

What are TOP ERP TRENDS in 2024?





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EDITOR'S NOTE

In this month's edition of ERPNews Magazine, we embark on a journey into the future of Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP), exploring the top trends that will shape the landscape in 2024. As the digital realm continues to evolve, so does the way businesses strategize, implement, and leverage ERP solutions to drive growth, innovation, and efficiency.

Our editorial theme, "What are the Top ERP Trends in 2024?" serves as a compass, guiding our readers through the intricacies of emerging technologies, dynamic collaborations, and strategic visions that will define the ERP landscape in the coming year.

This edition features exclusive interviews with industry leaders who share their insights and expertise. Join us as we sit down with Josh Fischer, Director of Product Management at Acumatica, to discuss the recent collaboration between Acumatica and Shopify's B2B features, unraveling the synergies that will elevate B2B experiences.

Delve into ERP dynamics, trends, and strategic visions with Andrew Kurtz, CEO of Kopis, offering a comprehensive perspective on how businesses can navigate the evolving ERP terrain.

Gain valuable insights into Logpoint's vision for the future of ERP software as we explore the recent announcement of the Vulnerability Monitoring Analyzer with Sükrü Ilker Birakoglu, Senior Director at Logpoint.

Discover the strategic moves that Unanet is making in the ERP space with our interview featuring Craig Halliday, CEO of Unanet, shedding light on their recent acquisition of Flowtrac Software.

Explore how Population Services International (PSI) is revolutionizing healthcare with Unit4's ERPx platform as we sit down with Alan Doyle, PSI's Director of Corporate Systems.

As we unlock the stories, perspectives, and innovations shaping the future of ERP, we invite our readers to join us on this insightful journey. The world of ERP is evolving, and ERPNews Magazine is your trusted guide to staying ahead in the ever-changing landscape of enterprise technology.

Happy reading!



Pinar SENGUL, EDITOR

ERPNEWS

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How To Deploy The Most Common SAP Patches

SAP is one of the most widely-used ERP systems globally, so it makes sense that it's regularly being updated to meet businesses' evolving needs. These updates often take the form of security patches that help reduce attack surfaces.

When SAP releases new patches, the process for implementing the updates is often involved and lengthy—not like applying updates to your mobile phone (click “accept” and the rest is done for you). IT leaders and their teams need to manage the updating process, speeding it along as much as possible since patches often mean system downtime—this business disruption is best limited as much as possible. Similarly, patch installation has the potential to open up new vulnerabilities in the interim, and a misconfigured patch could create new issues or weak points in the platform post-update.

If your enterprise is running SAP, it's critical to thoroughly understand what goes into a successful update, fully plan the process, test out patches, and consider the ramifications of updates on daily operations and overall security. To help ease deployments, here are three of the most common SAP patches along with additional context on best practices for their implementation.

SNotes (aka SAP Notes)

Stability and security are the core goals of SNotes, which are generally aimed at providing a fix for a known issue or platform error. According to SAP.com, “Security notes contain information about both the affected SAP HANA application areas and specific measures that protect against the exploitation of potential weaknesses. Additional security measures are also documented here. SAP security notes are released as part of the monthly SAP Security Patch Day.”



Article by
Christoph Nagy
CEO, [SecurityBridge](#)



Quick implementation of SNotes is recommended; when a critical flaw or system vulnerability is discovered, patch deployment delays leave those vulnerabilities intact for longer. In addition, SNotes often improve the performance of SAP platforms so installing patches will help make the system run optimally, benefiting users and the company as a whole.

SNotes can also be targeted at a specific problem and can either be corrected in the SAP platform by the installation of a patch or could come via manual instructions on how to resolve an issue. These patches are released often and are grouped into Support Package stacks that focus on a specific problem or functionality issue. Special attention needs to be allocated to the name and identity number of that stack, as it specifies what version of the SAP software the patches are compatible with.

SAP Service Packs

While SNotes are more tactical in nature, targeting specific issues, service packs are larger collections of updates for particular versions of SAP software, all in one place. These are generally used to bring a system up to date that hasn't been updated in a while or that is recently deployed. Some service packs are larger than others, and some contain updates that vary in seriousness; closely review the release notes and the provided instructions to prioritize installation accordingly.

Service packs are highly intensive when it comes to deployment; you can't expect to fit them into regular business operations. The pack needs to be downloaded, and tested, and the current system prepped. Don't overlook the testing step—applying the pack elements in a non-production environment before going live will minimize risk and help identify issues before problems

hit the production system. Also recommended is backing up the SAP system before installing the service pack; that way, an installation that goes awry can be scrapped and you can reset to the backup state.

Kernel Patches

The “kernel” of SAP is the system's foundation and innermost core processes, responsible for memory management, process and task management, disk management, and much more. As such, patches are sometimes released to make the SAP platform and features work smoothly, perform better, enhance security, or address errors that are occurring in the kernel.

Kernel patches are complex and require thorough testing and planning. All of the above recommendations for the process of installing and testing patches apply here, too. There is an added caveat here that misconfiguration or sloppy installation can have a significant impact on the SAP system as a whole. Since SAP is one of the most critical pieces of software in many enterprises, that impact could be disastrous. Prepping, testing, and developing a contingency plan if the update causes disruption is highly recommended.

Conclusion

These three types of patches are the most common ones IT teams will be working with as they keep SAP platforms secure and up-to-date. Their installations are usually quite involved, so minimizing the risk of disruption should always be top-of-mind, such as making the update in off-hours, creating a backup, and utilizing a test deployment environment to ensure the installation will happen smoothly in practice.

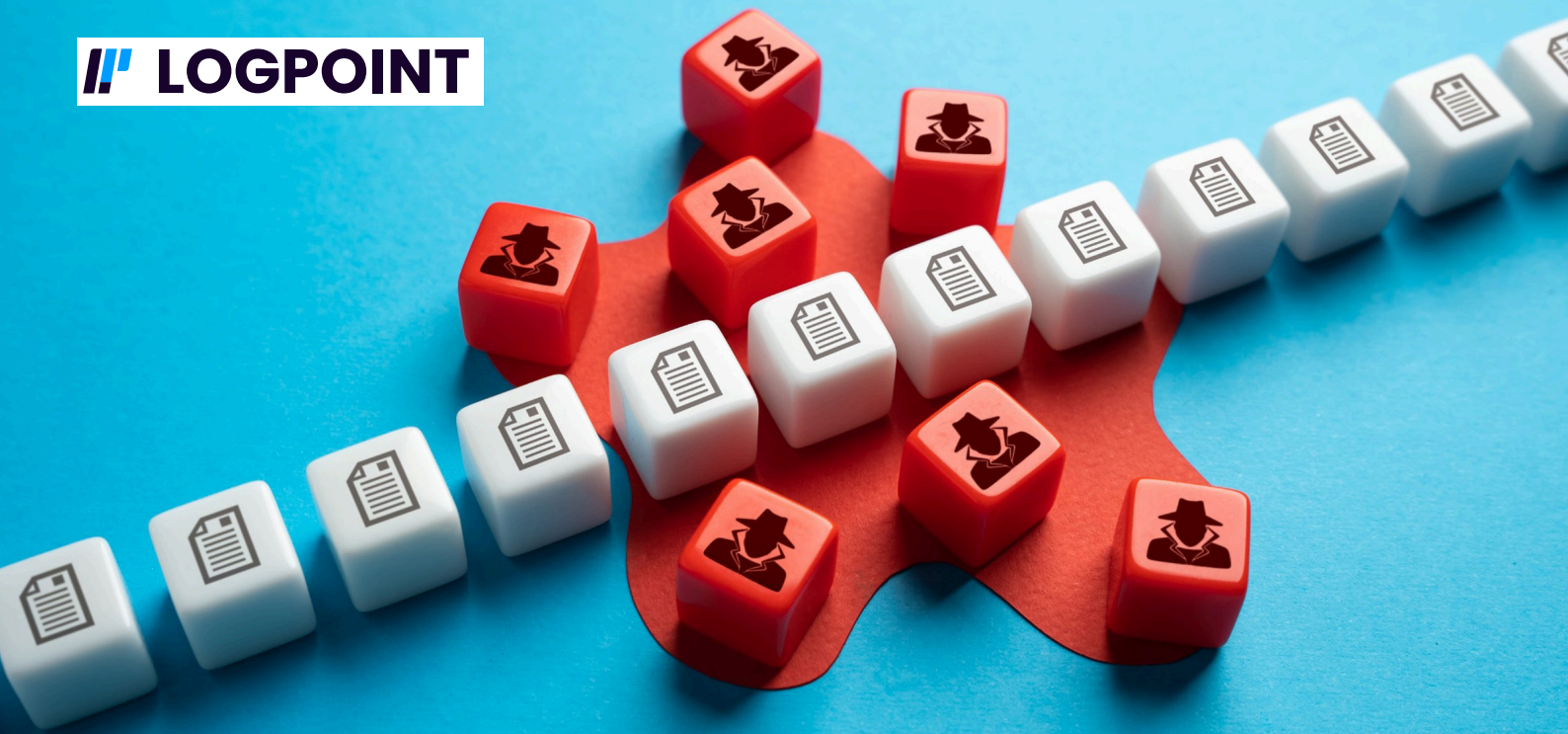
In addition, patches should be prioritized based on how critical they are to security and core business operations. Utilizing the [Common Vulnerability Scoring System \(CVSS\)](#) can help professionals determine where their focus should be in the immediate term. Taking a risk-based approach to managing SAP updates will serve an enterprise well over time—in the form of up-to-date defenses, robust product performance, and minimized operational downtime.

About Christoph Nagy

Christoph Nagy has 20 years of working experience within the SAP industry. He has utilized this knowledge as a founding member and CEO at [SecurityBridge](#)—a global SAP security provider, serving many of the world's leading brands and now operating in the U.S. Through his efforts, the SecurityBridge Platform for SAP has become renowned as a strategic security solution for automated analysis of SAP security settings, and detection of cyber-attacks in real-time. Prior to SecurityBridge, Nagy applied his skills as a SAP technology consultant at Adidas and Audi.

About Security Bridge

Real-time Intrusion Detection and Vulnerability Monitoring for SAP® applications. SecurityBridge is the first and only holistic, natively integrated security platform, addressing all aspects needed to protect organizations running SAP from internal and external threats against their core business applications. SecurityBridge's unique approach to protecting SAP NetWeaver, ABAP, and S/4HANA platforms reveal exploits, and uncovers previously unknown vulnerabilities, directing and enabling remediation before any harm is done.



Securing Tomorrow's ERP: A Conversation with Sükrü Ilker Birakoglu, Senior Director at Logpoint

In the ever-evolving landscape of cybersecurity and enterprise software, Logpoint continues to lead the charge with innovative solutions designed to fortify organizations against emerging threats. We had the privilege of engaging in a Q&A session with Sükrü Ilker Birakoglu, Senior Director at Logpoint, to delve into the recent announcement of the Vulnerability Monitoring Analyzer and to gain insights into Logpoint's vision for the future of ERP software.

Logpoint's latest offering, the Vulnerability Monitoring Analyzer, stands as a testament to their commitment to addressing critical security challenges in SAP systems. Sükrü Ilker Birakoglu shares valuable insights into how this automation tool simplifies and accelerates SAP patching processes, reinforcing cybersecurity measures against potential exploits.

As we look ahead to 2024, Sükrü Ilker Birakoglu provides a glimpse into the anticipated trends in the ERP landscape. From the integration of advanced security measures to the significance of user-centric design, Logpoint's approach aligns with the evolving needs of modern businesses.

The future of ERP software is intertwined with customization, scalability, and the integration of cutting-edge technologies. Sükrü Ilker Birakoglu sheds light on how Logpoint envisions the role of AI and automation in shaping the ERP landscape, ensuring not only efficiency but also robust cybersecurity.

Interview with
Sükrü Ilker Birakoglu
Senior Director, Logpoint

 LOGPOINT

To conclude, we explore Logpoint's long-term vision for the ERP and cybersecurity domains. Sükrü Ilker Birakoglu outlines Logpoint's commitment to staying at the forefront of innovation, providing clients with solutions that not only meet today's challenges but also anticipate and adapt to the challenges of tomorrow.

Join us in this enlightening conversation with Sükrü Ilker Birakoglu as we explore Logpoint's role in securing tomorrow's ERP landscape and shaping the future of cybersecurity.

"Logpoint Converged SIEM Platform supports monitoring of SAP S/4 HANA which are on-prem or in a private cloud. Logpoint are extending their solution for monitoring SAP S/4 HANA Solutions in the public cloud."

- 1. The latest press release highlights the release of the Vulnerability Monitoring Analyzer for Logpoint's Business-Critical Security (BCS) solutions. Could you elaborate on how this new capability enhances SAP patching processes and strengthens cybersecurity measures?**

The priority for SAP Departments is to keep SAP Systems up and running so that business processes can be executed without any problems. SAP Patching is a time consuming, and resource intensive process

and SAP Systems are down during patching. Because of these factors, SAP Departments tend to postpone patching activities, especially when it is a security related patch. With our Vulnerability Monitoring Analyzer, we are finding out missing security patches in SAP Systems and prioritizing them using the usage statistics of called components in these patches.

- 2. Manual SAP patching can be time-consuming and poses security risks. How does the Vulnerability Monitoring Analyzer address these challenges, and what benefits can organizations expect from automating the assessment of SAP patches?**

Vulnerability Monitoring Analyzer prepares a prioritised worklist of SAP Patches to be implemented for SAP Administrators. We do not provide an automated patch implementation solution now; this feature is on our future roadmap.

- 3. The release mentions that a typical SAP customer needs more than 100 days on average to install critical security corrections. How does Logpoint's Vulnerability Monitoring Analyzer contribute to reducing this timeframe and enhancing the security posture?**

VMA presents a customised and prioritised view on the criticality of SAP Patches in the system landscape of a customer. This gives SAP Admins the upper hand and they know exactly which patches are most critical for their systems and in which order they must be implemented. They do not have to wait 100 days to implement a critical security patch as they can see the criticality on dashboards within our solution.

- 4. Looking ahead to 2024, what are the top ERP trends you foresee shaping the industry, and how is Logpoint positioned to align with and leverage these trends?**

The adoption of SAP S/4HANA will surpass SAP ECC and the overall adoption of SAP S/4HANA will be higher than expected although there are migration challenges and varying rates of adoption across industries. Logpoint Converged SIEM Platform supports monitoring of SAP S/4 HANA which are on-prem or in a private cloud. Logpoint are extending their solution for monitoring SAP S/4 HANA Solutions in the public cloud.

Cloud hosting has become more popular. More and more organisations are opting for public or private cloud solutions to reduce costs and eliminate the need for hardware investments. Cloud-based SAP applications and platforms, including SAP SuccessFactors, SAP BTP, SAP Ariba, Concur, Hybris etc. are also gaining traction. Logpoint have already built solutions for SAP SuccessFactors and SAP BTP and released them. Our solutions for SAP Ariba, Concur and Hybris are in our roadmap.

- 5. In the evolving ERP landscape, how important is the integration of robust security measures, like the Vulnerability Monitoring Analyzer, and how does it contribute to the overall ERP strategy?**

As many SAP Customers are migrating their SAP ECC Systems to SAP S/4 HANA Systems and connecting cloud based SAP Applications to their core ERP System, the SAP System landscape is becoming more complex and it is getting more challenging to apply security patches in good time. Using the Vulnerability

Monitoring Analyzer, we are able to display the weak points of these systems and help customers to prioritise implementation of critical patches. SAP Customers will need more and more such tools to monitor application security. Since infrastructure security is the vendor's responsibility when it comes to cloud-based applications, application security and data security fall on the customer.

6. User experience is increasingly crucial in technology adoption. How is Logpoint ensuring a user-friendly interface and experience in its ERP and security solutions?

Logpoint Converged SIEM Platform is designed to be user-friendly and intuitive. We are taking advantage of the Logpoint Converged SIEM Platform user interface to provide a user-friendly interface for our customers. Besides that, our SAP Security Solutions have SAP technology-based configuration user-interfaces, which gives SAP Security Experts and SAP Administrators the flexibility to work in their familiar environments.

7. As businesses demand more customized solutions, how is Logpoint addressing the need for customization and scalability in its ERP software, especially in the security domain?

Our ERP Security Solutions come with a predefined set of use-cases which are created based upon many years of experience of our teams in SAP Security / ERP Security domain. Customers can create their own use-cases based on the architecture of our platform and also use our professional services to customise their ERP System Landscape. Our solutions work for huge SAP System

Landscapes and are highly scalable due to their optimised architecture for processing millions of security events from ERP Solutions.

8. The press release emphasizes automation in SAP patching. Looking forward, how do you see AI and automation playing a role in shaping the future of ERP software, particularly in cybersecurity?

Generative AI will help in domains such as User Experience and Productivity, automation of manual tasks, business process automation and analytics and decision-making.

“Our ERP Security Solutions come with a predefined set of use-cases which are created based upon many years of experience of our teams in SAP Security / ERP Security domain. Customers can create their own use-cases based on the architecture of our platform and also use our professional services to customise their ERP System Landscape.”

In security domain, AI based threat detection, user behaviour analytics and threat response will be part of every security solution in near future.

9. Do you anticipate a growing demand for industry-specific ERP solutions, and how is Logpoint prepared to cater to the unique needs of different industries in the ERP and security space?

I anticipate a growing demand for industry-specific ERP solutions for Utilities, Oil and Gas, and Manufacturing. Logpoint solutions offer configuration and use-case sets for these industries. New use-cases can also be created upon request from our customers.

10. What is Logpoint's long-term vision in the ERP and cybersecurity domain, and how does the company plan to stay at the forefront of innovation and client success?

The Logpoint Converged SIEM platform comprises state-of-the-art SIEM, UEBA and SOAR Solutions for cybersecurity. Our aim is to extend the scope of UEBA and SOAR components for ERP Security / SAP Security Domain. Besides that, we will integrate Generative AI into all of our solution components. Logpoint's long-term vision is to be the market leader in Business-Critical Applications Security and provide a platform for security monitoring, threat detection and response for all big ERP Solutions in the market such as SAP, ORACLE, MS Dynamics and others.

 **LOGPOINT**



Revolutionizing Global Healthcare Operations: A Strategic Shift with Unit4's ERPx at PSI

Embarking on a transformative journey to address healthcare delivery challenges across multiple countries, PSI has chosen Unit4's ERPx platform as the linchpin of its strategic initiative. We delve into the key factors guiding this choice and explore how Unit4's ERPx solution is poised to reshape the landscape of healthcare management at PSI.

Unit4's ERPx solution offers a tailored approach, uniquely designed for project-based nonprofit organizations like PSI. Boasting advanced project and grant capabilities, enhanced data transparency, and comprehensive analytics, ERPx is positioned as a game-changer for accurate cost tracking, swift decision-making, and improved accountability.

In this exclusive interview, PSI executives share insights into how the adoption of Unit4's HCM, Financial Planning and Analysis, and Source to Contract solutions will revolutionize day-to-day healthcare operations. The discussion unfolds around increased data transparency, near real-time financial visibility, and the anticipated impact on managing awards and projects with greater efficiency.

PSI outlines the specific IT challenges it aims to overcome, including fragmented data structures and inefficient reporting, through the adoption of Unit4's solutions. The transition from reliance on on-premises servers to a secure, modern ERP system is expected to streamline operations, providing standardized, trackable, and auditable systems for time entry, approval, and requisition.



Interview with
[Alan Doyle](#)
Director of Corporate Systems, PSI



Anticipating the enhancement of global operational efficiency, PSI envisions the ERPx implementation offering insights into stock management, talent mapping, and streamlined bids and proposals. The interview provides a glimpse into how Unit4's solutions will contribute to PSI's strategic planning efforts, optimizing resources, and supporting growth initiatives.

Navigating the complexities of donor reporting, PSI discusses how Unit4's global solution will eliminate wait times, providing real-time financial data for accurate reporting. The critical considerations in selecting Unit4 as a partner and the strategies in place to manage the transition and ensure a smooth adoption across diverse operations are also uncovered.

As PSI looks towards the future, the organization envisions ERPx making a lasting impact, bringing increased flexibility, adaptability, and reliability. The interview concludes with PSI's commitment to delivering quality, trusted, and affordable healthcare worldwide, facilitated by the seamless integration of Unit4's transformative ERPx solution. Join us in unraveling the strategic shift poised to revolutionize global healthcare operations at PSI.

1. What were the key factors that led PSI to choose Unit4's ERPx platform for addressing its healthcare delivery challenges across multiple countries?

Unit4's ERPx solution provides PSI with the following key differentiators:

- A purpose-built solution designed for project-based nonprofit organizations.
- Advanced project and grant capabilities for accurate cost tracking and allocations.

- Enhanced data transparency, accountability, and reduced time for auditable reporting.
- Comprehensive data capture, forecasting and analytics for swift, informed decision-making.
- Increased accessibility combined with a modern interface to liberate staff time and empower colleagues to be productive, from desk to field.
- Breadth of functionality – Financials, HR, plus Supply Chain.
- User-friendly interface enabling timely application setup, training and support.

2. How does PSI anticipate that the implementation of Unit4's HCM, Financial Planning and Analysis, and Source to Contract solutions will impact the day-to-day operations of healthcare delivery and management?

The increased data transparency and access, by all staff, to the near real-time visibility of the financial picture of PSI's headquarters (HQ) and its subsidiaries and branch offices, will provide the information required to make timely decisions at PSI, and more easily and accurately manage our awards and projects.

3. Can you elaborate on the specific IT challenges, including fragmented data structures and inefficient reporting, that PSI aims to address through the adoption of Unit4's solutions?

PSI is looking forward to using only a secure, modern, accessible system as our ERP. We will no longer rely on query by example (QBE) datafiles housed on on-premises servers in 40+ countries needing to be interfaced into our core ERP system. ERPx, with its greater system controls, will provide increased financial security in our

country offices. Country offices will have a standardized, trackable and auditable time entry/approval systems as well as a standardized, trackable, auditable requisition system. PSI will be able to sunset some of our peripheral systems, such as that used for vendor invoicing, as well as our online analytical processing (OLAP) solution.

4. In what ways does PSI envision the enhancement of global operational efficiency through the implementation of Unit4's ERPx platform, and how will this benefit the overall mission of consumer-powered healthcare?

Implementation of Unit4's ERPx platform will drive operational efficiencies across multiple layers of the organization. PSI will have clear visibility on when we are likely to either stock-out on a product or have that stock expire. Our Human Resources department will have a deeper understanding of staff's talent, and where we may have skills shortages. And access to all staff information will streamline and enhance our bids and proposal process.

"ERPx, with its greater system controls, will provide increased financial security in our country offices. Country offices will have a standardized, trackable and auditable time entry/approval systems as well as a standardized, trackable, auditable requisition system."

PSI country offices will have (near) real-time visibility of their financial position (currently, they are required to wait until the following month when QBE files are processed). HQ staff will have online access to documentation supporting financial transactions, removing some complexity from audit requests. Globally, PSI staff will use a trackable, auditable, online time entry and approval system. Country staff will have an online, trackable, auditable requisition system.

5. Could you provide insights into how Unit4's solutions will contribute to PSI's strategic planning efforts, especially in terms of resource optimization and growth planning?

The capability to have all entities on the same budgeting and forecasting system will greatly aid our ability to forecast and perform scenario planning at country, regional and PSI-wide levels. PSI's for-profit business unit will understand their financial position and the profitability of their various revenue lines, enabling them to make strategic decisions around their product/service mix. Additionally, PSI can have very long lead times for its commodity purchases. A standardized online, trackable and auditable requisition and purchase order (PO) system will provide visibility into future procurements including related commitments.

6. Donor reporting requirements can be complex for global health NGOs. How does PSI expect Unit4's solutions to streamline and improve the accuracy and efficiency of meeting these reporting needs?

Unit4's global solution means that PSI staff will no longer need to wait for PSI branch offices to interface their financial files at the end of

the month in order to generate the reporting required by PSI's donors.

7. What were the critical considerations and evaluation criteria that PSI used in selecting Unit4 as the preferred partner for this significant initiative?

ERP implementations can be difficult. PSI was looking for a committed partner and believe we found one in Unit4. Unit4 has experience working with similar organizations to PSI and understands a lot of the peculiarities of working with international NGOs, such as expansive donor reporting and billing demands, project cost tracking multi-currency, multi-company, multi-lingual and multi-national requirements.

8. Implementation of new technologies often involves a learning curve. How does PSI plan to manage the transition and ensure a smooth adoption of Unit4's solutions across its diverse operations?

PSI has the advantage of having a number of staff experienced in large ERP implementation projects. Based on their advice, and the advice of industry peers who have embarked on similar transformations, PSI is proactively addressing the transition's challenges by leveraging internal change management expertise. This dedicated team will spearhead tackling the communication, training and support activities required to make this project a success.

In addition, we plan to embed our staff in the implementation team so they learn the system and acquire new skills - putting PSI in a position to be able to independently manage the system going forward.

9. As PSI looks toward the future, how does the organization envision the long-term impact of implementing Unit4's solutions on its ability to deliver quality, trusted, and affordable healthcare to consumers worldwide

We envision increased flexibility, increased adaptability and increased reliability.

The ERPx solution provides PSI with the flexibility that is required in a world of International Global Health that is changing so rapidly. The ability to quickly spin up or spin off an organization in an ERP is essential.

The modern IT architecture of ERPx providing easy interoperability will allow PSI to more easily integrate with other IT service solutions when changing business needs give rise to additional functionality needs, which may not necessarily be met gracefully by an ERP system. Only with a reliable back-end support structure can PSI continue to deliver quality, trusted and affordable healthcare to consumers worldwide.

About Alan Doyle

As Director of Corporate Systems, Alan Doyle is responsible for PSI's Constituent Management and Point-of-Sale Systems. His team develops, implements and maintains off-the-shelf as well as custom solutions.

Alan started his career consulting in the high-tech industry in Silicon Valley. After a decade, he relocated to Paris where he continued his IT career while simultaneously pursuing advanced studies.

Alan holds a Bachelor of Engineering Degree from University College Dublin, Ireland; and an MBA from HEC Paris, France. He is an active Project Management Professional (PMP).



Empowering GovCons: Unanet's Strategic Vision and the Game-Changing Flowtrac Acquisition

In an exclusive interview with Craig Halliday, CEO of Unanet, we uncover the driving force behind the pivotal acquisition of Flowtrac and how it aligns with Unanet's broader mission of meeting the evolving needs of Government Contractors (GovCons). Halliday emphasizes Unanet's customer-centric approach, where every move is designed to empower GovCon customers with innovative tools for enhanced efficiency and cost-effectiveness.

The discussion explores successful integrations, such as the collaboration with BlueHalo, shedding light on the tangible benefits experienced by GovCons. The focus is on streamlined processes, consolidated data, and the creation of an integrated digital ecosystem around Unanet's ERP solution.

Learn how the integration of Flowtrac's capabilities amplifies Unanet's value proposition for GovCons, offering strategic advantages and scalable solutions. Halliday provides insights into the company's commitment to constant refinement, ensuring tools evolve according to the expanding needs of GovCons. The conversation dives into recent solutions addressing forecasting challenges, contributing to improved efficiency, and bottom-line growth for GovCons.

As Unanet positions itself for 2024, Halliday outlines the anticipated ERP trends that will significantly impact the GovCon sector. The emphasis is on fostering

relationships, ensuring clarity, control, and compliance. Discover Unanet's role in shaping the future of ERP software on a global scale, driven by a commitment to making business easy for customers.

The interview concludes with a glimpse into Unanet's collaborative culture, aligning seamlessly with Flowtrac's ethos, and the anticipated synergies that will further strengthen Unanet's position in delivering unparalleled value to GovCons. Join us in unraveling the strategic vision and transformative moves defining Unanet's journey in the GovCon landscape.



Interview with
Craig Halliday
CEO, Unanet



1. The acquisition of Flowtrac seems pivotal. Could you share the motivation behind this move and how it aligns with Unanet's broader vision for meeting the needs of GovCons (government contractors)?

Everything we do is geared toward our customers, and the Flowtrac acquisition is no exception. By adding Flowtrac's capabilities and integrating them into our ERP solution, we are able to give our GovCon customers with manufacturing and inventory management contracts new tools to operate more efficiently and cost-effectively. These fully integrated solutions make their jobs easier. For these GovCons, staying compliant requires highly specialized and detailed specifications. So, we listened to their needs and created a one-stop-shop for them that synchronizes automating procurement, tracking government furnished property and equipment (GFP and GFE), supply chain management and other operations.

2. You've had successful integrations with GovCons like BlueHalo. Can you provide more details on the specific benefits they've experienced, particularly in terms of streamlined processes and compliance?

With Blue Halo, they had acquired more than 10 companies in less than two years, resulting in multiple disparate systems. BlueHalo was able to consolidate its data quickly by bringing all the companies onto one organized system with Unanet. The full data migration took just a few months per company, and we were able to do a lot of the work in parallel - saving BlueHalo staff hundreds of hours of implementation time and significantly shortening our total project timeline. Today, they

have enhanced visibility into and control over every aspect of their business, including subcontractors with Unanet's Subcontractor Portal and inventory with Flowtrac. They have been able to build an entire integrated digital ecosystem around our ERP solution.

"The government is increasing its investments in more resilient domestic supply chains, so there is a lot of opportunity for growth in manufacturing and logistics for GovCons."

3. How does the integration of Flowtrac's capabilities into Unanet's platform enhance the overall value proposition for GovCons, and what strategic advantages does it offer to Unanet's existing customer base?

The government is increasing its investments in more resilient domestic supply chains, so there is a lot of opportunity for growth in manufacturing and logistics for GovCons.

Unanet's acquisition of Flowtrac was a strategic move to add capabilities that will make business easier for our GovCon customers. Flowtrac's industry-leading asset, inventory, and project manufacturing capabilities on the Unanet platform allow our inventory and project manufacturing GovCons to more easily track their products by quantity, lot, and serial code, maintain company-wide visibility into inventory statuses (including zeroing in on location down to aisle,

bin and shelf), automate backorder and task assignments, and customize invoicing and billing workflows. This integration provides them with the scalable solutions they need to improve productivity and manage complex projects.

4. With the newly acquired capabilities, how does Unanet plan to invest in and refine the tools to ensure they evolve according to the expanding needs of GovCons in the future?

Our commitment to constantly refining and strengthening the tools we provide GovCon customers is unwavering. That's a big reason more government contracting firms are choosing to leave their legacy ERP solutions behind for Unanet GovCon ERP's more modern approach. We'll continue to invest not only on the development side, but also in the support behind our technology, because we only succeed if our customers succeed.

In our recent GAUGE Industry Report, we found that GovCon finance and project teams are struggling with accurate forecasting, and it is impacting their business outcomes. Not only does forecasting directly impact their bottom lines, but it also serves as a roadmap to enhance operational efficiency, resource utilization, and overall growth. So, we created new solutions to help forecast projects, identify key skill gaps, and target recruiting and retention to keep their businesses aligned for growth.

One recent GovCon customer told us they were able to improve their profit margin by 4% because Unanet GovCon ERP made them more efficient. They were able to focus their activity and attention on managing and growing our business rather than managing the actual transactions themselves.

5. You mentioned providing a “one-stop-shop” for GovCons. How does Unanet ensure that its platform meets all the diverse needs of GovCons effectively, especially upon implementation?

For 25 years now, we have worked with more than 3,700 project-driven organizations to continuously refine our solutions based on what our customers tell us they need. One thing is the same across the board – they need to implement quickly.

We have created the fastest ERP implementation process in the industry because we know ERP solutions don’t move the needle if they aren’t set up properly, aren’t adopted, and don’t offer easy access to the data people want.

Our team is there every step of the way to guide our customers through the technology integration, customizing solutions as we go. But that support doesn’t stop with implementation. Our customers can count on us to support them for the entire lifecycle of their ERP system. It’s why Unanet consistently rates highest among its peers for support and service.

6. Looking ahead to 2024, what are the top ERP trends that you anticipate will significantly impact the GovCon sector, and how is Unanet positioning itself to address these trends?

It’s all about relationships – connecting people across teams, companies, and industries. For GovCons, it’s about clarity, control, and compliance. We provide a single solution so they can easily plan, track, and manage their projects to the strictest compliance standards. At the same time, they can scale

their businesses to grow efficiently with modern automation tools that align teams. One recent customer said Unanet’s efficiencies and processes helped his organization to grow by 30% this year without having to hire additional people on their financial team.

7. GovCons expressed a desire for synchronized capabilities with accounting and project management. How does Unanet ensure that these new inventory and project manufacturing features are seamlessly integrated into GovCons’ existing workflows?

Integrating with best-in-class applications is one of our top priorities. In fact, we already had a tight integration in place with Flowtrac’s capabilities long before we acquired the company.

Managing people, projects, and financials effectively spans numerous apps, processes and teams. Lack of automation can slow down productivity and hinder collaboration. But a fully integrated ERP solution can connect all these moving parts. We eliminate roadblocks by easily connecting Unanet to the applications businesses currently use.

We carefully designed our Unanet Connect integrations marketplace to have a comprehensive library of pre-built connectors that make business easy for our customers – whether it’s data orchestration, workflow automation or improving team collaboration tools. GovCons can synchronize effortlessly across platforms using Unanet’s purpose-built ERP solution as the backbone.

8. ERP solutions often have a global impact. How does Unanet envision its role in shaping the future of ERP software on a global scale, and what considerations are made for diverse markets?

I can sum up our approach to ERP and serving the GovCon market in two words: Business easy. We want to make it easy for customers to do business with us. We want to make it easy for customers to implement and maintain the core elements of their IT infrastructure, including ERP and CRM. We want to make it easy for customers to manage their projects so they’re profitable and provide a positive outcome for their own clients. We want to make it easy for customers to incorporate technologies like AI to empower and enable their people. We want to make it easy for customers to adapt their software to their business, and not the other way around. To those ends, we are always considering new ways to evolve our solutions. The more organizations we can positively impact, the better.

9. Looking at the collaboration with Flowtrac, how do the cultures of Unanet and Flowtrac align, and what synergies do you see in delivering value to GovCons through this partnership?

During the pandemic, we successfully integrated the workforces of two acquired companies (Cosential and Clearview) with our own. It wasn’t easy, but we did it. And today, if you ask people across our company, they’ll likely tell you our culture has never been healthier. It’s cohesive, collaborative and makes coming to work a joy. With Flowtrac, we did our due diligence and we’re confident, given their own people – and customer-focused culture – that they’ll only make Unanet stronger as a company. That, I believe, bodes well for our GovCon customers.





Innovating Tomorrow: A Dialogue with Andrew Kurtz, Kopis CEO, on ERP Dynamics, Trends, and Strategic Visions

As the technological landscape continues to evolve, Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) solutions stand at the forefront of driving business growth, efficiency, and innovation. We had the privilege to engage in a Q&A session with Andrew Kurtz, the visionary CEO and President of Kopis, a technology solutions company with two decades of expertise in custom software development and ERP solutions.

In this insightful conversation, Andrew shares his perspectives on the anticipated ERP trends in 2024, delves into the future of ERP software, and sheds light on Kopis's strategic approach. With a commitment to creating solutions that empower companies and state agencies to thrive, Kopis has played a pivotal role in optimizing operations for a myriad of businesses. Join us as we explore the forefront of technology, real-world efficiency solutions, and the long-term vision of Kopis in this dynamic and transformative era.



Interview with
Andrew Kurtz
CEO, [Kopis](#)



1. In your view, what are the key ERP trends we can anticipate in 2024, and how can businesses effectively adapt to the evolving needs of the industry?

Trend: The integration of conversational interfaces and AI-driven capabilities in ERP systems will continue to grow, providing users with a more intuitive and user-friendly experience.

Adaptation: Businesses should explore and adopt ERP solutions that leverage conversational AI, enabling users to interact with the system using natural language. This shift requires investing in training and change management to familiarize users with new interfaces and workflows.

Trend: Emphasis on ERP systems becoming integral components of broader business ecosystems, fostering connectivity to other services. This evolution aims to create a seamless flow of data and insights across various business functions and external services, facilitating a more comprehensive approach to decision-making.

Adaptation: To stay ahead in 2024, companies should prioritize ERP solutions that not only provide robust analytics tools and invest in data science capabilities but also seamlessly integrate with external services and form part of a cohesive business ecosystem. This approach ensures a holistic data-driven culture within the organization, allowing for enhanced collaboration and strategic decision-making across interconnected business processes.

Trend: The trend towards cloud-based ERP deployments will persist, offering scalability, accessibility, and cost-efficiency.

Adaptation: Businesses should consider migrating or adopting cloud-based ERP solutions to benefit from flexibility, remote accessibility, and automatic updates. This shift may require a strategic IT infrastructure transition plan.

2. As technology evolves, how do you see emerging technologies, such as AI, machine learning, or blockchain, influencing the landscape of ERP solutions in the coming years?

As we delve into the influence of emerging technologies such as AI, machine learning, and blockchain on the future of ERP solutions, a pivotal aspect is the evolving landscape of the integration of these technologies. It is not just about standalone enhancements but rather leveraging them within a broader business ecosystem. The trajectory towards conversational AI, as seen in products like Microsoft Copilot, exemplifies a move towards more intuitive interfaces.

Looking ahead, mid-market ERP systems are anticipated to embrace conversational capabilities, fostering natural language queries for seamless information access and user-centric interactions. This shift, central to the ecosystem play, holds the potential to streamline workflows. The integration of blockchain technology is poised to fortify data security and integrity, instilling trust and transparency in ERP transactions and data management.

With such a dynamic landscape, the emphasis on an ecosystem approach becomes increasingly crucial, enabling businesses to not only adopt these emerging technologies but also harness their combined power for revolutionary advancements in ERP functionalities and user experiences.

3. User experience is becoming increasingly important in ERP solutions. How is Kopis addressing the demand for more user-friendly and intuitive ERP interfaces in its software development?

Rather than adhering strictly to conventional approaches within the ERP domain, we draw on our extensive pedigree in digital product development to explore creative and unconventional solutions. This mentality encourages us to challenge traditional norms and seek inspiration from diverse industries and cutting-edge technologies. By doing so, we aim to break free from the confines of traditional ERP thinking, fostering a culture of innovation that pushes the boundaries of what is possible in user interface design, functionality, and overall user experience. This approach enables us to bring a unique and dynamic element to how users interact with their systems, ensuring that our ERP solutions not only meet the functional requirements of businesses but also exceed user expectations and contribute to a truly transformative user experience.

“As we delve into the influence of emerging technologies such as AI, machine learning, and blockchain on the future of ERP solutions, a pivotal aspect is the evolving landscape of the integration of these technologies. It is not just about standalone enhancements but rather leveraging them within a broader business ecosystem.”

4. With the increasing emphasis on data security and compliance, how is Kopis incorporating robust security measures into its ERP solutions, and what steps are being taken to ensure compliance with evolving regulations?

Without a doubt, our clients are facing more security threats and compliance requirements every day. In turn, we must continually evolve to support and lead them to a risk and compliance profile that is appropriate for them. We achieve this through constant review of our data protection policies, advice on theirs, technology improvements, configuration changes, etc. We've selected a partner in Microsoft that spends an enormous amount of time and money on creating technology that can layer onto the ERP solution to offer enterprise-level protections to the midmarket.

5. Cloud-based ERP solutions have gained prominence. How does Kopis see the future of cloud-based ERP, and what advantages does this model offer to businesses in terms of scalability and accessibility?

Cloud-based ERP solutions have not only gained prominence but are poised to revolutionize how businesses operate in the future. Beyond the traditional benefits of scalability and accessibility, which remain key advantages, the true potential lies in the expansive access to ecosystems that the cloud offers.

Scalability, in this context, extends beyond the ability to adapt to changing business needs; it encompasses the potential to scale what the technology can do for businesses. Once on the cloud platform, businesses gain unprecedented access to a

diverse ecosystem of features and functionalities that can significantly enhance their operations.

Secondly, accessibility is another significant advantage. With cloud-based ERP systems, users can access the system from anywhere at any time, as long as they have an internet connection. This makes it easier for teams spread across different locations to collaborate effectively.

In terms of the future, we expect to see further advancements in cloud technology that will make cloud-based ERP solutions even more efficient and secure. This includes improvements in areas like artificial intelligence and machine learning, which can be used to automate routine tasks and provide better insights from data.

"In terms of the future, we expect to see further advancements in cloud technology that will make cloud-based ERP solutions even more efficient and secure. This includes improvements in areas like artificial intelligence and machine learning, which can be used to automate routine tasks and provide better insights from data."

As businesses increasingly recognize the benefits of cloud-based ERP solutions, we expect higher adoption rates, potentially leading to more competitive pricing and enhanced service offerings from providers. The ongoing investments in research and development by cloud providers ensure that

businesses leveraging cloud-based ERP solutions can seamlessly tap into a continuous stream of innovation without the need for substantial development efforts. The cloud, once a cost-prohibitive technology, has become more accessible than ever, democratizing ERP system adoption and paving the way for businesses to leverage the full potential of cloud-based ecosystems for transformative improvements.

6. Kopis has extensive experience in building custom software solutions. How do you see the future of ERP software in terms of customization and scalability to meet the unique needs of diverse businesses?

We are entering a convergence of Custom and Configurable with Low-Code and AI bridging the gap.

On one hand, we've long had custom solutions to make pretty much anything. The downside has been the cost of software maintenance is higher compared to an off-the-shelf system (though for many this makes sense due to the reduction of other costs).

On the other hand, we have off-the-shelf solutions that continue to add functionality and configuration ability, even customization capabilities.

With low-code and AI assistance in customization, we're moving closer to the cost of off-the-shelf. With off-the-shelf embracing low-code and AI, we're moving more towards Custom.

The platforms that can support this bridging will carry significant advantages over others and take their clients to new levels of automation.

7. Kopis is committed to creating solutions that solve real-world inefficiencies. Can you provide examples of how Kopis has successfully addressed real-world challenges through its ERP solutions, leading to improved efficiency for its clients?

Oftentimes, ERP modernization requires significant changes to existing workflows which disrupts what feels familiar. Our initial discovery process serves as a crucial platform for our clients (and prospective clients) to be heard, laying the foundation for a responsive, tailored, and client-centric approach. By comprehensively understanding client workflows and identifying bottlenecks, we are able to craft impactful solutions that address their specific needs.

With over two decades of experience, Kopis is no stranger to the real-world challenges organizations face today and has a proven track record of providing

solutions that address the unique pain points of its clients across diverse industries. Kopis has worked with state agencies to improve disjointed systems, helped small businesses grappling with manual processes and assisted Fortune 500 companies in overcoming challenges posed by siloed information and complex legacy systems.

Many organizations operate with disparate systems for different functions such as finance, human resources, CRM, and supply chain management. Integrating these various business processes into a unified platform provides a seamless flow of information across the entire organization providing critical visibility across the company. Transitioning away from manual, error-prone processes and gravitating towards automated ones improves efficiency, reduces data collection errors, and gives organizations the ability to collect real-time data and make informed decisions based on reliable information. Moreover, modern

ERP systems allow for the adoption of AI and machine learning tools to optimize production processes and reduce costs.

8. Kopis aims to enable companies and state agencies to grow better, faster, and smarter through strategic technologies. What role do you see ERP playing in the overall growth strategy for businesses in the years to come?

Our mission is to enable companies to grow better, faster, and smarter through strategic technologies, and the role of ERP systems stands out as a critical driver of overall growth strategy. ERP serves as a strategic enabler by not only optimizing day-to-day operations but also enhancing decision-making processes. As technology continues to advance, ERP's role in supporting business growth will become even more integral, offering innovation and resilience for organizations aiming to excel in their growth endeavors.



Specifically, the financial reports, including Profit and Loss (P&L), Balance Sheet, and Statement of Financial Position, represent the ultimate metrics for adherence to targets. The closer a process is to impacting these financial reports, the more critical it becomes, often requiring a more rigid approach. However, our focus is on moving automation up the process chain to everyday activities that directly impact the financial position and business objectives. By delivering efficiency and real-time visibility into these processes, ERP empowers organizations to make informed decisions that significantly improve their chances of exceeding goals. This proactive and automated approach positions ERP as a strategic asset, not just for operational optimization but as a key driver in achieving and surpassing business objectives, aligning seamlessly with our vision for companies to grow better, faster, and smarter.

9. Given Kopis's experience with a diverse range of clients, do you foresee a trend towards more industry-specific ERP solutions, and how is Kopis positioned to cater to the unique needs of various industries?

Given the evolving landscape of ERP solutions and the escalating demand for industry-specific functionality, we recognize a discernible trend towards more specialized ERP solutions tailored to the unique needs of various industries. In navigating this trend, we strategically position ourselves to deliver optimal solutions by leveraging the powerful and economical technology ecosystem provided by Microsoft's Business Central ERP platform.

This platform's modular architecture allows us to seamlessly customize and extend ERP systems with industry-specific functionalities. However, our approach doesn't

stop at the platform alone; we understand the Goldilocks zone lies in a convergence of elements. This includes having a solid foundational platform with access to a full suite of business-enabling technology, low-code, and AI capabilities. Moreover, a vibrant ecosystem of purpose-built tools for specific industries further enhances the tailored approach.

Our commitment extends to partnering with industry experts who possess in-depth knowledge of verticals. These partners have developed best practices and adaptations for unique scenarios within each industry. Through this strategic alignment, we can provide agile and scalable ERP solutions that not only meet current industry-specific requirements but also establish a flexible foundation for sustained growth and adaptability within the dynamic business environment. This convergence approach enables the application of low-code and AI to the last mile more efficiently than ever, ensuring cost-effectiveness and innovation for our clients.

10. Looking ahead, what is Kopis's long-term vision for its role in the ERP and tech solutions space, and how does the company plan to stay at the forefront of innovation and client success?

Kopis sees itself as a strategic advisor to clients wishing to utilize digital technology to improve their business. Whether the right technology is ERP, AI, or Low-Code, we can help first understand the business value and collaborate on a path to utilizing the right technologies to solve the right problems. In this model, the technology will always evolve. Our job is to be curious and thoughtful in our research so that we can apply our learning to give clients the ability to achieve their goals.

"Given the evolving landscape of ERP solutions and the escalating demand for industry-specific functionality, we recognize a discernible trend towards more specialized ERP solutions tailored to the unique needs of various industries. In navigating this trend, we strategically position ourselves to deliver optimal solutions by leveraging the powerful and economical technology ecosystem provided by Microsoft's Business Central ERP platform."

About Andrew Kurtz

In 1999, Andrew Kurtz founded Kopis, serving as President and CEO since that time and, together with his team, has successfully delivered solutions for firms, from startups to Fortune 500 companies. Kopis specializes in custom software development, Business Intelligence solutions, application development, DBA services and ERP solutions for rapid-growth organizations whose growth typically outpaces their legacy systems and the ability to support and innovate their technologies. In 2022, Kopis acquired Intelice, a Managed Service Provider (MSP), that specializes in cloud and on-premise ERP services that utilize the Microsoft Dynamics 365 Business Central/NAV platform.

About Kopis

[Kopis](#), based in Greenville, S.C., has 20 years of experience building custom software and tech solutions in the app development and ERP spaces. Kopis is committed to creating solutions that enable companies and state agencies to grow better, faster and smarter through strategic technologies that solve real-world inefficiencies that hamper growth. Kopis has worked with hundreds of companies to make them run better and achieve sustainable scalability.

Elevating B2B Experiences: An Insightful Discussion with Josh Fischer, Director of Product Management at Acumatica

In the dynamic realm where technology and commerce converge, the recent collaboration between Acumatica and Shopify's B2B commerce capabilities marks a significant milestone. As businesses increasingly seek seamless solutions to manage their omnichannel sales experiences, Acumatica's integration emerges as a pioneering answer.

We had the privilege of sitting down with Josh Fischer, Director of Product Management at Acumatica, to delve into the intricacies of this groundbreaking integration. Join us in this exclusive conversation as we explore the driving forces behind this strategic partnership, the key features enhancing B2B functionality, and the broader implications for businesses navigating the ever-evolving landscape of digital commerce.

1. Can you provide more insight into the decision to integrate Acumatica with Shopify's B2B commerce capabilities? What were the key driving factors behind this collaboration?

a. Integrating Acumatica with Shopify's B2B commerce capabilities was driven by a strategic vision to empower businesses with a comprehensive and streamlined business management solution. Responding to customers' needs drove this collaboration – particularly

addressing the increasing demand for robust B2B e-commerce capabilities. Shopify has a strong position in the market and is known for its intuitive interface and rapidly evolving solution. By adding B2B capabilities in a cost-effective and approachable manner, they are filling a demand that has existed for over a decade. The integration leverages Acumatica's robust ERP functionality, combined with Shopify's proven B2B features, to create a powerful unified platform to offer buyers an exceptional buying experience and sellers an optimized sales process and back-office workflow.



Interview with
Josh Fischer
Director of Product Management,
Retail, [Acumatica](#)

2. How does the integration directly address the needs of businesses relying on various channels for customer interaction and sales? What advantages does it offer in terms of managing the whole omnichannel sales experience?

a. All business buyers are consumers at heart. They've learned that buying the products they need for their personal life can be easy and performed on a variety of platforms and channels. When they go to work, they want their business buying processes to be as easy and seamless. Shopify has answered these sales strategy challenges with its own e-commerce solutions, POS, and supporting sales on popular marketplaces such as Walmart and eBay. By seamlessly connecting Acumatica with Shopify's B2B capabilities as well as all other Shopify solutions, businesses gain a competitive advantage by offering their buyers a full omnichannel sales experience. Regardless of where those orders happen, they will flow into Acumatica seamlessly for an efficient order fulfillment process, inventory management and customer order status notifications. Providing buyers the opportunity to interact across various channels improves customer satisfaction and operational efficiency. It's a win-win situation.

3. Could you elaborate on the key features incorporated into the integration, such as customer hierarchies and price lists for B2B buyers? How do these features enhance the overall functionality of businesses?

a. The integration introduces support for key features such as customer hierarchies and price lists tailored for B2B buyers. Customer hierarchies allow businesses to establish and maintain complex business relationships with their

clientele, facilitating personalized service and targeted marketing. Business buyers are structured under a particular company, and all purchases by buyers must roll up to that company.

"The integration leverages Acumatica's robust ERP functionality, combined with Shopify's proven B2B features, to create a powerful unified platform to offer buyers an exceptional buying experience and sellers an optimized sales process and back-office workflow."

The company is the customer. If we treated all buyers as individuals, the merchant would lose touch with the purchase history, financial metrics and buying behaviors of the business customers. Customized price lists for B2B buyers enable flexible pricing strategies, catering to different customer segments and enhancing overall functionality for businesses by providing them with tools to optimize their pricing and offerings. Shopify built their B2B solution to be flexible, as every business has a unique B2B pricing structure. Acumatica naturally offers these same features, so mapping the two supports both the sellers' complex pricing strategies while providing buyers with a personalized and accurate buying experience. Additional features include inventory availability tracking, visibility into multiple warehouses, product information management and embedded integrations with leading shipping solutions – both standard carriers and LTL.

4. In what ways does this collaboration with Shopify simplify the process for manufacturers and distributors aiming to expand their market reach by selling across multiple platforms?

a. Manufacturers and distributors are rarely "front office" experts. For example, they don't spend much time analyzing the customer's digital buying journey or how to help digital buyers find the products they need as quickly as possible through faceted search and site search. They are masters of logistics, not engagement in the digital landscape. By integrating Acumatica with Shopify's B2B features, businesses can provide buyers with an outstanding buyer experience while seamlessly managing their operations, inventory and order fulfillment on a centralized and unified platform. This simplification enhances efficiency and reduces the complexity associated with omnichannel sales, allowing manufacturers and distributors to focus on expanding their market reach and ability to confidently sell their goods across multiple channels.

5. You have mentioned the importance of a comprehensive tool for managing the entire B2B omnichannel sales experience. How does the integration fulfill this need for businesses using online sales and backend fulfillment capabilities?

a. The integration caters to businesses using both online sales and backend fulfillment capabilities by providing a single tool that does both. From order processing to inventory management and customer interactions, the integration ensures a seamless flow of information and operations for B2B companies looking to offer direct-to-consumer

(DTC) experiences to their buyers. This unified approach enhances visibility and control over the entire sales process, allowing businesses to deliver a consistent and unique experience tailored to their specific customers.

6. The integration was launched with the 2023 R2 product update. Can you highlight some of the key aspects and improvements introduced in this update that businesses should be aware of?

a. The [2023 R2 product update](#) introduced several key aspects and improvements to Acumatica's product. With this product update, Acumatica launched Acumatica Payments, an integrated payment processing solution that enables businesses to enhance cash flow and streamline payment processes with credit card and ACH processing. By offering improved reconciliation, mobile payments, click-to-pay and gift card transactions, this feature empowers users to take control of their business transactions.

7. Research indicates a growing demand for e-commerce capabilities in industries beyond retail. How does Acumatica's integration with Shopify cater to this rising demand, especially for manufacturers and distributors?

a. It's truly an interesting time in business as the lines between retail, manufacturing and distribution are becoming very blurry. Modern businesses must participate in all these disciplines to serve modern customers. Acumatica's integration with Shopify responds to these growing changes, particularly in industries such as manufacturing and distribution that are increasingly

interested in identifying ways to directly engage with their target audience. The collaboration equips manufacturers and distributors with the tools needed to navigate the complexities of B2B commerce, providing a flexible and scalable solution that can be tailored to the unique requirements of diverse but blending industries.

8. Considering the evolving expectations of B2B buyers, how does the integration contribute to providing direct-to-consumer-like experiences for businesses interacting with their suppliers?

a. For these businesses, the Acumatica-Shopify integration fosters transparency, efficiency and collaboration for B2B organizations. With features like customer hierarchies and customizable price lists, businesses can tailor their interactions with suppliers, ensuring a personalized and efficient procurement process. This approach aligns with the evolving expectations of B2B buyers, who increasingly seek seamless and user-friendly experiences akin to those found in the consumer space.

9. Looking ahead, what developments or enhancements can users expect from the ongoing collaboration between Acumatica and Shopify in terms of B2B commerce capabilities?

a. Our two teams continue to align our roadmaps to solve the existing and coming needs of these merchants. Our solutions are designed around the input and feedback of the businesses in these industries, but we also continue to collaborate on innovative solutions that solve challenges we foresee surfacing in the coming years.

On the horizon, users can expect ongoing improvement from the collaboration between Acumatica and Shopify regarding the platforms' B2B commerce features. An example of this is multi-channel management improvements. We have joint customers deploying dozens or even hundreds of uniquely branded websites catering to niche audiences across B2B and DTC. We are contemplating what is needed to make it easier for merchants to route products to the appropriate sites and alter inventory levels based on each site's specific demand while processing and organizing incoming orders based on the expectations of the different buyers. These continuous updates to improve functionality, address emerging industry trends and incorporate feedback provided by Acumatica users is how we intend to continue offering a strong solution to the market. The collaboration aims to stay at the forefront of innovation in B2B e-commerce, ensuring businesses can consistently leverage the latest tools and features to enhance their operations and remain competitive.



About Josh Fischer

Josh Fischer is the Director of Product Management, Retail Edition at Acumatica, where he connects with mid-market retail organizations to empower them to improve efficiencies and scale their business. Josh is a creative and entrepreneurial leader with more than 14 years of experience working in the technology, marketing, design and professional services industry.



Why Your AI/ML Investments Need to Consider Your Supply Chain Maturity Journey

The challenges faced by supply chain professionals today are unlike anything we've seen before. Complex networks of suppliers, packagers, and logistics providers must navigate a "perfect storm" of market conditions that demand increased speed and responsiveness—and many organizations are looking to advanced technology such as artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML) to enable more agile operations.

The temptation to leap into the world of AI/ML can be alluring. According to IBM, "[Forty-six percent of supply chain executives](#) anticipate that AI/cognitive computing and cloud applications will be their greatest areas of investment in digital operations over the next three years."

Although most manufacturers would agree that technological modernization and adaptation are necessary in today's market, the question that looms large is where to prioritize time and financial investment. AI and ML applications promise transformative advantages, but they may not be the optimal starting point for many supply chains, particularly those that are still struggling with a fundamental understanding of their digital supply chain maturity.

This understanding—the honest self-evaluation of your enterprise's digital capabilities as well as those of your supply chain network—is critical to establishing the foundation for a digitally connected ecosystem that can effectively leverage AI/ML. Without addressing this fundamental question, the integration of advanced technologies like AI and ML can be akin to building a skyscraper on a shaky foundation.



Article by
Christine Barnhart
Chief Marketing and Industry
Officer, Nulogy



Article by Christine Barnhart

The 4 Cs of Digital Supply Chain Maturity

The proper foundation for technological investment lies in identifying your organization's position on the maturity curve for supply chain digitalization. This digitalization maturity curve represents the strategy and best practices of building data, automation, connectivity, robust processes, and intelligence into a manufacturing supply chain network.

“Digitalization enables both internal teams and external partners to work more effectively together by having the collaboration capabilities to react quickly to the real-time insights being generated through shared data and processes.”

We have seen time again that as manufacturing enterprises mature technologically, they must correspondingly increase their investments in both integration and collaboration within the enterprise's four walls: between facilities, business units and divisions. While this step is a necessary improvement, it is incremental at best, and does not account for value derived from multi-party orchestration.

As companies progress along the maturity curve, their focus shifts from internal digitalization and synchronization to investing with

their trading partners to ensure data visibility, collaboration and cooperation—network optimization that benefits all parties.

Simply put—supply chain digitalization focuses on developing digital capabilities within the organization's four walls first, then focuses outward on evolving connective capabilities within the external ecosystem of partners.

We often describe this process as the “4 Cs”:

Capture: Focus on capturing clean, real-time operational data on the production floors of the manufacturing supply base, including co-packers, co-mans, ingredient and raw materials along with transactional data. Digitalization strategies for an entire manufacturing supply chain ecosystem rely on accurate data that can be trusted—and that trust needs to begin at the source of the data.

Connect: Once the source of data is in place, digitally connect to your trading partners so that data can be shared in real-time. Doing so enables all parties to react and respond with greater speed and accuracy.

Collaborate: By aligning on a single source of truth for data and communication, collaboration becomes easier and comes with less friction. Digitalization enables both internal teams and external partners to work more effectively together by having the collaboration capabilities to react quickly to the real-time insights being generated through shared data and processes..

Cognition: Once the foundations for internal and external data flow are in place, alignment on business processes have been established, as well as the capabilities for

dynamic, high-fidelity collaboration are embedded, you will be well-positioned to leverage machine learning and data science to drive intelligent decision-making and continuous improvement. Here is where you can go faster and smarter by leveraging AI/ML.

“Once the foundations for internal and external data flow are in place, alignment on business processes have been established, as well as the capabilities for dynamic, high-fidelity collaboration are embedded, you will be well-positioned to leverage machine learning and data science to drive intelligent decision-making and continuous improvement.”

The Value of Multi-Enterprise Collaboration Solutions

Multi-enterprise collaboration solutions offer a pathway to progress in your digital supply chain maturity journey. These solutions can address digitalization barriers in your external supply chain network, such as:

- Capturing real-time data that is efficient and scalable and with reduced latency;
- Creating visibility by shedding light into the black box of your external partners' production and capacity;
- Ensure aligned truth by breaking down and/or eliminating data silos that exist between parties and functions;
- Applying proven, best practices and process improvements

- Enabling collaboration by removing inefficiencies stemming from off-platform and disconnected interactions; and
- Increasing intelligence by facilitating multi-party synchronization, orchestration, and distributed intelligence.

The journey toward a more technologically advanced supply chain begins with shoring up the basics. The promise of AI and ML is enticing, but the foundation must come first. By focusing on the 4 Cs—Capture, Connect, Collaborate, and Cognition—you lay the fundamental groundwork for successfully implementing a digital transformation strategy for your enterprise and external network.

Other frameworks that provide directional guidance in your journey toward supply chain maturity can be found from organizations like the Association for Supply Chain Management (ASCM) and Gartner. All point to the same conclusion—if you don't follow these steps in supply chain maturity, and leapfrog to the final steps without a solid

foundation, you risk going faster, but not truly smarter, which could actually result in wasting more money and dissatisfying both your organization and your customers.

Don't fall for the buzzwords and the hype. Focus on where your enterprise stands in its supply chain maturity journey (including the 4 Cs!) and build the foundation that will lead to success for both you and your supply chain partners.

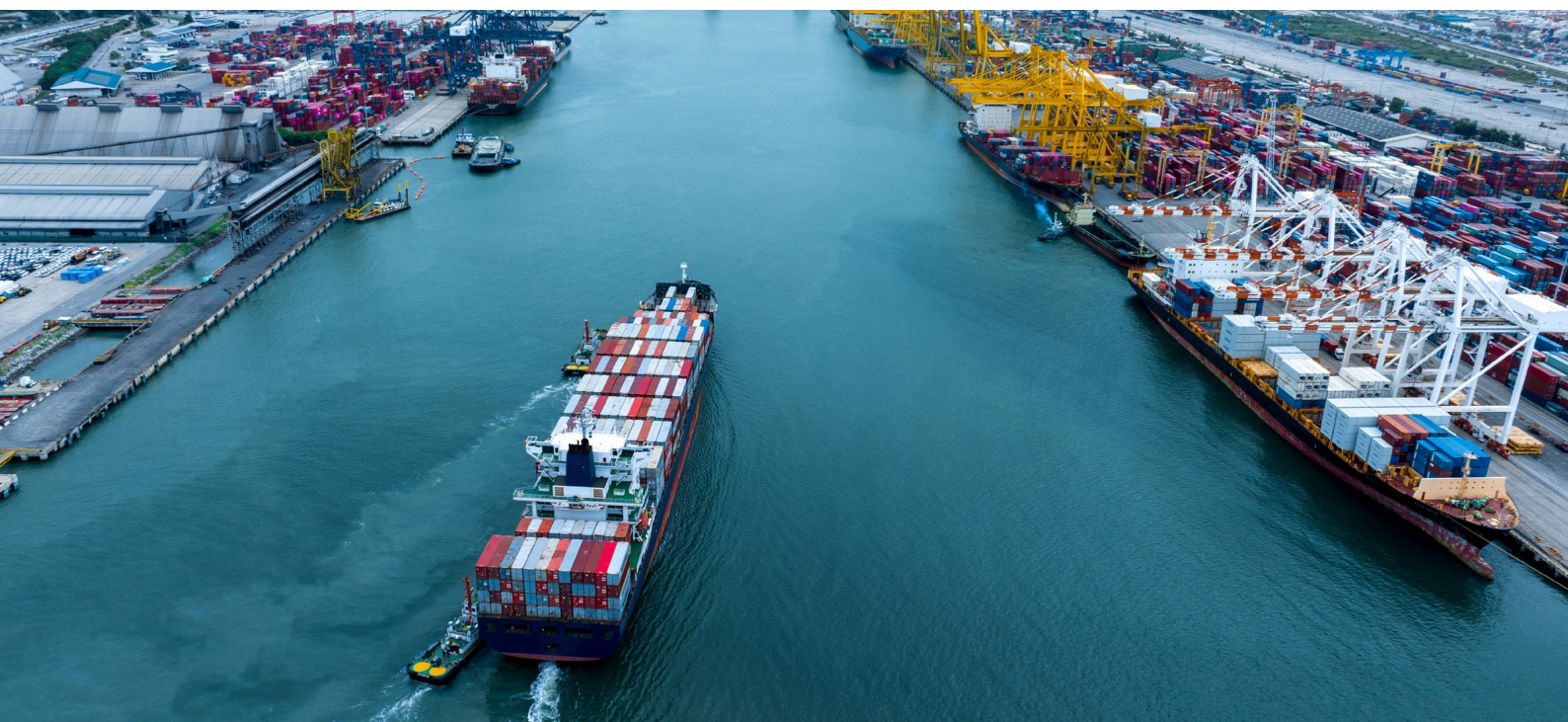


About Nulogy

Nulogy is the market leader in synchronizing the extended supply chain network, having pioneered the new digital era for contract packaging and manufacturing operations and external supply chain networks. For over two decades, Nulogy has been helping upstream supply ecosystems work better together and has been enabling customers to drive operational control and network synchronization with its multi-enterprise, cloud-based solutions.

About Christine Barnhart

Christine Barnhart, Chief Marketing and Industry Officer, As Chief Marketing and Industry Officer, Christine leverages her thought leadership and domain expertise to play a pivotal role in the way Nulogy speaks to the market and delivers customer value. Her extensive experience as a supply chain expert and seasoned software executive makes her uniquely positioned to incorporate sales, product, and customer success in the way marketing approaches its go-to-market, demand generation, and brand-building efforts. Under Christine's guidance, Nulogy continues to shape and educate the market around the emerging space of Multi-Enterprise Collaboration. Christine's previous roles include Vice President, Product Strategy and Go-To-Market at Verusen as well as Senior Director of Product and Industry Market Strategy for Infor. Christine holds a BSEE from the University of Evansville and an MBA from the University of Louisville. She is also an APICS-certified professional in Inventory and Production Management.





What Manufacturing Looks Like With (and Without) ERP Software

If someone took a photo of the health of your manufacturing business, would it look like a “before” or “after” photo?

You’ve seen these kinds of pictures in weight-loss advertisements. In the before photo, an obviously overweight person looks tired, flabby, and woefully out of shape. In the after photo, the person exudes the model of good health – lean, fit, and full of energy. In the manufacturing industry, companies without ERP generally look like the before photo. Those that use ERP to run the business typically look like the after photo.

How does ERP turn an overweight, inefficient manufacturing business into a lean, fit and supercharged manufacturing machine?

Simply put, ERP provides a complete solution for what ails your manufacturing business. Created to efficiently [run the entire organization from quote to cash](#), it touches all critical aspects of the business, allowing you to manage

everything from one central location. The power of ERP lies in its ability to provide the data you need to make smart decisions for your business. When you know what’s happening in every corner of your shop, everything gets better. People and processes become more efficient and productive. Communication between departments improves. Costs and waste go down while sales, margins and product quality go up. You can promise due dates to customers with confidence. On-time delivery becomes a way of life.



Article by
Mike Melzer
VP of Operations & Service,
Global Shop Solutions



At Global Shop Solutions, our motto is “ your ERP software helps you deliver a quality product on time every time.” Our goal is for Global Shop Solutions ERP software to become the most valuable asset at your business. This [short video](#) clip provides a brief introduction to how can ERP help you attain that goal.

Manufacturing Before ERP

Manufacturing without ERP generally looks like a mess. Some of the top signs of an unhealthy manufacturing business include:

Data can't be trusted.

Manufacturing companies without ERP generally use volumes of paper documents and spreadsheets to manage production. What software they do use consists of disparate programs that can't communicate with each other. This creates a system rife with manual errors, and inaccurate, outdated information. When you can't trust the data guesswork prevails, and often leads to low quality decisions.

Hit or miss scheduling.

With no true accounting of labor and machine capacity, rough estimations drive the [scheduling process](#). Manual scheduling can take days to complete. Making changes to jobs in progress becomes a nightmare of complexity and uncertainty. All of which result in missed due dates and dissatisfied customers. It's no wonder many manufacturers rank scheduling as the most stressful job in the business.

Inaccurate job costing.

Few manufacturing tasks are more important than [precise job costing](#). Without ERP, few tasks are more difficult. Manual time sheets often contain errors. Incorrect inventory counts make it hard to identify true material costs. Lack of real-time data makes job costing historical

rather than current. Estimating and quoting frequently miss the mark due to imprecise and unreliable data. Not a good recipe for knowing your true costs.

Incorrect work orders and routers.

In a “before” ERP environment, work order and routing information often consists of tribal knowledge that resides in the heads of a few people. Jobs often start late because the work orders and routers don't get to the shop floor on time. Large, complex work orders can take days or weeks to construct. Human error causes shop floor mistakes that lead to costly rework and missed due dates.

“The lack of integration with production makes the data historical rather than realtime. The numbers become out of date as soon as the next transaction occurs.”

Poor inventory management.

Manual inventory management creates a drag on virtually every aspect of production. Parts and materials get lost or misplaced. Purchasing often buys too much or too little due to imprecise inventory data. Poorly designed number structures can result in duplicate inventory. Material shortages cause jobs to start late and lead to expedited shipping costs. Inventory carrying costs go up, on-time delivery goes down, and nobody is happy about it.

Inefficient material movement.

Inaccurate inventory is a major cause of shop floor bottlenecks. Manually tracking material movements with handwritten bin cards makes getting the right parts to the right jobs even more difficult. Bin cards get lost. Material movers sometimes forget to record their transactions. Incorrect part numbers deliver the wrong part to the job. Inventory counts for a part or material may not get updated for days after a transaction.

Excess purchasing costs.

When the purchasing function can't communicate with inventory, buyers often don't know when to order parts, how many, or how much to pay. Incorrect inventory counts can cause overbuying to avoid potential part stockouts. Researching vendors for the best price and delivery times can take hours. Purchasing inefficiencies cause material costs to go up while inventory accuracy goes down.

Financial disconnect.

When the finance function doesn't reside in an ERP system, it must produce the financial reporting with a different system – a slow, cumbersome, and inefficient process. The lack of integration with production makes the data historical rather than realtime. The numbers become out of date as soon as the next transaction occurs. Manual data entry inevitably results in human error and can take days or weeks to close the books at the end of the month.

Low product quality.

Without ERP, quality control is a historical rather than in-the-moment process. Incorrect part numbers on work orders or routers can result in production errors. Manual scrap counts tend to be unreliable. Jobs often continue after engineers issue a stop order because some people

don't receive the notification. All of which leads to rework, increased job costs, and dissatisfied customers.

Double data entry.

Without ERP, customer specs, drawings, engineering documents, bills of materials (BOMs) and other job data typically require double manual entry – once by the customer and once on your end. This time-consuming process invites human error that increases labor costs and leads to mistakes on the job. The inability to integrate with CAD/CAM, nesting, and other software programs increases the time and cost required to set up and complete jobs.

“With a reliable ERP software, none of the above need to happen in your business.”

Manufacturing After ERP

What does the after ERP photo look like? Generally speaking, companies that implement or convert to an ERP system with a reputation for quality and service will experience many of the following improvements.

One source of truth.

Imagine being able to trust the data you collect. Not just some of it, but all of it – including production schedules and promised due dates. ERP makes it happen by tracking, organizing and providing quick access to [information you can count on to be accurate and up to date.](#) Manual spreadsheets, redundant processes, and stand-alone silos of information disappear as you discover what your business can achieve with data you can trust.

Fully integrated scheduling.

The toughest job in the plant becomes far less stressful with ERP. Instantly identify your true labor and resource capacities. Engage in “what-if” scenario planning to see how potential schedule changes will affect other jobs. Use finite and infinite scheduling to make long-term scheduling decisions. When you get the schedule right, shop floor personnel always know what to be working on now and what to work on next.

Precise job costing.

ERP gives you certainty in your job costing by providing detailed cost breakdowns for inventory, jobs sequences and cost of goods sold. It tracks every cost that goes into a project – from labor and parts to setup times, tool and equipment usage, indirect labor, outside work, and more – with remarkable precision. Estimate and quoting become more accurate. Cost overruns are easy to spot. Comparing actual to estimate becomes a powerful tool for identifying problems and areas for improvement. When a job is finished you know the total cost down to the penny.

Accurate work orders and routers.

Work orders act as the architectural blueprint for each job; routers provide the road map to get there. ERP electronically sends these critical documents to the shop floor, ensuring the correct versions get there on time, every time. Large, complex routers and [BOMs](#) can be built in a few hours rather than days or weeks. Work orders and routers become trusted tools that speed the production process rather than causing bottlenecks.

Digital inventory management.

[Accurate inventory](#) injects a new level of speed and efficiency into the entire production process. With

a few clicks of a mouse you can see how much of a part or material you have on hand, where it is, how much is already allocated to jobs, and when ordered parts will arrive. In short, everything you need to know to accept a due date or get a job started on time. Cycle times become simple to track. Physical counts often take hours rather than days or weeks. Inventory stockouts become a thing of the past.

Mobile material movement.

ERP transforms material movement by seamlessly aligning with mobile technology. Using handheld scanners and mobile devices, part movers can make material transactions from anywhere on the shop floor. Every transaction is instantly recorded in inventory, keeping the location and number of parts always up to date. Movers no longer waste hours looking for misplaced inventory, and the right materials get to the right jobs when operators need them.

“Manual spreadsheets, redundant processes, and stand-alone silos of information disappear as you discover what your business can achieve with data you can trust.”

A new level of financial accountability.

ERP systems with fully integrated accounting modules save time and money while leaning the entire accounting function. AR and AP management take less time. Eliminating duplicate data entry dramatically reduces human error. The system recognizes most

accounting data as soon as new transactions are recorded, enabling in-the-moment financial decisions. Month-end closing of the books shrinks from weeks or days to hours. You get more done in less time while creating a culture of financial accountability throughout the business.

Purchasing as a competitive advantage

ERP purchasing consolidates all work order and inventory data so you can make smart purchasing decisions. Purchases can be automated, giving buyers time to research vendors and negotiate better deals. Buyers can forecast future purchases based on customer history. The system even identifies when new purchasing actions are required due to job changes. ERP purchasing does all this and more – all from one screen.

Real-time quality.

ERP provides a robust array of tracking, statistical analysis, and reporting tools, including [complete traceability of every part](#) that moves through the shop floor. Live production data lets you measure quality by part, employee, machine, defect code and other

criteria. The system automatically alerts you to non-conforming parts while jobs are in progress. Producing documentation for ISO and other quality certifications can be accomplished in minutes. When you hold employees accountable for their scrap, the cost of quality declines.

Third-party software interfaces.

[Electronic Data Integration \(EDI\)](#), nesting and other software interfaces allow your ERP system to seamlessly exchange information with third-party software programs. This eliminates the need for duplicate data entry on the receiving end and prevents double entry mistakes. CAD/CAM interfaces save hours of high-cost engineer time by directly importing CAD/CAM drawings and data in digital format. Nesting interfaces send designs directly to cutting machines to optimize material usage. Payroll interfaces automatically send hours, pay rates, and other data to your payroll vendor for rapid processing. The possibilities for how much time, money and effort integrations and interfaces can save you are endless.

Get Lean and Fit with ERP

Manufacturing is a complex process, no matter what products you make or what processes you use. ERP simplifies manufacturing by providing real-time data visibility at every step of the production process. Knowing what you need to know to eliminate waste, reduce costs, and get quality parts out the door on time every is only a few mouse clicks or keystrokes away, whenever you need it.

Wondering How Your Business Is Doing Overall?

Take the 10-minute [Manufacturing Health Test](#) to see how you compare against other manufacturers. Then call us at 1.800.364.5958 start turning your business photo from a before to an after.

About Mike Melzer

[Mike Melzer](#) serves as VP of Service & Operations for Global Shop Solutions and is a 20-year veteran of the company. As a graduate from The Colorado School of Mines, Melzer is an unparalleled leader helping the best manufacturers use their ERP software to make their shops leaner and more efficient.





4 Focus Areas for Fresh Produce Businesses and How ERP Software Facilitates Success

Research conducted by the International Fresh Produce Association revealed that a [considerable majority of consumers worldwide ate the same amount or more fruits and vegetables in 2022](#). In other words, the appetite of the market is healthy—but with that opportunity comes fierce competition, which will only compound the challenges of succeeding in this sector.

As a professional in the industry, you know that fresh fruits and vegetables can be especially tough to work with due to their seasonality, perishability, unique properties and wide range of shapes and sizes. What's more, the supply chains of produce processors and distributors are often long and sprawling given that some varieties can only be grown in the optimal conditions of specific regions.

Attempting to account for all these different factors with paper-based records or outdated legacy software is at best inefficient and error-prone. At worst, it exposes your business to risk in the form of undetected contamination of products, shrinking profit margins, insufficient stock levels, excessive waste or other ramifications of mismanagement.

Thankfully, there's purpose-built technology for fresh produce companies that offers the functionalities required for such a complex space, and it comes in the form of [enterprise resource planning \(ERP\)](#) software. This foundational solution acts as a unified and fully digital platform for your whole organization while also providing specialized features for the distinct considerations of your vertical.

To elaborate on this subject, we've identified four focus areas for fresh produce businesses that can be bolstered with ERP software. By the time we reach the conclusion, you'll have a good understanding of just how transformative these systems can be for a business like yours.

1. Establishing Bidirectional Traceability To Ensure Food Safety

Simply put, the importance of [traceability](#) in the fresh produce industry can't be overstated. In most regions, it's mandated by government regulations, and it's also an expectation of modern consumers. Even more importantly, it's absolutely vital for [food safety](#), which is an area that companies in your industry can't neglect with the number of widespread and expensive recalls in recent years.

ERP software for fresh produce organizations offers lot and subplot management capabilities that allow you to monitor the movement of your lots bidirectionally and drill down with item-level granularity. The advanced attributes features of the solution are a perfect complement to the aforementioned, as they facilitate linking detailed traceability data to lots and sublots.

[Advanced fresh produce ERP systems](#) like Aptean Food & Beverage ERP also have functionalities to handle producer [certifications](#), which help you manage the many different certificates, like those of the Safe Quality Food (SQF) Institute or any of the national organic programs. With these increasingly being seen as a selling point for brands, it's critical to have those tools at your disposal.

2. Bolstering Quality Management To Boost Brand Loyalty

While it's not easily defined and involves a number of elements—including taste, freshness, consistency and appearance—[quality](#) is no doubt the major determining factor in customer satisfaction in fresh produce. Whether a physical defect deters the consumer immediately or they're disappointed biting into a

tasty-looking item only to find that something's off, their evaluation of your brand will suffer.

“ERP software for fresh produce organizations offers lot and subplot management capabilities that allow you to monitor the movement of your lots bidirectionally and drill down with item-level granularity.”

Luckily, the quality control features of produce ERP software enable you to define your quality triggers, automatically prompt quality checks and place any goods that fail on hold right away. The inspection status and status management capabilities go hand-in-hand with those functionalities, as they allow users to set and update the status and results of quality checks from the floor in real-time.

The non-conformance management tools of ERP solutions built specifically for fresh produce companies help you track and deal with customer complaints, digitally documenting them and scheduling follow-up actions to address the issue and prevent it from happening again. That's extremely important, as quality will boost loyalty—and the more loyal shoppers are to your brand, the more consistent is your revenue.

3. Tackling the Complexities of Produce Transactions To Promote Profitability

The tricky matters of costing and pricing are even more complicated in the world of fresh produce, as rates will vary depending upon many criteria, all of which must be reflected in the final calculations. And beyond that, the terms between growers, processors, manufacturers and their customers vary widely, and managing non-standard agreements can necessitate costly modifications to generic software.

But a bespoke [fresh produce ERP solution](#) will have you covered with capabilities developed to alleviate these pain points, like [grower accounting](#) and grower return features. These allow you to automatically calculate grower settlements and utilize flexible cost assignments to cover the intricacies of produce costing, and they also support prepayment and varied commission settings.

In addition, ERPs tailored to the fresh produce sector can help your business implement grade-out/pack-out methodology, which allows for prices to be automatically calculated while accounting for attributes like size, color, shape and appearance. And the [advanced pricing features](#) of advanced systems allow you to create hierarchical pricing structures that protect your profit margins while offering compelling rates.

4. Excelling in Inventory Management To Increase Sustainability

Balancing supply and demand is much more challenging when the goods you're dealing with have a limited shelf life. The risk of losing your investment when a lot spoils is likely motivation enough for you to really get a handle on your [inventory](#).

but the fact that excess waste will drag down your progress toward [greater sustainability](#) makes this an even more pressing imperative.

Fortunately, the trading board provided by fresh produce ERP platforms enables you to leverage real-time expected and available inventory insights across all of your locations so that you can assign the right lots to the right orders at the right time. And expiration date management features track all of your goods' freshness windows and send alerts when ranges are closing, helping you to avoid spoilage.

You can also consider integrating your ERP solution with [advanced route optimization software](#)—like [Aptean Routing & Scheduling Paragon Edition](#)—to help you [lower your carbon footprint](#). These systems can automatically generate optimized routes designed to minimize fuel consumption and maximize efficiency while also offering strategic route planning features that enable scenario modeling.

Aptean: All Your Software Needs From One Trusted Partner

We don't need to repeat all the reasons that the [fresh produce industry](#) is unique and highly complex—that's your reality as a professional in the space. But as we've explained above, ERP software that's purpose-built for the sector can help you excel despite these challenges by putting the tools you need at your fingertips and acting as a centralized "single source of truth" for your whole organization.

Aptean Food & Beverage ERP stands above its competitors thanks in part to having all the features discussed in this piece plus many more. It's also available via [flexible cloud deployment](#) on the Software as a Service (SaaS) model, which offers greater scalability, enhanced cybersecurity, stronger data protection and broader accessibility.

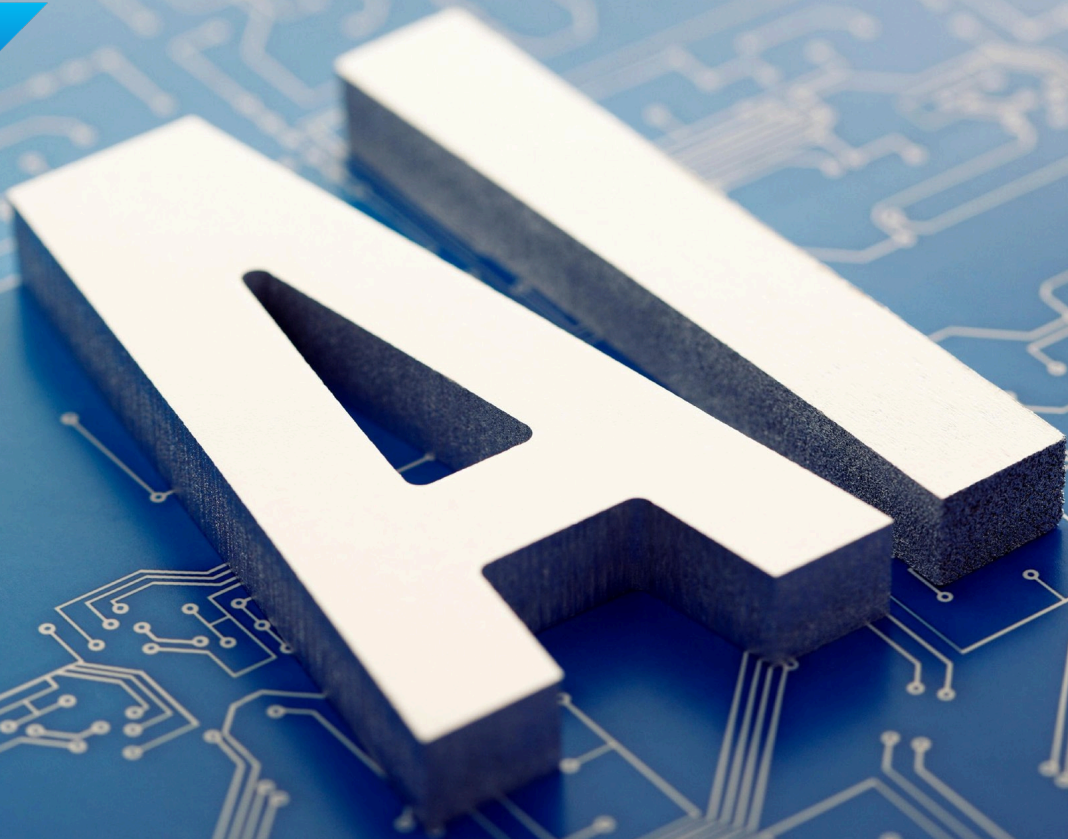
On top of that, our solution is comprised of industry-specific technologies built on the Microsoft Dynamics 365 Business Central platform, which gives it a user-

friendly interface and familiar feel. But beyond all these factors, consider also what sets us apart as a provider of software solutions—our approach as a partner for every customer and an outstanding track record serving our target markets.

Aptean's complete business solution ecosystem extends beyond ERP and route optimization software too, with [overall equipment effectiveness \(OEE\)](#), [enterprise asset management \(EAM\)](#) and [product lifecycle management \(PLM\)](#) systems available for an even more comprehensive tech stack. We're proud to support our clients in this era of [digital transformation](#) and are committed to a better tomorrow.

Check out our whitepaper [Effectively Managing Supply and Demand in the Fresh Produce Sector: Conquering 8 Key Challenges With Industry-Specific Software](#) for more on the power of modern solutions for fresh produce businesses. Feel free to [contact us](#) with any inquiries.





Coles Reimagines Volume Hiring with AI and Automation

Coles Group, one of Australia's most trusted and iconic brands, is steadfast in delivering on its purpose to help Australians eat and live better every day. Through its core business as a full-service supermarket retailer, Coles engages with millions of customers every week in its 860 supermarkets throughout Australia. The group's other areas of business include its Click & Collect online platform, network of liquor stores, and financial services with nearly 1,000 additional retail outlets.

Guided by the organization's clear [vision, purpose, and strategy](#), Coles' team of 120,000 employees is dedicated to making a difference in the lives of customers and the local communities it serves.

In fiscal year 2020/21, Coles Group hired nearly 30,000 people to deliver on its business needs. Mike Virgo, head of Talent Acquisition for Coles Group, said this hiring volume was necessary to make sure the company was "positioned well to support our customers."

The business environment, however, dramatically shifted as the public health crisis of the pandemic unfolded, resulting in repeated lockdowns and restrictions. As a neighborhood retailer dependent on in-person interaction to deliver most of its services, Coles found its workforce impacted by the pandemic. Faced with supply chain disruptions, panic buying behaviors by consumers, high employee absenteeism, and increased turnover, Coles urgently needed to step up its volume and pace of hiring to support its customers.

“Around 2020-2021, we started to experience one of the most significant shifts in the employment market we’d ever seen,” Virgo said in a [session](#) at [SuccessConnect Virtual](#). “It started to create huge challenges for organizations around the world – around how we attract, retain, and hire talent.”

“We needed automation and AI to remove a lot of the manual work in our systems. We wanted to create more consistency and uplift the experiences we were giving our candidates and our hiring managers.”

Catalyst for Change and a New Way of Working

To meet pressing business demands, Coles doubled its hiring volume from 30,000 to 60,000 people and increased recruitment advertising spend by a factor of three. Its talent acquisition team grew proportionally to manage the increased workload – but then labored under manual transactional activities that slowed processing times. As a result of the huge strain, variability in the candidate and hiring manager experience became noticeable.

Due to the volume of work, Coles looked for ways to evolve its system to create more speed, efficiency, and scalability. With a list of criteria,

Coles began to review technology solutions on the market to find one that could support its vision for a new way of working. “We wanted to reimagine how we recruit for our stores,” Virgo said. “We needed automation and AI to remove a lot of the manual work in our systems. We wanted to create more consistency and uplift the experiences we were giving our candidates and our hiring managers. And ultimately, [the solution] needed to drive commercial benefit for us.”

As a key requirement, the new solution needed to integrate with [SAP SuccessFactors Human Experience Management \(HXM\) Suite](#). In 2020, as part of an organization-wide [digital transformation](#) that introduced SAP S/4HANA and SAP Ariba solutions, Coles modernized its HR and payroll processing, replacing a patchwork of outdated systems with SAP SuccessFactors solutions. It became the first organization in the southern hemisphere to launch all modules of the SAP SuccessFactors portfolio in one go. With all HR processes unified on a single platform, Coles benefits from having a single source of truth for people data that is accurate and available in real time for the entire organization.

Two-Way Integration Ensures Single Source of Truth in Data

To help with the project, Coles chose [Phenom](#), an SAP partner whose AI-powered Intelligent Talent Experience platform provides two-way integration with SAP SuccessFactors solutions. Virgo said the two-way integration “allows us to have a holistic view of the candidates that progress through the process, no matter whether the team is operating in Phenom or SAP SuccessFactors, and it allows SAP SuccessFactors to be our single source of truth.”

There are several key benefits of Phenom’s solution at Coles. One is candidate attraction and engagement, which is achieved primarily through the Coles career site and chatbot. Another is recruiter automation and interview management, which provides automation and process efficiencies from when a job requisition is created in SAP SuccessFactors solutions and replicated into Phenom until a hiring manager chooses a candidate for the job. Once a candidate is chosen, the two-way integration enables the HR team to access the data in SAP SuccessFactors solutions and complete all compliance aspects, such as working rights, contract generation, and onboarding.

The Coles team gains additional efficiencies in its onboarding programs through the application of robotic process automation (RPA) powered by two bots that work in the background: Ashbotty processes the working rights and Usain Bot processes onboarding and manages pending recruits. “They take a lot of the transactional, manual work that we used to have team members doing. It can do that quickly, accurately, and it can do that 24/7 – which is particularly important for us as a seven-days-a-week business,” Virgo said.

AI-Powered Experiences for Candidates and Recruiters

Coles reimaged the candidate experience to launch a modern, tech-enabled career site – which has been chosen as a two-time winner of Australia’s Best Careers Site. The site includes an AI-powered chatbot to guide candidates as they look for information, search relevant job postings, and submit their applications. It also includes Coles’ Expression of Interest, always-on advertising that drives the growth of its talent pool and advances its

talent marketing by reducing the need to advertise every role. A Hosted Apply process, facilitated by integrations with Phenom, presents a consistent candidate experience and increases the conversion rate on applications.

Phenom AI Scheduling, a key part of Coles' hiring experience, enables candidates to book themselves an available interview slot and automates the coordination of hiring team calendars. The new solution provides a fully mobile-enabled experience to meet the demands of candidates for an omni-channel, real-time experience where they can learn, read, and apply for jobs where and when they want.

Inundated by nearly 1 million applications each year to review, Coles also took steps to elevate the recruiter experience and increase the speed and accuracy of candidate screening and job matching. It implemented Phenom Fit Score, an AI-powered feature that assesses a candidate's suitability for an open role, based on location and optimal travel distances, availability, and working rights; then, assigns a fit score and surfaces the most closely matched candidates to the recruiters. In addition, the new solution empowers in-store managers to collaborate with recruiters to review candidates and make quick hiring decisions with confidence.

Talent Pools Grow with Improvements to Hiring Speed and Efficiency

With the new augmented solution, Coles is experiencing tangible benefits across multiple categories and key metrics for success: time-to-fill is down six days; time-to-hire is down two days, which is impressive considering candidates can book the in-store interview up to two weeks

in advance; and advertising spend is down 50%.

"With the new augmented solution, Coles is experiencing tangible benefits across multiple categories and key metrics for success: time-to-fill is down six days; time-to-hire is down two days, which is impressive considering candidates can book the in-store interview up to two weeks in advance; and advertising spend is down 50%."

Most notably for Coles as a people-centric organization is the development of its talent pool, now numbering 2 million potential candidates. It achieves an 85% application conversion rate on up to 1 million applications per year. Through its [commitment](#) to be a safe, inclusive, and diverse workplace, Coles has applied the new solution to provide greater accessibility for more diverse candidates, resulting in an increase of 24% more hiring for people who identify as having a disability.

Virgo said that the talent acquisition team will continue to evolve its solution and assess more opportunities for AI and automation to bring value to the recruitment process. Although these technologies are not cure-alls for every recruitment scenario, they can save recruiting teams precious

time and resources to focus on more high-touch interactions further down the recruiting funnel. In sharing lessons learned, Virgo noted, "I think the important call out is the level of automation you can inject in your process will likely diminish as the seniority, complexity, and requirements of your roles increase because they are likely to be more high touch, perhaps need more interpretation or judgment calls from your recruiters to identify who the right talent is for your organization."

Watch [SuccessConnect Virtual](#) on demand.

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.



Why Service Life-Cycle Management is Vital for Asset-Centric Services

Organizations today face increasing challenges due to complex workflow systems, asynchronous data, and disconnected workforces. On top of this, businesses are under pressure to increase revenue in their aftermarket, improve asset uptime and first-time fix rates, and meet customer experience goals.

To address these challenges, Service Life-Cycle Management (SLM) provides a comprehensive solution that covers the entire spectrum of service management needs. IFS, a recognized leader in the industry, has positioned itself at the forefront of SLM solutions by delivering all critical functions within a single, scalable platform.

IFS Receives Analyst Recognition for Service Life-Cycle Management

IFS has consistently been recognized as a leader in SLM by global analysts. Most recently, IFS has been positioned in the Leaders Category in the IDC MarketScape: Worldwide Service Life-Cycle Management Platforms 2023-2024 Vendor Assessment (doc #US49989623, October 2023), for the second year running.

IFS has been recognized by the IDC MarketScape for the breadth and depth of service capabilities that incorporate AI, machine learning, IoT, and AR as well as our industry expertise for complex service environments. IFS is also recommended for organizations looking for a wide breadth of capabilities across the service lifecycle to support highly complex industries and service models.

Download a complimentary excerpt of the vendor assessment [here](#).

What is Service Life-Cycle Management?

IDC defines service life-cycle management in manufacturing as the process of providing services for a product or asset throughout its lifetime. The process includes customer support, service requests, service

planning, service execution, field service, spare parts management, warranty management, and recalls. SLM is no longer a siloed process, and data from the aftermarket can be utilized by other enterprise applications to provide better insights to the enterprise and deliver value to customers throughout their journey with the service organization.

Why Invest in Service Life-Cycle Management?

Investing in SLM is not just about providing post-sales support; it's about adopting a new approach where service becomes a driving force for value, revenue, and customer loyalty. Asset-centric manufacturers are facing mounting challenges, from complex workflows to disconnected workforces. They must also meet customer experience goals while finding revenue opportunities in the aftermarket.

Service Life-Cycle Management is the key to achieving true coordination and effective management of assets, people, and customers. By recognizing and acting on these factors, organizations position themselves for sustained growth and success in today's competitive business landscape.

All Critical Functions in One Solution

IFS takes a holistic approach to SLM, unifying single-issue digital investments with strategic initiatives that enhance both the service experience and enterprise insights. With IFS, organizations gain a comprehensive view of the entire service life cycle through a scalable, single platform that caters to their business demands, revenue generation, and customer experience enhancement.

Our capabilities span multiple aspects of service management, including Field Service Work Order Management, Reverse Logistics and Repairs, intelligent back-office scheduling engines, and AI and Machine Learning for predictive maintenance, issue resolution, and service optimization. IFS's offerings extend further to cover enterprise asset management, IT service management, and ERP solutions, making it a comprehensive choice for supporting even the most complex assets and use cases.

"IFS takes a holistic approach to SLM, unifying single-issue digital investments with strategic initiatives that enhance both the service experience and enterprise insights. "

Outcomes of Investing in Service Life Cycle Management

Investing in IFS Service Management solutions promises a multitude of benefits and solutions that address the challenges of modern business. While the full list of benefits is extensive and tailored to your specific needs, here are some key outcomes you can expect:

- Improved customer experience
- Enhanced asset uptime and first-time fix rates
- Efficient management of assets, people, and customers
- Revenue growth opportunities in the aftermarket
- Streamlined, interconnected workflows

- Data-driven decision-making through predictive maintenance and analytics
- Consistent alignment with customer experience goals

In a world where service is a critical driver of success and value, IFS stands as the comprehensive solution for Service Life-Cycle Management. Invest in IFS and experience the transformation of your service operations, customer satisfaction, and overall business growth, today.

If you would like to learn more about our Service Life-Cycle Management offerings and product capabilities click here: [Knock Down Service Silos, with IFS Service Lifecycle Management](#)

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](https://www.ifs.com).

A Year of Expansion and Success for Superior Trim: 2023 Transformer Impact Award Winner

When your mantra is to continuously find ways to improve, turning tradition on its head becomes part of the day-to-day routine. Superior Trim has found itself in the unique position of transforming into a top supplier to the heavy truck market and outpacing goals not only in annual sales but also with accolades from the industry. For the past 16 years, Superior Trim has worked with Plex to bring their operations into an era of smart manufacturing.

The Impact Awards are a way to celebrate and recognize the extraordinary achievements of our customers, highlighting their successes from the past year. Superior Trim is the 2023 Transformer Impact Award Winner, a sure sign of their impressive efforts to transform the way they do business and modernize their facilities through automation and Plex technology.

Superior Trim

Superior Trim started as a single-plant, niche supplier for handmade, low-volume, and interior trim parts. They currently serve as a leading supplier to the heavy truck market, with a wide array of diverse processes: injection mold, thermoforming, cut-and-sew, 2D and 3D

compression molding, molded foam, wood processing, assembly, waterjet cutting, and sequencing. Their current clients include Peterbilt, Kenworth, Navistar, Volvo, Mack, and Daimler and they operate across seven manufacturing plants in three different locations (Ohio, Tennessee, and Mexico). Their Plex implementation marks an era of major improvements for the company as it continues to expand its business.

Leading the Heavy Truck Market in Style

Although Superior Trim initially implemented Plex in 2007, the past three years are when they started to rev the engine on transforming their operations—the 2023 year, specifically, stands out as a hallmark time for the company.

They are one of the most decorated tier-1 companies in the heavy truck market and have numerous awards from PACCAR, DTNA, Navistar, and Volvo to show for it. Beyond awards, they also have numbers working in their favor. A testament to their willingness to improve and adjust, their sales have doubled since 2017. This is considerably impressive, given that the timeline includes the COVID-19 pandemic when many industries found themselves struggling with supply chain delays among other serious challenges.

“With the entirety of these advancements, Superior Trim has decreased employee training time and will improve retention due to more user-friendly processes.”

While the full year numbers aren't in yet, Super Trim is hopeful the trend of increasing sales will continue. They are currently projected to beat their 2022 numbers by double digits (and their 2022 sales were already up by a record-breaking 26% compared to the previous year). Beyond sale indicators, Superior Trim has seen positive indications in other areas of the business. These successes have allowed the company to expand and diversify into other fields. With that, their newest product offering has positioned Superior Trim as a premium golf cart seating supplier, and they also launched their first interior for the school bus market in Q4 of 2023.

Tapping on Plex for Outstanding Results

But how did they achieve these results? Superior Trim points to Plex as a critical player in improving their processes and the benefits are plentiful:

- Their smart production recording and inspection processes increased efficiencies, reduced scrap, and reduced inventory adjustments on the production. As a part of this, direct labor is down year over year to 7.8% from 9.0%.
- With the help of Plex, Superior Trim integrated thermoform machines to improve accuracy of OEE, actual production cycle times and reduce mislabeling of parts. This integration has allowed their thermoforming facility to step up as an industry leader.
- By integrating the cutting (waterjet) and sequencing processes, they were able to eliminate the manual entry of cut-file numbers. The waterjet now pulls from 9,999 cut files automatically from the customer's EDI via Plex, ensuring the file is cut properly every time. Since kicking this off in 2020, Superior Trim has received a top-quality award from PACCAR at the plant where this integration has been implemented.
- A major investment in their 2D trim panel assembly, the Lightguide system is fully integrated through API calls to report bin-for-bin production and automatically put a part on “hold” if it doesn't pass the work-instruction inspection. This includes overhead projectors that light up the next

component for the operator, shows them where to assemble it, and then provides a green check mark once assembled. Once the part is confirmed “good” they “earn” a label for the part.

With the entirety of these advancements, Superior Trim has decreased employee training time and will improve retention due to more user-friendly processes. For an industry that is often considered “old school,” Superior Trim is relentless in their pursuit to keep things fresh. They hope to inspire other companies in the field to follow their lead and bring other heavy truck market suppliers into the modern era.

The 2023 Transformer Impact Award

The Superior Trim team rallied around Plex to reimagine how their facilities could evolve and improve, and the results speak for themselves. As Superior Trim continues to broaden their utilization of Plex across their plants, we know there are only more positive results to come. The Plex team cannot wait to hear about those outcomes. Congratulations to Superior Trim for being selected as the 2023 Transformer Impact Award Winner!

See how Superior Trim leverage smart manufacturing solutions to improve processes and become the 2023 Transformer Impact Award Winner.

To learn more about how manufacturers transform their operations with smart manufacturing solutions from Plex, [read a success story here](#).





ERPTrends to Expect in 2024 and Future

In today's rapidly evolving business landscape, staying ahead of the curve is essential for success. Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) systems have played a pivotal role in streamlining operations, improving efficiency, and fostering growth for businesses of all sizes.

As we approach 2024, it's crucial to look ahead and anticipate the ERP trends that will shape the future of business software. In this blog post, we'll explore these trends and how Tranetech Software Solutions, the best ERP software company in Abu Dhabi, is at the forefront of innovation in the ERP software arena.

The Evolution of ERP Software

Over the years, ERP software has evolved from traditional on-premises solutions to cloud-based platforms, providing businesses with more flexibility, scalability, and cost-effectiveness. In 2024 and beyond, we can expect this trend to continue. Cloud ERP systems will become even more sophisticated, offering enhanced security, real-time analytics, and seamless integration with other software applications.

Tranetech Software Solutions, the best software company in Abu Dhabi, recognizes the significance of cloud ERP. With our cutting-edge ERP software, we ensure that businesses can access their critical data anytime, anywhere, and on any device. This accessibility empowers decision-makers to make informed choices and drive business growth.

Enhanced User Experience:

User experience (UX) will be a key focus in the future of ERP software. As businesses adopt more sophisticated systems, they demand intuitive interfaces and seamless navigation. ERP software providers, invest in enhancing the user experience to ensure that employees can quickly adapt to and harness the power of their ERP systems.

Our EQUAL ERP software is designed with user-friendliness in mind. We prioritize user-centric design to make sure our clients have a hassle-free experience while using our EQUAL ERP software. In 2024, we will continue to refine and innovate our user interfaces to ensure that our clients get the best ERP software experience in Abu Dhabi.

Mobile ERP Solutions:

With the increasing reliance on mobile devices, ERP software will be more accessible on smartphones and tablets. In 2024, expect to see mobile ERP solutions gain prominence, allowing businesses to manage their operations on the go. Tranetech Software Solutions is committed to providing mobile-friendly ERP solutions to ensure that businesses in Abu Dhabi can access critical information and perform essential tasks from their mobile devices.

“The future of ERP software is bright and promising. Cloud-based solutions, enhanced user experiences, mobile accessibility, IoT and Big Data integration, and cybersecurity will be the key trends in 2024 and beyond.”

Integration with IoT and Big Data:

The Internet of Things (IoT) and Big Data analytics will play a pivotal role in shaping the future of ERP systems. These technologies enable businesses to collect vast amounts of data from various sources and use it to make informed decisions. ERP systems will increasingly integrate with IoT devices and leverage Big Data analytics to provide deeper insights into operations, inventory management, and customer behavior.

Tranetech Software Solutions understands the importance of data-driven decision-making. Our EQUAL ERP software is designed to seamlessly integrate with IoT devices and harness the power of Big Data analytics. This ensures that our clients can make strategic decisions based on real-time information and predictive analytics.

Cybersecurity and Data Privacy:

As businesses rely more on digital data and cloud-based ERP systems, cybersecurity and data privacy will be paramount. The best ERP software company in Abu Dhabi, Tranetech Software Solutions, invests heavily in cybersecurity measures to protect sensitive data and ensure compliance with data privacy regulations.

In Abu Dhabi and beyond, Tranetech Software Solutions is recognized for its commitment to data security. Our EQUAL ERP solutions are designed with robust cybersecurity features to safeguard our clients' data and protect against evolving cyber threats.

Conclusion

The future of ERP software is bright and promising. Cloud-based solutions, enhanced user experiences, mobile accessibility, IoT and Big Data integration, and cybersecurity will be the key trends in 2024 and beyond. Tranetech Software Solutions, the best ERP software company in Abu Dhabi, is dedicated to leading the way in these trends and providing businesses with the tools they need to thrive in the digital age.

As you prepare your business for the future, consider partnering with Tranetech Software Solutions to harness the power of these ERP trends and stay ahead of the competition. Our commitment to innovation and excellence ensures that we will continue to deliver the best ERP solutions for service companies and businesses of all types in Abu Dhabi and beyond. The future of ERP is here, and Tranetech is your trusted partner for success.





Shifting Trends in The ERP Industry to Watch Out For in 2024

Another year has passed, and it's time for us to glance into the future and see what's on the horizon for ERP software and enterprise technology in 2024. The IT trends we expect will naturally progress the waves of digital transformation set in previous years.

As inflation, recession, immigration, and increased demand stress the global supply chain and expose new constraints; disruption becomes a dominant and permanent component of our reality. Organizations continue to adapt to the new business management standards, striving for stringent business continuity and risk management strategies.

To stay relevant and competitive in a constantly changing landscape, companies increasingly rely on ERP systems to manage their operations. Today more than ever, organizations are required to rapidly adapt the way they manage their entire business operations to meet their strategic business goals.

8 of the biggest ERP trends we'll continue to see in 2024 are:

The Expansion of Industry-Specific Solutions

Best-of-breed systems outshine enterprise-wide ones. The realization that one size cannot fit all dawns on the ERP market. Leading ERP providers are embracing the notion that every industry is unique, and today, they offer more industry-specific functionalities and features, which means there are fewer costs associated with customization, leading to faster implementation and deployment.



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As a result, we've seen a continued [expansion of ERP into new sectors such as retail](#) and construction. Resource planning solutions tailored to specific industry verticals are a driving force for today's ecosystem of data context. Be it different prospects offered to different industries or specific categories within one industry.

Taking the vertical approach drastically reduces the customization requirements, promotes better use of resources, and helps businesses achieve better integration with different processes.

Zephyr Chan, a Growth Marketer & Founder of Better Marketer, said, *"A one-size-fits-all strategy falls short of the expectations of business and technology executives due to the different demands of each sector. As a result, ERP solutions are emerging that provide features tailored to particular industry sectors. Industry ERP solutions are becoming more and more popular with CIOs. Emerging vendors have identified their specialty sectors."*

"In the past, CIOs would introduce an ERP system and progressively expand it to all of the enterprise's important business divisions. However, the SaaS revolution and growing digitalization are forcing IT decision-makers to change their strategy. CIOs choose a cloud ERP system from a top vendor for a key function like finance since it satisfies their needs, but they choose best-of-breed point solutions for other areas." Commented **Jamie Penney, CEO of ShoppingFoodie**.

Customization Replacing Standardization.

When it comes to ERP, operational differences are what determine the organization's distinct competitive advantage.

Today's organizations are characterized by unique flavors and nuances. A customizable ERP is a system designed with tremendous flexibility capabilities that allow you to deliver modules that perfectly fit unique business processes.

Traditional ERP solutions often require drastic changes to an organization's business flow. However, [customizable ERP solutions](#) can be tailored to ensure that an organization's workflow or business process remains unchanged. Customizable workflows, reports, and processes Reduce the learning curve, promote easy adoption, have minimal impact on business flow, and offer a massive productivity boost.

"Open, flexible, and scalable cloud applications led the market to be dominated by SaaS ERP solutions. Many organizations that still use on-premise ERP are starting to understand how and why they are left behind."

Emphasis on Integration.

With the rise in cloud/SaaS ERP adoption, integration using standard APIs is the common proverb. An ERP that allows you the freedom to integrate with third-party applications is crucial for technological independence.

Customizable ERP solutions offer access to APIs and deliver the ability to integrate niche third-party solutions that allow companies to easily add or remove features to their ERP solutions and have greater control over both development & implementation.

"Enterprises are attempting to benefit from the introduction of next-generation technologies like IoT, analytics, and AI to grow their businesses. Leading ERP providers embrace this trend by integrating their products with these cutting-edge technologies, and IT executives are doing the same. It is now simple to combine an ERP solution with other satellite applications because of the availability of web services and JSON." **James Angel, Co-Founder of DYL**.

Cloud-First Approach To ERP

[Cloud-based ERP](#) still ranks as one of the most revolutionary trends, even though it is not a new one. Cloud computing introduced a new world of ERP, enabling SaaS options that drive more efficient work practices, save time, reduce the total cost of ownership, and help companies change how they work.

Open, flexible, and scalable cloud applications led the market to be dominated by SaaS ERP solutions. Many organizations that still use on-premise ERP are starting to understand how and why they are left behind. Highlighted by the pandemic, operational limitations, from inflexibility and costly scaling to lack of innovation and partial collaboration, forced many businesses to operate remotely, deeming on-premise solutions obsolete.

Many more companies are now moving massive amounts of ERP data into cloud storage because their obvious advantages have evaporated those reservations. As a result, the cloud computing market size is projected to reach USD 791.48 billion by 2028, exhibiting a CAGR of 17.9%.

Mobile ERP

ERP on the go is an ever-growing trend as today's workforce is increasingly [mobile and adaptive](#). That's why it's no surprise that one of the biggest trends in ERP for 2024 is an increased focus on mobile management solutions.

Today, more and more organizations are onboarding mobile ERP, which is fast becoming a necessary operational tool. [Mobile ERP solutions](#) drive system visibility and accessibility companywide, accelerate business processes, boost productivity, and save time, resources, and costs. Mobile ERP apps are designed to power operations "on the go," with apps including mobile CRM, proof of delivery, warehouse, point-of-sale (POS), purchase approval, employee attendance apps, and more.

Machine Learning & AI

2024 will see a further shift into the era of automation and embracing machine learning and AI in ERP. In a business world dominated by a culture of instant gratification, process automation tips the scales in favor of those who use it to "achieve more with less."

In 2024 and beyond, the growing AI trend will echo across all ERP features, including industry-specific solutions, such as manufacturing and distribution. Artificial intelligence technologies, including machine learning, are helping

organizations draw additional value from the ever-growing volumes of collected data. [AI continues to empower companies](#) to gather new, actionable insights, enhance their operational processes, and best use their reams of business data.

Blockchain Integration in ERP

Blockchain technology offers unparalleled security and transparency for transactions. In 2024, we anticipate seeing an increasing number of ERP providers integrating blockchain technology, especially in sectors where traceability and transparency are paramount, like supply chain, finance, and manufacturing. This integration will enhance trust among stakeholders, ensure the authenticity of transactions, and reduce instances of fraud and data tampering.

Human Experience

Beyond the User Experience (UX), there's a rising trend focusing on the broader Human Experience (HX). While UX deals with the user interface and interaction, HX encompasses the entire user ecosystem, including the emotional, physical, and cognitive connection with the system. ERP providers are beginning to understand that for successful software adoption, it's essential to focus not just on how the system looks or operates but on how it feels for the users, putting a bigger focus on the overall user-experience.

Conclusion

The ERP evolution is driven by the industry's race to increase efficiency and revolutionize how businesses manage their operations. In 2024, we'll continue seeing a significant

change in the ERP solutions' key features and deployment methods. ERP will continue to evolve and create new technologies and operational workflows to stay ahead of the game.



About Olly Lukatski

Olly manages Priority's global marketing communications and content strategy. Over the past 10 years, Olly has gained vast experience in executing marketing initiatives in high-growth B2B companies, quickly adapting to the constantly changing market demands and bringing new concepts to life.

About Priority

Recognized by top industry analysts and professionals for its product innovation and leadership, Priority Software empowers thousands of organizations with comprehensive, flexible, and scalable cloud ERP solutions. With the mission of making ERP easier, we strive for ERP to be easier to use, to implement, and to maintain and enhance. What's more, Priority introduces a new take on ERP – a refreshing alternative to traditional complex ERP solutions, meeting the unique needs of organizations who are primed and ready to grow, increase profitability, and improve efficiency. Priority's functionality covers all the core elements of ERP, all via a modern platform with cross-functional capabilities, such as graphical BPM, Mobile Application Generator, Web SDK, Open APIs, and more.



ERP Trends 2024: The Topics That Will Keep Us Busy in The Coming Year and Beyond

Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) has been supporting the everyday work of businesses for many years. As businesses and their requirements change, so do ERP systems. New features are added, while those that are no longer needed disappear. Cloud computing, artificial intelligence, and other technologies are changing the market. What does the future hold? We present the most important trends that will accompany ERP systems in 2024 and beyond.

ERP Trend 1: Cloud computing becomes more and more of a must

A server that stands in its own room and can only be used from there - the classic on-premises hosting exists and is still the first choice for many businesses. However, cloud solutions are also on the fast track in the ERP sector and are no longer just the future. The trend for 2024 is clearly pointing towards the cloud. Private cloud and public cloud solutions offer advantages that meet the needs of today. Flexibility thanks to data access from any location with internet access, cost efficiency thanks to a rental model, and the ability to adapt the system scope to changing circumstances using scalability are just a few of them.

ERP Trend 2: Artificial intelligence supports work processes and saves time

Artificial intelligence (AI) has become a part of everyday life for many people, especially since ChatGPT. ERP systems are also increasingly relying on AI and its capabilities. AI



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can quickly and reliably analyze even huge amounts of data. The result is a comprehensive data set on the basis of which more informed decisions can be made. At the same time, AI can take over repetitive tasks, saving employees time. In addition, AI is able to analyze average inventory levels or inventory availability and provide recommendations for reordering and storage on this basis. Because information can also be played out more precisely for users through AI, recommendations are personalized and promise more success.

“The trend for 2024 shows that ERP systems are increasingly being integrated into IoT infrastructures to receive data from connected devices in real time.”

ERP Trend 3: The internet of things unites the benefits of the real world with those of the digital universe

The Internet of Things (IoT) connects objects with the possibilities of the internet. A well-known example is the refrigerator that, using sensors, realizes that the milk is empty and automatically orders a refill. The trend for 2024 shows that ERP systems are increasingly being integrated into IoT infrastructures to receive data from connected devices in real time. This allows processes in production and inventory levels to be monitored more accurately, and reactions can be made in time.

ERP Trend 4: Sustainability and the environment remain in focus

Environmentally conscious thinking is an important component that also affects software solutions. ERP systems are increasingly integrating sustainable processes to reduce required resources. Short delivery routes, low power consumption, and as little product waste as possible due to expired goods - the trend shows that ERP software is increasingly integrating such possibilities.

ERP Trend 5: Business intelligence enables the fast and reliable analysis of large data sets

As data sets become larger, the effort required to analyze them also grows. ERP systems are therefore increasingly relying on business intelligence (BI). BI solutions such as Microsoft Power BI support efficient analysis, create reliable foundations for data-driven insights and decisions, and facilitate accurate predictions.

ERP Trend 6: The opportunities for mobile working are growing, and access from abroad is becoming easier

Remote work, workation, and other trends are making it necessary for employees to access data from anywhere. To make this as efficient as possible, ERP solutions or their functions are increasingly being provided as mobile apps. This makes it easy to access them, and no bulky, stationary computers are required.

ERP Trend 7: Cybersecurity becomes a focus topic and more reliable

Another trend that will shape Enterprise Resource Planning in 2024 is the pursuit of security. Especially when it comes to the cloud, there are always concerns about the secure storage of data. With a view to criminal intentions, increasing

networking, and electronic data exchange, cybersecurity is gaining importance. Companies are investing a lot of money and effort in security measures. Protection from cyberattacks is more important than ever before.

ERP Trend 8: Compliance and data protection take center stage

New laws, strict regulations, and stringent requirements: The legal landscape is changing, and more and more rules must be followed. This is also and especially important when working with enterprise resource planning (ERP). Safe working in compliance with the guidelines - a clear trend that will continue in the coming year as well.

“BI solutions such as Microsoft Power BI support efficient analysis, create reliable foundations for data-driven insights and decisions, and facilitate accurate predictions.”

ERP Trend 9: Blockchain technologies bring new security to the digital world

Blockchains are actually known from the world of cryptocurrencies, but they are also gaining importance in the ERP environment. By integrating blockchain technology into an ERP,

security increases. The reason: Cryptographic algorithms provide security and transparency in transactions. It is a decentralized system that cannot be manipulated or changed.

2024 Will Be Digital: AI, Security, And Automation Will Shape ERP Trends

Transparency, speed, and compliance with regulations - these are perennial topics that will also accompany us in 2024. What is changing are the methods and functionalities used to achieve these goals. Artificial intelligence and automated data processing are increasingly becoming the focus of

the ERP world. As always, Microsoft is at the forefront: The company is setting standards in the field of artificial intelligence with Microsoft Copilot and provides users with a tool that is integrated into their own solutions. Because we also build on proven Microsoft technology, current developments are automatically part of our solution portfolio. With our ERP industry solution YAVEON ProBatch, you are choosing a system that keeps up with the times - yesterday, today, and tomorrow.



About Katharina Miller

No extra comma, no missing punctuation mark. Katharina Miller breaks down complex topics into simple and understandable sentences. Her texts have everything you would want from a good content marketer: Knowledge from more than five years of IT experience, exciting stories, peppered with the necessary expertise, insightful examples and metaphors, and above all: Added value for the reader.





SAP and the Mercedes-AMG PETRONAS F1 Team Join Forces to Drive Efficiency On and Off the Racetrack

SAP announced a multiyear partnership with the Mercedes-AMG PETRONAS F1 Team starting in 2024.

As an Official Team Partner, SAP is teaming up with the Mercedes-AMG PETRONAS F1 Team to accelerate operational efficiency and unlock new data insights to deliver performance gains. SAP S/4HANA Cloud, private edition serves as the technology foundation for the team, enabling them to explore how artificial intelligence (AI) and cloud solutions from SAP can help inform and predict decisions, optimize resources and future-proof their IT infrastructure.

Efficiency is the cornerstone of success in Formula One. Therefore, mastering the cost-cap challenge and optimizing the team's complex supply chain are two areas of focus for this partnership. Formula One's cost cap restricts how much teams can spend each season, with severe penalties if exceeded. The Mercedes-AMG PETRONAS F1 Team plans to navigate this complex course by using the SAP S/4HANA Finance solution to allocate, save and use resources more efficiently.

With SAP Business AI technology embedded, the team can forecast costs, predict final budget needs, and optimize both the supply chain and stocked items. To run its state-of-the-art operation, the Mercedes-AMG PETRONAS F1 Team is looking forward to leveraging SAP S/4HANA Cloud, private edition for a secure and future-proof cloud environment. The team can also take advantage of SAP Build solutions and SAP Business Technology Platform to implement a transparent, intelligent enterprise architecture – bringing together a single view of data and systems from various sources across the organization. Doing so can lead to shorter lead times for critical car components, helping ensure a seamless flow of parts during race weekends.

“Formula One is one of the most technologically innovative sports in the world, where incremental gains yield significant results. Given the extreme conditions under which Formula One teams operate, motorsports provide a global platform to showcase skill and engineering excellence,” said Julia White, member of the Executive Board of SAP SE and chief marketing and solutions officer. “But beyond the race day performance, there’s a lot going on behind the scenes. SAP is proud to partner with the Mercedes-AMG PETRONAS F1 Team to make sure its operations are as fine-tuned as its cars.”

This partnership has the potential to create a new blueprint for the automotive industry. Formula One is where latest innovations for the automotive industry are invented and premiered. Together, SAP and the Mercedes-AMG PETRONAS F1 Team will deliver new innovations backed by Formula One insights that will go on to serve and shape the businesses of other SAP customers.

“We are delighted to announce SAP as an Official Team Partner of the Mercedes-AMG PETRONAS F1 Team,” said Toto Wolff, CEO and Team Principal, Mercedes-AMG PETRONAS F1 Team. “We have a shared heritage and commitment to innovation and improvement, which will meaningfully contribute to our on-track performance. SAP is a global leader in its field, and we could not think of a better partner to help us improve our efficiencies in 2024 and beyond.”

Visit the [SAP News Center](#). Follow SAP at [@SAPNews](#).

About the Mercedes-AMG PETRONAS F1 Team

Mercedes-AMG PETRONAS F1 Team is the works team of Mercedes-AMG, competing at the pinnacle of motorsport – the FIA Formula One™ World Championship. Formula One is a sport like no other. Combining elite teamwork, cutting-edge technologies and innovation, high-performance management and exceptional driving skill, teams develop race cars capable of competing against their rivals in a high-octane environment that spans upwards of 20 races across five continents throughout each season.

The Mercedes-AMG PETRONAS F1 Team, based across Technology Centres at Brackley and Brixworth in the United Kingdom, brings together over 1,000 dedicated and determined people that design, develop, manufacture and race the cars driven by seven-time World Champion Lewis Hamilton and Grand Prix winner, George Russell.

Winning seven consecutive double Drivers’ and Constructors’ World Championships from 2014 to 2020 and securing a record-breaking

eighth consecutive Constructors’ Championship success in 2021, the Team is one of the most successful in the sport’s history.

Between returning as a Constructor in 2010 and the end of the 2022 season, the Mercedes-AMG works team has scored 116 wins, 264 podium finishes, 128 pole positions, 91 fastest laps and 54 one-two finishes from 259 race starts.

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 26 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.





Aptean Adds New Transportation Management Capabilities in Europe Through Acquisition of UK-Based 3T Logistics & Technology Group

Cloud-native TMS Solution Designed to Meet the Needs of Shippers and Carriers

[Aptean](#), a global provider of mission-critical enterprise software solutions, announced its acquisition of 3T Logistics & Technology Group (3T), a provider of cloud-based transportation management systems (TMS) to shippers and carriers in the United Kingdom and broader Europe.

With the acquisition of 3T, Aptean adds new capabilities to its TMS offerings for shippers and carriers serving manufacturers and distributors in the food and beverage, fast-moving consumer goods, industrial machinery, automotive and building product verticals.

Founded in 2000 and based in Leicester, England, 3T delivers solutions that drive cost reductions and service improvements by helping shippers and carriers automate processes, optimize logistics scenarios and attain real-time visibility into every facet of shipping operations. 3T's modular, app-based EVENT platform can be customized

to meet the unique business needs of its customers. 3T's customers also benefit from its logistics and transport management services, based on decades of expertise in the industry.

"Aptean is pleased to expand its TMS offerings in Europe with the addition of 3T's cloud-based EVENT platform," said Duane George, GM of EMEA and APAC at Aptean. "In today's challenging business environment, 3T helps organizations deliver their products with greater speed and efficiency, enabling them to compete a global level."

"Aptean shares our commitment to innovation and our solutions are highly complementary to Aptean's existing ERP and SCM offerings for manufacturers and distributors," said Steve Twydell, Founder and CEO at 3T. "As part of Aptean, we will be able to provide our customers with more solutions to enhance efficiencies and improve outcomes across their operations."



Sage Introduces AI-generated Member Masterclass

Sage, the leader in accounting, financial, HR and payroll technology for small and mid-sized businesses (SMBs), has announced the launch of its first AI-generated business avatar in Season 4 of Member Masterclass. [“Embracing the opportunities of AI: Insights from an AI-generated expert”](#). The lecture is part of Sage’s industry-leading series of talks and articles for customers.

AI tools have [increased](#) among U.S. SMBs as they seek ways gain more time from repetitive tasks to grow their business. With more than half (57%) “eager” to expand their knowledge of generative AI, resources like Sage’s Member Masterclass offer information into this expanding area. Created via generative AI tools, with human approval, the AI-generated Member Masterclass will guide the small and medium-sized business community through the intricate landscape of AI, providing an insightful overview of its evolution and the groundbreaking implications it has in various sectors, such as finance.

“Artificial Intelligence is not just the future; it’s the now,” said Cath Keers, CMO at Sage, “With this Member Masterclass, we are demonstrating AI’s potential to reinvent business interactions, while also fostering a deeper understanding and appreciation for the technology. By tapping into the capabilities of AI and elevating human work, businesses can navigate a future with more opportunities. The AI-generated Member Masterclass reflects this approach.”

The AI-generated Masterclass explores:

- Demystifying what AI is and its transformative influence on contemporary business.
- Tracing the milestones in the evolution of AI to provide a holistic perspective.
- Spotlighting how AI is reshaping the financial landscape with automation, predictive analysis, and innovative solutions.

Season 4 of Sage’s Member Masterclass, Thriving in a Changing World, is produced in partnership with The DO Lectures. The series recognizes that being able to deal with change is an essential business skill and highlights how businesses can not only adapt but succeed in a continuously evolving landscape.

For more information about Member Masterclass and AI-generated episode, visit [here](#).



IFS Cloud November Release reinforces AI capabilities across automation and optimization with IFS.ai

Further focus on ESG capabilities to accelerate time to value across business operations.

IFS, the global cloud enterprise software company, announced the general availability of the second of its twice-yearly IFS Cloud releases for 2023. The release is centered on capabilities that will help customers to increase productivity across their business and leverage digital technology to build agility and operational excellence.

The content of this November release is a continuation of IFS' goal to help customers in its core industries to build their composable, intelligent autonomous enterprise.

From this release onwards, the company's recently launched AI architecture [IFS.ai](#)'s capabilities will be directly woven into all of IFS's products and industry

specific capabilities. This makes AI widely available across customers' organizations, enabling them to simulate, optimize, and automate industry-specific business processes and increase productivity of their people, assets and services across their entire business operations.

Enterprises are building business resilience to be able to respond quickly, effectively and in a sustainable way to changing macro-economic conditions. Achieving this for the longer term requires them to build agility and adaptability to mitigate risks, creating a bigger dependency on technology innovation. Those companies who have already invested in digitalization will be able to leverage AI faster and manage their operational performance, as well as increase productivity.

To this end, the November IFS Cloud release continues to focus on three strategic business themes:

- Optimize People, Assets and Services
- Connect Global Operations
- Achieve ESG Goals Profitably

Optimizing People, Assets and Services:

IFS Cloud uses AI, ML, IoT and automation to streamline processes related to people, assets, and services and improve data quality and compliance.

- **Maximize capacity utilization by combining cross business insights and intelligent automation.** (Manufacturing Scheduling & Optimization, ERP)
- **Improve yield and throughput, reduce costs, and enhance production quality** (Intelligent Automation in Manufacturing ERP)
- **Boost order fulfilment, enhance productivity and improve customer service levels.** (Supply Chain, ERP)
- **Avoid maintenance procedure delays and minimize IT administration.** (Aviation Maintenance)
- **Maximize crew efficiency and reduce costs with higher first-time-fix rates.** (Planning & Forecasting in Service Management)

Connect Global Operations:

IFS Cloud breaks down data and other operational silos, aligning and connecting people to identify risks and opportunities. The latest enhancements continue to target unwanted complexity, reduce

downtime, and positively impact customer services. Advanced management capabilities include:

- **Combine critical business data and transaction updates to optimize offshore maintenance operations between shore and offshore assets.** (EAM)
- **Experience efficient and reliable service delivery with process automation along the entire financial value chain.** (Service Management)
- **Reduce costs and complexity and experience fast, efficient document signing with electronic signatures through Adobe integration.** (Asset Management)

Achieve ESG Goals Profitably:

As customers and consumers become more demanding of a company's ESG stance, a clear strategy and ability to deliver results will create long-term value. IFS Cloud is designed to help manage and achieve ESG goals, profitably and transparently. The latest update allows industries to leverage data to measure progress against commitments, demonstrate accountability, reuse components, reduce production costs and increase revenue.

- **Quickly access ESG-focused insights across energy consumption, materials used and DEI for more informed decision-making.** (Lobbies in IFS Cloud)
- **Easily and accurately track progress against Scope 1 and 2 sustainability goals.** (IFS Cloud Emissions Tracker)
- **Reuse components for re-manufacturing and reduce production costs.** (Supply Chain, ERP)

Christian Pedersen, Chief Product Officer, IFS, said: "Accelerating digital transformation remains a top priority for our customers as they continue to depend on technology to build predictability in performance and resilience in their business. With this latest release of IFS Cloud, we have stayed true to our product vision to enable customers to adopt our innovation out of the box." Pedersen added: "This includes our commitment to providing a product that stays evergreen. Delivering a composable option that provides a clear path to always being up to date with the latest digital and AI innovation is central to that." He concluded: "IFS.ai capabilities already exist in IFS Cloud, and we are continuing investment into this area. Our aim with AI is to make organizational-wide impact for all our customers across all their users."

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.



Rootstock Software to Showcase Latest Manufacturing Cloud ERP Capabilities at World Tour Chicago

Rootstock also slated to provide thought leadership on the Manufacturing Signal Chain and results from its State of AI in Manufacturing Survey

Rootstock Software will showcase its leading Manufacturing Cloud ERP capabilities at the upcoming [World Tour Chicago](#). Rootstock's presence at this event, scheduled for Wednesday, December 6, 2023, 9:00 am to 5:00 pm CT at McCormick Place West in Chicago, demonstrates its continued commitment to meet with manufacturers to solve key business challenges and help optimize their manufacturing operations.

"Chicago's vibrant manufacturing landscape is the perfect backdrop for us to demonstrate the transformative capabilities of Rootstock Manufacturing ERP, especially in terms of business intelligence and decisioning capabilities," said [Raj Badarinath](#), Chief Product & Marketing Officer at [Rootstock Software](#). "Our Cloud ERP built on the Salesforce Platform is designed to break down data silos and bring unprecedented visibility across the manufacturing enterprise—from shop floor to the top floor."

At World Tour Chicago, manufacturers will have the opportunity to engage with Rootstock team members in the following ways:

- **Thought Leadership Session:** Stu Johnson, Rootstock's VP of Product Marketing, will deliver the presentation, "What's Next in ERP? A Signal Chain Decisioning Platform," at 11:30 am CT in the World Tour campground. This session will delve into Rootstock's groundbreaking vision for "The Manufacturing Signal Chain." This approach is a game-changer for manufacturers, allowing them to dynamically synchronize supply and demand signals with production capacity. The Signal Chain also allows them to span data silos, provide increased visibility, and empower AI-driven decisions. Participants will hear about real-world scenarios and best practices to launch their own Signal Chain strategy.

- **Discover AI's Role in Manufacturing:** Corresponding with the World Tour's focus on AI and how it is transformative for the industry, Rootstock will also be discussing the results from its State of AI in Manufacturing Survey. This study unveils a significant surge in AI adoption among manufacturers, with 82% increasing their AI budgets for 2024. A vast majority of manufacturers also feel confident that their ERP will deliver the AI capabilities they need. The survey outlines key challenges in AI adoption and offers a roadmap to navigate these complexities.
- **Exclusive Culinary Experience:** In the evening after the World Tour event, Rootstock will also be hosting a private dinner with a renowned celebrity chef in Chicago. This intimate gathering will be held with select manufacturing leaders, offering them an added opportunity to explore Rootstock's Manufacturing ERP in a more conversational setting.

Sign up for [World Tour Chicago](https://www.rootstock.com/erp-events/), and if you can't make it to this event, be sure to check out Rootstock's future events:

<https://www.rootstock.com/erp-events/>.

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.





ORACLE
NETSUITE

Restaurant Industry Serves Success with NetSuite

NetSuite helps restaurants and hospitality businesses streamline processes and drive growth

Restaurant and hospitality businesses are turning to [Oracle NetSuite](#) to increase productivity, expand visibility, and improve decision making. Hofman Hospitality Group, Lettuce Entertain You, Union Square Hospitality Group, and many others have chosen NetSuite to streamline business processes and provide a scalable foundation for future growth.

NetSuite helps restaurants and hospitality businesses manage their operations on a single cloud business suite to help increase productivity, reduce costs, and expand business insights. With industry-leading enterprise resource management capabilities for financials, accounting, procurement, fixed asset management, and franchise management, NetSuite helps restaurant and hospitality businesses integrate and automate processes,

embrace new operating models, diversify revenue streams, and improve the experience they deliver to their customers.

“The restaurant and hospitality industry is increasingly competitive, and businesses are challenged to keep up with changing consumer preferences in addition to rising food and labor costs,” said David Rodman, senior vice president of customer success, Oracle NetSuite. “With NetSuite, restaurant and hospitality businesses can streamline financial and other operational processes to increase productivity, capitalize on growth opportunities, and successfully scale.”

Restaurant and hospitality businesses that are leveraging NetSuite include:

Hofman Hospitality Group

Founded in 1951 in Long Beach, California, [Hofman Hospitality Group](#) is a family-owned restaurant group that started as a single beach burger stand and has since grown its portfolio of locations and cuisines. Today, Hofman Hospitality Group operates 25 restaurants including Hof’s Hut, Lucille’s Smokehouse Bar-B-Que, and Saint & Second throughout California, Nevada, and Arizona. To help scale its business and manage new revenue streams, Hofman Hospitality Group uses NetSuite to centralize financial data, automate reporting processes, and gain the insights it needs to improve strategic decisions.

“Within the Hofman Hospitality Group corporate structure, we have three separate business entities and multiple revenue streams,” said Chris Crawley, chief financial officer, Hofman Hospitality Group. “With NetSuite, we have an integrated system that has enabled our finance team to gain a single view into data

from across our operations and improve the speed and accuracy of financial reporting processes. The insights from NetSuite have also helped us identify new ways to continuously improve the guest experience, which is our top priority.”

Lettuce Entertain You

Founded in 1971 in Chicago, [Lettuce Entertain You](#) is a family-owned restaurant group that oversees a portfolio of around 60 distinct brands and 130 restaurants spread throughout the United States including R.J. Grunts, Mon Ami Gabi, Aba, and RPM Italian. To help scale its business and improve the experience for its guests, Lettuce Entertain You uses NetSuite to support its accounting processes, increase efficiency, and improve business visibility across its growing portfolio.

“As our portfolio of restaurants grew rapidly so did the complexity of our business and this resulted in our finance team spending too much time on manual data analysis and reporting,” said Jessica Ling, controller, Lettuce Entertain You. “With NetSuite, we have reduced the number of time-consuming and manual finance tasks, accelerated financial insights, and enabled our leadership team to quickly respond to changing industry trends and customer demands.”

Union Square Hospitality Group

Founded in 1985 in New York City, [Union Square Hospitality Group](#) operates 14 restaurants across New York, including Michelin Star restaurants The Modern and Gramercy Tavern, and offers a wide range of related services including hospitality consulting, catering and events, and hospitality investment funds. To improve the

speed of its financial processes, maximize profitability, and ensure it can continue to provide high-quality guest experiences as it scales, Union Square Hospitality Group chose NetSuite and [NetSuite Planning and Budgeting](#) to support business performance reporting and forecasting.

“We operate under tight margins and disparate business systems can make it difficult to assess profitability and create accurate forecasts,” said Tiffany Daniele, chief financial officer, Union Square Hospitality Group. “By providing an integrated suite, NetSuite has given us the visibility we needed to quickly identify performance drivers and gain a better understanding of what’s happening across our business. The insights from NetSuite have empowered us to open new restaurants, design new menus, and source more strategically.

For more information about NetSuite offerings for the restaurant and hospitality industry visit:

<https://www.netsuite.com/portal/industries/restaurant.shtml>.

**ORACLE
NETSUITE**

About Oracle NetSuite

For more than 25 years, Oracle NetSuite has helped organizations grow, scale, and adapt to change. NetSuite provides an integrated system that includes financials / Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP), inventory management, HR, professional services automation and omnichannel commerce, used by more than 37,000 customers in 219 countries and dependent territories.



Odoo And Ricoh Announce Strategic Partnership To Revolutionize Hong Kong Officescape

RICOH
imagine. change.

Multinational electronic and digital business solution company [Ricoh Hong Kong Limited](#) and Belgian business management software firm Odoo announced a strategic partnership in November 2023.

Imagining new technology to change the modern digital workplace, Ricoh commits to empowering local businesses with holistic and tailored office solutions that optimize the effort of your team—physical or remote—while promising cybersecurity and workflow automation.

Odoo is known for its fully-featured and modular business management solutions across the retail, manufacturing, and trading sectors. Welcoming Odoo 17, the latest annual product upgrade, the open-source software company introduces the Payroll app to Hong Kong, expanding human resources and finance management services while revamping the other 70+ official apps with new features.

“A famous quote by Henry Ford comes to mind when we are looking for strategic partnerships: ‘Coming together is a beginning, staying together is progress, and working together is success.’ Ricoh and Odoo’s Strategic Partnership is one of mutual interest and benefit. With Ricoh’s experience in hardware and software technologies and Odoo’s expertise in business software, it only made sense to collaborate as we are driven by the same goal—building success with technology tools we love.”

Emmanuel Lawas_Head of Partnership & Alliances, Odoo APAC

The partnership now brings the best of both worlds to revolutionize the Hong Kong officescape. The Ricoh-Odoo duo commits to bringing exceptional printing and smart office devices to the local office scene with an Odoo-backed online system to streamline all operations, facilitating a professional hybrid working style with software and hardware support.

As Odoo’s strategic partner, Ricoh is equipped with extensive Odoo product knowledge and the Quickstart Implementation Methodology. Combining its years of experience designing industry-specific software solutions, Ricoh dedicates a team to projects from this partnership and is confident in delivering tailored Odoo systems to local businesses across sectors, from manufacturing and trading to retail and service, to empower them with efficient and integrated business management solutions.



“We are confident in expanding services sustainably by tailoring even better and more convenient software solutions for our customers with Odoo. The flexibility of low-code Odoo offers is the trend in workflow automation. Combining it with Ricoh’s years of experience in solution customization, this partnership with Odoo is definitely a beneficial addition to our business.”

Ricky Chongji_Chief Operating Officer, Ricoh Hong Kong Limited

Furthermore, the partners will host a series of co-organized events in the future to showcase their integrated solutions. While Ricoh continues to lead the hardware market with world-class office electronics, Odoo expands its share in the software market by offering all-in-one and scalable business management apps to streamline operations. Joining forces, the alliance aspires to serve Hong Kong companies with top-notch office and corporate management solutions





Introducing new Copilot experiences to boost productivity and elevate customer experiences across the organization

Microsoft Copilot presents an opportunity to reimagine the way we work—turning natural language into the most powerful productivity tool on the planet. With AI, organizations can unearth value in the mountain of data across productivity tools like Microsoft 365 and business applications.

To this end, earlier this year, we introduced [Microsoft Copilot for Dynamics 365](#), the world's first AI copilot natively built for CRM and ERP. Since then, more than 130,000 organizations have experienced copilot capabilities in Microsoft Dynamics 365 and Microsoft Power Platform firsthand. In fact, a survey revealed that 70 percent of the Copilot users were more productive, 73 percent could complete tasks faster, and 68 percent of users improved the quality of their work.

Organizations, however, depend on a range of business applications across roles and functions, from customer relationship management (CRM) systems for marketing, sales, and service roles to enterprise resource planning (ERP) systems for finance, supply chain, and operations departments. ***At [Microsoft Ignite](#), we are announcing new Microsoft Copilot experiences that empower organizations to unlock value from a multitude of systems of record.*** In conjunction with these copilot experiences, we are announcing new and updated copilot capabilities in Dynamics 365 applications.

Announcements include:

- **Updates to Copilot for Dynamics 365** to drive efficiency across the organization, featuring capabilities that help marketing, sales, and field service professionals provide exceptional customer experiences.
- **Introduction of Microsoft Copilot for Service and Microsoft Copilot for Sales**, the evolution of Sales Copilot, bringing together the power of Copilot for Microsoft 365 with role-specific insights and actions. Both provide flexibility to integrate with an organization's existing contact center and CRM systems respectively.

Together, these capabilities empower organizations to harness secure and enterprise-ready, generative AI experiences, helping employees to perform at their highest potential across every role and function.

Reimagine ways to drive efficiency across the organization with Copilot for Dynamics 365

We're introducing new and enhanced copilot capabilities for Dynamics 365 that help marketers, sellers, and field service professionals elevate customer experiences.

The following Copilot updates are in addition to [recently-announced copilot and demand planning capabilities](#) for Microsoft Dynamics 365 Supply Chain Management, as well as [the 2023 release wave 2](#) for Dynamics 365 and Microsoft Power Platform, a six-month rollout of new and enhanced capabilities scheduled for release between October 2023 and March 2024.

Copilot delivers answers and information to field service workers in a chat-based conversation

Field service workers depend on quick access to a variety of customer and technical information precisely at the moment it is needed. A recent survey by Microsoft highlighted that not being able to easily find the information they need ranks in the top five disruptive issues faced by frontline workers in their current day-to-day role.² This can significantly affect key performance indicators such as first-time fix rates, customer satisfaction, and retention.

We're introducing **AI-powered experiences for Microsoft Dynamics 365 Field Service**, available for preview in December, that enable frontline workers to quickly access information on a job site by asking questions in conversational language, directly within Teams.

We're also announcing the general availability of AI-assisted work order creation and technician scheduling, and the public preview of financial and inventory data flow between Dynamics 365 Field Service and Microsoft Dynamics 365 Finance and Dynamics 365 Supply Chain Management. Additionally, Microsoft Dynamics 365 Guides and Microsoft Dynamics 365 Remote Assist are available at no additional cost.

Explore the full set of updates to [Dynamics 365 Field Service](#).

Reimagining CRM systems with natural language experiences

The innovation and scale of Copilot have established Microsoft Dynamics 365 Sales as an innovative leader in sales technology, as recognized by [Gartner](#) and [Forrester](#). Copilot in

Dynamics 365 Sales enhances seller productivity and effectiveness in their flow of work, enabling them to automate the sales processes and make informed decisions with AI-powered insights and actions. Copilot features help sellers save time, boost productivity, and eliminate mundane workloads to maintain focus on connecting with customers and closing deals.

We're announcing **new copilot experiences in Dynamics 365 Sales that allow sellers to interact with their data using natural language**.

Now in preview, sellers can use their own words to get contextual insights and recommendations for leads and opportunities.

In addition, Copilot in Dynamics 365 Sales has a new full-screen view where sellers can use natural language or prebuilt prompts to gain a quick understanding of customers, deals, meetings, forecasts, and more. The feature is now available in Asia and Europe and will be available in North America in December.

Deliver more personalized customer experiences with Copilot in Dynamics 365 Customer Insights

New capabilities for **Microsoft Dynamics 365 Customer Insights** provide a deeper understanding of target customers and segments, helping to hyper-personalize campaign content and improve engagement.

Available for preview in December, sellers can use Copilot in Dynamics 365 Customer Insights to instantly generate a **customer profile summary**—including demographic, transactional, behavioral, and analytics data—to uncover key insights on customers. The capability is available for organizations that have both Dynamics 365 Customer

Insights and Dynamics 365 Sales Enterprise or Premium subscriptions.

We continue to build capabilities that enable a seamless handoff from marketing to sellers. Now in preview, marketers can ***qualify their leads using metrics such as engagement scores***, ensuring marketing and sales teams maximize the opportunity pipeline and improve win rates.

Adding to our growing ecosystem, we're announcing a unique ***partnership with Optimizely***. In preview this December, organizations can use the segments and journeys built in Dynamics 365 Customer Insights directly within Optimizely. This enables Optimizely users to build personalized campaigns in real time without writing any code. Through bi-directional integrations, organizations can deliver hyper-personalized omnichannel experiences across web, social, email, and offline channels.

Bring together the power of Copilot for Microsoft 365 and business insights and actions

Most organizations depend on a range of applications to manage the business, including CRM, ERP, and supply chain management systems. Integrating innovative technology, like generative AI, into these systems can be challenging—especially when security, privacy, and compliance are a top priority.

Responding to this need, we're introducing a new category of Microsoft Copilot solutions that tap into data from various applications—including Microsoft 365 and third-party systems of record—to bring a new level of efficiency and automation to business functions across the organization.



Modernize the contact center with Microsoft Copilot for Service

In a recent Microsoft survey, it was revealed that three out of four customer service agents feel less inspired and motivated by their work. With insufficient focus time, over half of them are struggling to deliver exceptional customer service and efficiently address customer issues.² The surveyed agents express confidence that AI can positively impact their performance, as well as provide, analytical insights, including trend and sentiment analysis.

We're meeting the needs of service agents with a Microsoft Copilot solution that integrates generative AI capabilities into the tools and processes that they depend on every day. ***Microsoft Copilot for***

Service integrates an organization's trusted knowledge with the power of Copilot for Microsoft 365 to boost agent productivity in the tools they already use every day, such as Outlook and Teams; providing AI-guided answers and resources personalized for each customer issue and conversation.

Microsoft Copilot for Service provides the flexibility to integrate with an organization's existing CRM and contact center systems. Organizations can train Microsoft Copilot for Service using trusted websites, knowledgebase articles, files, and other critical data sources from their existing contact center to unlock generative AI-powered guidance across all of their data. Microsoft Copilot for Service provides out-of-the-box integrations with Salesforce, ServiceNow, and Zendesk, and can be extended to other systems through a vast array of more than 1,100 prebuilt and custom connectors.

Copilot for Service can be further customized with ***Microsoft Copilot Studio***, also announced at Microsoft Ignite 2023. With Copilot Studio, service teams can fine-tune copilot experiences by incorporating their own data, logic, and actions tailored for specific scenarios, frequent conversations, or other unique use cases.

Copilot for Service will be available in preview in early December and generally available in early 2024. Pricing is USD50 per user per month.

[***Learn more about Microsoft Copilot for Service.***](#)

Unlock sales productivity in the flow of work

Microsoft Copilot for Sales is the evolution of [***Sales Copilot***](#), used by leading brands including 10,000 sellers within the Microsoft sales

team. A recent survey revealed that 83 percent of Microsoft sellers claim that Microsoft Copilot for Sales helps them improve productivity, with sellers saving an average of 90 minutes per week. Read [our ebook on the AI advantage for sellers](#) for details.

Copilot for Sales brings together the power of Copilot for Microsoft 365 in seller workflows, using customer data within the CRM system they already use, along with information in documents, email, and chats from Microsoft 365 applications.

The innovations enabled in Copilot for Sales include a newly integrated experience with Microsoft Word and Teams. Sellers can prompt Copilot to create a meeting preparation brief in Word, automatically populated with customer information such as an account and opportunity summary, names and titles of meeting participants, pending tasks, and highlights from recent meetings and

email threads. In addition, meeting recaps in Microsoft Teams can surface action items and tasks, key performance indicators (KPIs), and sales keywords mentioned. These experiences help sellers save time and energy, generate innovative ideas, build stronger customer relationships, and ultimately close more deals.

Like Copilot for Service, **sellers can customize AI-assisted sales processes with Copilot Studio**, bringing tailored experiences informed by their own data, logic, and actions for specific scenarios.

Copilot for Sales will be available in the first quarter of 2024 for USD50 per user per month.

Learn more at Microsoft Ignite

[Register for Microsoft Ignite](#) to access on-demand recordings of keynotes and sessions, including opportunities to learn about the

copilot capabilities announced. You have the opportunity to engage with the global community online, regardless of your location, and participate in live discussions at no cost. To get started, we recommend the following sessions:

- [Becoming an AI-powered organization with Microsoft Copilot](#) (keynote, in-person and online)
- [Transform customer experience with Dynamics 365 and next-generation AI](#) (breakout, in-person and online)
- [Transforming service organizations with generative AI](#) (breakout, in-person and online)
- [ERP in the era of AI: A new face of business efficiency and agility](#) (breakout, in-person and online)

In addition, learn more about what's possible with Copilot for Dynamics 365 and get started on your journey today.





PRODUCT

Meet Odoo 17

Odoo 17 has landed! It's even faster and more secure than before and packed with exciting AI solutions. We also developed new apps that accompany our oldies-but-goldies – that have, of course, been injected with new features.

Let's talk about the elephant in the room: Odoo has been completely redesigned! We're sad to see the purple go, but the new design represents everything that we stand for: it's clean but exciting, intuitive but fun, and it makes your work days better, just like the rest of Odoo – one feature at a time, for over a decade.

To know more about Odoo 17, you can [try it for free](#), read the [release notes](#) and watch the [video](#).

With that said, let's dive into this version's highlights!

Industry Library

Building a database can be overwhelming, especially when choosing from Odoo's 70+ apps. Combine that with

settling into new business flows and creating data, and you might end up with implementation gone wild!

Fear not – with Odoo 17 comes a solution! The new industry module is designed to jumpstart the whole process. No need to start from scratch anymore; simply choose your industry from the library, and a selection of related apps will be automatically installed, already preconfigured with business flows and demo data for your industry.

Think automatically generated Website, with the right templates and copywriting, a selection of demo products in your Catalog, customized templates, or preconfigured Appointment types – the possibilities are endless.

We hope the industry library will not only be a secret

weapon for our clients and partners. We also believe that it will truly flourish with the support of our community. We count on you to provide us with input on your business line and your unique needs, resulting in improvements for all!

Point of Sale revamp

Point of Sale underwent major changes this year, resulting in state-of-the-art software – a dream come true for modern restaurants and shops. It's all about giving you and your customers options: they can now order and pay by scanning QR codes with their phones or using a self-service kiosk.

The new Kitchen Display app is designed with kitchen staff in mind, allowing them to process each order as efficiently as possible. Having said that, it can also be used for assembling orders placed online or preparing large orders, for example, in a furniture store.

Customizing your menu has gotten much easier, with new fun features like combos - allowing you to manage the pricing of complete menus (think lunch or a tasting menu) - and improved variants. Last but not least, a new integration with Appointments allows clients to book tables online. You were asking for it, and we heard you!

Get to know our new Point of Sale (and Odoo's new office in Belgium!) in the [video](#).

AI strikes back – ChatGPT in Odoo

ChatGPT had its moment in 2023, and it's becoming clear that it's not just a moment – it's a revolution. Keeping in line with that, we have integrated ChatGPT with Odoo. You can now use it to generate alternatives for your text across our apps. And if you're feeling

completely stuck, all you need is a good prompt to generate text from scratch!

The possibilities are endless. Just imagine what AI can do for your Knowledge articles, campaigns across Marketing apps, or email templates... And when it comes to the Website app, we stepped it up even more: creating a new website or page is a breeze with auto-generated content that perfectly aligns with your business line. Plus, the AI copywriter tool offers a range of alternative text suggestions for every need.

Website news!

Exciting news for anyone embarking on an Odoo journey: the website scraper is finally live! This new feature allows you to transform any website into an Odoo page. Forget lengthy migrations, manual copy-pasting, and redesigning your digital home from scratch. Just paste your website's address and let the magic happen!

WebP format images haven't been getting as much press as ChatGPT, but they're a small revolution on their own. Compared to traditional formats like JPEG and PNG, WebP images are much more compressed, which results in better page load times, improved visitor experience, and even better SEO ranking! Why are we telling you this? Because all images in Odoo Website are now automatically compressed to WebP format!

Other exciting features in Odoo Website include a better overview of page templates, a new header and footer design, an improved shape library, as well as tags and images for variants in eCommerce. We also included an often-requested possibility of adding multiple email domains.

You will also notice that the customer portal, along with the front end of eCommerce, Events, Forums, and Appointments, has gotten a complete revamp.

Your sales' secret weapons

This year, we added some new weapons to the arsenal of sales staff. The new quotation builder allows you to go the extra mile and create personalized quotations for your clients. Include pictures, detailed product descriptions, custom messages, and terms and conditions – the sky is the limit!

We also improved the product catalog – forget searching and adding products to quotations using an imperfect drop-down. Instead, with one click, you get a complete view of all your products

WhatsApp

You asked for it, and we delivered – WhatsApp has been integrated with Odoo!

This powerful tool needs no introduction, but let us walk you through the possibilities it offers in Odoo. The range of operations includes sending Sales Order confirmations, shipping details, invoices, payment links, Point of Sale receipts, Event reminders or tickets, or customized messages from Contact view.

Last but of course not least, you can receive and respond to any other types of messages, making customer relationships stronger than ever!

Supply chain

We did not forget our friends who work with Manufacturing, Inventory, and Barcode. We paid attention to your feedback and came up with

several new features that we hope you'll enjoy!

The new Manufacturing Order Overview centralizes all relevant data, including the component status and reordering options. It makes replenishment super easy, and you can even compare vendors directly from the dynamic report.

The new Shop Floor app replaces the Tablet View and is an absolute game changer for work center operators. Once a Manufacturing Order is confirmed, it's displayed on the Shop Floor, and the operators of each station can follow all types of work instructions with minimal effort. And with a simple tap on the touchscreen, the data in your DB is perfectly updated!

This year, we introduce yet another way of handling manufacturing orders – this time, using a barcode scanner, or any mobile device. Simply scan the used components, and everything is updated! We also introduced the possibility of automatic printing once a barcode is scanned, as well as other improvements.

Last but not least, the Inventory app got a revamp of the picking flow - you now instantly get the quantities per location as you reserve products.

Employees, Attendance, Payroll & all things HR

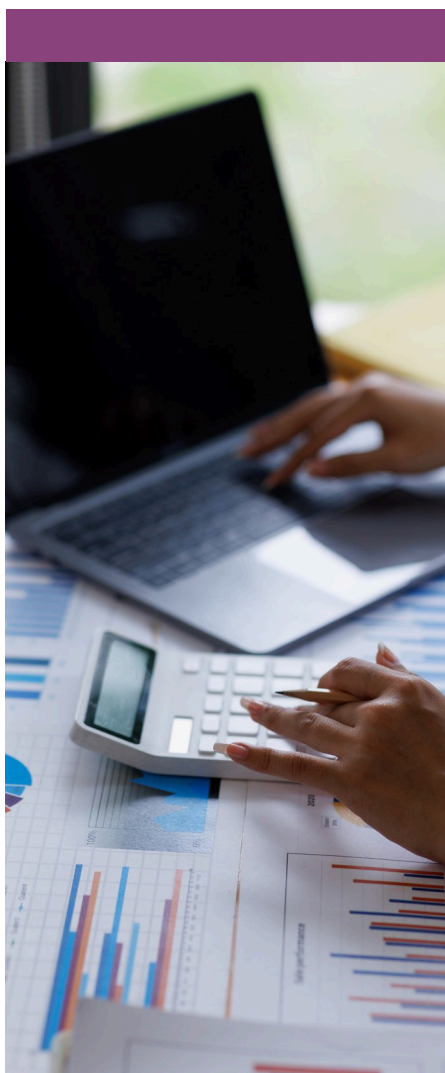
This year, we gathered our efforts to develop the best version of our HR apps to date. We redesigned Employees, including a new hierarchy view, as well as Attendance, making it easier and more user-friendly than ever before – the handy little button that we added looks innocent at first, but it allows you to check in from anywhere, thus revolutionizing the way Attendance works.

The homeworking module, together with the geolocalization tracking option, ensures a better overview of employees' working plans.

To allow our international users to benefit from tailored payroll packages, we improved and created new localization packages (Belgium, Switzerland, Hong Kong, Kenya, Mexico, the United States of America, and Australia). The tailored packages have all the necessary elements and requirements according to the countries' standards.

Accounting

New and improved localization packages have been deployed in the Accounting module. Some highlights include Belgium, Mexico, Brazil, and Spain. See the full list in our [release notes](#).



We're also excited to announce that our Accounting app now supports Peppol, a standardized e-invoicing system, making it easier than ever for you to streamline your invoicing and financial processes. We also developed a scam protection feature, which will generate a warning when creating a transfer to a vendor bank account that has not been marked as trusted.

The management of deferred entries is now distinct from assets, which allows the creation of deferred revenues and expenses without setting up deferred models in advance.

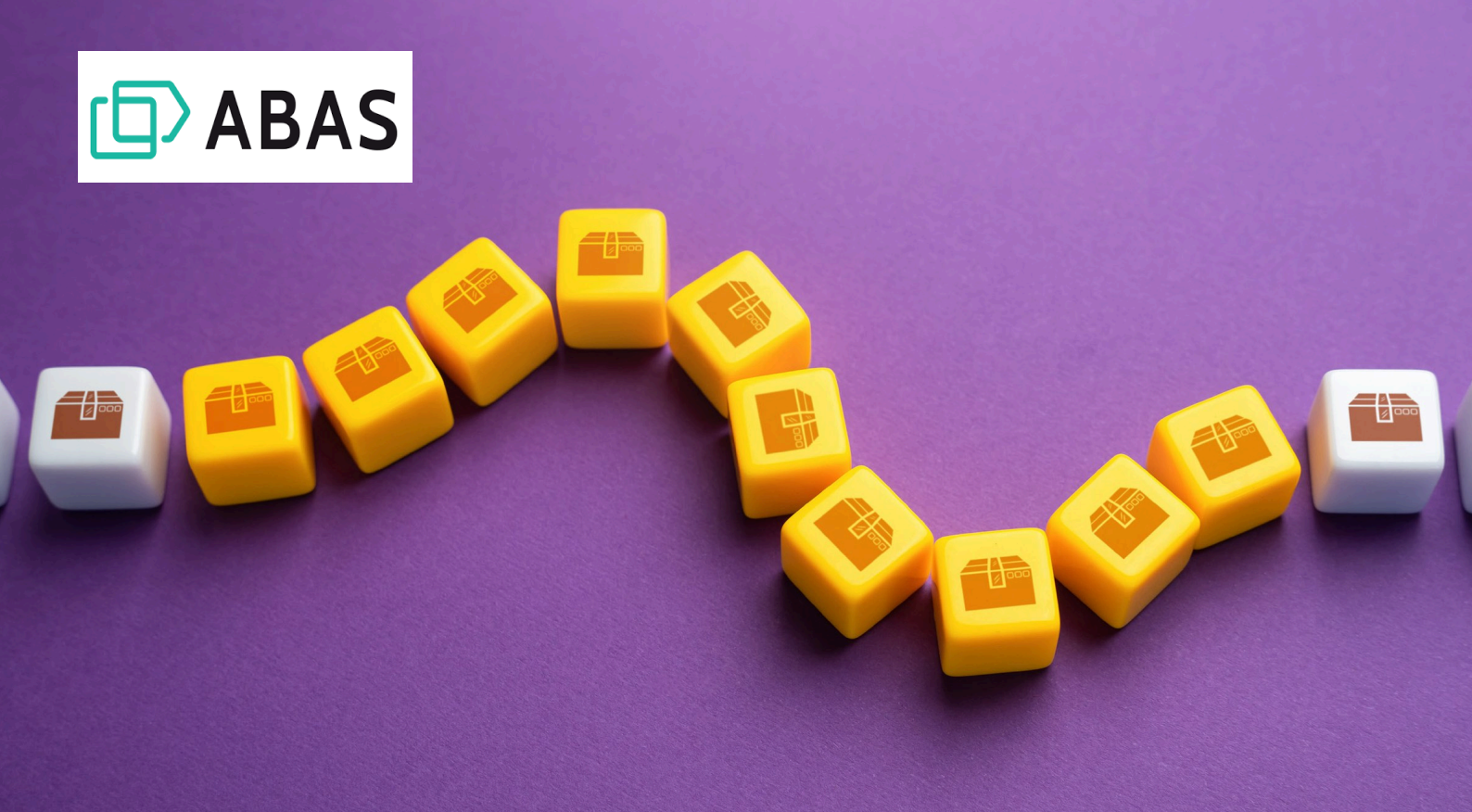
New apps: Meeting rooms, Frondesk, To-do

Last but not least, we created two new apps: the Meeting Rooms app includes a display mode to show the current and upcoming meetings planned in the room. It's also possible to book the room directly from the display mode, for example, from a tablet next to the room's entrance.

If you ever invited a guest to visit your business and had them wander aimlessly in the lobby or even get lost, the new Frondesk app is for you! Once a guest arrives on site, they can check in, notify the right person, and even request a drink - all using one deceptively simple mobile app.

Remember the Notes app? Don't be surprised if you can't find it! This handy little app has been transformed into To-do, a simple but powerful tool designed to boost productivity. Any To-do can be converted into a Project task, allowing you to organize your days even better!

Odoo 17 - yup, you just got more productive! [Try it here for free.](#)

A decorative graphic at the top of the page shows a series of yellow and white cubes arranged in a curved path on a purple background. Each cube has a small icon of a building or warehouse on its top face.

Abas ERP Ensures 50% Shorter Delivery Times and Impresses with Maximum Flexibility and Customizability



Since their founding in 1909, the Speck Group has been one of the primary drivers of innovation in the field of liquid and gas pumping. Today, their portfolio includes various pumps, compressors and motors for diverse industrial applications: From medical technology, the chemical, pharmaceutical, plastics and automotive industries to wind turbines and temperature control and cooling devices. The company manufactures their products primarily on an order-by-order basis and according to individual specifications and supplies OEMs and plant engineers in over 80 countries worldwide. Production not only takes place at the headquarters in Roth, near Nuremberg, Germany, but Speck also operates its own production facility in China and sales companies in France, Spain, Thailand, Japan, Taiwan, Australia and the USA. Due to continuous growth and a high variety of products, the pump specialist is dependent on an agile IT infrastructure capable of being adapted to individual processes with as little effort as possible.

Speck therefore decided to implement abas ERP back in 2008 and has benefited to this day from the high flexibility and user-friendliness of the solution for midmarket businesses. In particular, the ease of customization

while maintaining update-compatibility delivers great added value: Speck can also map special processes in the software without jeopardizing the future security of the system.

“In the abas world, the motto really is: ‘Nothing’s impossible’. Even if many processes are near to the standard, there are always deviations somewhere that have to be mapped quickly in an ERP system.”

*Torsten Hahn_ COO and
Authorized Signatory*

Three Companies – One ERP Client

The challenge for Speck in Roth lies in three individual companies divided by product groups that require a common ERP client but are strictly separate from an accounting perspective. Thanks to the tried-and-tested 7-step abas GIM (Global Implementation Method) methodology, the implementation went smoothly and the ERP system was able to go live according to plan. “I was initially opposed to the implementation method, in part because I felt that I already knew our requirements and what we needed. But the experience was eye opening and I can only recommend the procedure to everyone today,” explains Torsten Hahn, COO and authorized representative of Speck Pumpen Walter Speck GmbH & Co. KG. The software has been supporting the mechanical engineers in all areas of the company for more than 13 years without any downtime

and forms the data-supported basis for all business processes. Compared to the isolated solutions that the mechanical engineers had used previously, abas ERP delivers a significantly improved workflow organization, streamlined processes, and a high level of information transparency.

Delivery Times Halved Thanks to Abas ERP

A major benefit can be seen in the area of sales planning, since abas ERP contributes to a significant improvement in the delivery deadlines situation: Manually managing production orders is a thing of the past and the entire process is fully automated. This is not only an advantage when changes are made to orders, since reworked plans are automatically adjusted and production errors avoided - the ERP solution also drives process efficiency across the board. This



way, Speck was able to reduce the delivery time from around 3 to 5 months to around 6 to 10 weeks and thus achieve a time saving of about 50%. In addition, the sales planning has helped to reduce inventories in the long term and has proven to be a valuable safeguard during the delivery difficulties caused by recent crises: Because the required end products are divided directly into BOMs by abas ERP, Speck can commission vendors with sufficient time buffers and react significantly faster.

Multisite Creates Efficiency

Due to their strong international orientation, the group of companies also achieves significant added value thanks to the Multisite and the multi-client capability of abas ERP. The connection to the foreign locations enables master data to be exchanged in real time: For example, when selling to the US branch, the appropriate incoming packing slips are generated directly in their system and downstream processes, such as scheduling and delivery date calculation, are automatically triggered after the order is released. As a result, Speck benefits from significant relief in the area of administration and can handle these processes more easily and in a shorter time.

Guaranteed Upgrade-Compatibility Despite Customizations

Another important feature for Speck is the adaptability of the ERP software. abas ERP's high level of customizability makes any number of special features achievable, for example, a large number of variants can be mapped effortlessly and the system can be adapted to new requirements as they arise. "In the abas world, the motto really is

"Nothing's impossible"," according to Torsten Hahn. "Even if many processes are near to the standard, there are always deviations somewhere that have to be mapped quickly in an ERP system." At Speck, this includes quality management and the area of service. For example, the mechanical engineers use their own service module that maps the entire process, from the recording of a warranty claim to the return of the goods, including damage reports, photos, and descriptions of the parts in question. One USP Speck in abas ERP compared to other ERP systems is the guaranteed upgrade-compatibility of their customizations: Because the software architecture keeps the core functions separate from the flexible adjustments, the latter are automatically adopted during release changes. "This is really unique and still impresses us to this day," says Torsten Hahn. Because it makes it possible to implement the new version in just a few days and without risking system outages.

In addition to the customization options, the company benefits not least from the connections to external systems, which also include a product configurator. This enables the sales department to create a completely new product with just a few clicks, for which abas ERP in turn automatically generates the BOM and the work plan. The product configurator generates 3D models and dimensional drawings. abas ERP then embeds the dimensional drawings in sales order documents and the 3D models are recorded in the product. The system-side specification of the steps to be followed helps to minimize the risk of errors, while simultaneously increasing the process speed. As a result, Speck is able to reduce the quotation phase from 14 days to 15 minutes.

Together Into the Future

With abas ERP Speck has a flexible software that grows to meet their increasing requirements and ensures the company is optimally equipped to meet the challenges of the future. "All in all, we are very well positioned with abas ERP and thanks to the high level of customization, we also have the security of being able to optimally react to potential requirements with flexible adjustments," summarizes Torsten Hahn. For this reason, the pump manufacturer would like to continue investing in the cooperation with the German software provider and the next plans are already in development: The introduction of the new version abas ERP 21 is coming up. Furthermore, the expansion of the project management add-on, which is currently in the test phase at Speck, is also on the agenda. Last but not least, the company is working on a joint project with FORCAM, which involves replacing PDC terminals with direct data acquisition on the machines.

"All in all, we are very well positioned with abas ERP and thanks to the high level of customization, we also have the security of being able to optimally react to potential requirements with flexible adjustments."

Torsten Hahn_ COO and Authorized Signatory



Nestlé S.A.: Achieving a global cloud transformation



Explore Nestlé's journey with SAP

With sales of more than one billion products a day, Nestlé S.A. is one of the world's largest food and beverage companies. And with over 2,000 brands in 188 countries, the company's operations are as large as they are complex. Nestlé's journey with SAP began 20 years ago when it standardized its global ERP systems. Today, cloud solutions from SAP help support the digitization of everything from advanced analytics, customer experience, sustainability tracking to workforce and talent management.

275,000

Employees worldwide have a single point-of-entry to all SAP applications.

99.97%

Increased system availability with a simplified global IT infrastructure.

1,200+

Terabytes of data moved to the cloud.

“Moving to the cloud is a huge endeavor for us, but it’s critical to the business. It makes us more agile and resilient.”

Chris Wright
Head of Information
Technology & CIO,
Nestlé S.A.

The Challenge

Strengthen the core: Building an IT infrastructure fit for global scale and complexity

To stay in the hearts and minds of consumers for 156 years as Nestlé has, you need to embrace change. But when your company sells more than a billion products each day and employs more than 275,000 people who manage over 2,000 brands in 188 countries, that’s easier said than done.

Nestlé’s business models and routes to market are changing as constantly as the world around us. Consumer expectations have shifted, and digital commerce is accelerating quickly. Supporting a future ready workforce with great employee experiences and efficiency at scale.

Nestlé knew that at the core of every successful company is a solid IT infrastructure built to utilize data and provide the business insights that guide decision-making. And so it began its digital transformation journey.

The Solution

Transforming with a seamless journey to the cloud

To ensure a smooth, disruption-free transition to a more dynamic, reliable, and scalable infrastructure, Nestlé selected the [RISE with SAP solution](#)—a complete offering of ERP software, industry practices and outcome-driven services designed to help companies take advantage of cloud computing in their mission-critical, core systems. With its global cloud transformation, Nestlé is now able to automate business processes across its operations, create innovative business models at global scale and achieve greater agility and resilience.

All of Nestlé’s cloud solutions are integrated and feed into its analytics tools allowing 275,000 employees worldwide to have a single point-of-entry to all SAP applications. This is a major game-changer, reducing the time and effort to manage IT systems.

With help from [SAP Services and Support](#), including [SAP MaxAttention](#) services and the SAP Solution Delivery Center group, Nestlé shut down nine data centers and more than 10,000 servers. This enabled the company to migrate thousands of applications, 300 instances of SAP software, and a total of 1,200 terabytes of data to the cloud. Despite the size and complexity of the project, it was delivered on time, on budget, and without disruption to the business.

“What we have between the Nestlé IT teams and the SAP Services and Support team is a true partnership that delivered on an ambitious transformation program—one that’s critical to Nestlé’s future success in the marketplace,” Chris Wright, CIO.

Optimizing recruitment to retirement processes

One of the first areas of Nestlé’s digital transformation was the transformation of HR systems. The company used SAP SuccessFactors to standardize and automate HR processes that support everything from recruitment to retirement. Nestlé also uses [SAP Business Technology Platform \(SAP BTP\)](#) to develop custom extensions of [SAP SuccessFactors](#) for situations such as high-volume hiring during seasonal surges.

By creating a hiring application that allows for batch handling and validation of employment data, Nestlé sped up the hiring process and made it much less cumbersome. Additionally, Nestlé now has a chatbot that speaks over 20 languages and answers simple and common questions from thousands of candidates each week without input (interactions) from HR professionals, providing a more seamless experience to the candidates and allowing the Nestlé team to focus on other work.

“In the past, failing systems took approximately six hours to recover. That meant six hours of downtime in factories and distribution centers. Today, our platforms are up and running again in less than ten minutes—and many end users don’t even know that there was an outage.”

Ralf Huebenthal
Global Head of IT Platforms,
Nestlé S.A.

“SAP SuccessFactors is our people backbone. It provides the common processes, systems, and data that let us create engaging people experiences at scale.”

*Giancarlo Pala_
Head of IT HR, Nestlé S.A.*

Transforming Customer Experience with One-Stop Shop

Nestlé is enhancing the customer experience for its business customers by streamlining the ordering, tracking, and invoicing processes. The existing approach relied on frequent telephone contact, resulting in time-consuming processes and potential errors. To overcome these challenges and adapt to the “Consumerization of Commerce,” Nestlé implemented a global platform based on SAP Commerce Cloud. This platform eliminates the need for telephone contact by providing real-time insights into orders, invoices, and delivery information.

By offering a digital self-service portal, Nestlé improves the ordering and payment process, making it easier, quicker, and more efficient for retailers, wholesalers, supermarkets, and distributors. The unified one-stop shop built on [SAP Commerce Cloud](#) has revolutionized

the previous customer service approach, reducing waiting times, enhancing flexibility, and ensuring transparency. This transition aligns with Nestlé’s recognition of the importance of offering a seamless digital customer experience to stay competitive and meet evolving consumer expectations. The implementation of the platform not only benefits customers but also optimizes internal processes, increases flexibility, and supports Nestlé’s sustainability efforts through paperless invoicing and better insights into orders, deliveries, and transportation.

“Our customers are constantly innovating and transforming. Similar to our consumers, they are increasingly collaborating through digital platforms and solutions. It was therefore a logical choice for us to offer them a seamless and enhanced digital experience.”

*Pablo Nill_
Sr. Product Group
Manager Customer Service
Information Technology,
Nestlé S.A.*

The Result

Better IT infrastructure means better business efficiency and agility

Nestlé has seen a range of benefits from its implementation of RISE with SAP, which has enabled a rapid and cost-effective cloud transformation, reducing costs, and improving the security and compliance of its applications. In simplifying its global IT infrastructure, the company has increased systems availability to 99.97% with outage times reduced from six hours to seven minutes. With SAP BTP, the company can now deploy digital assets 10 times faster than before, increasing business agility and reducing time spent managing IT.

Business units such as human resources have seen improvements in their operations, too. Not only do they benefit from innovative applications like the multilingual chatbot, but increased automation has helped streamline and automate processes. Nestlé has also standardized the annual bonus and salary review processes across the company. Instead of taking a different approach in each country, 15,000 managers in more than 100 countries now use one common solution that has automated 95% of review processes.

The transition to a customer-oriented approach and improved customer experience has yielded significant benefits. The reliance on the internal ERP system has diminished with the implementation of SAP Commerce Cloud, enabling easier connections and freeing the company from IT system constraints. This enhanced flexibility has led to smoother processes and better visibility of ongoing activities. Customers can now manage orders and inquiries independently,

allowing the customer service team to focus on more complex customer questions or provide additional support to the sales force teams.

Nestlé has strong commitments when it comes to sustainability and is using the information architecture of SAP to understand how its processes, supply chain, and manufacturing practices can be optimized to achieve these.

Future Plans

Improving the consumer experience

With Nestlé's direct-to-consumer business increasing by more than 14% in the last year, the company is piloting SAP Commerce Cloud-based applications and portals to ensure that the customer has the same shopping experience buying directly from Nestlé as they do from a retailer.

Nestlé plans to continue its journey to migrate its entire business operations to [SAP S/4HANA Cloud, private edition](#), with finance and procurement already live.

Nestlé's digital transformation with SAP is helping to achieve their mission to unlock the power of food to enhance quality of life for everyone. And with SAP cloud solutions at the core, there is nothing stopping the company from fulfilling its purpose to be a force for good.

SAP helps Nestlé S.A. run better

Key business outcomes and benefits

- Reduced time spent on IT, allowing the company to quickly adjust business models and enter new markets

- Increased reliability, resilience, and performance of the platform
- Enhanced visibility and transparency
- 70% of hiring tasks now automated, improving data quality and cutting processing time by up to 90% in some markets



Featured solutions and services

- [RISE with SAP](#) can transition your current ERP data and processes to the cloud with less risk and without compromise. The bundle of tailor-made ERP software, transformation services, business analytics, and partner expertise guides you along a personalized path to the cloud.

- [SAP S/4HANA Cloud, private edition](#) is a ready-to-run cloud ERP that delivers the latest industry best practices and continuous innovation.

- [SAP Business Technology Platform](#) is a unified, business-centric platform that helps companies decide confidently, act with integrity, connect processes, data, and experiences, and achieve continued business innovation

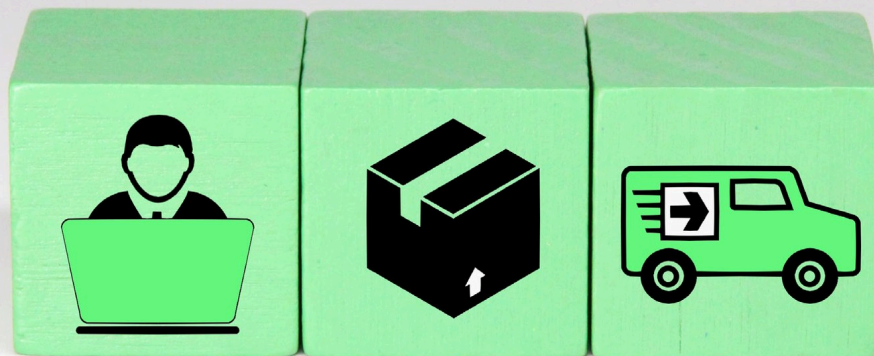
- [SAP SuccessFactors HXM Suite](#) offers individualized experiences and strategic solutions – with mobile self-services available anytime, anywhere that empower employees to reach their full potential.

- [SAP MaxAttention](#) can help you realize the full potential of your intelligent enterprise vision with on-site, premium access to trusted SAP experts, tools, and methodologies that can help deliver your expected outcomes successfully with SAP solutions.

- [SAP Commerce Cloud](#) solution provides a trusted e-commerce platform to help you innovate at scale and tap enterprise-wide data to boost profits and customer satisfaction.

About Nestlé S.A.

Nestlé S.A. is a Swiss multinational food and drink processing conglomerate corporation. It is the largest publicly held food company in the world, measured by revenue and other metrics, since 2014.



Jeffree Star & 80 Influencers 'Drop' Products Via Killer Merch and Acumatica Cloud ERP

Flash Sales Require Integrated ERP with Sophisticated Distribution to Quickly Ship Tens of Thousands of Orders

Overview

YouTube Influencer Jeffree Star, now with more than 16 million followers, launched a cosmetics company in 2014. He then partnered with Killer Merch, a distribution company founded to provide services and online stores for bands, comedians, and other influencer brands' orders. The two companies ran on QuickBooks, which they quickly outgrew. Jeffree Star Cosmetics (JSC) and Killer Merch each deployed Acumatica Cloud ERP gaining real-time visibility into inventory, royalty obligations, and critical data while also streamlining both companies' operations and providing seamless connections to Shopify.

Key Results

- Gained a connected, cloud-based ERP platform, facilitating more efficient operations, increasing client base and revenues
- Obtained native Shopify Connector, seamlessly connecting 80-plus stores to Easy Post and Acumatica, saving time and making Killer Merch more efficient
- Provided robust distribution and warehouse management platform efficiently handling millions of products
- Acquired a solid, connected financial management platform, enabling financial audits and real-time reporting
- Reduced shipping times from 6 to 10 days down to 1 or 2, while reducing customer service staffing needs from 16 to 4, eliminating overtime and saving money
- Accessed data transparency from purchase to shipping all the way through to the returns
- Achieved real-time inventory visibility and flexibility to adjust orders instantly, reducing errors and saving time
- Increased transparency of royalty obligations and critical operational and sales data, gaining accurate cash flow while providing royalties reporting in real-time rather than 7 days later
- Automated SKU item generation with product matrix, reducing manual input time from a day to an hour

- Improved customer satisfaction with faster shipment times and better access to purchase history, gaining cross-sell and upsell opportunities that increased revenues
- Streamlined customer communications and overall experience, cementing fan loyalty, increasing repeat purchases

Challenges

Social media and e-commerce have changed the way many people shop. Products are no longer announced through a press release or a press conference. Instead, they are “dropped” online.

New product drops are marquee events with count-down clocks, limited editions of customized goods, bonuses, collaborations between influencers and brands, and an addictive cycle of continuous new releases. Drops aren’t new but technology has elevated the concept. Influencers deploy suspense and exclusivity, inducing a mad rush to buy, with most fans using smartphones to make purchases.

Popular YouTube influencer Jeffree Star, with his Jeffree Star Cosmetics brand, is arguably one of the sales strategy pioneers. A sister company, Killer Merch, is the backbone that makes the back-end magic happen for more than 80 other influencers, bands, MMA fighters, and comedians as it spins up and supports online pop-up sales and stores.

While those stores can process tens of thousands of orders today, the picture was bleak before the two firms implemented Acumatica Cloud ERP’s Retail and Distribution Editions.

In 2014, Jeffree Star, Mark Bubb (who came from the music industry), Jeff Cohen, and team began Killer Merch using tools many startups adopt: QuickBooks for accounting, Shopify as its e-commerce store, and ShipStation for distribution.

“At the peak one week, we had 700,000 orders. Thankfully Acumatica was already in place.”

**Mark Bubb_
Co-Owner and Chief
Operating Officer,
Killer Merch**

Ran on QuickBooks

Jeffree Star recognized he could offer his millions of followers more than just advice and had begun making and selling cosmetics. He sourced products from overseas and assembled them in the company’s CA office, which included a 3,200-square-foot warehouse filled with folding tables.

Recognizing that other influencers would need similar merchandising, production, and distribution support, Killer Merch, began offering its back-office services to brands and bands wanting to offer fans branded apparel and other merchandise from the same office. Killer Merch creates and runs online stores, supplies retail stores, and handles tour merchandise for concerts as well as live and virtual events, among a whole host of other brand management and promotional services.

While the disconnected software trio worked in the beginning, they cratered just eight months later when Jeffree Star’s meteoric rise led to tens of thousands of orders within hours and crashed the systems. That’s because when orders came in, Killer Merch had to manually move the information from Shopify to ShipStation. When items were shipped, information from ShipStation was then typed back into QuickBooks.

The disconnected systems couldn’t provide visibility into inventory (which they had to keep on multiple spreadsheets), operations, or key data, which hampered decision-making, caused delays and was error-prone. The companies operated on a cash basis. Revenues and cost of goods sold (COGS), were not booked in the same period, says Jenni Arant, Chief Strategy Officer of JSC and Executive Vice President of Killer Merch.

Initially, Killer Merch simply sold merchandise for all influencers from one Shopify store. It took at least a week for someone to manually acquire the data to sort out various royalty payments, which made it difficult to predict cash flow or update its influencer clientele in a timely manner.

When Jeffree Star launched his first products, 30,000 customers sold out his three lipsticks within minutes. A later drop saw 300,000 orders within a few days, which overloaded the system and started key executives on a path for a better platform, better processes, and more efficient operations.

“We were doing a couple of hundred orders a day that turned into a couple of thousand orders a day that turned into tens of thousands of orders a day—in an eight-month period,” says Bubb, Co-Owner, and Chief

Operating Officer. “All of a sudden, we needed a bigger warehouse, we needed more people, and we had to move fast. In tandem, Killer Merch was also gaining more clients.”

Tens of Thousands of Orders in Minutes

Flooded with orders, it took six to 10 days just to ship out the product, which was unacceptable for customers used to Amazon’s speedy delivery and instant gratification. Even worse, the disconnected systems led to numerous errors.

“One of the biggest problems was we were still a DIY kind of punk rock mindset shipping facility,” Bubb says. “We were shipping 18 hours a day and it was tough to make sure things were going out right. Even Jeffree would spend 10 hours a day out on the line shipping in those early days, as well as myself and our whole team.”

When huge orders came in, we “had to shut everything down, import all the orders into the system, stop customer service, and stop everything they were doing,” says Taylor Dunlop, Senior Business Analyst.

Shipping Delays Led to Customer Satisfaction Issues

Everything halted because after importing Shopify order data into ShipStation, it took 12 hours to manually print orders so they could be picked, packed, and shipped, Dunlop says. They didn’t use bar codes. No changes could be made once the orders were printed, so customer service could not change orders or update addresses. Without the ability to make real-time changes to orders, returns quickly piled up. Calls from unhappy customers came in, and influencers wanting updates on their “drops” were frustrated

with a lack of information, even days after their events. “Nothing was working,” Bubb says.

The large volumes were “a problem for Shopify, a problem for PayPal, and a problem for almost any program we used in any aspect of the business because they just couldn’t handle the volume. Keep in mind, that these sales weren’t just products you stuffed into a manila envelope,” he adds.

“Everything is individually wrapped,” Bubb continues. “There’s special paper and packaging and boxes and postcards and free gifts. It’s something where we want everyone to have an experience, a premium product. There’s a lot of labor, a lot of man hours on all fronts.”

“A big feather in Acumatica’s cap is that they were able to understand what we were trying to do (integrate some 80 Shopify sites to facilitate drops) and accomplish it in a world that didn’t really exist four years before.”

**Mark Bubb_
Co-Owner and Chief
Operating Officer,
Killer Merch**

Solution

System Overhaul

To ease order input, Bubb decided that every Killer Merch client needed their own Shopify site. Then his team looked for a way to automate manual tasks and be more efficient. They wanted to connect Shopify, ShipStation, and other software they used into a single platform, one that could handle inventory and provide data insights they desperately needed.

Killer Merch evaluated several ERPs, but even the concept of an ERP was daunting, Bubb says. “We met with a variety of options in one week and at that time, it was tough for us to wrap our heads around. We were so in the weeds just trying to get things done.”

Many employees were young and had not worked with an ERP before. Many didn’t understand the concept or why it was needed, says Arant, who joined Killer Merch after working for the technology partner that deployed Acumatica. Others, like Taylor Dunlop, an analyst, had worked with Oracle NetSuite and Sage, which she was reluctant to endorse.

After meeting several vendors and seeing demos, the Killer Merch team discussed their options. “Acumatica was the one that seemed to make the most sense. It seemed like we would be able to integrate (third-party applications) and get what we wanted the quickest,” Bubb says.

“A really big feather in Acumatica’s cap is that they were able to understand what we were trying to do (integrate some 80 Shopify sites to facilitate drops) and accomplish it in a world that didn’t really exist four years before,” he adds.

Investing in Acumatica was a risk for a small company like Killer Merch, Bubb says. “It was a gamble for us. You hear plenty of horror stories of other companies and programs being put in and they spend two years and then abandon the software. So, having the assistance of Acumatica, having the reps that worked in-house with us and helped teach everybody, they made sure our investment wasn’t going to be a black hole, which I’m thankful for.”

Connected eCommerce and Distribution

JSC and Killer Merch chose Acumatica because the cloud-based platform easily connects with applications like Shopify, ShipStation, and the project management application Asana. It has robust distribution, e-commerce, and inventory functionality. Acumatica, through its Project Accounting module, easily handles royalty accounting, includes in-depth reporting and personalized dashboards, and offers data visibility into every aspect of operations, which makes decision-making much easier.

Acumatica’s native integration into Shopify allows Killer Merch to manage its back office within Acumatica’s ERP while creating an exceptional customer experience on the Shopify front end. The seamless synchronization between the two systems increases efficiency by syncing products, customers, inventory availability, sales orders, and fulfillment information in real time. That means merchants like Killer Merch don’t have to worry about selling an item on Shopify only to find out it had been sold or allocated hours earlier to someone else or hire a third party to code a connection between the two business solutions.

Benefits

Single Platform Handling Millions of Orders

Killer Merch now has a single source of truth in a cloud-based platform that connects all its third-party applications, including more than 80 Shopify stores. The company obtains critical data instantly, which shaved



a week off royalty reporting, and increased cash flow. Killer Merch also boosted revenue by tapping into customer information including purchase history, which allowed it to easily cross-sell and upsell products. Killer Merch did not have this data visibility previously.

“Access to data is the winning factor,” says Nakuma Scott, Vice President of Technology. “We’re now able to put together budgets and forecasts and make wise financial decisions because we have data available to do that.”

Most importantly, Killer Merch can easily handle a crush of orders flooding multiple Shopify sites and keep fans happy. “At the peak one week, we had 700,000 orders,” Bubb says. “Thankfully Acumatica was already in place.”

Faster Shipping Times, Ease of Order Modification

Killer Merch now operates in five warehouses totaling about 200,000 square feet. Orders flow into Acumatica from Shopify sites in real-time and are processed by a dedicated team after they are notified using Acumatica about what to pick and pack. Administrative and other employee teams no longer work overtime to help ship orders. Customer service, now a team of four, down from 16, can modify or cancel orders instantly, and that information flows to the warehouse automatically so the shipping team can pick additional items or cancel a package. “Now we aren’t canceling a thousand orders because something wasn’t calculated or one product had an error,” says Dunlop.

Real-Time, Synced Inventory

Killer Merch previously relied on physical hand counts and spreadsheets for inventory counts, Bubb says. Now incoming products are scanned into inventory and instantly visible in Acumatica. “We have millions of units floating around, with components coming in from various countries to meet up with cosmetics and we actually have a visual at all times and that’s been a game changer for production,” he says.

With accurate inventory counts and material requirements planning (MRP) functionality, Killer Merch can better plan when it needs to reorder stock accurately rather than tying up cash with too much inventory or fielding complaints when items go out of stock.

Data-Driven Decisions

Executives no longer work from intuition. They know which items are profitable because they have dashboards with information upon which to make wise decisions. “Just being on the same page with information has helped,” Bubb says. “What’s working? What’s not working? Where are we making a profit? Those metrics are something both companies didn’t have access to. It was ‘Let’s make a black hoodie because we like black hoodies.’ Well, are they making us any money? We didn’t know.”

“We were just willing our way towards making money as opposed to making smart decisions.”

Those smart decisions allow them to better counsel new influencers, brands, and bands looking to cash in on their names and understand what items may sell better.

“We’re constantly launching new brands and when you have this client that has this wild idea like ‘I want to sell this neon green sweatshirt’ or something like that, and we can look at the data and say ‘Okay, we had

a client with the same request and the neon green didn’t sell,’” Dunlop says. “We now have the data to back that up.

Full Customer View Increases Sales

Killer Merch now has easy access to customer data, such as purchase history, that it didn’t have before.

“We’re able to make well-advised suggestions targeted to the customer to drive revenue,” says Scott. “We’re able to get data from Acumatica, Shopify, our marketing system, and our shopping cart system, and combine it in one place to get a better picture of what a customer looks like.”

Armed with that information, he says, “We can see that they might have two out of three items in a collection, we can see the third item is in stock, and we can offer that item. In QuickBooks, we didn’t have anything like that.”

Having data like that is priceless.

“Even Jeffree—when we go through the numbers for the new skincare products—said, ‘Wow this is so powerful. It’s amazing to see the cleanser doing this versus the moisturizer. People are trying these new products.’” Arant says. “We love those kinds of metrics. That information wasn’t possible before.”

Improved Customer Service & Customer Satisfaction

With Acumatica, Killer Merch gained the opportunity to be proactive with end customers, which was a game changer, Bubb says. Keeping fans and brands informed goes a long way toward fostering goodwill and future orders while avoiding possible social media backlash.

“Being able to be transparent with them, knowing where their product or order is, or if something needs to be changed, we’re creating a better experience,” Bubb says. “And if customers are happy, I’m doing what I’m supposed to be doing. We’re able to use Acumatica to be proactive with the customer.”

With two successful Acumatica deployments on the books, Killer Merch is extending the connected ERP platform to an additional merchandising firm, Absolute Merch, and considering adopting it for additional distribution companies or warehouse locations as they spin up new sites for new bands, brands, comedians, or athletes.

“We’ve come to rely on Acumatica to run the whole company,” says Arant. “It’s cool to see how far we have come and that we don’t have to make guesses anymore. We can make decisions based on the information in front of us in Acumatica.”





Dura-Shiloh Standardizes Data Across 15 Facilities and Limits Material Variance with Plex ERP

Dura-Shiloh is a global automotive manufacturer and supplier with a focus on all things mobility, from space frames and cross-car beams to seating systems and steering components. They are renowned worldwide, with 32 facilities in 13 countries across North America, Europe, and Asia. Dura-Shiloh works with both combustion engines and electric vehicles, giving them a leg up in the automotive manufacturing world. Their most recent expansion in North America is comprised of a state-of-the-art manufacturing site for electric vehicle battery enclosures.

By focusing on electrification, light-weighting, safety, and performance, Dura-Shiloh's pillars of technology, they have extended the customer experience and made a name for themselves across the globe. As they reinvent mobility and drive new product advancements, the team at Dura-Shiloh solidifies their position as a consistent partner for their customers and a prominent manufacturer in the automotive world.

At A Glance

- Implemented Plex at 15 plants
- Achieved less than 1% material variance
- Standardized data across all facilities

Expectations, Plex Selection Process, & Planning

As their business expanded rapidly, Dura-Shiloh realized that in North America alone, their facilities were running on a total of seven different ERP Systems. This made it difficult to access consistent data from plant to plant. Terry McKinney, Shiloh Director of Digital Transformation, stated, "We spent more time looking for the right data and cleaning it than we did capturing the data."

The team at Dura-Shiloh made a collective decision to simplify their facilities and switch to a single ERP system to increase both productivity and connectivity. Not only

“When Plex was introduced as a potential ERP solution, the Dura-Shiloh team quickly determined that it would bring invaluable assets to the day-to-day workflow. Not only could Plex be implemented across all Dura-Shiloh locations, but the features within Plex’s ERP were created specifically for manufacturers, appealing to Dura-Shiloh’s business model.”

were they looking for one solution, but they also needed a system that was both user-friendly and could easily connect multiple facilities. By simplifying their ERP model and picking one solution that could both store and retrieve their data for reporting, Dura-Shiloh was confident in their ability to improve business and ultimately make more informed decisions moving forward.

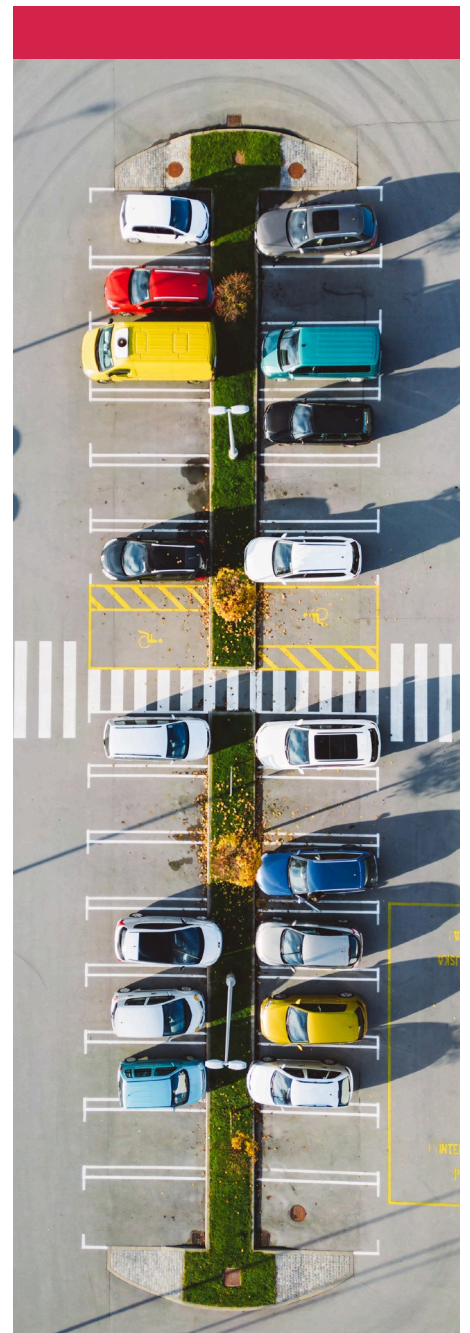
Before any implementation could take place, the Dura-Shiloh team spent seven months strategizing and designing a method that would later be used to simplify the implementation process from

one plant to the next. A team of employees was formed, including project managers, system analysts, and shop associates, to ensure that all areas of the business were being represented in the implementation process. By developing a common model, Dura-Shiloh found a process that worked for everyone and can be expanded upon in the future as they continue to grow and acquire new business.

When Plex was introduced as a potential ERP solution, the Dura-Shiloh team quickly determined that it would bring invaluable assets to the day-to-day workflow. Not only could Plex be implemented across all Dura-Shiloh locations, but the features within Plex’s ERP were created specifically for manufacturers, appealing to Dura-Shiloh’s business model. By making the initial process a dual effort between Plex and Dura-Shiloh, both teams were able to communicate requirements and determine exactly what Plex was capable of in conjunction with Dura-Shiloh’s expectations. The design process that was created allowed the team to easily combine Plex and Shiloh resources and better visualize the implementation. They also visited several representative sites to gather different implementation requirements and better understand the process before implementing themselves.

Implementations 1-15 & Advice

Shiloh partnered with Plex Professional Services to build and execute an implementation plan targeting deploying a standard solution model across their facilities. Since their initial implementation with Plex, Dura-Shiloh has fully implemented 14 additional plants. McKinney described these implementations as “flawless” and stated that now, “everybody can



talk the same talk.” With one ERP system in place, all Dura-Shiloh facilities have a common language, and all team members are on the same page. Not only has this allowed communication to be streamlined but connectivity has drastically improved, too.

Dura-Shiloh’s Plex implementation yielded positive results quickly. As one example, physical inventory is checked on a yearly basis. After their first physical inventory check post-Plex implementation, one facility described how they had less than 1% material variance.

From one implementation to the next, the Dura-Shiloh team has become more accustomed to the process and gained more confidence. As they've found additional ways of measuring progress and success with each new facility that implements Plex's ERP system, the process has also become more efficient. The learning curve of the initial implementation helped Dura-Shiloh prepare for future acquisitions and a transition to a high level of self-sufficiency. During the first two implementations, Dura-Shiloh had a Plex delivery consultant available on-site to answer any questions that employees may have had. After working closely with Plex and developing a strong internal implementation team that met consistently and provided support to the team when it was needed, Dura-Shiloh felt confident moving forward with more limited Plex assistance.

Given that Dura-Shiloh implementations are done on a plant-by-plant basis, the team has had the ability to carry out preliminary meetings with each plant prior to their Plex implementation. An additional kick-off meeting also takes place once the implementation process has started, ensuring that all steps of the process are outlined, and everyone understands the timeframe and expectations. All associates on the plant floor are trained directly on the Plex system, further ensuring success during each transition.

By having strong executive sponsorship and a centralized governance model, Dura-Shiloh was able to maintain a common configuration and deployment approach throughout their rollout. This allowed them to quickly deploy each site live on Plex in under 16 weeks, an exceptionally expedient

benchmark for an ERP deployment. In the coming months, Dura-Shiloh has plans to take the next steps in their road to Industry 4.0. With 15 implementations already under their belt, the team is confident in their ability to self-implement moving forward. As they continue to expand business through acquisition, the possibilities are endless for Dura-Shiloh with Plex in their corner.

About Dura-Shiloh

Dura-Shiloh is a global automotive systems supplier specializing in the design, engineering, and manufacturing of solutions that drive the evolution of mobility. With over 100 years of experience, they are recognized by leading vehicle manufacturers as a preferred partner of systems that improve safety and enhance driving performance.





DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

ZEISS Group: Combining process innovation and digital transformation to reshape manufacturing in a highly regulated environment



Realizing a vision for smart manufacturing in the cloud

When leading optics technology provider Carl Zeiss AG (ZEISS Group) embarked on its digital transformation journey, it adopted the SAP Digital Manufacturing solution and SAP Business Technology Platform as its advanced manufacturing execution system. Direct interaction between the shop floor and the top floor means improved efficiency and no more manual inputs.

~100%

reduction of paper-based digital
history record printing.

~>3x

more efficient, going from 3 to 10
parallel rollouts.

~100%

elimination of printed work-
instructions verification for the
first rollout.

“We are just at the beginning of our smart factory transformation journey. With SAP Digital Manufacturing, we will make manufacturing more intelligent, more efficient, and more productive now and in the years to come.”

*Jochen Scheuerer_
Head of Connected Smart
Factory, Carl Zeiss AG*

Digitalizing production practices in a highly regulated environment

For more than 175 years, a unique, innovative spirit has imbued Carl Zeiss AG (ZEISS Group) with real staying power, allowing it to challenge the limits of what is physically and technically feasible. As one of the world's leading optics technology companies, ZEISS Group has a balanced portfolio geared toward future-oriented markets in optics, precision mechanics, and optoelectronics.

Committed to advancing the world of optics, ZEISS Group operates in around 50 countries with more than 30 production sites, over 60 sales and service locations, and around 30 research and development facilities worldwide.

Ready to bring its digital transformation strategy to life, ZEISS Group mapped out key requirements for digitalizing its shop floor and manufacturing processes, mindful of the stringent regulatory requirements of its operational environment.

Jochen Scheuerer, head of Connected Smart Factory at ZEISS Group, explains, “In general, the idea was to harmonize operations and support smooth production practices, with standardized applications replacing manual production processes. But a major consideration involved the very high standards of testing and documentation required to meet our regulatory obligations. This provided a multitude of challenges in terms of how to adapt them to an entirely new context.”

“Part of the success of our proof of concept using the SAP Digital Manufacturing solution at our subsidiary Carl Zeiss Meditec was the ability to scale it across our group of companies in a timely manner.”

*Jochen Scheuerer_
Head of Connected Smart
Factory, Carl Zeiss AG*

Connecting smart production lines of the future

Committed to a cloud-first strategy, ZEISS Group looked for a cloud-based manufacturing execution system (MES) to underpin its smart production lines of the future. It made the decision to invest in the SAP Digital Manufacturing solution. Guided by strategic partner Deloitte in tandem with implementation partner Syntax, ZEISS Group deployed the solution in a proof of concept. And to prepare the solution for validation and operation, the company took advantage of SAP Services and Support offerings, gaining expert advice from SAP Enterprise Support services.

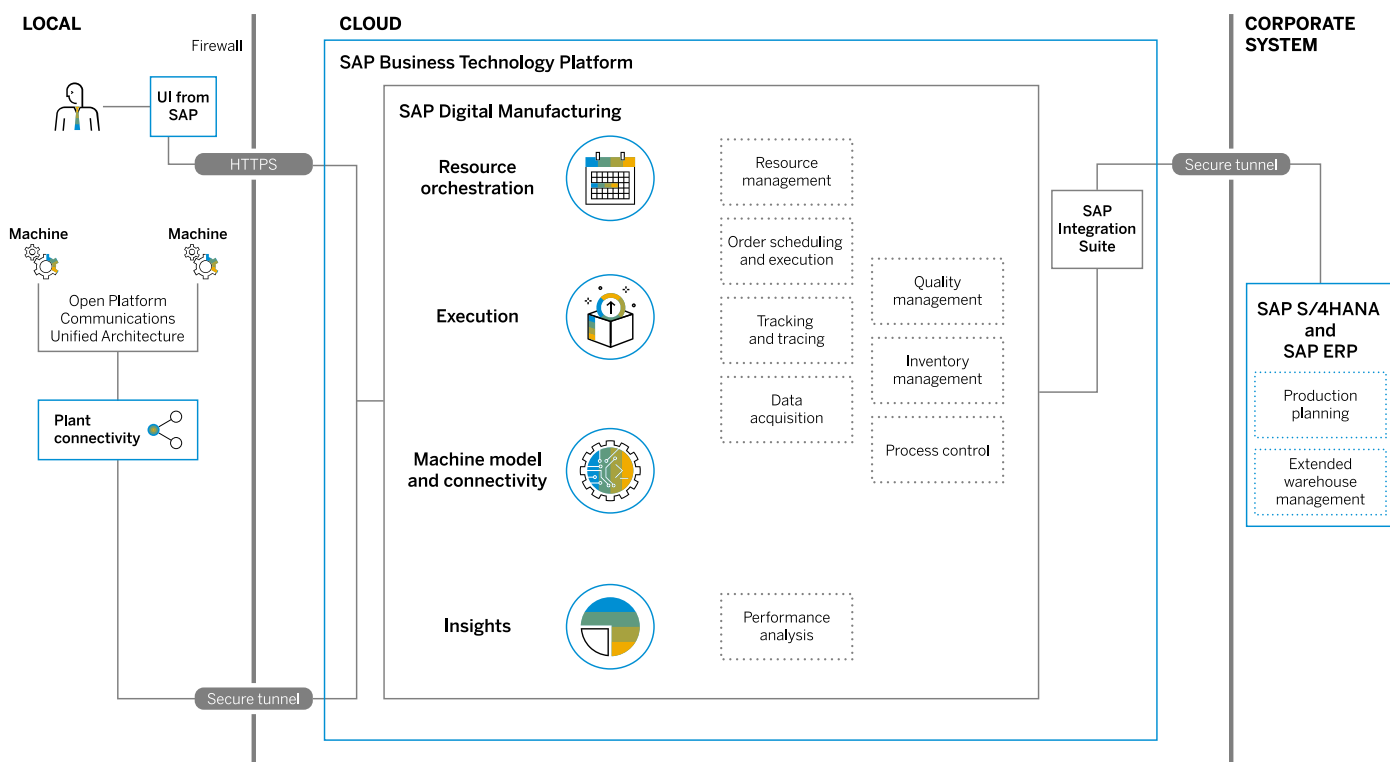
Andreas Busse, with Connected Smart Factory at Carl Zeiss AG, comments, “We needed to invent new processes for staying validated through new releases and had to talk about what the operation of that could look like in the context of manufacturing combined with the cloud. And we had to discuss the governance of the entire solution. There were many parts of this project that were new and hadn't been done before.”

Forming the backbone of its manufacturing operations, SAP Digital Manufacturing connects top-floor business systems to shop-floor equipment, providing visibility across plants. Connectivity between the MES and the shop floor allows ZEISS Group to send information about a production order from the MES layer directly to the shop-floor layer. This also acts as a process control mechanism, meaning production can't be started or a special pause executed without all the correct information in place. And when finishing processes on the shop floor, confirmation signals trigger in SAP Digital Manufacturing. Busse adds, “We have direct

interaction between the shop floor and the solution, eliminating manual inputs. And based on those various actions and events, SAP Digital Manufacturing offers specific information to the machine-to-machine exchange.”

SAP Business Technology Platform (SAP BTP) was used to provide the technical foundation to manage and audit processes and workflows and integrate with its instance of the SAP ERP application and other custom apps, shown in the architecture

diagram below. This creates a link between its production and business operations, allowing the production orders housed in SAP ERP to be shared with the MES for good issue confirmations and approval.



“It’s a much faster world, and our innovation potential is now much higher thanks to SAP Digital Manufacturing giving us agility in a manufacturing context.”

Andreas Busse_
Connected Smart Factory,
Carl Zeiss AG

Rolling out smart manufacturing capabilities enterprise-wide

Following the successful proof of concept at its subsidiary Carl Zeiss Meditec, the implementation of SAP Digital Manufacturing across ZEISS Group’s production lines is now in full swing, with 29 rollouts planned over the fiscal year.

“Using the solution, we have defined an approach that allows us to roll out MES projects into production, including the validation at the end of every sprint,” says Scheuerer. “This is highly unusual and quite innovative and means we are packaging an entire solution that’s fully tested and fully documented once per month.”

Connecting the shop floor with the top floor blends process innovation and new automated production processes and means the management team at ZEISS Group has more accessible and transparent production information. By integrating production execution, visibility, and analysis to optimize manufacturing performance, the company is seeing significant efficiency gains, an increase in production output, and improved product quality. Importantly, the solution allows the company to fulfill its medical product traceability requirements. This includes a history of the product, starting with the process used to assemble it in the production line, as the data previously collected manually on paper now resides in the solution.

Terms of efficiency, using the digital manufacturing execution system allows ZEISS Group to improve its operations from a sustainability standpoint. Busse explains, “The company now has data to provide a better understanding of where scrap is produced, so we can alter inputs to use less energy to produce the same number of finished parts.”

“We chose the SAP Digital Manufacturing solution because of its extensive functionality and because our partnership with SAP allows us to contribute to the future road map of the solution based on our needs.”

*Jochen Scheuerer_
Head of Connected Smart
Factory, Carl Zeiss AG*

Realizing its strategic vision for operational excellence

As part of its digital transformation, ZEISS Group is executing a number of strategic programs in tandem with its digital manufacturing initiative, including planning for operational excellence and the implementation of SAP S/4HANA.

Want to know more about ZEISS Group?

Connected Transformation Leveraging Manufacturing Cloud (DMC) (SAP Innovation Award Pitch Deck) Smart SAP Digital Factory Worldwide

About Deloitte

Deloitte is a top SAP global strategic partner serving more than 1,000 active SAP clients globally. The firm has provided SAP software implementation services to more than 3,000 clients, delivering more than 7,000 SAP software implementation engagements to these clients in the past 10 years. Guiding program and vendor management, Deloitte helped ZEISS Group build a future-ready technology infrastructure.

Deloitte.

About Syntax

Syntax Systems GmbH & Co. KG is a leading managed cloud provider for mission-critical applications. As ZEISS Group’s implementation partner for the SAP Digital Manufacturing solution, Syntax provided product expertise and built the required custom applications on SAP BTP. Its knowledge contributed to delivering a solution that matches the company’s processes and scales to its needs.

 **SYNTAX**



ERPNEWS