. With Proffix, all business processes of a company can be controlled via a central database. The SME software is industry-independent, modular in design and offers an attractive price-performance ratio. With more than 2,500 active customers, Proffix is one of the most successful ERP software businesses in the Swiss SME market. Proffix Software AG has its headquarters in Wangs (Canton St. Gallen) with branch offices in Wetzikon (Canton Zurich), and in Steinhausen (Canton Zug), and distributes its software through 39 sales partners in Switzerland. For more information on Proffix and its solutions, visit www.proffix.ch.

About Forterro

Since it was founded in 2012, Forterro has grown to employ more than 1,600 employees who work from over 40 office locations around the world to support specialised software solutions and more than 11,000 small and midsize manufacturers. Headquartered in London, Forterro is a category leader in one of the largest and most steadily growing markets in software, with strongholds in each of Europe’s top production economies, as well as regional service hubs and development centres around the world. Forterro is home to a diverse range of local and vertical industry software solutions - each one uniquely developed by the midmarket, for the midmarket. For more information, visit www.forterro.com.

FORTERRO





Agiloft Launches AI Trainer To Put the Power of Artificial Intelligence Into the Hands of Non-Technical Users

Contract Lifecycle Management leader Agiloft launches no-code AI Trainer to deliver fully individualized AI contract analysis to legal and contract teams.

Agiloft, the global standard in agile contract lifecycle management (CLM), announced the release of AI Trainer, a powerful, new AI model training capability that will empower non-technical users to fully customize the way they review and analyze contracts. Designed to be a force multiplier for legal and contract teams, AI Trainer empowers non-technical, subject matter experts to train Agiloft's AI to identify important key terms and clauses, so they can quickly analyze and draw actionable insights from their contracts, then share that business-critical intelligence with the rest of their organization to drive real enterprise value. Agiloft's AI Trainer also actively accelerates its own training process by continuously learning and then auto-suggesting additional relevant data for users to consider tagging.

"No two contracts are quite alike, nor are any two organizations. That is why relying on pre-trained, generic AI models alone simply does not get the job done," explained Agiloft's Chief Product Officer Andy Wishart. "We are introducing AI Trainer to ensure more organizations can use our best-of-breed AI to surface, analyze, and report on their contracts effectively. This provides legal and contracting teams with an easy-to-use, self-service tool that helps them codify their expertise to enhance the automation of the contracting process. AI Trainer empowers the very teams who are closest to the contracting process and gives them a way to train and individualize the systems they use to uncover and categorize key terms and clauses in their contracts."

Unlike other AI solutions on the market, AI Trainer is designed to put the power of artificial intelligence fully into the hands of non-technical users. In keeping with the entire Agiloft platform, AI Trainer offers users a no-code environment to create their own AI models to better automate the process of reviewing large numbers of contracts. This will accelerate contract review cycles and help organizations reveal the valuable information that can otherwise be trapped in their contracts.

"CLM should be viewed as an enterprise solution, rather than just legal technology, so a legal department's partners – in sales, procurement, and finance – need to be able to easily find and interact with the invaluable data that is contained within their contracts," adds Eric Laughlin, Agiloft's CEO. "Using AI to identify party names, dates, and common clauses is necessary but insufficient. The organizations that create competitive advantage will be those who are able to extract and use the information that is uniquely valuable to their environment and unlikely to be covered by pre-trained models – for example, legal and commercial terms unique to their industry niche or company. That's why we are so excited for our customers to use AI trainer – it puts that power in their hands."

AI Trainer enables users to easily create custom AI models to examine business-specific elements of their contracts, including clauses, important key terms, and obligations that will help them monitor risk, performance, and compliance. The outcome is a rapid, individualized model of an organization's contracts, which enables teams to surface potential risks before they become problems, identify opportunities for competitive advantage, and ensure compliance across a range of regulations.

To learn more about how the new Agiloft AI Trainer can transform your company's contract intelligence, visit *our website* or join our *2023 Summer Release webinar* to see the technology first hand.

About Agiloft

As the global leader in agile contract lifecycle management (CLM) software, and the only CLM provider to offer a money-back guarantee on their software, Agiloft is trusted to provide significant savings in purchasing, enable more efficient legal operations, and accelerate sales cycles, all while drastically lowering compliance risk. Agiloft's adaptable no-code platform ensures rapid deployment and a fully extensible system. Using contracts as the core system of commercial record, Agiloft's CLM software leverages AI in a pragmatic manner to improve contract management for legal departments, procurement, and sales operations. Visit www.agiloft.com for more.





10 Must Do's For Small- To Medium-Sized Manufacturers

The world has never seen a more competitive and accessible marketplace. Manufacturing companies must operate as lean as possible to maintain profitability and a healthy bottom line. My nearly seven years at Global Shop Solutions has put the magnificence of the manufacturing industry front and center in my life. Everything around us, at some point in time, was touched by a human hand – it is truly amazing to think about. I feel fortunate that my role provides the unique opportunity to spend time with owners, presidents, and key personnel at many of our thousands of customers across the 30+ countries and 25+ industries Global Shop Solutions serves. I spend the majority of this precious time simply listening to what makes their businesses lean, efficient, and successful.

What Have I Learned?

Whether the company is a tool manufacturer such as Fullerton Tool or a leading production/job shop like H&R Mfg. and Supply, Inc., I have found 10 common "must do's" that enable manufacturers to cut costs, operate in a lean and efficient manner, and maintain a commitment to excellence.

1. Lower Labor Costs.

To compete globally, especially for North American or European manufacturers, labor costs must be kept to an absolute minimum. This doesn't mean pay people less; it means less wasteful minutes. Speed up setup times, measure your employees, and reduce indirect labor and redtime. This is accomplished by leveraging realtime data on the shop floor with touch screen Graphical User Interfaces (GUIs) and barcoded work orders to know what your employees are doing as they are doing it.



Article by
Adam Grabowski
Director of Marketing
Global Shop SOLUTIONS

To minimize labor costs, track indirect labor with remarkable precision. Save on direct and indirect labor costs by going mobile. Mobile materials management eliminates the need to record material handling on paper and then manually transfer it to the computer. Use wireless technology to track raw materials, inventory, tools and finished product from anywhere in your production plant using a handheld wireless device. Give your employees the best tools to do the best job possible.

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

2. Cut Cycle Time.

Competing means having a short cycle time and compressing the time between the sequences in your manufacturing. Some companies have been able to cut cycle time by up to 50% by automating processes and leveraging flex schedules with their manufacturing software. For example, the ability to access and analyze capacity data by workcenter and individual machine allows for sequential scheduling of like jobs to reduce setup and breakdown times.

And since every company runs their business a little differently, automation requires a software package that can be customized through a software development kit like Global Shop Solutions' *GAB SDK.* Modify existing screens for enhanced functionality and user capabilities. Create new custom screens for specific users for improved data visibility that matches your manufacturing business needs. Customize your ERP software to meet specific manufacturing reporting and scheduling needs.

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

3. Automate Scheduling and On-Time Delivery.

Manufacturing companies that turn the corner on efficiency mostly say the same thing, "We used to spend too much time on scheduling." Lean manufacturers do it automatically, as it saves time and frees up your human capital to spend more time calling customers, creating new ideas, and proactively managing the business. And since every manufacturer has different processes, machines, and philosophies, the increased efficiency from *automating your scheduling* requires customization.

Improve customer service – and on-time delivery – by accurately viewing and scheduling shop resources, outside processes and material requirements while estimating lead times for jobs. Use advanced finite/ infinite scheduling to create what-if scenarios when moving jobs around to meet customer due-dates. Maximize tools, materials and labor efficiency while offering customers reliable quotes that reflect real-time data. Access the information you need to get every job done on time and on budget for the highest levels of efficiency and productivity.

4. Automate Purchasing.

The most successful manufacturers I speak with rely on automated purchasing so they know when to buy parts and in what quantity. The guessing game disappears, and manufacturers can spend most of their time improving price and delivery, decreasing inventory, and reducing obsolescence.

Automatically import and consolidate all work order and inventory information to make smart purchasing decisions with real-time data. Easily forecast future purchases based on customer history. Instantly see required purchasing actions when entering job changes into the system. Go totally paperless for even more cost savings. Of course, purchasing automation requires customization. Do I sound like a broken record yet?

> "Save time by managing all purchasing activities from one screen."

5. Quote Quickly and Accurately.

The more jobs you can quote and the more accurate those quotes become, the more jobs you win. It's that simple. If you are an efficient manufacturer, winning jobs means profit and margin. The most successful and efficient

manufacturers take all the guessing out of the quoting process by using an automated system for pricing and quoting anything they are manufacturing.

Quote with confidence by tracking job costs with precision. Review comprehensive quoting histories by part number, product or customer. Know the estimated versus actual costs and margins for every job that runs through your shop floor. Instantly access purchasing data to identify fluctuations and trends in materials prices. Again, since every business is different, automating your quoting process requires customization of your manufacturing software.

6. Have One ERP Integrated System

Maintaining separate payroll, accounting, CRM, inventory control and other discreet software programs wastes time and opens the door to inaccurate data. Lean manufacturers manage the entire manufacturing process with a single integrated system that handles all aspects of their business from quote to cash. Data is entered into the system or captured by the system one time and one time only. The information then becomes available, or is pushed to anyone in the company at any time, based on system security and permissions.

An *integrated ERP system* provides a central organizing hub for all the data required to manufacture your product, get it out the door, and handle the accounts receivable process. It makes all the systems and processes more visible, and puts all employees on the same page at the same time with the same information. Employees can perform their jobs more efficiently and management can make better-informed, real-time decisions.

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

7. Reduce Spreadsheets and Paper.

It's a little-known secret that most manufacturers want to be tree huggers. Paper on the shop floor is slow. The more paper and spreadsheets on the shop floor, the more hunting, pecking, and lost time. Lean manufacturers increase efficiency by *reducing paper and spreadsheets.* The integrated system notifies employees which job to run next, or the employees view realtime dispatch lists on the shop floor, leveraging a product like *TrueView™*. No more asking supervisors for directions or hunting down paperwork. All the information regarding the next job is available at the touch of a button, click of a mouse, or glance at a screen.

Use *EDI (electronic data interchange)* to electronically receive purchase orders, job changes, job specs and other documents from customers and vendors. The data is automatically populated throughout your system, eliminating the need for manual data entry and paper copies. Every manufacturer is different, and the greater the degree of automation and paperless(ness), the more customization you need from your business software.



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

8. Maintain Accurate Inventory

Inventory often represents a "black hole" for cash flow. The most efficient manufacturers protect cash flow by knowing their inventory. Moreover, they integrate their inventory with all the other processes so they can manage it in a highly efficient and effective manner. This requires a single integrated system that offers all the functionality to keep your production line supplied with the right materials at the right time.

The most efficient manufacturers protect cash flow by knowing their *inventory.*

Easily track every aspect of your material needs, from detailed inventory data to bill of material (BOM) cost buildups. Review and analyze realtime inventory data for accurate management of production materials. Integrate your material ordering system with your inventory and usage by setting up automated purchasing based on material requirements, planning functions, and purchase history. From multi-location inventory and history/ usage reports to cycle counting and product line reports, material inventory tracking is made easier and more accurate with one point of entry.

9.Delight Customers.

Repeat orders happen when customers are serviced truthfully, quickly and accurately. When customers call or email to inquire about the status of an order, the last thing they want to hear is, "I will have to check on that."Lean manufacturers use a single integrated system and *mobile CRM application* to put all the information at the employee's fingertips so they can instantly answer customer inquiries and resolve problems.

Instantly access invoicing, job status, shipments and quoting data in real-time, for all areas of your manufacturing operation. Use "what if" scheduling to give customers quick answers when they request job changes or accelerated due dates. Help your customers work more efficiently by safely and securely giving them access to specific data regarding their jobs within your system.

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

10. Constantly Measure Your Business Health.

A fever is typically an indicator that your body is fighting an infection. If noticed early enough, you can limit the spread of infection and the impact to your day-to-day life. The healthy manufacturing customers I speak with all require the same awareness in their business. Each of them relies on *Key Performance Indicator (KPIs)* to get in front of moneymaking opportunities and money-draining challenges before they happen.

Measuring your business health through KPIs enables decision makers to:

- Practice evidence-based management
- Predict future actions and results
- Eliminate management by fire
- Encourage changes in thinking and actions

Access customizable graphs, charts, and reports to reviewed summary and detailed information regarding margins, product lines, sales trends, financial performance, and more. Create forecasts based on reliable data rather than gut feel. Review detailed historical data to determine appropriate product and customer mix. Analyze productivity reports to identify opportunities to cut costs and lean operations.

> "With the right erp system in place, these "must do's" become a way of life for your organization, resulting in leaner operations, improved efficiencies and better margins and profits."

About Adam Grabowski

Adam Grabowski is the Director of Marketing at Global Shop Solutions. He is responsible for translating the company's business objectives into successful brand, marketing, and communication strategies to drive awareness, revenue, and loyalty.

Article by Adam Grabowski



Transform your Wholesale Distribution Business Using Mobile ERP

In the dynamic landscape of wholesale distribution, technological innovation is critical for maintaining a competitive edge. NetSuite's mobile-friendly enterprise resource planning (ERP) solution offers those in wholesale distribution access to a tailored platform, enabling them to operate more accurately and efficiently than ever before.

Mobile-friendly ERP is a specialized software that operates seamlessly on mobile devices. This mobility is especially advantageous for wholesale distributors and manufacturers needing immediate access to data and applications while moving, in the warehouse or on the shop floor. The software's tailored features make it a strategic asset for distributors seeking enhanced capabilities.

Benefits of using a Mobile ERP as a Wholesale Distributor

A mobile ERP tool can help take your business to the next level, thanks to its many benefits including:

Increased Efficiency and Improved Visibility

Mobile ERP can help businesses streamline operations and improve efficiency from the back office to the loading dock. Warehouse or shop floor employees can utilize an ERP system on tablets or mobile devices, and easily gain access to order information, bin locations, shipping notifications, assembly instructions and more. As manufactured parts are completed, inventory decreases or outbound deliveries are picked up, the back office can see this information in real-time and respond accordingly.

These features allow manufacturing distribution companies to operate on a single platform from anywhere. This provides increased visibility to track products,

Article by
Matt Posey
VP of Sales and Solutions

SCALENORTH

pending orders and customer status, aiding in better decision-making and improved profits.

Enhanced Collaboration

Mobile ERP can also improve and streamline collaboration among team members regardless of their location. Individuals can share information and documents and work on projects together in real time. This not only helps improve communication but allows teams to accomplish tasks more quickly and efficiently.

Case in point: When the sales team closes a deal, with a mobile-friendly ERP system, your team can instantly be notified of the order, the details, where the parts are located and more. The order status can be updated by the warehouse employees using their mobile devices, and a confirmation email can immediately be sent to the customer. When utilizing a mobile ERP, collaboration across departments, locations and even countries becomes more seamless than ever.

Increased Inventory Accuracy

Proper inventory management is the backbone of any manufacturing or distribution business. A mobile ERP can help track inventory levels in real time, providing businesses with improved visibility into how much of each product or part is in stock. By avoiding stockouts or excess inventory, organizations can be leaner and more profitable. Features like barcode scanning can further maximize operational efficiency. RF Smart, a leading provider of mobile barcode scanning, for example, can help companies optimize their warehouse operations, from labeling and barcoding to cycle counting and advanced picking.

Enhanced Customer Service

White glove customer service is essential for creating repeat customers, word-of-mouth referrals and ultimately growing the revenue engine. A mobile ERP system can help provide better customer service by equipping sales, customer support and warehouse teams with the customer information they need when they need it. When a sales agent answers a phone call, they can instantly access that customer's historical information and order history. When a shipping provider picks up a shipment from the warehouse, that customer can be notified of the progress of the order. This creates a company-wide cohesive customer experience, promoting loyalty and positive word-of-mouth recommendations.

Reduced Costs

Mobile ERP can help reduce costs by automating many business processes. For example, a mobile ERP system can simplify order processing and customer communications, reordering parts when a certain threshold is met or *automating dunning processes*. By eliminating manual tasks, mobile ERP empowers wholesale businesses to run more efficiently and cost-effectively, ultimately leading to improved profitability.

Mobile ERP Systems Offer 360-Degree Business Software

Apart from functions specific to the wholesale distribution and manufacturing industries, mobile ERP systems, like the ones offered by NetSuite, provide organizations with a full business solution on a single platform. Daily business functions such as marketing, sales, sourcing and more can be done using a mobile-friendly ERP such as:

- Marketing: Access to real-time metrics and comprehensive data to drive engagement with current customers and new market expansion.
- Sales: Unparalleled efficiency and visibility from lead to close to support a sales effort that's second to none.
- Orders: Ability to accept orders everywhere (online, offline, EDI and more) and fast-tracking order-to-cash.
- Sourcing: Ultimate control over procure-to-pay processes to improve supplier relationships, transparency and forecasting.
- Warehouse: Warehouse Management System (WMS) functionality reduces overhead and cycle times while increasing inventory turns and on-time delivery rates.

Wholesale distributors must adapt to rapid and significant change and stay agile to remain competitive. With a mobile-friendly ERP system, distributors can have real-time visibility across its organization, allowing them to know their operations like never before.

Plus, the easy sharing of information and real-time collaboration with team members ensures smoother communication, faster project completion and enhanced customer service.

About Matt Posey

Matt Posey, VP of Sales and Solutions at ScaleNorth, is a seasoned ERP professional with over 20 years of experience. Matt has built horizontal knowledge across multiple industries including manufacturing, wholesale distribution and consumer goods. He has served in multiple leadership roles within the NetSuite environment, including working at NetSuite directly as well as multiple NetSuite partners.



Kirkham-based Smart IT snaps up complimentary Odoo business, Opus VL saving over 20 jobs.

Kirkham-based Smart IT, the Group focused on the design and implementation of Odoo ERP solutions to medium and enterprise clients, has announced that it has acquired the trading business of Odoo Community partner, Opus VL.

The Acquisition, effective in July 2023, compliments the existing solution offering of the Group and extends its footprint into pockets of the public sector, particularly the NHS where Opus has had significant success. The Group intends to retain all staff and the move significantly bolsters the Group's development capability with the transfer of Opus VL's Software Development Centre based in the Midlands to Smart IT.

With already approaching 55% of Odoo's market share in the UK, the acquisition is expected to enhance the Group's earnings in the financial year to 2024.

"Our software development strategy is built on a UK-based, employee-only model to ensure quality and project continuity, so this acquisition dovetails perfectly with an addition of around 10 developers to our team," explains Barry Bullen, Smart IT CEO.

"The acquisition also brings the opportunity to offer Smart IT's existing portfolio to OpusVL customers, both the Odoo enterprise platform and our managed IT services. "We also see a real opportunity to extend the market presence in the OpenEyes and Flexibase Auction products where Opus VL has an impressive footprint."

About Smart IT

With more than 150 projects successfully completed, Smart IT is the UK's largest and most accomplished Odoo Gold partner and one of the channel's fastest-growing in Canada. The company transforms businesses with innovative ERP solutions delivered by its UK based, in-house consultants and developers, helping businesses operate efficiently and achieve competitive advantage.



Next-Level Innovation: Three Ways Low-Code No-Code Tech Future Proofs HR and Operations

A colleague recently asked me, "What is driving change for businesses in the market right now?" From my perspective, it's a few things: employee expectations, company expectations, stakeholder expectations. ***The speed of change itself has changed.***

Put these forces together, and the question for business leaders becomes, "How do we enable our people to bring their best in a virtual, dispersed workplace that demands collaboration, innovation, and efficiency every day?"

There's an important follow-on question at the heart of this business challenge. That is: "How do we reach our goals while also offering people opportunities to grow their skills and thrive in their jobs?"

Digital technologies have always been an enabler, but low-code no-code solutions like SAP Build have become an **imperative** for organizations to keep up with the speed of change while also presenting an opportunity to people to build tech skills.

SAP Build empowers business users to develop their own customized applications and automated processes — **without needing to be expert software coders.**



Article by
Sabine Bendiek
Chief People & Operating Officer
and Labor Relations Director

The *statistics on the potential value* are hard to ignore:

- 31% faster completion of projects
- 63% fewer business processes with errors
- 21 hours saved per user per year
- 495% three-year ROI

Concrete examples are always helpful, so here are some ways that I see SAP Build changing the game in helping to solve business challenges, including some of our very own at SAP.

But first, **what is SAP Build?** SAP Build is a cloud native, user-friendly platform with visual interfaces, simple drag-and-drop tools, and pre-built templates that can help business users jump-start their own IT projects **without needing to be coding experts.**

SAP Build comes with *training* and *community support* to help users get started and keep going. With demand for IT support outpacing the availability of those resources, it's smart to put business users in the lead with low-code no-code solutions.

> "Build is a cloud native, user-friendly platform with visual interfaces, simple drag-and-drop tools, and pre-built templates that can help business users jump-start their own IT projects **without needing to be coding experts."**

Process Automation: Helping Teams Work 15x Faster

One way I see SAP Build empowering *our customers'* businesses is through HR process automation. Low-code and no-code platforms allow HR teams to automate time-consuming processes such as onboarding, offboarding, and performance management. **This can free up hundreds of hours per year for some staff,** giving them the chance to focus on higher-level tasks.

- ***Example:*** Standard welcome emails, collecting necessary paperwork, and assigning required training courses. At SAP, we used SAP Build ourselves to automate the creation of *27,000* offer letters per year, working *15 times faster than manual processes*.

> "Low-code and no-code applications can reduce employee time spent on **routine manual processes** and give them time back for higher level work."

Data Management: Flagging Operational Risks and Opportunities

Next, with low-code and no-code software, HR teams can manage employee data more efficiently and accurately. Dashboards are easy to create, helping managers, leaders, and teammates across the organization to collaborate over key metrics, gain insights into workforce trends, and *make decisions* quickly.

- ***Example:*** Creating custom reports that track employee turnover rates, time-to-hire, succession data, and employee engagement scores. This data could be used to signal business and operational risk, evaluate performance, identify trends, and spot areas for improvement.

Reduce Burden: Improve Employee Experience at Scale

Low-code and no-code applications can reduce employee time spent on *routine manual processes* and give them time back for higher level work. Research shows reduced administrative burden can contribute to improved employee experiences.

- ***Example:*** Invoice processing. One SAP customer will save up to 160 hours *per person* per year on fewer administrative tasks. Their low-code no-code invoice processing solution was up and running *in just a few days'* time.

- ***Bonus example!*** Routine high-volume, manual *financial closing* At SAP, we're using SAP Build to transform manual closing activities across 120 subsidiaries and realizing up to four times faster processing of closing tasks.

Many of us have heard the saying "every company is becoming a tech company." SAP Build puts intuitive tech in business users' hands, helping to get more done in an expeditious, innovative way in ways that matter most.

We'll be sharing many more customer stories at *SAP Sapphire Orlando.* See you there!

About Sabine Bendiek

Sabine Bendiek is Chief People & Operating Officer, Labor Relations Director, and Member of the Executive Board.

The People & Operations board area combines excellence in people with the cross-board area mandate of SAP's business operations.

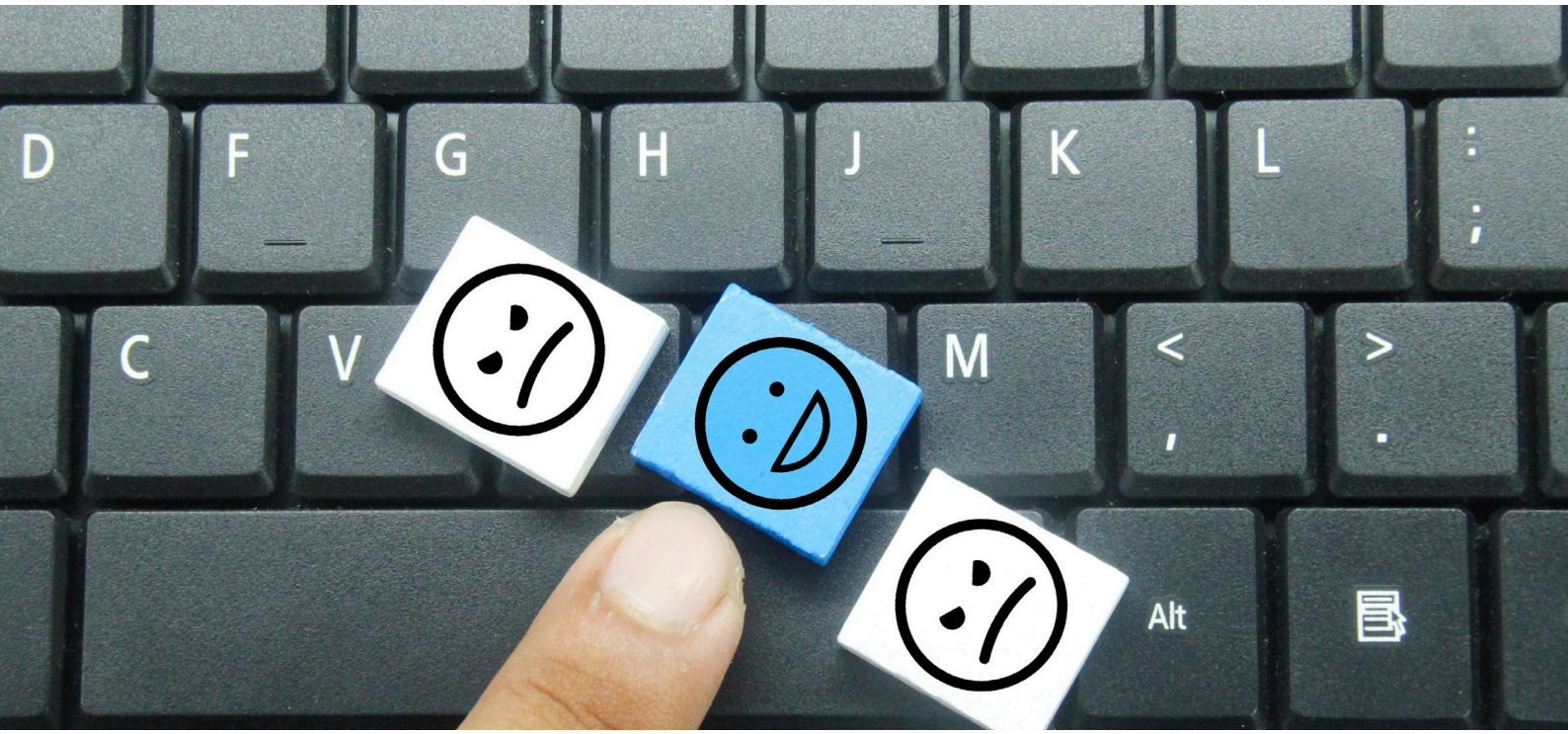
In her role, Sabine Bendiek together with her team drives and further accelerates SAP's transformation to the cloud by bringing together what creates the essential fabric of our company's successful transformation: our people agenda, our systems and processes as well as our capabilities to enable insights, innovation and change both for SAP internally and for our customers.

Bendiek has more than 20 years of professional experience as an executive in the technology industry. Before joining SAP, she was Chairwoman of the Management Board at Microsoft Germany. Bendiek also held the position of Vice President and General Manager for EMC Germany and was responsible for Dell's Small and Medium Business in Germany, Switzerland and Austria. At the beginning of her career, she worked for McKinsey, Booz Allen as well as Siemens Nixdorf Information Systems.

Bendiek holds a master's degree in Management Science from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in Cambridge and a bachelor's degree in Economics from the University of Cooperative Education in Mannheim.

About SAP

SAP's strategy is to help every business run as an intelligent, sustainable enterprise. As a market leader in enterprise application software, we help 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. SAP helps give people and organizations deep business insight and fosters collaboration that helps them stay ahead of their competition. We simplify technology for companies so they can consume our software the way they want – without disruption. Our end-to-end suite of applications and services enables business and public customers across 25 industries globally to operate profitably, adapt continuously, and make a difference. With a global network of customers, partners, employees, and thought leaders, SAP helps the world run better and improve people's lives. For more information, visit www.sap.com.



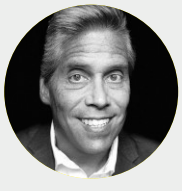


Extending ERP in a Low-Code/No-Code Environment

Here's how to unlock successful ERP extensions in the modern SaaS landscape.

Extending an enterprise resource planning (ERP) solution in a *low-code/no-code* environment has evolved significantly in the past decade. Before multi-tenant cloud, companies had the freedom to build whatever they wanted, in any manner they saw fit, because they were responsible only for their own system. If something ran too slow or too long, organizations could add more memory. Furthermore, if something held too much history data, they could go buy more space. However, with the evolution of SaaS solutions where your ERP is one of many in a shared space (think a tenant in condominium complex), being able to "do what you want" is no longer an option.

More than ever, low-code/no-code environments need to ensure that the process by which you build an extension will run performant to maximize the resources allocated to you as a tenant and not impact any other tenants in your SaaS environment. Those tools also need to cater to everyone from *citizen developers* to professional developers.



Article by
David Heffler
VP of Product Management
Director
infor

So how do you know if your framework is built with those ends in mind? Let's start by defining what makes a successful extension. First, it needs to solve a particular business need. This could be as simple as mashing up data from various systems of record, all the way to complex modules that require tables, forms, business logic, and could impact how the ERP processes information. Second, whatever the solution is, that uniqueness must not sacrifice upgradability of the ERP. Third, it must accommodate various authors. This means, extensions can come from various sources like the software vendor, partners, and even customers. All these sources need to work in harmony with the ERP.

> "Low-code/no-code environments need to ensure that the process by which you build an extension will run performant to maximize the resources allocated to you as a tenant and not impact any other tenants in your SaaS environment."

Achieving Extension Goals: What to Look For

Now, let's explore what you should look for in a framework to achieve your extension goals. When you build an extension, the developer should not have to worry about whether their strategy will work in a SaaS environment. The framework should be configured to only allow safe development and integration for their solution. Those guardrails are essential for building a consistent, reliable solution.

Examples are:

- Templates for forms that allow extensions to be viewed as part of the natural ERP solution
- Governors in place to aid in the retrieval of large data sets or for when processing large complex sets that result in numerous data rows being created
- The framework should be accessible to all skill sets — from professional developers to citizen developers

A framework also should not penalize you if your initial extension was built with a no-code option but needs to evolve beyond that. The framework should allow you take that no-code solution and evolve it further using low-code and even full-code capabilities, rather than having to start over.

Extensions Are Upgradable

Depending on the ERP, the framework you are using for the extension could either be the same as the ERPs or it could be different. If it is the same, your extension should benefit from the same future features as the ERP. If the template for the ERP evolves, so should your extensions. If new attributes are added to the ERP, your extensions should also be included. If the extension framework is different from that of the ERP, it should still ensure that any updates to the framework are accessible to the extensions without the developer having to perform any unnecessary steps to adopt them.

Focus on the Goal of the Extension

You need your extension to enhance the way you run your business, and having a framework that takes certain basic needs into account by default (examples include record navigation and FCRUD [Function Create Read Update and Delete]) allows you to realize your ROI for the extension quicker because of the reduction in development time. Other features to look for in a framework are its built-in authentication interface and security modules. These features are vital to ensuring the right people are looking at the right data. If they do not exist, that means many hours of effort are needed to create those interfaces and modules, which reduces your overall ROI on your investment.

> "Technology is evolving at a rapid pace, and low-code/no-code frameworks need to ensure that as new features are introduced, previous extensions do not have to be rebuilt to allow those features to be leveraged."

Built to Scale

Many extensions start out small, either in functionality or in the number of users accessing it. It is inevitable, however, that the extension will evolve. Either the functionality will expand or the number of users will grow. The framework it is built on needs to

be able to adapt to those changes and growth without developer intervention. If the framework has the proper pieces in place, it will be able to expand and contract with your extension's needs. If the solution needs to pull back millions of rows for a unique ask, a good framework will have features that allow for record retrieval batching to limit the stress on the cloud farm as well as have the ability to scale up/out so as to not affect other tenants while that request is on-going.

Evolution vs. Revolution

Technology is evolving at a rapid pace, and low-code/no-code frameworks need to ensure that as new features are introduced (e.g., *ChatGPT*), previous extensions do not have to be rebuilt to allow those features to be leveraged. Otherwise, your low-code/no-code framework is costing you time and money due to unnecessary rework. In today's fast paced, competitive market, that can severely affect your profitability.

About David Heffler

David Heffler is a VP of Product Management with over 30 years of experience in software development. During his time at Infor, he's been responsible for evolving Infor's extensibility framework from an on-premises to a multi-tenant cloud offering, and is currently focused on the next generation of that framework. His understanding of what customers require of extensibility and comparing that to what the market is currently offering results in Infor providing a true no-code, low-code, full-code framework that serves both the UX and the server-side processes. Prior to joining Infor, David was an owner at RSVP Business Systems (an Infor ERP channel partner), which was acquired by Infor in 2011.

About Infor

Infor is a global leader in business cloud software specialized by industry. We develop complete solutions for our focus industries. Infor's mission-critical enterprise applications and services are designed to deliver sustainable operational advantages with security and faster time to value. Over 60,000 organizations in more than 175 countries rely on Infor's 17,000 employees to help achieve their business goals. As a Koch company, our financial strength, ownership structure, and long-term view empower us to foster enduring, mutually beneficial relationships with our customers. Visit www.infor.com.





AI and Low-Code: 4 Things to Know

Today, organizations must do more with less. The pace of innovation has increased exponentially, yet resources remain the same (or are dwindling).

Between talent shortages, long development cycles that rely on traditional programming languages, and technology teams that are already stretched perilously thin, many businesses have glaring operational problems they simply can't solve with their current resources.

But two technologies offer a solution, promising rapid development and ultra-fast time to value for investments:

- ***AI.*** Artificial intelligence (AI) has a wide range of applications—from using generative AI and natural language processing to create code or interfaces to decision-based AI that enables greater process orchestration and data processing.
- ***Low-code.*** Low-code tools expedite development processes via visual interfaces. They also keep AI in check by enabling strong governance that reduces the risk inherent in generative AI-based development.



Article by
Daniel O'Keefe
Content Marketing Manager at Appian
appian

Together, AI and low-code make a powerful combination that enables both developers and non-technical users with limited or no coding experience to build valuable applications.

Today, we'll talk about four things to know about AI and low-code development—from applications of the technologies to reasons why the two work together so synergistically.

[Concerned about data privacy when using AI? You don't have to compromise. *Get Implementing Private AI: A Practical Guide to learn how.*]

1. You can create forms automatically.

Applications are built on forms, and creating them takes time. Typically, you'd have to use traditional manual coding techniques that involve front-end development and CSS to style the form, back-end coding to process data, database work to store it properly and tune the performance, and a whole lot more. Or you could just upload a PDF form into Appian.

With Appian's new AI Copilot feature, available as part of our 23.3 launch, you can upload a PDF and have Appian generate a well-designed form that works perfectly within your applications.

With Appian, you can generate an interface from a PDF form in just seconds—and all the extra work is done for you. It's critical to build strong interfaces to drive adoption among your users. And following strong UX-design principles ensures people can accomplish their tasks quickly, leading to immense time and cost savings.

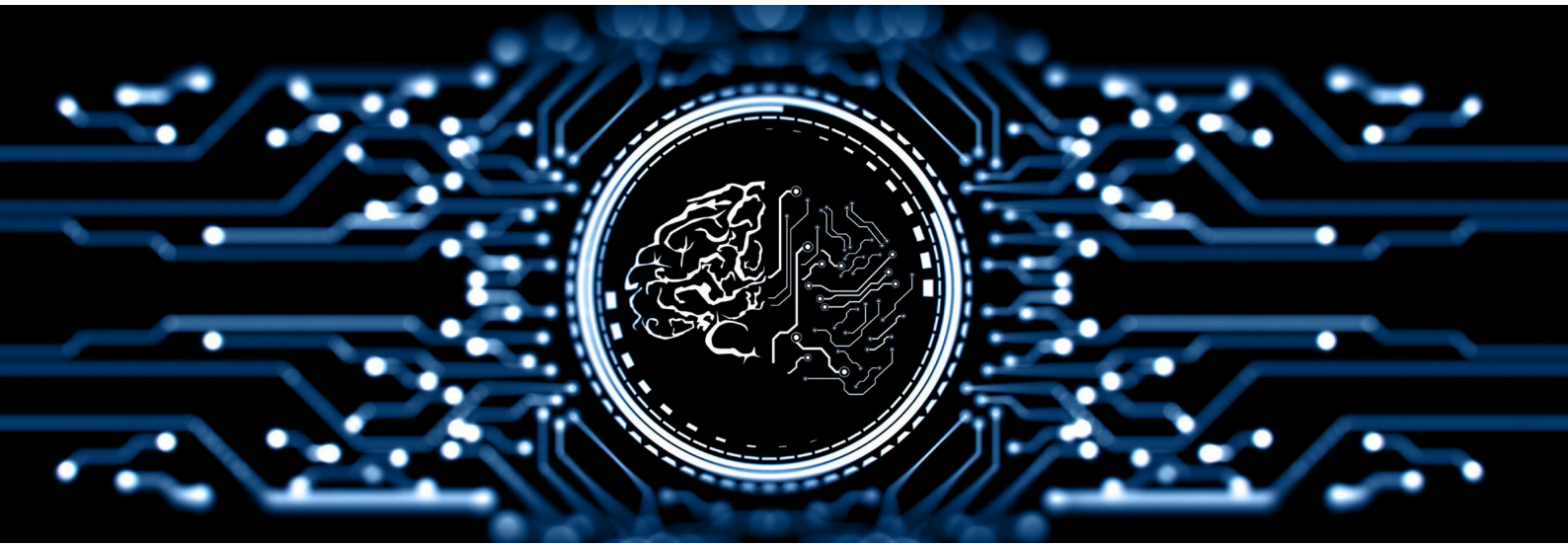
2. You can reduce time spent on document and content processing.

How much time do you think your organization spends on processing documents (filing them out, sending them to the right people, and inputting data to the correct system)? Hundreds of employee hours? Thousands? What about correcting errors?

AI can handle a lot of this for you. For example, in the Appian AI Skill Designer, you can create private, custom models trained on your own data. Appian AI Skills covers a number of tasks, including:

- ***Document classification:*** AI can automatically understand and categorize the type of document it receives—from bills to tax documents to medical forms and more. This makes it easy to know how best to route information.
- ***Document extraction:*** The AI can pull critical information from a document and prepare it for use in your applications. When combined with document classification, this helps automate the vast majority of document processing, freeing up workers for other tasks and reducing manual data entry errors.
- ***Email classification:*** You can also build an AI model that classifies incoming emails so you can then route the emails to the appropriate team or worker. You simply upload a representative sample batch of emails, then the system will train on your data. With this AI Skill, you can save a significant amount of time by routing to the appropriate group.

Simply create these skills, then drag and drop them onto your low-code canvas so they can become part of a process. And you can easily tweak and modify the skills to optimize model performance whenever you need.



[Want to succeed at AI? Get specific about your use cases. Learn how by watching the Appian World presentation: *6 Ways AI Makes a Difference to Your Business.*]

> "With built-in governance and robust security infrastructure in place, placing generative AI into a wider low-code context helps you achieve the rapid speed you want with far greater quality and fewer risks."

3. Low-code and generative AI offer speed without risk.

McKinsey notes that generative AI could dramatically improve development speed—but that it requires additional features to truly maximize the benefits and avoid potential risks. With generative AI alone, developers have to understand the technology, coding languages, and programming frameworks they're working with to be able to generate rapid results and do so without introducing errors—or even security vulnerabilities.

Platforms that offer low-code development and design make this a non-issue. With built-in governance and robust security infrastructure in place, placing generative AI into a wider low-code context helps you achieve the rapid speed you want with far greater quality and fewer risks.

For example, take the case of an organization working in a highly regulated industry like financial services. With generative AI alone, you'd have the AI create code, but you'd need to check it to ensure it complies with the latest regulations and doesn't introduce any vulnerabilities that could lead to a data breach. This requires a lot of expertise that generative AI alone simply can't provide. A strong platform with *multiple compliance and security certifications* reduces the knowledge barrier and can help you avoid potential business risks. This is only one example, but having a strong AI-powered process platform that includes low-code gives you a significant amount of additional tools that supercharge generative AI and help you realize its full potential.

4. You can orchestrate full processes.

Building an application or deploying technology is not the end goal—providing business value is. This is the goal behind digital transformation: to change the way organizations do business in a way that produces massive ROI.

Building on the previous point about combining generative AI and low-code in a platform, AI-powered process platforms enable you to orchestrate full end-to-end processes using multiple hyperautomation tools. You can build solutions to handle small tasks, such as invoice management, or bigger activities, such as an entire billing process. The best platforms provide this power, where AI is only one tool among several—including robotic process automation (RPA), API integrations, business rules, and more.

It's all about the platform.

Low-code and AI are force multipliers for both development teams and business units. When you place low-code and AI into the context of a wider AI-powered process platform, you get other tools to speed up development as well as business processes. Consider just a few of these tools:

- ***Data fabric:*** A data fabric architecture allows you to unify data from multiple systems to enable secure and easy access to enterprise data and deliver a 360° view of the business.
- ***Process automation tools:*** A good platform will offer multiple built-in tools to connect people, systems, bots, AI, and business rules in end-to-end process automation. This helps not only speed up development, but also offers the ability to speed up the entire enterprise with *up to 95% faster operational processes.*
- ***Process mining:*** Process mining capabilities allow you to mine the data generated by your solutions to automatically identify bottlenecks, process non-conformances, and the root cause of issues inhibiting your digital transformation goals.
- ***Total experience:*** Instead of having to have strong knowledge about code across devices, a good platform will offer the ability to design seamless, beautiful experiences across desktop and mobile devices.

Want to learn more about AI and low-code? *Watch our latest release webinar replay* to learn more.

appian

Article by Daniel O'Keefe



Will low-code/no-code drive (or fix) ERP technical debt?

Move from a traditional "everything is done on the ERP" mindset to a more agile approach.

We've all seen horror stories about millions going to waste on failed ERP replacement projects. They fail because replacing an ERP is as challenging as trying to replace a bunch of your body organs whilst flying a jumbo jet in a storm! This is because the ERP is like the heart of the business and must continue to function as the business continues to operate. When it comes to large enterprises, chances are they are operating through an ERP that's been around for decades, in fact, it's likely the most legacy piece of technology that they have – designed in an era when business drivers were not fuelled by rapid change in the way that they are now. ERP's are designed to be stable and resilient, which they are! But they were never designed to be changed on a regular basis. This leaves many businesses struggling with the pipeline of changes they need to make to their ERP – a list that becomes increasingly long and often ignored.

A much better approach to the ERP 'rip and replace' is to appreciate the existing ERP's strengths in terms of holding and processing critical data, while improving on its main weaknesses – they are expensive to run and make changes to. If we acknowledge this, low-code can contribute massively to stopping the creeping ERP technical debt.

A much better approach to the ERP 'rip and replace' is to appreciate the existing ERP's strengths in terms of holding and processing critical data, while improving on its main weaknesses – they are expensive to run and make changes to. If we acknowledge this, low-code can contribute massively to stopping the creeping ERP technical debt.

By leveraging low-code, organisations can move from a traditional "everything is done on the ERP" mindset to a more agile approach. An approach in which the ERP holds the core data and ensures transactions are safe, but the business process and the apps people interact with are orchestrated in the low-code platform.



For example, the *end-to-end process of customer onboarding*, which involves a lot of coordination between people and systems, is not always straight forward when using an ERP. The user experiences they offer are often poor and unfit for the work at hand, they are also built to be used in isolation, so they tend to throw up challenges when it comes integrating with other systems in the organisation. Granted, given huge quantities of time and money, it's not impossible for an ERP to achieve a solution to this, albeit one that would likely compromise the user experience. But it's a whole lot easier for a low-code platform to achieve this – it's what they are great at. They can pull data from one system to be validated, then pull more data from another system, combine it together and so on. And where changing one business rule to an ERP can take weeks or months of expensive consulting, release management and testing, these changes are made instantly available on a low-code platform. Ease of use and user experience are orders of magnitude better. This reduces pressure on the ERP, pauses technical debt growth and creates the opportunity for organisations to work on reducing it in a much more pragmatic and less risky way.

> "Fixing the ERP technical debt with low-code requires a strategic approach"

Because the ERP is like the heart of a business, replacing it or tampering with it, brings too much risk. Core systems migrations so often fail, and a better approach is to make these changes incrementally – start removing functionality from the ERP and start building it outside the ERP in a more distributed manor. When you start externalising functionalities and building out your technology landscape in a more distributed way, it becomes significantly easier to change different components without impacting the whole system.

However, there is an important and often overlooked catch – it's very easy to use low-code to generate even more technical debt. If I were to buy a low-code platform for my organisation and just let people build a bunch of ungoverned, disconnected apps, it would generate more debt and scatter my data even more.

That is why fixing the ERP technical debt with low-code requires a truly strategic – meaning consistent, long term and governed – approach, ensuring the low-code solutions tap into the ERP data, while guiding people and other systems to collaborate on the execution of end-to-end business processes. As long as this is achieved, low-code offers an efficient, affordable and time sensitive solution to technical debt, something that I am already seeing an increasing number of businesses benefit from.

About Aurachain

Aurachain is a simple and intuitive low-code platform that allows rapid creation of digital applications to automate an organization's business processes. It allows you to automate end-to-end processes connecting multiple systems, teams, and departments in a continuous flow optimized for efficiency.

AURACHAIN

Article from Aurachain



Streamlining Inventory Management with No-Code Apps

Managing inventory takes a lot more than keeping track of products on shelves. It requires agility, accuracy, and alignment with your business goals. And if you've ever struggled with outdated spreadsheets, manual errors, or expensive custom software, you know the challenges of traditional inventory management all too well.

No-code apps provide an entirely new way for you to manage inventory. They enable you to easily design and customize an ***inventory management*** system that can streamline and automate your inventory tracking, analysis and reordering without writing a single line of code.

No-code apps can eliminate the frustrating challenges that come from traditional inventory management and give you opportunities for growth and innovation.

The Pitfalls of Traditional Inventory Management

The complexities of inventory management often lead to inefficiencies and frustrations.

Manual Tracking and Errors

This can be a major hurdle. If you're painstakingly entering data into spreadsheets, you know this method is

tedious and *error-prone*. Something as simple as a misplaced decimal or transposed numbers can turn your inventory tracking into a mess.

If this happens with a popular product or critical part, you could think you have more stock than you do. Mistakes like these aren't just frustrating, they can have real business consequences, including unfulfilled customer orders and a damaged reputation.

Lack of Integration with Other Business Systems

How many systems do you have in your tech stack? And how well do they communicate? It's likely that you've got multiple systems that silo the key datasets that inform your full inventory picture.

> "No-code apps can eliminate the frustrating challenges that come from traditional inventory management and give you opportunities for growth and innovation."

This is a real problem for effective inventory management, and also can impact your customer experience. For example, if your inventory system doesn't communicate well with your e-commerce platform, your online store might show items in stock when they're sold out. You'll disappoint customers, and create extra work for your team.

Expensive Custom Software Development

Custom software development can be cost prohibitive. From initial development to ongoing updates, custom solutions can quickly drain your resources. And traditional software development takes extra time to coordinate the specialized coding resources or wait in often lengthy queues to get on the schedule of your IT department. Over time, the additional time and expense limits your growth by diverting time and attention away from other essential areas of the business.

This is a roadblock when you're ready to develop a new inventory management solution, and an ongoing obstacle you hit each time you want to make an update or improvement. Working this way can halt your agility and momentum.

These challenges make it easy to feel overwhelmed or trapped by the limitations of traditional inventory management.

Streamline Inventory Management with No-Code Apps

Fortunately, you can overcome these challenges without needing a team of software developers or investing in costly, customized solutions. No-code apps give you the power to reimagine and streamline your inventory management system by building a custom app that's tailored to your unique business requirements and processes.

Automate Inventory Tracking and Reordering

Don't spend hours each week manually updating inventory numbers and generating reports when you've got so many strategic activities that need more time and attention.

With a no-code app, you can design and *automate workflows* to handle routine and repetitive processes. You can define color-coded status indicators for at-a-glance tracking of inventory levels and generate automated alerts when inventory levels are low. Build automations to trigger purchase orders when inventory levels drop below a predefined amount, and even automate the purchase order process to streamline and speed approvals. This frees you up to focus on high-value tasks that drive results to your bottom line.

> "Custom software development can be cost prohibitive. From initial development to ongoing updates, custom solutions can quickly drain your resources."

Real-time Inventory Analysis and Reporting

If you're stuck sifting through spreadsheets or waiting for weekly inventory reports, you know that you're always looking at information that's instantly out of date. That makes it difficult to spot trends and patterns to help you better manage inventory levels and optimize the amount of budget that's tied up in your stock.

No-code apps can provide real-time insights, allowing you to make informed decisions on the fly. Through custom *dashboards and reports*, you always have accurate, up-to-date information to make adjustments instantly. Your data delivers actionable intelligence.

Integration Inventory Management with Existing Systems

No-code apps can bridge the gap between different software systems, creating a seamless flow of information. Through apps and services that *integrate* with your no-code platform, to *API* access that gives you an easy path to connecting your tech stack to unify your data, no-code apps provide the tools you need to turn data silos into a single source of truth that delivers meaningful business insight.
This integration means fewer mistakes, more efficiency, and a more cohesive business operation.

Enhanced Collaboration and Workflows

Creating shared platforms and tools gives team members across departments a way to work together more effectively. It's like building a virtual conference room where everyone has access to the information they need. Collaborative tools can build a sense of unity and alignment that goes beyond inventory management, strengthening your entire organization.

Increased Data Security

Security is critical in today's digital landscape. Employing advanced security measures like encryption, granular user-access controls, and even the capabilities to meet strict data-privacy compliance regulations like *HIPAA*, no-code platforms ensure that your sensitive inventory data is protected.

Cost-effective Pricing

No-code solutions offer scalability and flexibility without the hefty price tag. Whether you're a small business owner or managing a large enterprise, these platforms can be a budget-friendly option. They deliver value without compromising on functionality.

If you want your entire team, or even external stakeholders like partners and vendors, to have access via a portal, evaluate the *pricing model* of each no-code platform. Depending on your strategy, a model based on the number of users may be cost prohibitive, whereas a utility-based model, based on data and records, could be much more affordable.

Transforming Inventory Management with No-Code Innovation

No-code apps are leveling the playing field and putting powerful tools directly in your hands. They let you automate routine tasks, get real-time insights, seamlessly integrate systems, and ensure robust data security.
No-code apps offer a way to innovate and make your operations more agile – a direct path to improving business success.

knack





Creating customer-centric change in a technology business

This article is written by Andy Campbell, Global Solution Evangelist at Certinia. Andy is laser-focused on helping services businesses leverage cloud-based technology to react faster, run smarter, and grow through disruption. Get his insights here on the why and how technology companies must prioritize customer-centric change.

Among the world's key industries, there is little doubt that high-tech is among the fastest-moving and most adaptive. Small wonder, perhaps, since it gave birth to all the digital tools and technologies that now power the world's companies, governments, and communities.

Ever since Moore shone the first light on the growth rate of processing power, the pace of technology change has only accelerated. Today's tech businesses continue to push back the boundaries of the possible, and champion digital transformation with fervour. Yet, at an individual level, high-tech companies can find it just as tough as those in other sectors to adapt their business to the changing world.

Of all the pressures facing high-tech business leaders today, it is the urgency of securing and serving customers successfully and profitably that may be the most pressing. Yet, creating the changes that will ensure the next level of success requires thoughtful actions.



Article by
Andy Campbell
Global Solution Evangelist
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Satisfactory UX gives way to incredible CX

In the past, innovation was the lifeblood of a high-tech business. Firms focused on fielding the best products, at speed, to gain first-mover advantage and then stay ahead of the pack. Software as a Service and XaaS changed the game. Tech firms pivoted into services businesses very fast. This certainly brought new opportunities, but plenty of challenges too.

Now, customers need and expect more than ever. The value and experience they seek is not from products, but from providers.

Brilliant service has become the differentiator, and customer satisfaction can now make or break a brand. Securing, retaining, and renewing profitable customers can mean the difference between financial success and failure.

> "It is the customer who determines what a business is, what it produces, and whether it will prosper."
>
> *– Peter Drucker, 1954*

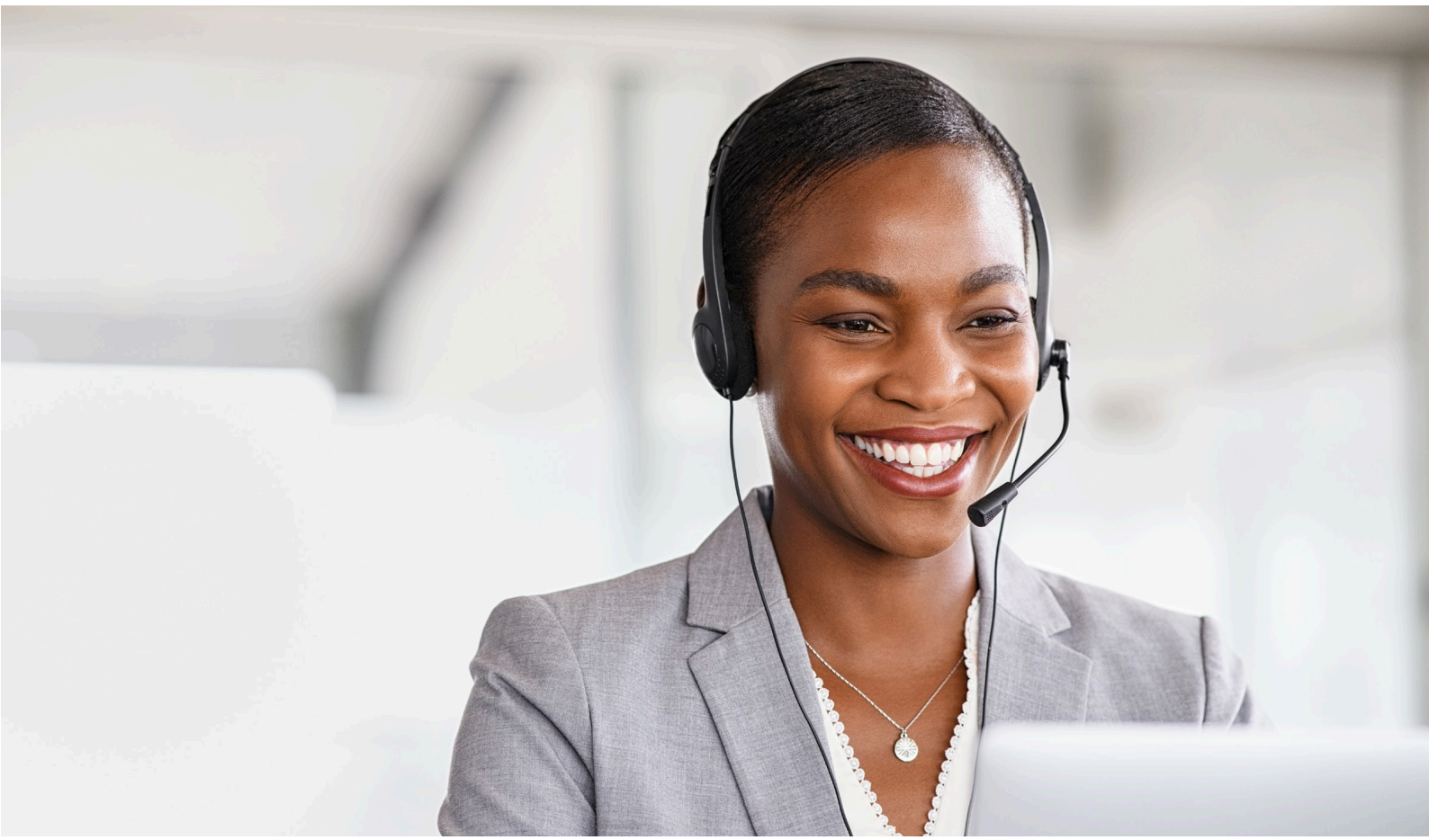
The concept of customer-centricity is far from new, but in high-tech, it is now a critical success factor. Those who fail to make it a priority may face oblivion.

The need for company-wide connections

Meaningful customer-centricity demands not only a connected business but one which recognises that the customer and their experience lie at the core of every operation.

Great relationships are not built by any one function. Every individual, team, and department will influence and impact customer experience– it is the sum of every impression, conversation, and interaction. Customers make no distinction between interacting with accounts payable, the service desk, or their account manager. This is now a continuous relationship, not a single transaction. Renewal and retention of customers and building long-term value and relationships have displaced simple sales volume measures as determinants of technology business success.

Customers seek a totally connected, seamless, harmonious journey from first sale, through delivery, through problem resolution, billing, and subscriptions. Instead, they often find jarring notes and irritations due



to disconnected systems, disparate data, or departments working in isolation. Customer success managers may smooth over some issues, but not all. Customers expect certainty in service delivery, that the promises that you have made in the sales process are kept. To achieve this you need a business platform specifically designed for the needs of a services business.

What should a modern, high-tech platform look like?
Get the guide

No change for customers without internal change for you

Connected customer-centricity done right will do more than simply introduce new systems and processes. It is about business transformation and cultural change. It will shake up ideas about who owns what data, who carries the can for customer service, and who is ultimately accountable for customer satisfaction. It demands a whole company shift of mindset to unlock new collaboration around, and transparency for, the customer.
It requires a true change management approach that is holistic and needs to be driven from the top.

The most important aspect of any change is for there to be real ownership and vision at a leadership level, to aspire to transform how the entire organisation supports, engages, and nurtures its best customer relationships. Aspire is the first of five change leadership steps championed by McKinsey* which includes

- ***Aspire***—Where do we want to go?
- ***Assess***—How ready are we to go there?
- ***Architect***—What must we do to get there?
- ***Act***—How do we manage the journey?
- ***Advance***—How do we continue to improve?



Leading a transition to a true customer-centric organisation has many facets, such as:

- ***Synchronising*** the operations of every function, to get everyone on the same page.
- Taking a ***fresh approach to data*** that enables finance, sales, and services delivery to share a common version of the truth
- ***Engaging and empowering*** not just managers but all employees, partners, and other stakeholders.
- Investing to ***create transparency and autonomous*** access to information for customers.
- Being equipped to ***deliver with intelligence,*** having strong insights, and making decisions with certainty.
- Ensuring your systems have the ***agility to accommodate swift changes*** so that you can ensure certainty for the future.
- Perhaps most fundamental, ***integrating systems and automating processes*** to eradicate gaps and disconnects between departments that could erode revenue and deter customers from renewing.

To learn and explore in more depth how you can bring your finance, sales, services, and customer success teams together, and deliver to your customers with business certainty, download our new guide *"Building the platform for a modern high-tech business."*

About Certinia

Certinia (formerly FinancialForce) delivers a Services-as-a-Business platform that powers and connects all aspects of services operations, from services estimation and delivery to customer success management and financial planning and accounting. The company's Professional Services Automation (PSA), Customer Success, and ERP solutions—delivered on Salesforce's leading cloud platform – provide services businesses with the intelligence and agility to deliver high-quality services, elevate customer experiences and accelerate growth. Headquartered in San Jose, California with offices around the world, Certinia is backed by Advent International, Salesforce Ventures, and Technology Crossover Ventures. For more information, visit www.certinia.com.

Article by Andy Campbell



Extending Your ERP in a Low-Code / No-Code Environment

Global manufacturers are facing ever-increasing disruption and turbulence in the markets they serve. Automotive manufacturers, for example, are dealing with industry changes brought on by autonomous vehicles, connected vehicles, electric vehicles and ride-sharing (known as ACES). In order to survive and thrive in this changing world of manufacturing, manufacturers must be able to innovate, adapt and change their business models at unprecedented rates of speed.

Along with the changes manufacturers face in the current environment, they must also deal with increasing challenges when it comes to extending their ***Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system***. Over time, manufacturers have been required to quickly change their business processes to adapt to new requirements. As an example, manufacturers may deliver products directly to a customer assembly line, and in the sequence of that assembly line, with the right ERP customizations in place to support this. However, ERP customizations can actually hinder manufacturer capabilities and business processes as they can take significant amounts of time to develop and even more time to fulfill new business processes. Not to mention customizations make ***ERP upgrades*** cumbersome as each customization needs to be transferred and tested in the upgraded ERP system.

What is a Low-Code / No-Code Platform?

By definition, a low-code development platform is software that provides a development environment used to create application software through graphical user interfaces and configuration instead of traditional hard-coded programming. No-code development platforms are similar to low-code development platforms but require no coding at all.



Article by
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Global Pre-sales Business Consultant

When it comes to the responsibilities of an ERP system, manufacturers in this case must be able to increase software productivity by simplifying the way they develop new business applications. Manufacturers often have to fulfill their new business processes quickly, and the ERP should be there to support by delivering an easy-to-use development platform.

How are Low-Code / No-Code Environments Disruptive?

The rising popularity of low-code / no-code platforms can be tied to the digital transformation happening across industries. With *digital transformation*, the pressure is on for software creation that can manage new and existing processes. Manufacturers are constantly looking to increase productivity, and a low code / no-code enterprise platform can help to combat disruptive events.

Low-code / no-code environments can also strengthen and even disrupt app development. A manufacturer's ability to respond to business change, to adapt over time and continue to support new business processes, will determine enterprise effectiveness and remove barriers to digital transformation.

A Low-Code / No-Code Platform Creates Opportunities for Enterprises

So, how can manufacturers utilize a low-code / no-code development platform? There are a few options out there when considering these capabilities, but typically companies will want to either plug-in a low-code / no-code platform to their existing ERP or turn to an integrated solution. An integrated solution allows key end users from the company to develop and test new business applications.

In a disruptive world, app development is certainly headed in the direction of low-code / no-code. Within the QAD Enterprise Platform, for example, external extensibility provides robust REST APIs / microservices that support interoperability of all applications. The REST API approach also allows for easy integration with best-of-breed third-party applications, cloud-based applications and applications developed specifically for the business.

> "Manufacturers are constantly looking to increase productivity, and a low code / no-code enterprise platform can help to combat disruptive events."

The QAD Enterprise Platform Further Enables Manufacturers

Disruptive events are shaping the new normal, so it's imperative, especially during tougher times, that executive teams stay well-connected with their IT systems teams to increase enterprise productivity and quality. By extending the ERP in a low-code / no-code environment, no changes or modifications to the system are required to leverage the benefits delivered through extensibility while still respecting the company's security model. The QAD Enterprise Platform *enables manufacturers to adapt* and maximize their return on investment while also enabling them to extend and create applications that are dependable and scalable.

About Etienne Ouvry

Etienne is an APICS-CPIM certified global pre-sales business consultant for QAD. He works with global accounts around the world to discover on-site supply chain challenges and better understand CxO goals. Etienne graduated from Universite de Grenoble (France) with a Masters degree in Electronics.

About QAD

QAD Inc. is a leading provider of next-generation manufacturing and supply chain solutions in the cloud. To succeed in a turbulent world, facing disruptions in supply and fluctuations in demand, manufacturers and supply chains must rapidly respond to change and seamlessly optimize agility, efficiency, and resilience for effective customer service. QAD delivers Adaptive Applications to enable these Adaptive Enterprises. Founded in Santa Barbara, California, QAD has customers in 84 countries around the world. Thousands of companies have deployed QAD enterprise solutions including enterprise resource planning (ERP), digital commerce (DC), supplier relationship management (SRM), digital supply chain planning (DSCP), global trade and transportation execution (GTTE) and enterprise quality management system (EQMS). To learn more, visit www.qad.com or call +1 805-566-6100. Find us on LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook and Instagram.

Article by Etienne Ouvry



How Aptean GenomeQuest Helps Law Firms Improve Their IP Strategy

When your business is intellectual property (IP), you need to differentiate yourself by building information-driven IP strategies for your customers. A crucial part of this is providing your clients with ***strong patent protection and efficient IP research.***

However, in the life sciences, rulings like *Mayo v. Prometheus* and *AMP v. Myriad* have cast a web of uncertainty over the proper drafting of claims for new applications and the enforceability of claims of existing patents. That leads to even more opportunity for your firm, but a great deal of challenging analytical work as well.

Completing exhaustive and precise IP sequence searches can be time-consuming and expensive; often requiring a team of highly skilled professionals to carry out the searches, analyze the results and produce accessible, insightful reports for the client. You will find free *IP sequence search tools* are incomplete or stuck in the wrong algorithms, as well as static and time-consuming to use—not to mention the security risks they can present. Considering these risks, what's needed is a powerful, cost-effective and *efficient method of searching for IP around sequences*.

This is where Aptean GenomeQuest can make a real difference, giving you the ability to search the *world's most comprehensive database of gene patents, antibody patents and other patent sequences* helping you deliver that aforementioned strong patent protection with a more efficient IP research service to your clients; differentiating your offering in an increasingly competitive marketplace.

Product Review from
Henk Heus
Business Leader

aptean

How Can Aptean GenomeQuest Benefit Your Business?

- ***Savings for your clients*** - Quickly produce professional, comprehensive and accessible search reports in hours—not days. Choose from a variety of custom summary and reports, including sequence search, *full-text document search* or other combinations. Documents and alignments can also be exported to formats such as Microsoft Word, Excel and BizInt Smart Charts. Take less time and make your offering a more attractive, cost-effective proposition than that of your competitors with IP searches powered by *Aptean GenomeQuest.*

- ***Do more with the people you have*** - Take full advantage of Aptean's experience and expertise in IP sequence searching to help you set up and analyze searches; enabling you to do more with the people you have in-house. Your IP search experts will spend less time on the searching process, but be equipped to produce more complex search results—like antibody searches or amino acid variation searches—without needing to employ additional skill sets. You can profit from Aptean's experience, keeping your team happy with an efficient, best-of-breed, easy to use search and analysis tool which includes advice on search strategies, should you require it.

- ***Achieve peace of mind*** - You and your clients can have *utmost confidence* in the results of your IP searches. Not only has Aptean GenomeQuest been the tool of choice for the industry for over 20 years, it's used by the majority of big pharmaceutical, *agrochemical* and biotech companies and some of the large *patent offices* to establish and protect their IP.

- ***A flexible business model*** - The amount of searches you need to carry out might vary from week-to-week or month-to-month. That's why a flexible business model is a must when it comes to how you pay for your searches. Pay for a single search or buy a discounted search bundle; any unused search credits can be carried over to the next bundle too. Again, this makes for a more cost-effective, flexible approach to searching, which you can then pay forward to your clients.



What Makes Aptean GenomeQuest Different to Other Search Tools?

Now that you've seen how Aptean's IP search solution can benefit both your law firm and your clients, let's review the factors that differentiate our solution from other search tools on the market.

1. ***World's most comprehensive IP sequence database*** - Featuring 580+ million bio-sequences and over 25+ million Life Science full-text patent documents, Aptean GenomeQuest contains information from sequence listings, text, tables, figures and all major public sequence databases. Updated twice a week—ensures you always have access to the most thorough, accurate and up-to-date IP sequence data giving you confidence in your searches, leaving no stone unturned.

2. ***Complete set of industry-standard sequence comparison algorithms*** - Including several dedicated IP sequence search algorithms developed in collaboration with some of the largest pharmaceutical companies in the world (peer-reviewed and published in Nature Biotech), our solution offers a complete set of industry-standard sequence comparison algorithms including BLAST, and MOTIF search, plus Aptean's proprietary GenePAST and Fragment Search algorithms for percent identity calculations. The full-text document search algorithm syntax supports ontology-based and user-made synonym lists, full Boolean logic, wild cards and sophisticated features like word proximity and fuzzy search. Searches can be done on the full document text or on any of the bibliographic fields available.

3. ***Extensive analysis and reporting functionality*** - Filter, sort, group, deduplicate search results and export presentation-ready search reports in various popular formats using extensive analysis and reporting functionality. A user-friendly result browser with a vast range of flexible filters, intuitive summary views and graphical results charts provides quick and easy searching and on-point results. This combination of powerful searching with user-friendly visualization and analysis tools that can merge sequence and full-text document search results and analyze the results as one, helps you to quickly make sense of large sets of search results, while extensive filters and grouping tools allow you to examine any combination of fields and drill down to individual results.

As the patent protection and IP research *demands on law firms* become more complex, having the *right IP sequence search tool* at your disposal can be the key to unlocking a real competitive advantage for your business. With Aptean GenomeQuest, you **can provide the timely, exhaustive search and analysis capabilities that clients require**, creating a tangible competitive advantage for your business, putting you and your clients a clear step ahead of the competition.

> "As the patent protection and IP research demands on law firms become more complex, having the right IP sequence search tool at your disposal can be the key to unlocking a real competitive advantage for your business."

For more information on how Aptean GenomeQuest has helped organizations like yours and how we can help to optimize your IP sequence search capabilities, *contact our team of IP search experts today.*

About Henk Heus

Henk Heus has been with Aptean GenomeQuest since 2001 where he now heads up vision, strategy and execution. He holds a PhD in human genetics and has over 20 years of experience in genomics, software development and IP. Heus has also worked at NV Organon/Akzo Nobel.

About Aptean

Aptean is one of the world's leading providers of purpose-built, industry-specific software that helps manufacturers and distributors effectively run and grow their businesses. With both cloud and on-premise deployment options, Aptean's products, services and unmatched expertise help businesses of all sizes to be Ready for What's Next, Now®. Aptean is headquartered in Alpharetta, Georgia and has offices in North America, Europe and Asia-Pacific. To learn more about Aptean and the markets we serve, visit www.aptean.com.

aptean





Cannon Aircraft Interiors

Epicor Kinetic Streamlines Processes While Elevating Employee Engagement and Materials Traceability

The challenge

A recent Markets and Markets research report states that the aircraft cabin interiors market is projected to grow from $17.6B in 2020 to $32.7B by 2025 as air passenger traffic surges and the desire to deliver enhanced travel experiences continues to expand. Poised to help advance the innovation of aircraft cabins in private and commercial planes is Cannon Aircraft Interiors. This modestly sized, but renowned shop in Everett, Washington, has delivered high-quality handcrafted custom interiors to clients for nearly 30 years.

Within the close-knit Cannon team, Thea Larsen, IT Tech at Cannon Aircraft Interiors, wears several hats, including that of IT Tech. She explained, "My background is in web design, administration, and marketing. When I joined Cannon, it was primarily on the manufacturing floor; the opportunity to work with my hands really appealed to me."

While the company had built an enviable reputation for highly skilled, hand-made craftsmanship, technology and processes were not a primary focus. "Our old workflow involved group knowledge, email, labels and spreadsheets. We knew we needed to establish more consistent processes and apply best practices," reflected Larsen. "We also needed an easier way to trace source materials to meet regulatory compliance standards."

> "ERP systems are invariably very complicated. They can seem intimidating and become overwhelming really quickly, especially in a smaller company like ours where we don't have a dedicated ERP team. Epicor Kinetic has a more intuitive interface which allows our skilled craftspeople on the shop floor, with varying levels of digital skills, to log data easily so they can focus on what they do best."

In the aerospace industry, material traceability is key. The ability to quickly trace, for example, the fabric that was used in one of their pieces back to the original fabric manufacturer's lot number allows for swift mitigation and resolution should any issues with it arise. "Each customer has their own requirements. We provide whatever documentation is required - our own certificates of conformance as well as lot numbers, certifications and performance specs from the material manufacturers - in a shipping packet that gets sent with the order," added Larsen.

The cloud shrinks IT burden

Cannon's executive team engaged industry specialist Cre8tive Design & Technology to conduct an extensive evaluation of ERP solutions and decided that the optimal choice was Epicor Kinetic deployed in the cloud.

> "The Epicor Kinetic screens are a major step-up from the Classic version. The information we want is front and center or added easily."

With her experience in web design and administration, Larsen was the obvious choice to manage the software, and the selection of a native cloud-based solution makes this aspect of her job significantly easier. She said, "Cannon is committed to providing a flexible, healthy work/life balance and Epicor helps us to achieve that. The Epicor Kinetic browser-based access gives us the mobility to easily work remotely and securely. Running in the cloud, with Epicor handling updates and backups, keeps all the day-to-day administration and routine maintenance tasks off my plate so I can focus on other things. When I'm troubleshooting, I often use the browser version to find help articles quickly and easily."

A workforce-friendly user experience

Another aspect that Larsen particularly values is the Epicor Kinetic UX which delivers an efficient and intuitive user experience. "ERP systems can seem intimidating and become overwhelming really quickly, especially in a smaller company like ours where we don't have a dedicated ERP team. Epicor Kinetic has a more intuitive interface which allows our skilled craftspeople on the shop floor, with varying levels of digital skills, to log data easily so they can focus on what they do best," she shared. "The Epicor Kinetic screens are a major step-up from the Classic version. The information we want is front and center or added easily."

For Larsen, the Epicor Application Studio enables her to personalize screens to make the experience even more streamlined. "Although my coding skills are light, Epicor Application Studio is really simple to use. I can hide buttons and fields that employees don't need and make the screens they use on a daily basis super clean," Larsen explained. "The ability for users to personalize their own screens is really valuable and has definite appeal for our power users."

> "We've seen substantial improvements in job tracking, pipeline visibility, and just knowing what needs to ship and when. We're now able to provide lead times to our customers with greater confidence."

A further advantage of Epicor Kinetic is the extensive Epicor community and availability of a wide variety of support-related resources. Larsen elaborated, "The EpiUser forum is

very active and extremely helpful. The Epicor Kinetic documentation is excellent, growing all the time, and their self-paced training definitely helps flatten the learning curve for anyone new."

Piloting a smarter future

Within a few months of deploying Epicor Kinetic, Cannon was reaping significant benefits. "We've seen substantial improvements in job tracking, pipeline visibility, and just knowing what needs to ship and when.," Larsen said. "We're now able to provide lead times to our customers with greater confidence."

The team also has dramatically improved traceability while simultaneously increasing productivity. Larsen commented, "Now, all the conformance documentation is uploaded into the system. We no longer need to walk out to the shop and track down labels. Handheld scanners on the shop floor allow us to enter data faster, more easily. Everything that goes into Epicor Kinetic can be easily accessed and then sent to the customer when their order ships."

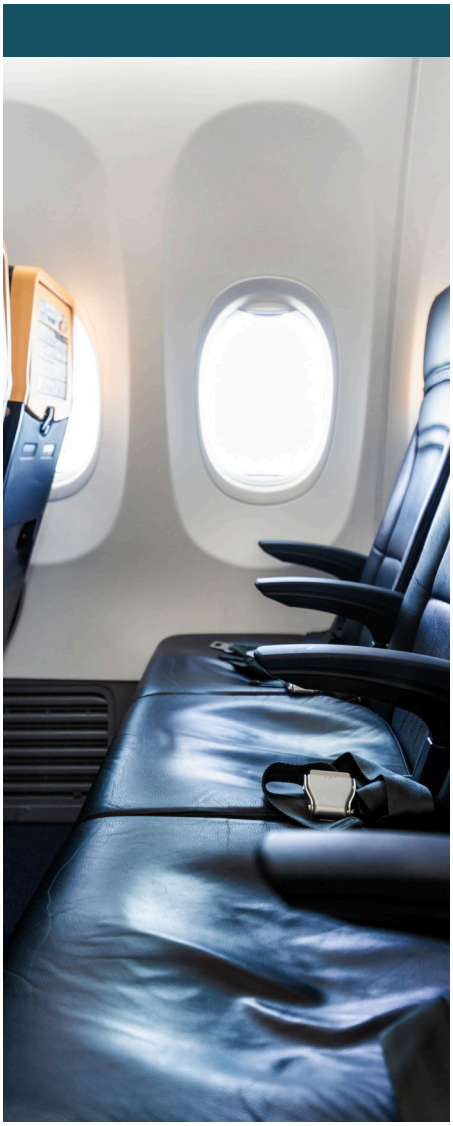
> "The ability for users to personalize their own screens is really valuable and has definite appeal for our power users."

And, as Cannon continues to collect data, patterns are beginning to emerge that will empower the team with relevant, timely information to further optimize the business. "We are gaining new insights into our pricing, how long each piece takes, and how to more efficiently manage re-work," Larsen explained. "These insights enable us to deliver a higher quality end-product, at a price that is fair to our customers and to Cannon."

> "The Epicor Kinetic browser-based access gives us the mobility to easily work remotely and securely. Running in the cloud and being supported by Epicor also keeps all day-to-day administration and routine maintenance tasks off my plate."

Larsen also discovered that the actual process of implementing the Epicor solution delivered unexpected benefits. "The exercise of examining our procedures and understanding what was missing, what we needed to add, and what data should be collected, was very eye-opening. We inventoried materials that hadn't been counted in years. We realized we needed an ERP system even more than we thought!"

Going forward, Larsen expects that Cannon will leverage data from Epicor Kinetic to drive further improvements in the business. She noted, "Next year will see us creating new processes and continuing to improve existing ones. By refining our lead times and better managing our pipeline we will be able to offer even more value to our customers. We've really only just begun!"



About Epicor

Epicor equips hard-working businesses with enterprise solutions that keep the world turning. For 50 years, Epicor customers in the automotive, building supply, distribution, manufacturing, and retail industries have trusted Epicor to help them do business better. Innovative Epicor 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 its customers' ambitions, whether to grow and transform or simply become more productive and effective. Visit www.epicor.com for more information.



Advance Computing Expands Market Share With Cross-Platform Solution

LANSA lets you start from where you are and build on what you have.

Advance Computing Pty Ltd, based north of Melbourne in Australia, has been a leading provider of specialist financial software and consultancy services for over 25 years. Advance Computing has expanded its market share from a handful of large IBM midrange customers for its financial solutions, to also include numerous Windows implementations. All platform implementations are supported from a single set of LANSA source code and include cutting-edge features like XML data exchange, web access and integrated email and document management.

John Martin, Senior Consultant at Advance Computing says, "Being able to offer a scalable solution that can be deployed on multiple platforms has allowed us to expand our market share dramatically. LANSA lets you start from where you are and build on what you have. Accuracy and reliability are of utmost importance in the finance industry. LANSA helps us to manage the complexity and risk of implementing new technologies and getting it right the first time, every time."

The Challenge

Back in the early eighties Advance Computing, then known as M&S Computer Services, developed the first versions of its legal and financial software solutions that are today known as MISSION (Mortgage Investment Software System) and CMS (Contributory Mortgage Scheme).

The software was written in conjunction with the company's first AS/400 customer, The Banksia Financial Group, a large non bank financial institution, who is still a happy customer today. All applications were written in RPG2 and had been migrated from the IBM System 34/36 to run on the IBM AS/400.

Although very complete in functionality, the application didn't have the right architecture to take forward. The database was internally described, many of the files had multiple record formats and the RPG language lacked productivity. The applications would only run on the IBM AS/400, but that was not a

concern at the time. In 1989 cross platform deployment wasn't on anyone's radar yet.

Martin explains, "The challenge then was to reuse the existing business logic – initially most of the RPG2 programs – while at same time updating our software to native AS400 and taking advantage of the DB2/400 relational database. We selected LANSA because of its central data repository and productive 4GL."

> "In 1989 cross platform deployment wasn't on anyone's radar yet."

The Migration Project

Using the LANSA Repository, Advance Computing first reworked the database to a proper relational design and externalized the business rules and validations. The RPG programs were initially left as they were, except that they were re-engineered to work with the modernized database. "We decided for the incremental modernization approach, as we could not afford to break with what we had. We wanted to avoid a disruptive and risky big bang approach," explains Martin.

After back-engineering the modern database design into the RPG programs, Advance Computing embarked on the next step, the gradual replacement of RPG programs with LANSA programs. Replacement was basically done one-by-one, but there was a lot of consolidation as well, where multiple RPG programs were replaced by a single LANSA program.

When in 1992 LANSA announced the first version of its Windows development and deployment tool, at that time called LANSA PCX, Advance Computing was one of the first customers to make the switch from AS/400 development to Windows development. The Windows tool allowed Advance Computing to use the same high level LANSA source code to either generate Windows-based C code or AS/400 based RPG code.

By then Windows deployment had become a priority for Advance Computing, as several smaller AS/400 customers indicated they wanted to move to the Windows platform. Initially the MISSION and CMS solution were still partly relying on RPG and could therefore not be deployed in their entirety in a Windows environment. The moment all RPG programs were redeveloped with LANSA, around 1993, Advance Computing could offer its solutions in the Windows environment, of which the vast majority of customers make use today.

> "We wanted to avoid a disruptive and risky big bang approach."

Continuously Evolving

The MISSION and CMS solutions have been continuously evolving. MISSION was extended with a web-based online banking system that allows customers to offer their clients electronic access to their accounts to securely transfer money, view their investments and download statements in PDF format.

Both solutions have been extended with LANSA Integrator for XML data exchange to third parties. For example, with the Australian Taxation Office for instant verification of a client's tax file number and for periodic reporting of investment returns. Other electronic data exchange include reporting to APPRA, the Australian Prudential Regulation Authority, and with Banklink, a service solution that allows clients to authorize their fund manager to give a nominated accountant access to their financial records.

Other integration points include near real-time two-way synchronization with MYOB, Australia's most popular Windows-based accounting system, and on-demand integration with Microsoft Outlook, Excel and Word and Adobe for PDF creation.

The built-in document management module originally only worked with documents created by MISSION and CMS, but was later extended to check-in documents from other sources. It lets you search multiple document formats by multiple search criteria and turned out to be so popular, that Advance Computing now offers a modified version as a standalone solution.

A web-based branch and agent system, currently being implemented by Banksia, allows Banksia's 20+ branches and 300+ agents to have a sub-group of clients in the Banksia system, so they can do business on behalf of Banksia. Banksia can define different levels of authority and individual access to loan/investment products and view reports that show the overall performance of products. In addition Banksia's branches have Windows client-server access to the core functionality on the IBM i, using LANSA on the client, on the server, plus Citrix and LANSA middleware.

Advance Computing is often the first to adopt new technologies internally, as a way to get familiar with it. "We try new technologies for ourselves first and then we can very confidently offer them to our customers," explains Martin. As an illustration Martin gives the example of how Advance Computing recently used LANSA Integrator to extended its web-based support system with a facility to automatically re-direct support requests to the iPhones of technical staff. Martin feels his staff is well prepared as some MISSION customers are now looking at offering their clients the option of receiving alerts by SMS.

> "We already implemented iPhone integration to our own technical staff and can very confidently offer that technology to our customers."

What the Customers Say

H.D.& C. Securities Limited is one of MISSION's Windows-based customers. HD & C recently moved from a less scalable solution that required deployment in an emulated Unix environment under Windows. David Joyce, General Manager at HD & C Securities expects that the move to MISSION will provide for a very quick return on investment. "MISSION is a perfect fit for our company and I am very impressed with the XML integration, paperless office and document management features," he says.

Joyce is also pleased with the way Advance Computing has built a framework around the application for managing security, printers, Windows integration, back-ups and other housekeeping tasks. "It's all very streamlined," he concludes.

Trevor Goode, General Manager at The Banksia Financial Group, one of the IBM i customers, regards reliability one of the biggest attractions of the combined IBM i, MISSION and LANSA technology. "We prefer the stability of the IBM i environment," he explains. "The hardware is reliable and the software is reliable as well. We just don't have any downtime." Having said that, Goode is also pleased with the multi-platform capabilities of the LANSA-based solution, as it allows Banksia to offer its 20+ branches and 300+ agents a mixture of Windows client/server and web access.

Goode notes that the online banking module benefits Banksia and its customers. "It is very seamless and hands free. Generating and processing financial transactions is an important part of our business and the online banking module saves us a lot of time in processing, identifying and handling transactions. Online investment transactional capabilities is an important feature and enables our clients to view and manage their investment accounts from anywhere and at any time of the day. Being able to provide clients with online access is an additional selling point for our products. Plus the site provides us with a platform to publish information for our customers."

The online investment facility also drastically reduces the need to send out paper statements. Goode estimates that the facility will potentially save Banksia from having to print and post a few hundred thousand interest, tax and maturity advice statements every year. However, at the moment part of the client base still opts for delivery by post. Goode believes that in the future Banksia may extend the choice of delivery methods with Short Message Service (SMS) to mobile phones.

Goode concludes, "Advance Computing has proven to have the skills and the tools to provide scalable and reliable solutions to meet the growth of our business. We find them very flexible to deal with and they always seem to be able to incorporate our customization requests in a timely matter."

> "Our clients can view and manage their investment accounts from anywhere and at any time of the day."

Conclusion

"Being able to offer a scalable solution that can be deployed on multiple platforms has allowed us to expand our market share dramatically," says Martin. "Our customers range in size from new startups that are managing several million dollars with a couple of staff to firms managing in excess of a billion dollars with over 100 staff."

"Most customers run Windows implementations of our software, while some larger finance companies are ideally suited to the IBM i Server. LANSA allows us to deliver a scalable low-cost solution on a variety of

Windows and IBM i operating system versions that we can support with a single set of LANSA source-code."

Martin feels that LANSA has been a major contributor to the fact that his team has always been able to rapidly incorporate ideas and requests that have come directly from customers. "Having set up a good architecture and having a productive tool has made it easy to deliver just about any enhancement our customers have asked for," he says.

"It's important to understand your customer's business and have a sound knowledge of their requirements. LANSA has allowed us to focus on the business requirements by giving us a set of easy-to-use development and integration tools that reduce the complexity of implementing new technologies," says Martin.

Martin feels that his solutions are more modern than most others available in the market and his development team more agile than that of other solution providers. "Our products have continuously evolved with LANSA's technology. Likewise, our development team is continually improving and developing through the training and support supplied by LANSA."

> "LANSA allows us to deliver a scalable low-cost solution on a variety of Windows and IBM i operating system versions."

About Lansa

Advance Computing has been a leader in its field for over 25 years. The company's MISSION and CMS solutions are used by finance companies and legal mortgage practices throughout Australia. Advance Computing's professional team also provides network management & support, web and application development, project management and specialized training courses. Plus the company's retail outlet offers sales and services to the general public.

Advance Computing has formal/ certified partnerships with LANSA, Microsoft, Cisco, Apple and HP.

For more information visit: www.advancec.com.au





P&G partners with Quickbase to drive efficient, productive collaboration

Managing a project portfolio serving one of the world's largest manufacturing companies is a complex task. For Procter & Gamble's Global Business Services (GBS) organization, Quickbase serves as a central repository for project data and activities. Since implementing Quickbase, P&G has realized *significant operational cost savings, better productivity, and more confidence in the speed and accuracy of project data.*

Challenge

- Silos of data contributed to information inconsistencies
- Disjointed spreadsheets hindered ability to scale and evolve data and processes
- Inability to easily access or leverage common data caused duplication of efforts, projects and reports
- Lack of global visibility hindered collaboration efforts
- Time-consuming administrative work diverted valuable personnel and resources from strategic initiatives

Solution

- Increase efficiency by streamlining and standardizing processes and methodologies
- Better leverage common data by providing real-time, global visibility and accessibility to all P&G Global Business Services (GBS) service-line managers
- Implement a customizable solution that easily adapts to rapidly evolving business needs
- Improve interoperability with existing technology infrastructure
- Reduce costs, increase efficiency, and improve capacity with existing headcount

Benefits

- Cost savings from operational efficiency and rapid deployment (3-6 weeks per application) with no programming resources required
- Eliminated 18-24 days of meetings per person per year
- Minimal maintenance cost (one FTE supporting hundreds of apps)
- Fast access to real-time data via flexible, role-based reporting
- Increased user satisfaction

Since its founding in 1837, P&G has continuously challenged convention—continuously reinventing the way they do business in order to better win in the global marketplace. In everything from product and package design to business models and organizational efficiency—innovation is the key driver behind this reinvention, enabling P&G to maintain competitive advantage through the delivery of high-quality products at a lower cost.

In 1999, P&G established its Global Business Services (GBS) organization to better support and enable innovation across the entire enterprise. This shared services business unit centralizes and manages all back-office operations for the entire company—and strives to marry information technology with business services in ways that help every P&G employee become more productive, collaborative, and efficient. The GBS organization is responsible for providing world-class solutions at a low cost with minimal capital investment.

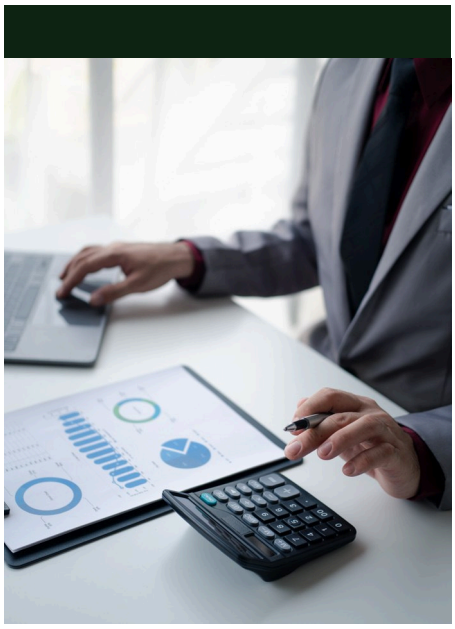
In order to deliver scalable services and solutions with excellence throughout the company, GBS began by examining their own operations. They turned to Quickbase to help address the challenges of their growing, increasingly complex business unit, as well as to elevate internal operations to a higher level of efficiency—*through improving collaboration, global project visibility, accessibility, and business process standardization.*

The Need for Real-Time Collaboration

With more than 7,000 employees, GBS is responsible for thousands of interdisciplinary initiatives each year that require joint human, financial and technical resources.

In 2004, the GBS Project Management Organization (PMO) team began looking for a new way to manage information to simplify the current system which required synching data from multiple spreadsheets into a single, master spreadsheet consisting of thousands of records. With no way for managers to implement or enforce data standards across these multiple sources, the reporting process was arduous and often inaccurate. In turn, this led to hours of meetings centered on identifying the most current version of a given source—and then correcting the master spreadsheet's data, column and formula discrepancies accordingly. Across the organization much time was dedicated to inputting and reconciling data.

As the number of spreadsheets grew, so did duplication of efforts. "We had several different people doing the same work in different locations," says Jason Schubert, GBS systems analyst. With no centralized source of information—no way of tapping into common data—service line managers were forced to create their own approach to similar business processes. This stymied efficiency and cost hours of administrative time each month.



"These silos of information dragged down our efficiency. Prioritizing projects, forecasting human resource requirements, project costs and delivery dates—all of these were virtually impossible without calling endless meetings and tying up staff who really should have been focused more strategically. Our ability to collaborate the way we wanted to—and needed to—wasn't happening."

Kim Kehling_ Director of the GBS Project Management Service Line

With no way for managers to implement or enforce data standards across thousands of records housed in multiple databases, staff spent hours in meetings centered on identifying the most current version of a given source—and then correcting the master spreadsheet's data, column and formula discrepancies accordingly.

From Information Silos to Global Visibility: Web-Based Project, Process, and Portfolio Management

GBS PMO recognized the need for a portfolio approach to project and process management—but lacked the technology to support it.

> "As we thought about all of our different shared services projects, we wanted to be able to capture and integrate the data and information associated with those projects in a centralized database—and then share that data and information with hundreds or thousands of people in real-time, whenever and wherever they happened to be."
>
> *Kim Kehling_ Director of the GBS Project Management Service Line*

In this way, service line managers could leverage and re-use common business data far more efficiently than they could with other traditional desktop tools.

After an extensive evaluation process, Eduardo Garcia, in his position on the PMO team at the time and Site Services Leader for GBS's Fabric & Home Care Innovation Center today, chose Quickbase—the backbone upon which he developed a proprietary application called GBS Portfolio.

The total cost of the Quickbase solution—including license fees and development and deployment of the GBS Portfolio application—offered the right fit for the business ***at the right price***. "Ramp up was fast. We began developing GBS Portfolio within a couple of months of purchase the first iteration was deployed within three weeks, and we continued fine-tuning and customizing it from that point, without disruption," says Garcia.

Today, GBS Portfolio consolidates hundreds of projects across many GBS service lines into a single, online, web-accessible Quickbase database.

> "One of the biggest benefits of using Quickbase is our ability to speed alignment between service lines and increase project visibility—particularly among those requesting resources from multiple departments or service lines."
>
> *Eduardo Garcia_ Site Services Leader for GBS's Fabric & Home Care Innovation Center*

This helps managers better forecast project requirements and deploy resources against the highest priorities—something that used to take hours of meetings to accomplish.

Scaling Across the Organization

After witnessing how quickly Garcia developed GBS Portfolio—and experiencing its ease-of-use and business value firsthand—other GBS managers began developing additional Quickbase applications to better manage data in their own service lines. Together, these nearly 70 applications—developed on the secure Quickbase platform and sharing a common data repository—are driving increased collaboration, productivity, and agility throughout the entire P&G organization. Now, thousands of users can access, share and leverage critical business data where and when they work—rendering their static, inflexible Excel spreadsheets obsolete.

As a result of this transition to Quickbase, GBS service lines have experienced tremendous benefits across the board, including:

Increased Productivity and Capacity with Quickbase

For example, Garcia notes that across the 15-member PMO, "Quickbase has saved significant time. Each team member used to spend two to three full days working just on identification of cross-service line projects and resource alignment. Now they spend approximately three to four hours on it. Quickbase has increased productivity and capacity in the individual service lines substantially—due to visibility, collaboration and customizability."

Kathy Meyer, cash forecaster for the GBS Capital service line, agrees. As stewards of P&G's capital

spend, Meyer and her team are responsible for tracking more than 1,600 projects—and also must generate monthly budget forecasts, commitments and actuals reports for each of those projects.

Under her direction, systems administrator Jason Schubert developed the GBS Capital Tracking Tool—another user-friendly, web-accessible Quickbase application—which houses all capital projects, forecasts and actuals. Now, just one person can synch and generate the reports in as little as two hours per month—a significant efficiency that has improved the team's ability to take on more strategic work.

> "Given our success moving from spreadsheets to the GBS Capital Tracking Tool, I would highly recommend Quickbase as a solution for other corporate spreadsheet-intensive environments."
>
> *Kathy Meyer_ Cash Forecaster for the GBS Capital Service Line*

Streamlined Business Processes

Thanks to Quickbase, ***each service line is working to automate and standardize business processes in order to further increase their efficiency.*** For example:

GBS Capital — GBS Capital Tracking includes automated tasks such as monthly data uploads and pre-built standard reports—which have greatly improved the team's efficiency and have all but eliminated costly data entry errors.

> "With GBS Capital Tracking, our data integrity has increased dramatically," says Meyer. "We have much greater confidence in what we report to Corporate in terms of our forecasting, actuals tracking and commitments."
>
> *Kathy Meyer_ Cash Forecaster for the GBS Capital Service Line*

GBS Capital — Built-in functionalities, including automatic report submission to senior management, have streamlined GBS processes—resulting in far shorter report generation lifecycles that require less interaction from fewer staff members. Now, executives can access—in real time—the actionable data they need to make strategic plant operating and production decisions, which has further increased P&G's overall agility.

Cost Savings and Ongoing Return on Investment

Not only has GBS saved significant money in purchase and implementation costs with Quickbase—it also sees an ongoing return on investment across all 70 applications.

At GBS Capital, Kathy Meyer's team has seen major efficiency gains. "Now that we don't spend time constantly cleaning spreadsheets, we've been able to focus our efforts on bringing in more work," Meyer says. "And, while it's difficult to attach a number to this increased capacity, it's hugely valuable in terms of driving our profitability."

Conclusion

As the global operational backbone of P&G, the GBS business is charged with addressing some formidable challenges—both internally and, by extension, throughout the entire P&G organization—in order to transform P&G's business and drive for competitive advantage through innovation and agility. How can GBS increase productivity through improved collaboration? How can GBS realize greater efficiencies through streamlining business processes? How can GBS increase profitability?



Canon Gießen goes in to the future

Here's how to unlock successful ERP extensions in the modern SaaS landscape.

For more than 70 years, Canon has delivered innovative products for moving and still images to customers around the world. The company was founded in 1937. Canon has evolved into a global company operating in a variety of markets: Business Solutions, Consumer Imaging, Broadcast & Communications, Medical Systems and Industrial Products. Canon Germany was founded in Düsseldorf in 1973. The Giessen site is mainly involved in service and support for Canon copier systems and printers.

Innovative ideas have always secured Canon a firm place at the forefront of the industry. Whenever businesses and consumers choose Canon products, they are choosing reliable, stylish and advanced technology. Canon has been an Infor ERP XA customer since the early 1990s. The intention of starting this project was originally to modernize the applications as a whole and bring the entire infrastructure onto the same technological platform.

Project steps

In 2015, the first joint milestone was the upgrade to XA 9.1. The heavily modified ERP system was brought up to the Infor standard. Thus, future update costs were significantly reduced and the stability of the system was significantly improved. The next step was the implementation of a modern output management with Interform. In 2017, the first Infor ION solution for system integration was put into operation at Canon as part of the modernization of the IT infrastructure. The successful upgrade to ERP XA R9.2 then took place in 2018.

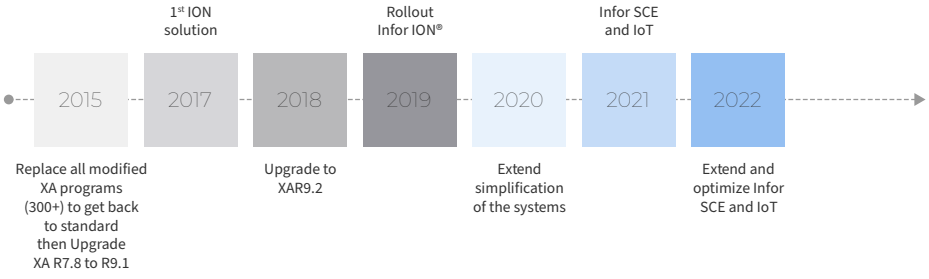
In 2019, further ION solutions were put into operation and simplifications of the system

landscape were implemented in the following. In 2021, the Infor SCE implementation followed to optimize logistics. In the same step, a modern IoT solution was implemented for comprehensive control of the complete infrastructure.

In 2022, SCE and IoT were further optimized. The next shortterm goal is the modernization of the UI and the further rollout of the Infor OS technology. In 2023, there are still projects to be implemented: for example, the upgrade to XAR 10 as well as further interfaces based on Infor ION.

> "Over the period of the entire cooperation, our costs have been significantly reduced and processes in the company have been simplified. We are very satisfied with the Infor solutions overall."
>
> *Uwe Breuer_General Manager Finance & Administration/CFO*

> "With Infor's solutions, we have taken a step in the right direction. Our IT infrastructure is already at a very good, modern level. The digitization of our company is well advanced. On this basis, the infrastructure will continue to be continuously optimized.""
>
> *Alexander Stortz_ Database & Application Engineer*



Challenges

- Highly modified source code was causing high cost for upgrade and maintenance
- HR resource were hardly to find to support the various old technologies anymore
- Many individual interfaces required too much time and resources in the company

Solutions

- The new technology opens doors for future developments
- Optimized the warehouse logistics (with Infor SCE)
- Reduced costs for the daily maintenance and future upgrades as well as developments
- Simplified the system landscape into a uniform structure

About Infor

Infor is a global leader in business cloud software specialized by industry. We develop complete solutions for our focus industries. Infor's mission-critical enterprise applications and services are designed to deliver sustainable operational advantages with security and faster time to value. Over 60,000 organizations in more than 175 countries rely on Infor's 17,000 employees to help achieve their business goals. As a Koch company, our financial strength, ownership structure, and long-term view empower us to foster enduring, mutually beneficial relationships with our customers. Visit [www.infor.com.](www.infor.com)



RISE with SAP Accelerates Biotech Innovation

Biotech research and development (R&D) is one of the hottest high-growth industries, stoking an innovation renaissance in products after the pandemic that reinforced imperatives for healthcare breakthroughs like lifesaving vaccines and personalized medicine. True innovators are digitally transforming to increase speed to market and address regulatory compliance in this R&D-driven sector.

One example is STEMCELL Technologies, Canada's leading life sciences research company that sees itself as a company of scientists helping scientists. Based in Vancouver, STEMCELL has a 30-year history of growth in developing and manufacturing products and services that help other industrial and academic scientists innovate in the areas of stem cell, immunology, cancer, regenerative medicine, and cellular therapy research. STEMCELL has staff in 20 countries and sells a constantly expanding portfolio of over 2,500 products, including cell culture media, cell separation technologies, instruments, and accessories, as well as education and services. Reducing the time to market for new products is crucial to the company's mission of pursuing life sciences discoveries leading to the next generation of healthcare treatments.

"We're always looking for ways to accelerate time to market for new products and adapt our technology environment to meet the evolving needs of our internal stakeholders and external customers," said John Lilleyman, CIO at STEMCELL. "Advanced discoveries in areas like precision medicine are bringing new hope to patients and their families. At the same time, we have to comply with increasingly stringent global mandates for sustainable packaging and product safety."

Faster Innovation with SAP S/4HANA

Since STEMCELL went live with *SAP S/4HANA*, the biotech leader has been intent on using the latest innovations from SAP to help speed up product testing. Speaking during a session held at this year's *SAP Sapphire & ASUG Annual Conference Orlando*, Lilleyman shared the company's strategy for effective and fully automated software with SAP.

"We're particularly excited about the cloud-first innovations from *RISE with SAP*, which will help us deliver a more sustainable solution, continuously meet security and compliance requirements, and set us up for success with future upgrades," he said. "With a new test-automation strategy, we can make sure that testing is an accelerator and not a bottleneck to change."

Automation Expedites Rigorous Product Testing

STEMCELL doesn't create end-user patient therapies. Rather, the company develops the products and solutions that help other life sciences researchers innovate for new therapeutic discoveries. To develop these solutions for other scientists, STEMCELL performs rigorous product quality testing to comply with the *U.S. Food and Drug Administration* and other global regulatory frameworks and guidelines.

Replacing manual testing with a highly automated process has generated significant results for the company. To date, STEMCELL has reduced the time required to complete SAP system validation for GxP "good practice" guidelines and regulations by 86%, test quote-to-cash scenarios by 97%, and execute a full regression cycle by 98%.

"Instead of taking the better part of a month or more, most of the testing is now completed in a handful of days or less," said Lilleyman. "This is a tremendous accelerator for our business and our teams. We'll be able to take advantage of enhancements in SAP solutions faster. It will continue to pay dividends every day, week, month, and year as we move forward, expanding our footprint in new product markets and locations."

> "Cloud-based automation at all stages of testing helps move us towards continuous compliance in a continuously changing market."

Digital Helps Fast-Track Global Expansion

Averaging 20% annual growth, STEMCELL has made digitalization central to its strategy for bringing products to market faster and more sustainably. Lilleyman said that speeding up testing in compliance with global mandates will help the company as it expands worldwide.

"Cloud-based automation at all stages of testing helps move us towards continuous compliance in a continuously changing market," he said. "As we continue to expand our inventory for testing, we'll be able to accelerate upcoming projects as we open up in different environments. We can have a library with a simple checklist to set up a new entity where we can test end-to-end. We can shift the testing burden away from business users to release innovations faster with completed testing."

He looked ahead to greater benefits from further automation, including on-demand validation reports for updated system testing and quality controls. Speedier testing from STEMCELL is making the lives of researchers easier by accelerating the release of the tools they need to in turn deliver advanced, patient-centric therapeutic discoveries for a healthier world.

About SAP

SAP's strategy is to help every business run as an intelligent, sustainable enterprise. As a market leader in enterprise application software, we help 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. SAP helps give people and organizations deep business insight and fosters collaboration that helps them stay ahead of their competition. We simplify technology for companies so they can consume our software the way they want – without disruption. Our end-to-end suite of applications and services enables business and public customers across 25 industries globally to operate profitably, adapt continuously, and make a difference. With a global network of customers, partners, employees, and thought leaders, SAP helps the world run better and improve people's lives. For more information, visit www.sap.com.



Birdrock Home

Based in Austin, Texas with fulfillment centers across the United States and development teams in 5 countries, BirdRock Home specializes in high-quality goods for the home, outdoors, office and more. Since 2008, BirdRock has been a reliable source of high-quality products and backs them up with friendly and helpful customer support.

Time to Modernize to Improve Agility

BirdRock Home provides an extensive array of high-quality products for the home, garden, automobile, and garage both online and through brick-and-mortar retail partners. In the consumer packaged goods space, order planning and forecasting are critical to remain agile and react quickly to changes in consumer demand. However, BirdRock was still using antiquated methods with an expansive spreadsheet process created by a third party to manage ordering for their 700 active product SKUs. From start to finish, one round of planning took approximately one month to complete. "By the time I finished, I was already 30 days late, and the data was now inaccurate," commented Analucia Pandini, BirdRock Demand Planner Specialist. With the organization running on visibility to out-of-date information, there was a reduced ability to act in a timely manner. This in turn increased BirdRock's risk of over-forecasting and over-buying, leading to the costly proposition of holding more inventory than needed and impacting the bottom line. With a desire to increase process efficiency, visibility, data accuracy, and better respond to market demands, BirdRock made the decision to find a solution that would eliminate the need for their outdated means of planning and provide a real-time data view. Pandini's impressive resume in implementing enterprise ERP and SCP systems gave her unique insights when selecting the solution best suited for BirdRock's needs. After exploring several options, she and other members of the BirdRock team chose cloud-based Plex DemandCaster Supply Chain Planning, with note to its userfriendly nature. DemandCaster met Pandini's high standard based on her 15 years of experience in supply chain planning, and she stated, "to me, it was a no-brainer. It had to be DemandCaster software."

> "It's so easy to identify the trends, ups and downs, potential issues, and to show other departments what's going on so we can do something now."
>
> *Analucia Pandini _ BirdRock Demand Planner Specialist*

Ushering in a New Era of Productivity

Based on her past implementation expertise, Pandini knew what to expect when it came to getting DemandCaster in place. Together with great support from Mark Chuberka, NetSuite Administrator, they executed an expedient go-live. Chuberka was hands-on and easily able to get the interface between DemandCaster and NetSuite up and running.

The expectations were high right off the bat, as it was critical that DemandCaster pick up all elements of the workflow to continue operating at 100%. Thanks to Plex DemandCaster's user-friendly interface and reporting functionality, the BirdRock team was very receptive to the change and adjusted to their new system seamlessly. They were able to start using the new solution almost immediately and with little impact on the day-to-day workflow.

While the implementation was quick and painless, it ultimately took the BirdRock planning organization two years to get where it is today. Due to the shear amount of historical data, including inaccurate inventory and incorrect forecasting that occurred prior to Plex DemandCaster, the team needed to make manual adjustments initially. Their solution is now at full speed, automated and tailored to fit BirdRock's business model. The team has a trustworthy, single source of truth and is working with their data, instead of in it.

Improved Proactive & Reactive Decision-Making

Since completing the implementation, BirdRock has seen major improvements. It's much easier to successfully communicate across their facilities thanks to Plex DemandCaster, which has improved inventory management and optimized the supply chain. The ability to identify the areas of business that need attention is increasing reliability and efficiency. Data trends and potential issues are caught with more frequency and employees make more informed decisions because they recognize changes in real time. Ultimately, they can create highly accurate plans, reduce costs, and produce better customer outcomes.

Before Plex DemandCaster, one planning cycle took approximately one month. Now, in terms of reviewing forecasts and landing requirements, this timeframe has been shortened to one week at most. With less time spent deep in planning and forecasting data, the BirdRock team can focus their time on analyzing the data in strategic processes like forecast performance reviews. Pandini described how these changes have also allowed her to spend valuable time with the product development, sales and marketing, and warehouse teams, preparing for what's next. "It's so easy to identify the trends, ups and downs, potential issues, and to show other departments what's going on so we can do something now," Pandini said.

As they look towards the future, the BirdRock team aims to continue being a reliable and efficient source of goods for their customers and adapt to demand fluctuations with confidence with the help of Plex DemandCaster. As an industry veteran, Pandini suggests that other manufacturers consider moving away from solutions such as spreadsheets for their supply chain planning needs. "Stay away from it," Pandini advised. "That's the stone ages of planning and forecasting." Instead, she councils that companies open themselves up to change. While she recognizes the reaction of resistance in process and system changes, she also knows that Plex DemandCaster can up-level an organization's strategic supply chain planning, a game changer in today's manufacturing reality.

> "It's going to improve productivity and it's going to optimize inventory. So, there's really no discussion. How can you compare?"
>
> *Analucia Pandini _ BirdRock Demand Planner Specialist*



Odoo Engineers Everbolt's Growth in APAC

Established in 2015 in Sri Lanka, Everbolt Engineering (Pvt) Ltd. is an industrial automation and engineering services provider with a comprehensive range of products, such as panel builders, machine manufacturers, and process plants. Setting its goal to lead the industry in Asia in the future, the company is making its first steps with new showrooms in Dubai, South Asia, South Africa, and North Africa to expand its services.

Growing Out of the System

Before Odoo, Everbolt was supported by no more than the accounting software QuickBooks on the backend, leaving most tasks to manual labor. For instance, pre-manufacture cost comparison took as long as one week because every piece of information and RFQ had to be gathered and drafted manually, then typed into an Excel sheet to find the best deal. The purchasing team would email the warehouse team to book slots to manufacture finally.

The company also needed a more comprehensive report generation system. The QuickBooks subscription could only provide general sales and procurement analysis reports without integrating with other business record tools. As the company continues to expand its operations and pursue new business opportunities, it has become increasingly important to have a sophisticated reporting system that captures all sales data and generates metrics such as business performance, quotation, and quotation to sales order reports, which allows the managers to make accurate and profitable decisions, and increase productivity within the team.

A Pleasant Surprise

> "After implementing Odoo, the team's efficiency increased by roughly 40-50%"
>
> *Hashan Fonseka_ Business Development Manager at Everbolt*

Turning to *Centrics Business Solutions*, Everbolt was instantly intrigued by what our *Gold Partner* could offer — an efficient, flexible, and user-friendly Odoo backend system with support from its dedicated helpdesk team whenever assistance and training are needed, ensuring all staff at Everbolt get on board within one month.

The most significant change Everbolt experiences with the Odoo implementation is the efficiency in managing purchase orders and pushing the product line and approval process to optimize the company's resources. The cloud-hosted system automates 90% of the RFQ creation process by extracting information from the integrated Odoo *Purchase*, *Inventory*, and *Invoicing* apps. Once a request from a customer is received, the purchasing team at Everbolt can immediately check up on available stock on Odoo Inventory and compare the prices from vendor quotations on the Purchase app to find the best deal and make an offer to create an invoice accordingly. A process that used to take days is now done with Odoo in minutes, in one window.

This digitized workflow allows Everbolt to cut down on paper waste and encourages data centralization that helps managers make timely and profitable business decisions. With all purchases and sales records consolidated into one database, directors and managers at Everbolt can now generate customized business performance reports with a few clicks within the system that allow them to spot the best-performing products, salespeople, and seasons and design the most suitable strategy with references to these numbers.

Managing sales on Odoo online also brought Everbolt a more precise division of labor and protected the business from social turmoil. Using the Odoo *CRM* and *Sales* apps to keep track of all leads, Everbolt separates salespeople into two teams, one in the office to cater to all incoming requests and the other outside the office to reach out to new opportunities, optimizing sales performance. The outward team can access the *cloud-hosted Odoo system* anytime and anywhere to pull out details whenever needed to give a more informative pitch to potential clients and increase business prospects. Meanwhile, the office team gets instant updates on the shared database. Accessing the company database and managing the business online outside the office also helped Everbolt maintain services during dire times when Covid and protests hit Sri Lanka, respectively, in 2021 and early 2022, when the Everbolt staff was forced to work from home.



And what surprises Everbolt the most of out all apps are Odoo *Website* & *eCommerce*, and *Email Marketing*. With a crisply designed eCommerce website integrated with all the backend apps, Everbolt can cater to more corporate clients on *everbolt.lk* with all order details automated on the backend and having the sales and inventory team notified to act accordingly. At the same time, the Odoo Email Marketing app helps strengthen the collaboration between Everbolt's marketing and sales teams — the app automates customized emails to target the right audience in the client base with the right products to generate more leads.

Onto a New High

Overall, Odoo helps Everbolt overcome limitations by streamlining the workflow and optimizing resources while constantly creating leads to push the company onto a new high. With expert assistance and training from Centrics Business Solutions, Everbolt is well-positioned to achieve its goal of leading the industry in the future.



Certinia's Summer 2023 Release Introduces AI Functionality and Updates Improving Productivity, Efficiency, and Decision Making

Release includes innovative new Artificial Intelligence (AI) capabilities that will enable service businesses to deploy pragmatic AI use cases; as well as new project and resource management features

Certinia, the platform for services business, announced the general availability of its Summer 2023 product release. This release includes valuable updates to Certinia's Services-as-a-Business platform that empower both new and existing customers to achieve a single source of certainty in their services operations.

The latest capabilities are focused on empowering services providers to deliver more efficient and cost-effective projects by automating and streamlining resource management and providing time-saving enhancements for accounting teams. Customers leveraging these capabilities will be better equipped to navigate growth and they'll have the insights to respond to market and business uncertainties with greater confidence.

Introducing Embedded AI Functionality

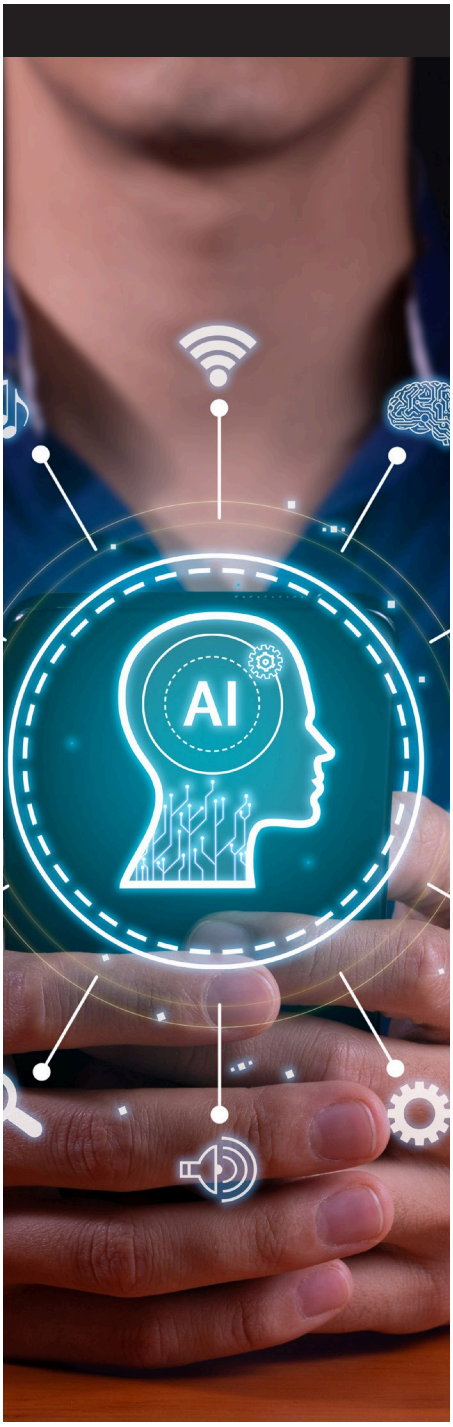
Certinia's pragmatic approach to AI is changing how global mid-sized enterprises address the challenge of adopting AI into their Finance and Professional Services operations, with AI use-cases augmenting Certinia's products. This approach will elevate services business with role-based actions, not just insights, delivered at the point of impact.

Pragmatic AI reduces the uncertainty and risk around investing and adopting AI by providing curated datasets, closed-loop models that make recommendations to improve model accuracy, and expert support and services from Certinia. By leveraging Salesforce's Einstein Discovery Machine Learning (ML) models with an end-to-end platform for financial and operational data, organizations can have greater trust, control and confidence in operationalizing AI for more accurate cash flow forecasting, planning, staffing, and decision making.

The Summer 2023 product release includes updates that support the following use cases: identifying risk and proactive mitigations to scheduled project work, improving service margins, as well as predicting days to pay in cash flow forecasting. Certinia continues to take a broad strategy to ML with future investments on its roadmap.

Elevated Project Management for Greater Productivity

Central to the Summer 2023 release is the enhancement of project management capabilities. The introduction of the Task Board component enables project teams to boost productivity through seamless task updates using intuitive drag and drop functions. Program Managers gain greater visibility of the status and financial performance of multiple projects with Project Overview, leading to reduced administrative work and more accurate revenue forecasting. Additionally, improvements to the Scheduling Risk Dashboard, which launched in Certinia's Spring 2023 release, empower project managers to identify potential risks to upcoming scheduled work and take timely precautionary measures to uphold margins.



Optimized Resource Management for Enhanced Efficiency

Resource Management receives significant enhancements in the Summer 2023 release. Integration with Google and Microsoft Outlook calendars allows project managers to quickly assess the team's availability when scheduling events from within a project. Resource Managers can effortlessly edit resource assignments with advanced work planner features and easily pinpoint the right resources for projects based on employees' previous experience and work history. These highly-requested updates optimize resource utilization, ensure operational continuity, and elevate customer satisfaction.

Time-Saving Enhancements for Accounting Teams

Certinia understands the importance of increased productivity for accounting teams. The Summer 2023 release delivers an enhanced user experience for managing collections, vendor payments, and generating depreciation schedules. Controllers gain greater control over the period and year-end close process with accounting playbooks, which include associated tasks and due dates for a simplified and faster close. The release further streamlines time-consuming accounting tasks including processing of inbound invoices and AP invoice creation, auto-populating business activity statements for Australian entities, and summarizing fixed assets journals. Additionally, users now can apply inflationary price uplift to hundreds of billing contracts at once, saving hours of manual effort.

Insights-Driven Procurement

The Summer 2023 release provides real-time insights through reimagined reports and procurement alerts. Procurement teams can now analyze and control spend by category and supplier, driving more strategic purchasing decisions. Customer-sourced ideas for additional reporting enhancements have also been prioritized, resulting in flexible formatting and multi-select filtering for easier consumption and targeted analysis.

"With continuous improvements in project and resource management capabilities across a variety of use cases, adopters of Certinia's Services-as-a-Business platform can expect to both increase the amount of work that can be done, as well as reduce the amount of resources required to do that work," said Mickey North Rizza, IDC Group Vice-President Enterprise Software. "The introduction of the AI functionality and specific use cases represents a deliberate customer-centric approach to guide the use of AI in services enterprises."

For more information on the Summer 2023 release, please visit the *Release Hub* on the Certinia Community and register for an upcoming *customer webinar.*

About Certinia

Certinia (formerly FinancialForce) delivers a Services-as-a-Business platform that powers and connects all aspects of services operations, from services estimation and delivery to customer success management and financial planning and accounting. The company's Professional Services Automation (PSA), Customer Success, and ERP solutions—delivered on Salesforce's leading cloud platform – provide services businesses with the intelligence and agility to deliver high-quality services, elevate customer experiences and accelerate growth. Headquartered in San Jose, California with offices around the world, Certinia is backed by Advent International, Salesforce Ventures, and Technology Crossover Ventures. For more information, visit www.certinia.com.





Epicor Discusses the Power of Data and Digital Innovation at Annual Insights Australia Customer Conference

Epicor, a global leader of *industry-specific enterprise software* to promote business growth, will discuss next week at the company's annual Insights Australia customer conference how businesses across the region can take advantage of today's digital innovations – including SaaS and industry-focused software platforms grounded in contextual business intelligence – to adopt a data-first strategy that lets them optimise and strengthen their businesses and supply chains.

"Advanced technologies can be applied at scale to transform the way we solve some of our biggest challenges, but to get there, organisations must adopt a data-centric mindset to succeed in today's complex business environment," said Andy Coussins, Epicor Executive Vice President of International. "At Epicor, we are helping our customers across Australia, New Zealand, and globally turn insights into action through a strong digital foundation that gives them a competitive advantage."

Specifically, digital innovation in the region's manufacturing sector is of vital importance, indicated by the Australian government's recent announcement of a *new $15 billion National Reconstruction Fund* aimed at bolstering advanced manufacturing capabilities in the country, and investment in critical technologies that underpin advanced manufacturing including AI and robotics.

"The target investments and incentives from the Australian government reflect the importance of digital innovation in continuing to strengthen the region's vital role in the global economy," Greg O'Loan, Epicor Regional Vice President of Australia and New Zealand. "We are laser focused on helping our manufacturing customers across the region leverage these advanced technologies to gain actionable insights to optimise and automate business flows and drive time-to-value."

"We are also excited to share with our aged-care customers how our latest Epicor Senior Living Solution can help streamline processes, personalise care, and control costs."

Epicor Insights Australia 2023 brings together more than 200 customers, partners, and influencers across the region to connect, learn, and explore possibilities in using Epicor solutions to create a world of better business. For more information, please visit *https://www.epicor.com/en-au/.*

Press Release from Epicor



Zofri Chooses Infor WMS as its Warehouse Management System

Infor®, the industry cloud company, announced that Zofri, Zona Franca de Iquique, will implement Infor WMS warehouse management system to improve customer service, one of the most important performance indicators in the supply chain. The Infor WMS solution will be deployed in the cloud, which is powered by AWS (Amazon Web Services), and will be implemented by Cerca Technology, Infor's partner in Latin America.

Zofri is one of the most important centers of commerce and industry in South America. It has more than 2,000 companies from various countries operating at its sites, with a wide variety of items available such as electronics, automotive, textiles, and household items, among many others. Zofri and the enormous number of companies operating at its locations contribute more than 45,000 direct and indirect jobs in the region.

Its operation has five business areas: Zofri Mall, the Wholesale Business Center, Chacalluta Industrial Park in Arica, Zofri Business Park in Alto Hospicio and the Zofri Logistics Center. Zofri Logistics offers outsourced logistics services (3PL) to customers that operate under the free-trade regime, taking care of the process from arrival of the merchandise to the Port of Iquique until its dispatch to the final destination, anywhere in the world.

Zofri's primary need for a WMS solution is to improve customer service. Previously, the real-time inventory of its clients was unknown, due to the use of multiple warehouses for the storage of merchandise. Therefore, having updated status was a task that demanded a lot of time. In addition, the process of tracking the entry and exit of goods was done manually, which decreased efficiency and created delays.

"We seek to be more efficient and improve response times to our customers," said Miguel Perret Paquien, operations manager of Zofri S.A. "We are a top-level company, and we know that Infor WMS is a solution that will live up to our expectations."

Likewise, Felipe Alfaro Pizarro, deputy operations manager of Zofri S.A., stressed, "We had the objective of implementing a software solution that was a leader in the market and that would help us to jointly manage the warehouses, spaces and storage of the different merchandise of our customers."

Zofri's selection of Infor WMS was based on a thorough technical and strategic evaluation. The company was looking for a solution that was stable and scalable over time, that was a market leader and that would enable it to manage the inventories of all its warehouses. To Zofri, visualizing the warehouse in 3D is a "real plus" capability of Infor WMS. This enabled stakeholders to see a prototype of how the management of orders from its warehouses would be in real time.

"We are very pleased to partner with a logistics operator as important as Zofri, in its strategy to optimize logistics operations," said Jose Luis Gomes, commercial manager, Cerca Technology. "Zofri has a clear focus on customer service and a very clear vision of how to optimize service and generate greater value for its customers. We will be working together to implement Infor WMS in Zofri's operations, as part of its services and support modernization strategies."

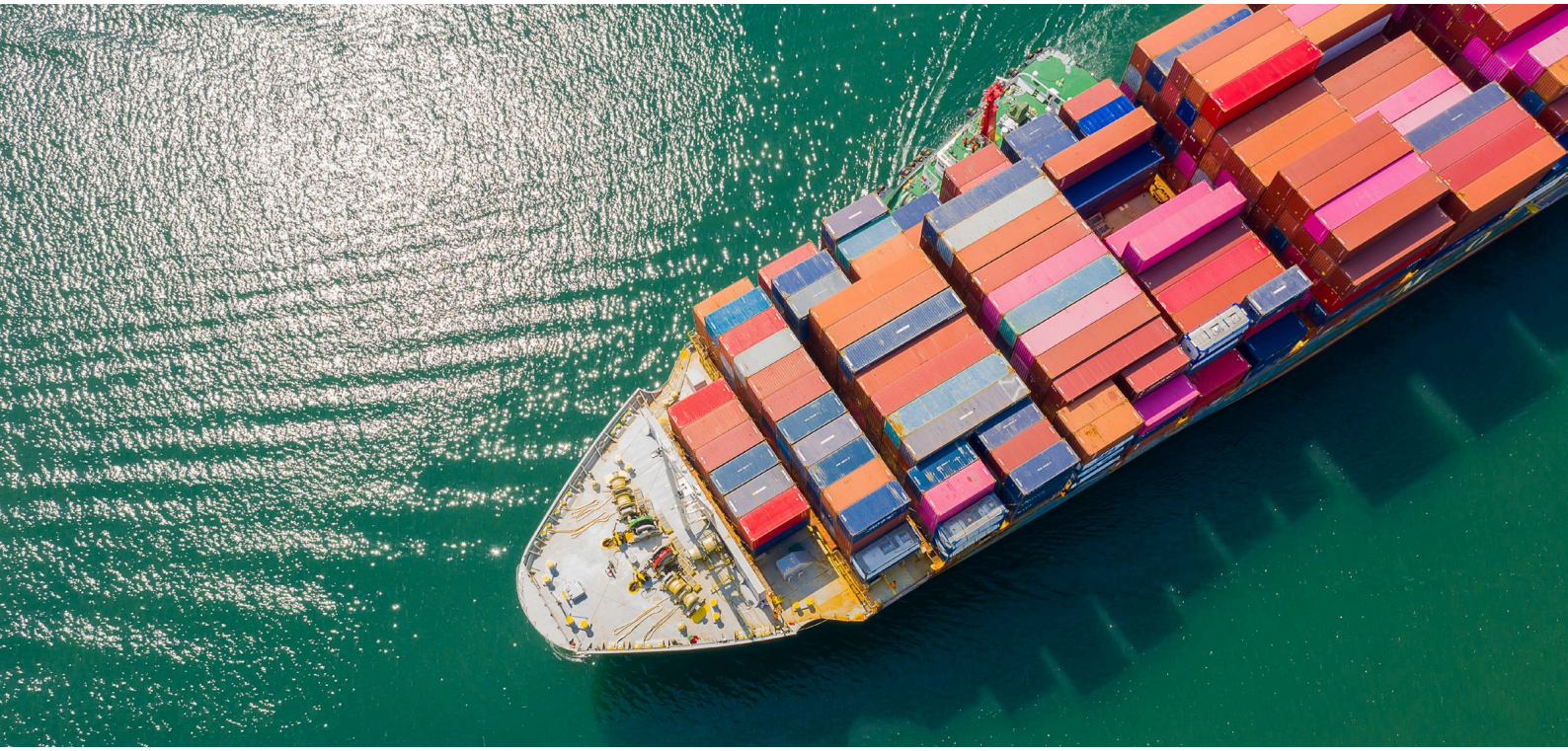
Zofri's goal is to automate its supply chain, and the selection of Infor WMS is a first step in its roadmap. In this first phase, the company will increase efficiency in its processes and improve response times to customers. Additionally, Infor WMS will help the company continue to develop its commercial competitiveness when offering services to companies in the Chilean market.

Alberto Costoya, senior channel sales manager at Infor South Latin America, said, "Infor WMS met Zofri's requirements, as it is a world-class solution that can be applied to B2B and B2C business models. The solution combines advanced functionalities, data analytics and ease of use, which helps Zofri meet its objective of improving customer service."

Learn more about Infor WMS.

About Infor

Infor is a global leader in business cloud software specialized by industry. We develop complete solutions for our focus industries. Infor's mission-critical enterprise applications and services are designed to deliver sustainable operational advantages with security and faster time to value. Over 60,000 organizations in more than 175 countries rely on Infor's 17,000 employees to help achieve their business goals. As a Koch company, our financial strength, ownership structure, and long-term view empower us to foster enduring, mutually beneficial relationships with our customers. Visit www.infor.com.





IFS Selects Tech Mahindra as Sole Distributor in India

IFS, the global cloud enterprise software company, announced that Tech Mahindra, a leading provider of digital transformation, consulting, and business re-engineering services and solutions, is now the exclusive distributor of IFS solutions in India, including the IFS Cloud platform which delivers intelligence and automation across Field Service Management, ERP and EAM.

As the exclusive distributor for IFS, Tech Mahindra will leverage its extensive expertise and market presence in India to introduce and distribute IFS's cloud technology across asset and service-centric industries. IFS's customers and partner ecosystem seeking reliable and efficient cloud solutions that drive growth and deliver business value will benefit from IFS and Tech Mahindra's strong commitment to customer satisfaction.

Jinender Jain, Head of Sales, UK&I, Tech Mahindra said, "The Tech Mahindra and IFS partnership has had a significant transformation over the past 17 years. From being a services partner initially to co-creation of IP, R&D, and Global Support Services for industry-specific solutions for our mutual clientele across UK, Sweden, and now in India. This strategic alliance underscores our dedication to addressing the growing market demand for IFS solutions, while delivering faster return on investment (ROI) with Tech Mahindra's digital transformation experience. Tech Mahindra's expertise and the proven excellence of IFS's cloud solutions will start a new era of growth and success for businesses in India and globally."

IFS Cloud delivers a broad set of ERP, Service Management and Enterprise Asset Management capabilities. Organizations can choose the functionality they need from across the solution areas. Built on a powerful, flexible common platform, IFS Cloud combines deep industry and functional strength with intelligent autonomous capabilities, including AI and IoT technology embedded natively, differentiating IFS from competitors.

Vincent Carvalho, Regional President, APJ, ME&A, IFS said, "We are delighted to have our existing Global Platinum Partner, Tech Mahindra as the exclusive distributor for IFS in India. With strong delivery capacity in IFS's key industries as well as being a leading Global Systems Integrator, we are confident that Tech Mahindra will continue to deliver IFS innovative solutions to our clients and support their growth aspirations."

About Tech Mahindra

Tech Mahindra offers innovative and customer-centric digital experiences, enabling enterprises, associates, and society to Rise for a more equal world, future readiness, and value creation. It is a USD 6.5+ billion organization with 148k+ professionals across 90 countries helping 1250+ global customers, including Fortune 500 companies. It is focused on leveraging next-generation technologies including 5G, Metaverse, Blockchain, Quantum Computing, Cybersecurity, Artificial Intelligence, and more, to enable end-to-end digital transformation for global customers. It is the only Indian company in the world to receive the HRH The Prince of Wales' Terra Carta Seal for its commitment to creating a sustainable future. It is the fastest growing brand globally in 'brand value rank' and among the top 7 IT brands globally in brand strength with AA+ rating. With its NXT.NOW™ framework, Tech Mahindra aims to enhance 'Human Centric Experience' for its ecosystem and drive collaborative disruption with synergies arising from a robust portfolio of companies. It aims at delivering tomorrow's experiences today and believes that the 'Future is Now'.

Tech Mahindra is part of the Mahindra Group, founded in 1945, one of the largest and most admired multinational federation of companies with 260,000 employees in over 100 countries. It enjoys a leadership position in farm equipment, utility vehicles, information technology, and financial services in India and is the world's largest tractor company by volume. It has a strong presence in renewable energy, agriculture, logistics, hospitality, and real estate. The Mahindra Group has a clear focus on leading ESG globally, enabling rural prosperity and enhancing urban living, with a goal to drive positive change in the lives of communities and stakeholders to enable them to Rise.

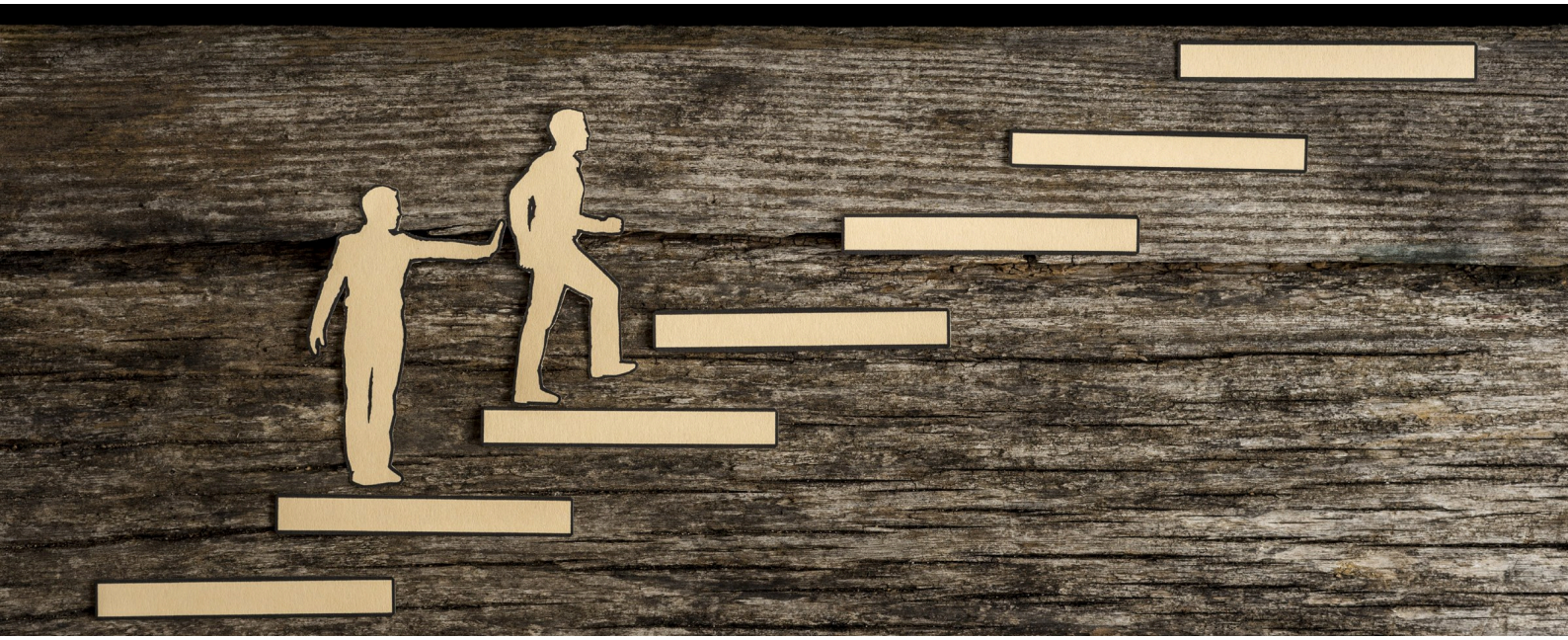
Connect with us on www.techmahindra.com

For more information on Tech Mahindra, please contact:
Abhilasha Gupta, Global Corporate Communications and Public Affairs
Email: Abhilasha.Gupta@TechMahindra.com; media.relations@techmahindra.com

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 over 5,500 employees every day live our values of agility, trustworthiness and collaboration in how we support our thousands of customers. Learn more about how our enterprise software solutions can help your business today at ifs.com.

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QAD Redzone is Front Runner in LNS Research Connected Frontline Workforce Applications Solution Selection Matrix

Company recognized for rapid growth, product innovation and customer results

QAD Redzone, a leading connected workforce technology solution, announced that it has been recognized by LNS Research as a Front Runner in its Connected Frontline Workforce (CFW) Applications Solution Selection Matrix (SSM). The company secured this prestigious placement for its rapid market expansion and product innovation.

"LNS Research is a leading industry research authority in industrial technology, and we are honored to be recognized as a Front Runner in their latest report," said Ken Fisher, SVP Product & Solutions at QAD Redzone. "On average, our customers achieve a 29% increase in labor productivity, 74% more employee engagement, and a 32%

reduction in employee turnover in the first 90 days. QAD Redzone is the #1 Connected Workforce Solution in the space with the largest customer base (over 1,000 plants), the most users (over 350,000), the highest customer satisfaction (NPS score of 68), and the highest rating on both G2 and Capterra."

According to the research, QAD Redzone emphasizes a flexible platform with highly productized and repeatable solutions that do not need heavy IT or OT technology to improve productivity and engagement. The offering provides many out-of-the-box workflows with a tailored cloud within one week to improve time to value.

The LNS Research CFW SSM QAD Redzone Vendor Profile states: "The company's Connected Frontline Workforce Solution is an application suite providing workflow integration to the frontline to address labor shortages, worker burnout, and supply chain disruptions." The LNS Research 3P Evaluation Model, used to qualitatively position vendors and develop composite scoring, noted, "Future improvements include providing multiple plants with a common cloud for multi-site analytics and access to anonymized data to allow customers to benchmark across the QAD Redzone customer base." Learn more about the evaluation methodology of CFW Application Vendors conducted by LNS Research ***here***.

Download a complimentary copy of the LNS Research CFW Report ***here.***

Additional resources:

- ***Download*** Redzone's 2023 Productivity Benchmark Report
- Explore QAD Redzone on this ***blog***
- Follow QAD Redzone on *LinkedIn* and *Twitter*

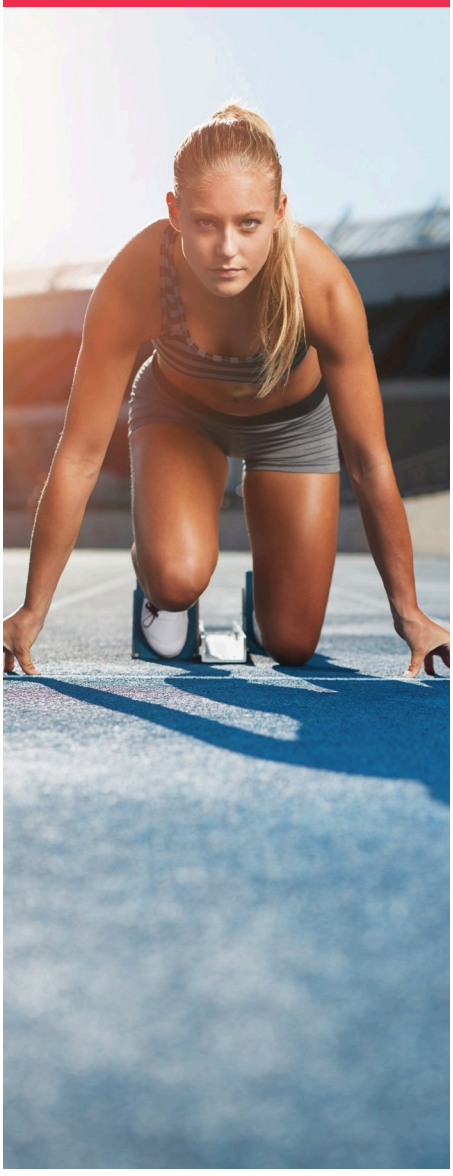
About LNS Research

LNS Research provides research and advisory services to guide industrial companies through digital transformations. The firm's research focuses on how digital technology drives transformations across the value chain and offers insights into the people, processes, and technologies required for achieving Operational Excellence. The firm's publications include quantitative research on trends and best practices, as well as Solution Selection Guides. The company's research analysts work with industrial companies, including manufacturers in discrete, batch, and process industries, to minimize risks associated with alignment, time, and cost in Industrial Transformation, from assessing readiness through solution selection and deployment. This work uses proven methodologies to drive convergence between IT and operations teams, and to empower team leaders to achieve goals and time-to-value, quickly and confidently.

All entries in the LNS Research Connected Frontline Workforce Applications Solution Selection Matrix represent the opinions of the authors based on their industry experience and their view of the information collected using the methods described in the LNS Research Integrity Policy. LNS Research and the Solution Selection Matrix are trademarks of LNS Research.

About QAD Redzone

As the #1 connected workforce solution in manufacturing, QAD Redzone enables frontline teams to contribute their full potential, elevating the frontline with new technology to achieve company goals around productivity and throughput. Today, hundreds of thousands of frontline workers are valued, celebrated, and working with purpose, creating stronger communities inside and outside their plants. With customers both big and small, Redzone is helping more than 1,000 plants worldwide achieve remarkable productivity gains in just 90 days. For more information, visit www.rzsoftware.com.





Rootstock Software to Showcase Salesforce Thought Leaders and Enterprise Solutions at 2023 Rooted-In Manufacturing

Spotlight on how Salesforce Manufacturing Cloud engages with Rootstock Manufacturing ERP to deliver value at the speed of need for manufacturers

Rootstock Software, a recognized leader in the Manufacturing Cloud ERP space, is delighted to welcome Salesforce executives as featured thought leaders and keynote speakers at the *Rooted-In Manufacturing Conference* in New Orleans, March 25-27. This premier manufacturing ERP event will bring together mutual customers and partners, ERP and CRM users, technology experts, thought leaders, and professionals across the manufacturing industry.

"Since *Rootstock Manufacturing ERP* is built on the *Salesforce Platform*, our companies have been long-time partners working together to understand and meet the needs of manufacturers," said *Matt Wolf*, SVP of Global Alliances at Rootstock Software. "Salesforce has revolutionized the way manufacturers are able to engage with customers, suppliers, and other stakeholders. In addition, the industry expertise offered by Salesforce's Manufacturing, Automotive, and Energy (MAE) division will elevate the overall thought leadership at our event."

On the first day of Rooted-In, *Achyut Jajoo*, SVP and GM, Manufacturing and Automotive at Salesforce, and *Adam Alfano*, SVP, Manufacturing, Auto, and Energy at Salesforce will deliver a keynote on how manufacturers are continuing to digitally connect and transform their operations—from the frontend to the backend

of their enterprises. They'll discuss how *Manufacturing Cloud*, *Sales Cloud*, and *Service Cloud*—together with *Rootstock Cloud ERP*—can empower manufacturers to increase automation, build a comprehensive *Signal Chain*, and optimally utilize business intelligence—all while scaling for growth and defining a competitive edge.

"We're excited to be participating in Rooted-In and to connect with attendees on the ground to learn more about their visions for the future and what the biggest challenges are to getting there," said Jajoo. "We're also looking forward to sharing our latest innovations, including generative AI with Einstein GPT, and other AI capabilities, such as Einstein Discovery, that will help power the next revolution in manufacturing."

The second day of Rooted-In will launch with a keynote from *Vala Afshar*, Chief Digital Evangelist at Salesforce, delivering a presentation alongside Rootstock Chief Product Officer *Raj Badarinath*. The session will focus on how companies are "Accelerating Value with the Power of Salesforce."

"In today's fast-paced and ever-changing landscape, manufacturers must remain agile and responsive to customer needs and market changes," said Afshar. "Those using the Salesforce Platform have a major advantage in being able to unlock an unparalleled level of value at the speed of need. Research shows thoughtful design helps to streamline processes, enhance user experience, and optimize overall performance."

The "Rooted-In Manufacturing" theme underscores the core values and foundational principles that drive the manufacturing industry forward. The event acknowledges the historical significance of manufacturing, while also embracing the new technologies and innovative strategies redefining the industry's future.

For more information about the 2023 Rooted-In Manufacturing Conference, including the speakers, conference agenda, and registration details, please visit the official conference website at *https://rootedin.rootstock.com/.*

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About Rootstock

Rootstock Software provides the leading Manufacturing Cloud ERP, which empowers hundreds of manufacturers to turbocharge their operations in today's dynamic, post-pandemic world. Natively built on the Salesforce Platform, Rootstock delivers a futureproof solution. With it, manufacturers gain the agility to continually transform their businesses to meet evolving customer needs, navigate emerging challenges, and accelerate success. In addition, the "connectability" of Rootstock Cloud ERP gives manufacturers 360° visibility to collaborate with suppliers, trading partners, and the broader value chain. As Rootstock continues to grow, stay tuned to the company's latest customers, career opportunities, and LinkedIn posts.





Aptean Expands ERP Capabilities for Manufacturers and Distributors in Germany through the Acquisition of trend SWM

Aptean, a global provider of mission-critical enterprise software solutions, announced its acquisition of trend SWM, an enterprise resource planning (ERP) software provider to manufacturers and distributors in Germany, including manufacturers of paint, chemicals, cosmetics and plastics.

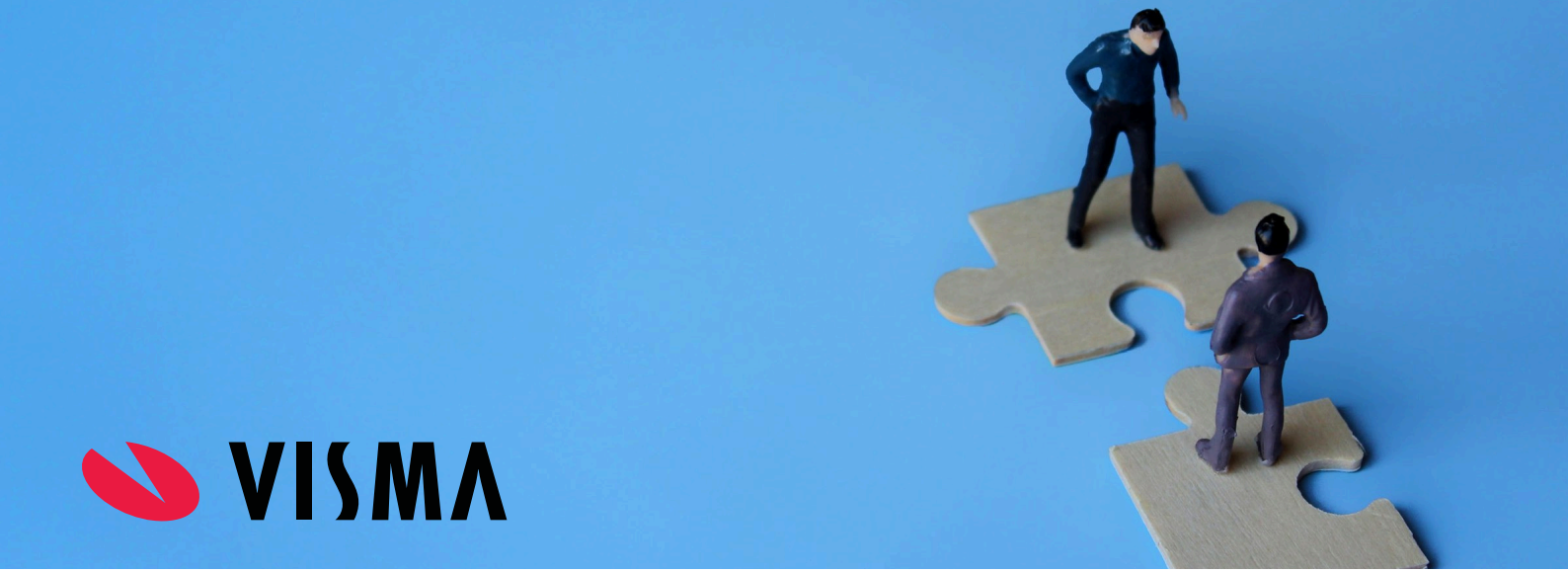
trend SWM was founded in 1989 and is headquartered in Freiburg, Germany. trend SWM's modular, flexible ERP solution includes industry-specific features such as batch management and recipe management to support process manufacturers; as well as packaging and warehouse management functionality to support wholesalers and distributors, and additional features to meet the specific requirements of automotive distributors. trend SWM's software can be deployed on-premise or in the cloud and is supported by a dedicated team of experts who follow the customer's journey from implementation through to execution and beyond. The addition of trend SWM will enhance Aptean's ability to serve mid-sized manufacturers and distributors in Germany.

"trend SWM's team of talented professionals shares Aptean's commitment to innovation and our passion for delivering an exceptional customer experience," said Oliver Dahlhaus, GM, DACH, at Aptean. "We're pleased to add trend SWM to our ERP capabilities to support manufacturers and distributors in Germany."

"Aptean and trend SWM share a common mission to deliver flexible, integrated solutions that are purpose built to meet the unique needs of our customers," said Peter Müller, GM at trend SWM. "We are excited to go forward together and accelerate our growth across the region."

About trend SWM

trend SWM is a provider of enterprise resource planning software designed to meet the specific needs of modern, mid-sized manufacturers and distributors, including paint, chemicals, plastics and cosmetics manufacturers. For over 30 years, trend SWM has delivered its solutions with the added support of a service model that aligns each customer with a dedicated contact for the entire customer lifecycle. To learn more visit: www.trendswm.de.



Visma acquires public software provider ACOS

Visma has entered into an agreement to buy ACOS, a supplier of digital solutions to the public sector.

ACOS offers cloud software solutions for document processing and archive systems, CMS systems, as well as workflow management. The solutions can be used separately, or linked together to form a unique overall concept.

Its customer list includes most Norwegian municipalities and ministries, as well as a number of supervisory authorities and directorates, in addition to several private organisations.

Now ACOS will become part of Visma, Europe's leading supplier of mission-critical software.

"We are impressed by the position ACOS has built over time, based on first-class competence and products developed in close dialogue with users. The company's solutions perfectly complement Visma's existing offering to the public sector, and we look forward to growing and developing further together", says Kasper Lyhr, Public Segment Director in Visma.

A new chapter

ACOS will continue to operate as an independent company, under the same management.

"We are looking forward to a new and exciting chapter in the history of ACOS, now as part of the Visma family. We are now launching our new state-of-the-art product platform, and realised that the timing was right to bring in a strategic partner which can help us reach even more customers", says Bent-Inge Storheim, managing director of ACOS.

Storheim highlights the importance of having found a partner that not only has a long-term perspective in the public sector, but can also open doors for ACOS-products in new markets.

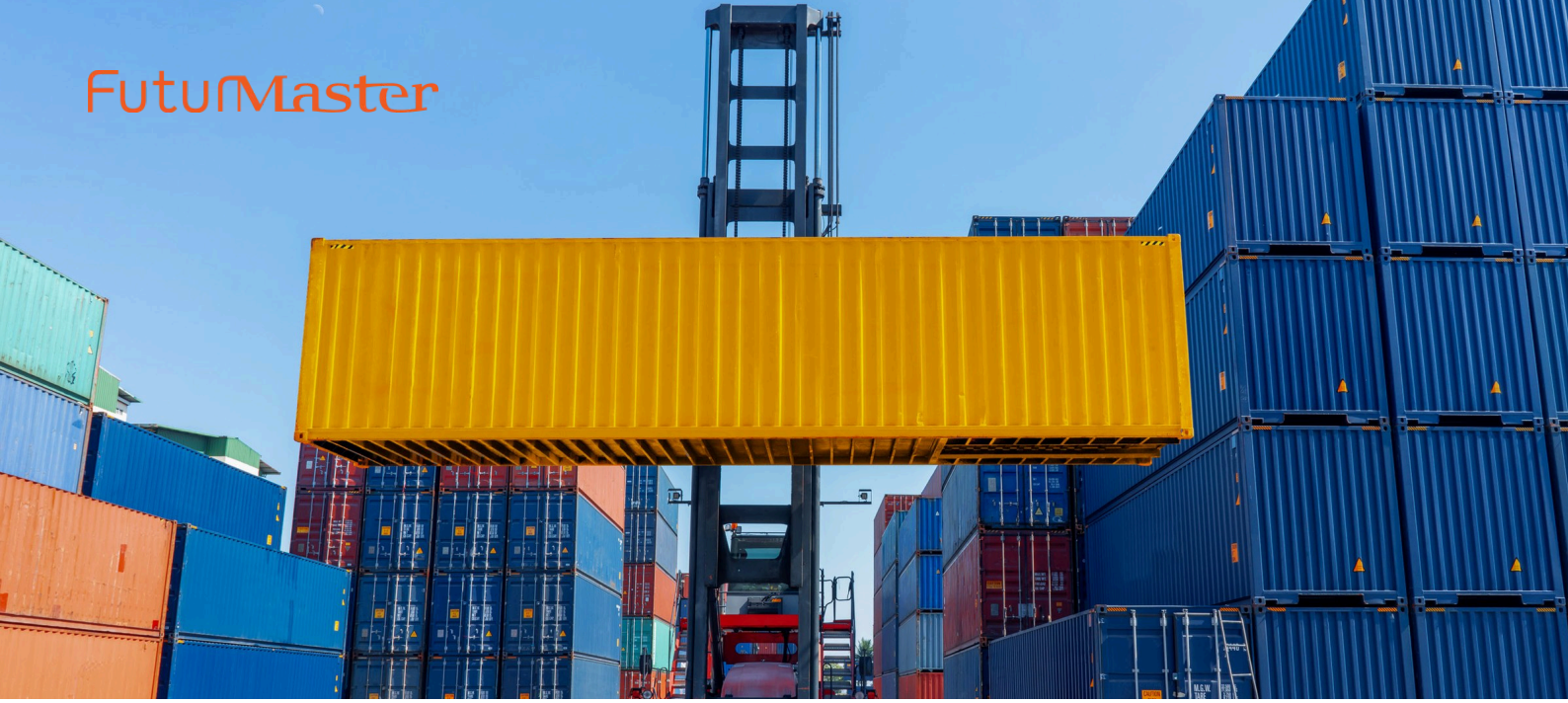
"Visma is one of Europe's leading software companies, and gives us valuable access to a larger base of resources and expertise. This is important to ensure that we can continue to deliver the best solutions going forward", says Storheim.

The acquisition is dependent on approval from the Norwegian competition authorities.

About Visma

Visma is a leading provider of mission-critical cloud software, with revenue of € 2.06 billion in 2022, 14,500 employees and 1.6 million customers across Europe and Latin America. By simplifying and automating the work of businesses and organisations of all sizes, we enable a more efficient and prosperous society. Visit us at visma.com.

Press Release from Visma



FuturMaster Empowers Digital Transformation in the Middle East and North Africa Region's Supply Chain With DFYA

FuturMaster, a market leader in Supply Chain Planning and Trade Promotion Management & Optimization (TPx) solutions, has entered into a strategic Value-Added Reseller (VAR) agreement with DFYA, an innovative player in supply chain management. This partnership aims to amplify digital transformation across the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, with DFYA selling and implementing FuturMaster's advanced solutions.

This strategic agreement unites FuturMaster's state-of-the-art solutions and industry expertise with DFYA's advanced exobrain technology, enabling rapid reach in an essential and expanding marketplace. The partnership seeks to enhance supply chain decision-making capabilities and operational efficiency across the region, particularly in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries. It aims to facilitate their journey through expansive digital transformation.

Working in alignment with Vision 2030 –Saudi Arabia's roadmap for digital and economic diversification – the FuturMaster and DFYA partnership will work to transform the region. The partnership aims to enhance the non-oil sectors of the economy while supporting the region's adaptation into a global hub connecting Asia, Europe, and Africa through the provision of innovative solutions.

"FuturMaster has always been at the forefront of turning the complexity of supply chains into competitive advantages," said Yacine Zeroual, EMEA General Manager at FuturMaster. "Our VAR agreement with DFYA solidifies our commitment to this mission, driving growth in the MENA region and equipping businesses with the advanced tools they need to excel within the framework of Vision 2030."

Amine Benmesbah, Founding Partner at DFYA, shared the enthusiasm about this partnership. “Representing FuturMaster in the MENA region is a significant step towards a technologically advanced supply chain in this area. Together, we are bringing FuturMaster’s next-generation, AI-driven solutions to the market, catalyzing the ongoing digital transformation. We’re confident that this partnership will support the region in achieving the ambitious objectives outlined in Vision 2030, and we are proud to be part of this transformative future.”

About FuturMaster

FuturMaster is a market leader in providing advanced Supply Chain Planning and Trade Promotion Management & Optimization (TPx) solutions. Serving over 600 customers across all industries, FuturMaster assists companies in unlocking the power of their supply chain by managing the inherent complexity of their industry, turning it into competitive advantages. The Bloom platform, developed by FuturMaster, integrates cutting-edge technology, data, and business expertise to provide best-fit solutions that drive agility, resilience, and optimized performance. www.futurmaster.com

About DFYA

DFYA’s mission is to shape the future of the supply chain by harnessing the power of data science, AI, and technology, combined with unique expertise in operations, decision intelligence, and low-code platforms. DFYA provides an exobrain that enhances the decision-making and execution capabilities of supply chain teams in their daily operations. By connecting your organization through your exobrain and its set of digital copilots, your organization becomes more agile with improved efficiency and sustainability. www.dfya.io




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