ERP NEWS
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ERP AND THE GIG ECONOMY

Technologies for a Flexible Workforce

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EDITOR'S NOTE

Welcome to the August issue of ERPNews Magazine, where we explore a theme that's rapidly gaining relevance in today's business landscape: ***ERP and the Gig Economy: Technologies for a Flexible Workforce.***

The gig economy is redefining traditional employment structures, offering workers greater flexibility and companies access to a diverse pool of talent. As this trend accelerates, the need for ERP systems that can adapt to the demands of a flexible, decentralized workforce has never been more critical. In this issue, we delve into how ERP technologies are evolving to meet these challenges, supporting businesses in managing everything from project-based work to freelance contracts, all while ensuring operational efficiency and compliance.

We're also excited to feature an insightful interview with Daniel Oh, Vice President of Business Development at Acumatica, who shares the latest on Acumatica's Alliance Program. This initiative is a prime example of how ERP providers are fostering innovation and collaboration to support not just traditional businesses but also those navigating the complexities of the gig economy. Daniel's perspectives on the strategic benefits and future direction of the Alliance Program offer valuable insights into how ERP solutions can empower a flexible workforce.

As you explore this issue, we invite you to consider how your own organization can leverage these emerging technologies to stay competitive in an evolving market. The intersection of ERP and the gig economy is more than just a trend—it's the future of work.

Happy reading!

Pinar SENGUL, EDITOR

ERPNEWS

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Transforming Cloud ERP Partnerships: An In-Depth Look at Acumatica's New Alliance Program with Daniel Oh

In this month's issue of ERPNews Magazine, we had the opportunity to speak with Daniel Oh, Vice President of Business Development at Acumatica, about the company's newly launched Alliance Program. This strategic initiative is set to transform partnerships within the cloud ERP market, providing extensive resources, training, and support to organizations looking to enhance their operational efficiency and drive innovation.

In our Q&A session, Daniel offers an in-depth look at how the Alliance Program is designed to foster co-innovation, create synergies, and deliver tailored solutions that propel small and mid-sized businesses (SMBs) forward in an increasingly competitive landscape. From the strategic benefits for partners to the long-term vision for the program, this interview sheds light on Acumatica's commitment to building a robust and collaborative ecosystem.

Dive into the full interview to learn how the Alliance Program is paving the way for the future of cloud ERP solutions.

1. Can you provide an overview of Acumatica's new Alliance Program and its primary objectives?

We launched Acumatica's new Alliance Program to broaden our reach in identifying and supporting small and mid-sized businesses that can benefit from Acumatica's cloud-based business management solutions. This no-cost program fosters growth through co-innovation, enhancing collaboration at scale and investing in the future. By partnering with experts across various industries, technologies and finance sectors, the Alliance Program aims to improve efficiency and drive operational excellence, assisting businesses in transforming their operations. We believe this will appeal to accounting firms, private equity firms, independent software vendors, consulting firms and other organizations looking to better support their customers and become a vital part of the best and most collaborative ecosystem in the Cloud ERP market.

Interview with
Daniel Oh,
Vice President of Business Development, Acumatica

Acumatica
The Cloud ERP

2. What are the key strategic benefits that partners and customers can expect from joining the Alliance Program?

For starters, partners who join the Alliance Program gain access to a wealth of Acumatica's content and go-to-market strategies, along with specialized training portals. They also have access to enhanced marketing automation tools and social syndication platforms that will boost visibility and engagement. Furthermore, partners can look forward to collaborative opportunities that drive innovation and improve their solution offerings, ultimately supporting business growth and success. Acumatica's focus is on generating value for partners that join the program.

The Alliance Program helps customers as well. They receive enhanced strategic support and innovative solutions customized to their unique business needs. This customized support helps customers streamline operations and improve efficiency. Customers collaborating with Alliance Members will also benefit from access to a network of experts who provide tailored support, strategic direction and innovative solutions. This collaboration ensures that customers receive comprehensive solutions that propel their business forward.

3. How will the Alliance Program enhance efficiency and drive operational excellence for small and mid-sized businesses (SMBs) as they transform their operations?

The Alliance Program offers a robust network of experts who understand SMBs' goals. These experts provide strategic guidance to SMBs navigating challenges and offer innovative solutions to overcome them. The program encourages continuous improvement through shared best practices, helping businesses stay ahead in a competitive market.

> "The program is specifically designed to promote co-innovation and collaboration by establishing a dynamic ecosystem where partners can share best practices, develop joint solutions and cooperate on innovative projects."

4. Can you elaborate on the types of resources, training, and support that Alliance Members will have access to?

Program members will benefit from access to Acumatica's industry-specific expertise and advisory services, best-in-class training portals to develop and refine skills and advanced marketing automation tools to support their go-to-market strategies. Additionally, members will have access to social syndication platforms for broader reach and engagement and collaborative platforms for sharing best practices and creating better ways of working.

5. What specific sales and marketing benefits will businesses that join the Alliance Program receive?

Businesses that join the Alliance Program will enjoy a variety of sales and marketing benefits, including learning paths, licenses and certifications, marketing materials and templates, logos and native assets. Whether accounting firms or ISVs, these organizations will have an opportunity to create synergies, co-create solutions, co-market and co-sell their offerings, cross-refer customers, share best practices and collaborate on innovation. These resources support go-to-market strategies and enhance sales efforts with industry-specific insights.

6. How does the Alliance Program foster co-innovation and collaboration among partners, and what impact do you anticipate this will have on the cloud ERP market?

The program is specifically designed to promote co-innovation and collaboration by establishing a dynamic ecosystem where partners can share best practices, develop joint solutions and cooperate on innovative projects. This collaborative approach is expected to accelerate the development of new and creative solutions to empower businesses to thrive, enhancing the quality and diversity of cloud ERP offerings and driving market growth.

7. How will Acumatica leverage the expertise of industry, technology, and finance experts through the Alliance Program?

Acumatica will harness these experts' perspectives by partnering with them to innovate, collaborate and grow on their terms, maximizing the value of their relationship with Acumatica. Additionally, collaborations with these experts will provide advisory services within key verticals such as manufacturing, construction, distribution, retail and professional services, bolstering Acumatica's ability to address its customers' specific needs and real-world challenges.

8. What types of organizations are eligible to become Alliance Members, and what criteria must they meet to join the program?

We are particularly focused on outreach to accounting firms, independent software vendors (ISVs), consulting firms and other entities that have customers that will benefit from business technology that will help them grow and scale. To join the program, organizations must complete an application and undergo an approval process, followed by maintaining an Acumatica certification to ensure continued alignment with program standards.

9. How will the Alliance Program create synergies and foster community among its members?

By joining the Alliance Program, members will become part of an active and thriving Acumatica community of creators, partners and customers dedicated to engaging together through various processes, including a Community Forum and input on product development. The program provides platforms for members to share best practices and success stories, facilitates networking opportunities and events and offers comprehensive community resources and support. It fosters a collaborative and supportive ecosystem that drives collective success by aligning members' goals with joint growth and profitability objectives.

"By joining the Alliance Program, members will become part of an active and thriving Acumatica community of creators, partners and customers dedicated to engaging together through various processes, including a Community Forum and input on product development."

10. What are Acumatica's long-term goals for the Alliance Program, and how do you see it evolving to meet the needs of a rapidly changing business landscape?

As we look down the road, we'd like to see the Alliance Program expand our network of expert partners that provide support and expertise to our customers. In the future, the program will continuously evolve to meet the changing needs of businesses, helping them navigate the hype of new technologies and understand what solutions will work best for them, adding the most value for the business.

Acumatica
The Cloud ERP

About Acumatica

Acumatica Cloud ERP is a comprehensive business management solution that was born in the cloud and built for more connected, collaborative ways of working. Designed explicitly to enable small and mid-market companies to thrive in today's digital economy, Acumatica's flexible solution, customer-friendly business practices and industry-specific functionality help growing businesses adapt to fast-moving markets and take control of their future. For more information, visit acumatica.com or follow us on LinkedIn.

An SAP Perspective On The "Rapid Reset Attack"

As highlighted in SAP Security notes, the urgency of the 'Rapid Reset Attack' vulnerability cannot be overstated. This article will delve into this critical issue, elucidate its impact on SAP systems, and provide actionable steps to thwart these debilitating threats.

What is a 'Rapid Reset Attack'?

'Rapid Reset Attacks' send an enormous amount of cancellation requests in rapid-fire succession. These commands can bypass a server's rate limits, putting a system-breaking strain on the device's resources because opening and closing streams require few resources from the client— but can overload the server side. This denial-of-service attack initiates hundreds of thousands of HTTP/2 streams and rapidly cancels them, at scale, over an established connection. With these reset streams rapidly flowing, threat actors overwhelm websites and knock them offline. When these *attacks* were aimed at Google's cloud infrastructure in 2023, they peaked at 398 million requests per second (RPS); the ones that struck AWS and Cloudflare exceeded a volume of 155 million and 201 million RPS, respectively.

The 'Rapid Reset Attack' is cataloged under *CVE-2023-44487* and said to be exploited publicly 'in the field.' To understand this better, we must realize the Hypertext Transfer Protocol (HTTP) and its different versions.

Anyone who has ever used an internet browser knows the HTTP protocol. However, it may not be widely known that it comes in different versions. That may not be important for the average user, but it is essential for IT personnel.

Root Cause: HTTP/2

HTTP protocol version 1.1 was the main version used everywhere in the internet's nascent days. HTTP1.1 was released in 1997 and was used by all and propagated right along with the global growth of the internet. Though widely accepted and used, it had some flaws. The 1.1 version of the protocol was limited. It had issues when

Article by
Christoph Nagy
CEO, *SecurityBridge*

handling multiple requests over a single TCP connection. As the protocol was used more and more and optimizations were added, a negative impact was experienced when processing requests between the HTTP client and server. These efficiency issues were addressed and released in version 2 (HTTP/2) in 2015. The main differences are that HTTP/2 is:

- Based on binary protocols, which are more compact and less prone to errors;
- Using multiplexing for parallelization to prevent blocking of requests;
- Using header compression;
- Allowing servers to 'push' a response rather than only waiting for clients to 'pull' and;
- Doing all this over a single TCP connection.

We want to take a closer look at the' multiplexing' part. This means multiple 'streams' of data can be opened, containing multiple messages in request/response format. This format works well for efficiency, but it allows an option for HTTP clients to request a server to cancel a previously opened stream. And that is where this vulnerability exists. A client can open a stream and immediately cancel it. This open/cancel function requires minimal resources from the client but can put an enormous strain on the server. This allows a client to be able to open and immediately close vast numbers of streams and, therefore, be able to overload the server side. Hence, the term 'Rapid Reset' was used for this attack.

Impact On SAP Components

As stated earlier, the vulnerability was discovered in 2023. SAP has released three security notes that address the issue and recommend action: *3398186*, *3389917*, and *3410615*. According to these warnings, the Internet Communication Manager (ICM) and Web Dispatcher components primarily require patching or disabling HTTP/2 as a workaround. Concretely, this concerns the following components: Web Dispatcher (standalone or embedded variant), NetWeaver ABAP, Web Dispatcher (XS Classic and Advanced), and PowerDesigner. The impact of the 'Rapid Reset Attack' on these components can lead to system overload, potential data loss, and service disruption.

It's important to note that other SAP components, such as NetWeaver Java, SAP Cloud Connector, and SAP Business Objects, are not affected.

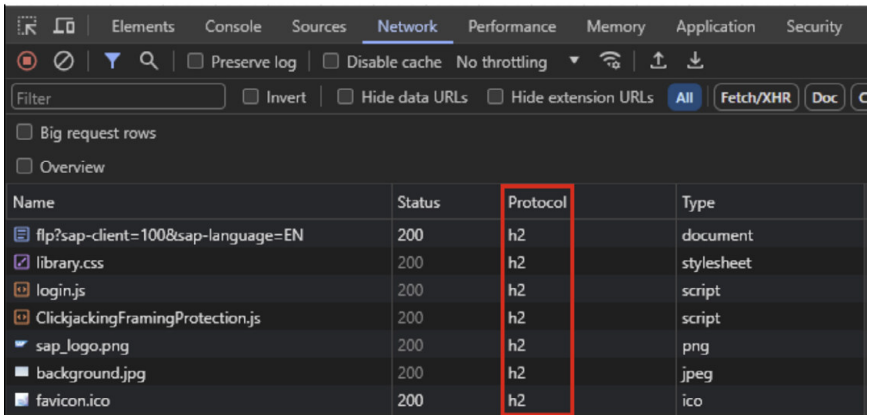
How To Fix The 'Rapid Reset Attack' Vulnerability

As IT personnel and SAP system administrators, your role in addressing the 'Rapid Reset Attack' vulnerability is crucial. By patching SAP systems, you can effectively insulate them from this threat. To determine if your systems are vulnerable, check the ICM and Web Dispatcher versions. Depending on the version, HTTP/2 may be active and vulnerable, necessitating immediate patching.

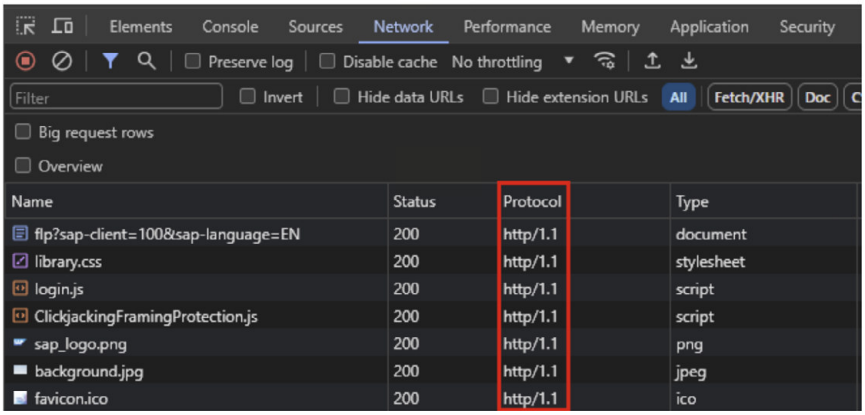
When patching, bear in mind that you need to patch in different ways:

Component	How to patch?
Web Dispatcher standalone	Patch Web Dispatcher component directly
Web Dispatcher embedded NetWeaver ABAP	Patch the kernel of the affected ABAP system. Note that the embedded Web Dispatcher is a part of the ABAP central services instance (ASCS)
Web Dispatcher XS Classic / Advanced	Patch the HANA database and runtime components.

However, another option for patching is to apply a workaround temporarily. This is controlled with the ICM parameter icm/HTTP/support_http2. Setting this to 'FALSE' will disable HTTP/2 altogether, rendering the component not vulnerable to the 'Rapid Reset Attack.' Checking the workaround can be done with a simple browser check using the developer tools; see below.



Example: Fiori Launchpad with HTTP/2 active



Example: Fiori Launchpad with HTTP/2 inactive > fallback to HTTP 1.1

Conclusion

Manually going through each version for each component in your landscape or setting and checking the workaround takes a lot of time and makes you susceptible to errors. There is a better way to deal with this attack. An automated SAP patch management solution will immediately identify what components need to be fixed in a comprehensive overview. In this manner, checking for parameters, in the case of applying the workaround, is simplified. With a custom baseline setting, all systems can be instantly checked for the correct value. With these solutions, manual labor is kept to a minimum when checking and rechecking to ensure your SAP landscape is secure.

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.

Article by Christoph Nagy

7 Deadly Sins of Manufacturing

The "seven deadly sins of manufacturing," also known as the seven wastes of lean manufacturing, categorize inefficiencies that can affect a company's productivity and profitability and a lot more. Some of these sins are obvious, such as flawed inventory management, inconsistent transportation processes, and product defects. Others can be hard to identify and quantify. Either way, every sin creates an unwanted impact on your business.

Learning how to identify and prevent these sins will reduce or eliminate unnecessary waste, improve efficiency and productivity, protect profitability and cash flow, and uphold your company's reputation. If any of these sins are lurking within your business, here's how to identify and rectify them.

Whitepaper by
Chris Pinaire
MBA, PMP Director of
New Implementations
Global Shop SOLUTIONS

1. Transportation

Delivering products on time to manufacturing customers is essential for building vendor loyalty. However, waste created by unnecessary movement of raw materials, finished goods, or work in process (WIP) can make it difficult to meet expected shipping dates, leading to increased costs and dissatisfied customers. In addition to wasting fuel and energy costs, excess transportation can also trigger other wastes such as waiting and motion.

Transportation waste often results from poor plant design, such as large distances between operations. It can also be generated by large batch sizes, poorly designed production systems, and multiple storage facilities, as well as inefficient material flows during storage, retrieval, and transfer. To prevent this kind of waste, design a sequential flow from raw materials to finished goods, don't store WIP in inventory, and maintain consistency and continuity when assigning job priorities.

> "Implementing 5S, a five-step methodology that creates a more organized and productive workspace, can also play a role in minimizing motion waste."

Value stream mapping (VSM), a lean manufacturing technique for analyzing, designing, and managing the flow of materials through the shop floor, can be very effective in identifying transportation waste. It involves full documentation of all aspects of your production flow rather than just mapping specific production processes.

The voice of customer (VOC) can be used in conjunction with VSM to add important information. If your VOC has information critical to success that is not supported in your VSM, (e.g. customer says they want delivery in X days, your VSM says the process takes greater than X days) the two documents together can guide the improvement efforts.

2. Inventory

Excess inventory is a form of waste related to the holding costs of raw materials, WIP and finished goods. In addition to driving up inventory costs, this deadly sin ties up capital, takes up space, and allows for inventory to age and obsolete. Excess inventory is a good indicator of other issues within the production process.

Excess material purchasing resulting from poor forecasting and production planning is often caused by a poorly designed link between the procurement department and the manufacturing and scheduling departments of an organization. Due to a lack of visibility and an unknown future, procurement is forced to err on the side of ordering too much material.

Purchasing raw materials only when needed and reducing the need for safety stock will minimize this waste. *ERP Inventory software* simplifies this process by tracking inventory counts with remarkable accuracy to facilitate the reduction of over- or underpurchasing.

Mobile barcode scanning for inventory receiving and movement can reduce this type of waste by providing high levels of inventory visibility and control. It reduces the need for manual inventory and cycle counts, increasing accuracy of stock on hand. Real-time inventory data improves the performance of forecasting software so purchasers know when to order more stock.

3. Motion

This deadly sin consists of unnecessary movements by employees or machines that don't add value to the product or service. Common sources of motion waste include poor workstation layout and negligent production planning and process design. Shared equipment and machines, siloed operations, and lack of production standards can be added to this list.

Motion on the shop floor can include reaching for raw materials, walking to get tools or materials, or moving finished goods out of the work area. Redesigning your shop floor to simplify the work will help reduce excess motion. In the office, wasted motion can include searching for files, sifting through spreadsheets or multiple folders to find what is needed, excess mouse clicks, and double data entry. ERP software can jettison a lot of this waste by automating processes to eliminate manual data entry, reduce paper, and simplify purchasing and receiving.

Implementing 5S, a five-step methodology that creates a more organized and productive workspace, can also play a role in minimizing motion waste:

1. Sort – Keep only what you need
2. Set in Order – Keep it organized
3. Shine – Keep it clean
4. Standardize – Keep it the same across workstations
5. Sustain – Keep it consistent over a long-time horizon

4. Waiting

Wasting time waiting for materials, information, equipment, or people is considered a sin because it slows production, increases costs, and adds no value. Furthermore, it can prevent finished goods from being delivered on time – a bigger sin in the minds of customers.

A major source of waiting occurs when production employees don't know which job to be working on now and what comes up next or have not been provided with the necessary raw materials. ERP software can solve that problem by making the information directly available to machinists without leaving their workcenters and providing the warehouse with a dispatch list of jobs slated to start.

To reduce this waste, use VSM to analyze the total time spent working on jobs from order to shipment and summarize the amount of time where value is not added to your product. Make the process flow as seamless as possible by creating buffers between production steps and create standardized instructions to provide consistency in the method and time required for each step.

Four rules to minimize waiting waste:

1. Automate scheduling so workers always know what to do and when.
2. Design processes to ensure continuous or single piece flow.
3. Have standardized work instructions.
4. Develop multi-skilled workers who can quickly adjust to unexpected work demands.

5. Overproduction

Overproduction occurs when manufacturing the product is required or before it is asked for. Often referred to as the "just in case" sin, manufacturers tend to use overproduction as a backup in the event of unexpected increases in demand. However, it can lead to a rash of problems, from preventing smooth workflow and increased storage costs to hidden defects within WIP. All of which requires additional capital to fund excessive lead times and the production process.

Strategies for terminating overproduction include:

- Use a pull system to control manufacturing capacity.
- Make sure the rate of manufacturing between stations remains even.
- Reduce setup times to facilitate production of small batches or single-piece flow.
- Adjust the production pace to match the rate of customer demand.

A relatively new strategy consists of integrating artificial intelligence (AI) with your ERP system to more accurately forecast product demand based on historical data, market trends, and customer behavior. With AI you can also predict consumer demand for individual SKUs using data based on seasonality, pricing, promotions, and product lifecycles.

6. Over-Processing

This waste can be hard to uncover because it often hides in activities that, from the customer's perspective, don't add value to your product. Over-processing gets uncovered when customers reject product features, capabilities and services they don't want or consider excessive. These can range from rework, excessive analysis and over-engineering a solution in a way the customer doesn't deem necessary or worth the additional cost.

Over-processing in the office typically involves administrative and workflow overkill. Customers see it as unnecessary steps in the purchasing process, unnecessary signatures on forms or documents, and other forms of red tape. For office personnel it comes in the form of double data entry, unnecessary forms, and extra steps in a workflow.

Putting the brakes on over-processing starts with understanding the work requirements of the customer. This is where specification documents or prototype/first articles can be leveraged to ensure the customer and you are on the same page, especially for new product developments. If you don't align, make adjustments to your manufacturing process so it syncs with what the customer wants.

Remember:

- Always have the customer in mind before starting production
- Build a level of quality that meets customer expectations.
- Produce only the quantities needed.

7. Defects

Products that fall short of yours or the customer's quality requirements certainly qualify as a deadly sin, especially if they get shipped out before the defect is discovered. The cost of the wasted materials, labor time and rework are bad enough. Lost customers and the damage to your company's reputation can extract a higher price over the long term.

The best way to counteract defects is to identify them as they occur, and implement corrective actions that will prevent them from reoccurring in the future. This is best done with ERP Quality Control software. Start by monitoring completion of every step of the production process

through your ERP system. When defects are detected immediately, enter the non-conforming part into the ERP system, halt production, analyze the problem, and outline cause and correction action if necessary.

If you have frequent defects with particular parts, using tools such as a Fishbone Diagram, a visual way to look at cause and effect, can help brainstorm and identify the root cause of the most common faults and why they continue to happen. Then redesign the process so those defects don't occur and standardize the work to ensure a consistently defect-free manufacturing process.

Anti-defect rules to remember:

- Implement a process protocol that brings consistency to all your manufacturing methods. Never pass defective items along the production process.
- Track non-conformance by vendor, customer, employee, department, and product.
- Always require engineering signoff before deploying a cause and corrective action.

Why waste time creating waste?

ERP software can help eliminate waste while you improve processes at the same time.

About Chris Pinaire

Chris Pinaire, MBA, PMP is the Director of New Implementations at Global Shop Solutions, where he has been a part of more than 350 ERP software implementations. His team has more than 250 implementations active at any given time. With Global Shop Solutions for more than 20 years, Pinaire daily helps manufacturers simplify their operations and become better.

About Global Shop Solutions

Global Shop Solutions ERP software provides the applications needed to deliver a quality part on time every time from quote to cash and everything in between including shop management, scheduling, inventory, accounting, quality control, CRM and 25 more. Available in the cloud or on premise, our manufacturing customers benefit from real-time inventory accuracy, improved on-time delivery, lower administrative costs, increased sales and improved customer service. Headquarters in The Woodlands, Texas includes a state-of-the-art R&D facility and Global Shop Solutions training center. Through its offices in the U.S., Mexico, Indonesia, Singapore, Australia, New Zealand and the United Kingdom, the company supports thousands of manufacturing facilities in over 25 countries and more than 30 industries. For more information please visit globalshopsolutions.com.

Compare the Leading ERP Solutions at Dublin ERP Event

The Lumenia Consulting ERP HEADtoHEAD™ event returns to the Crowne Plaza Hotel, Dublin Airport on 1-2 October. The event is Lumenia's 24th event and is now an established event on the ERP calendar. The unique format of the event brings together the leading ERP vendors, who must follow a script during their presentations, allowing ERP buyers to compare solutions like for like.

The event will feature ERP product demonstrations from 14 ERP software providers. Solutions suitable for various organisation sizes, from large corporations to SME's, will be represented. ERP solutions to be demonstrated include SAP S/4HANA, Oracle NetSuite, Epicor, Sage Intacct, SAP Business One, Microsoft Dynamics 365 Business Central, Infor, IFS, SAP Business ByDesign, Intact iQ, EFACS E/8, Microsoft Dynamics 365 Finance, Kerridge K8 and Acumatica.

The event is aimed at organisations that are planning to upgrade or replace their ERP systems. This is an ideal opportunity for senior finance or IT executives and members of their ERP selection teams to efficiently review the leading ERP products and to learn how to manage their selection process so that risk is reduced and benefits are maximised.

The event kicks off with the ERP vendors taking part in an 'Elevator Pitch'. During this session the vendors present a summary of their USP's to convince delegates why it would be a good idea to attend their ERP system demonstrations. Over the two days, delegates can choose to attend sessions focused on Finance, Production, Procurement, BI & Analytics, Projects, Supply Chain or Sales. The demonstrations are based on standardised high-level scripts which makes it easier for delegates to make system comparisons.

The ERP packed Agenda will include presentations of keynote speeches from Lumenia Consulting on 'What Makes Successful ERP Projects', 'Navigating the Intersection between ERP and Digital Transformation' and 'Are you ERP Ready'? It will also include vendor showcase presentations on key ERP topics and insights around new technology. Day 2 will conclude with a panel-discussion on 'Avoiding ERP Implementation Mistakes', always an event highlight. A panel of industry end users, all of whom have implemented ERP, will talk about their experiences good and bad and highlight things they might do differently next time.

The event will have ample time for networking and the ERP vendors will be available in the expo area for questions and 1:1 meetings. The event is facilitated by independent ERP consultants *Lumenia Consulting* who will also be on hand to offer impartial guidance and advice.

For further information on the event, early bird discounts and to register please visit the event website *https://erpheadtohead.com/ireland/*

ECI Software Solutions Acquires Smart Manufacturing ERP ProfitKey

The acquisition enhances ECI's manufacturing software portfolio, further solidifying its commitment to supporting manufacturing businesses

ECI Software Solutions, a global provider of cloud-based business management software and services, announced the completion of its acquisition of ProfitKey International LLC, an ERP platform for discrete manufacturers. The strategic acquisition enhances ECI's robust manufacturing software portfolio and further solidifies its commitment to supporting businesses within the industry. Terms of the acquisition were not disclosed.

"We're excited to welcome ProfitKey and its impressive customers to the ECI family," said Trevor Gruenewald, CEO of ECI Software Solutions. "The world-class ProfitKey ERP and the expertise of the team have greatly impressed us. By joining together, we can continue to invest in the success of manufacturing businesses and their evolving industry needs. Our goal is to provide even greater value to manufacturing businesses and ensure a bright future for all our customers."

For over 25 years, ECI Software Solutions has been at the forefront of delivering high-value, industry-specific software solutions designed to help small- to medium-sized businesses worldwide manage their operations efficiently and grow profitably.

"I am very excited about this news and the great value it will provide to all the ProfitKey stakeholders," said Kevin O'Keefe, CEO of ProfitKey. "Our investors are receiving a fair return on their capital while our customers are benefiting from the additional resources that ECI brings to their long-term success. ProfitKey's employees will realize greater opportunities for career and personal growth by joining a larger, global organization like ECI."

ProfitKey's team will be joining ECI's Manufacturing division, the company's largest business unit. The software, support, and processes that their customers have come to know and trust will remain the same to ensure a smooth transition.

To learn more about ECI's innovative manufacturing software solutions and tools, *visit the website.*

Press Release from ECI

Unlocking Data to Make a Meaningful Difference in Manufacturing Operations

In the fast-paced world of modern business, the age-old adage "knowledge is power" has taken on new significance - particularly in the manufacturing sector. The ability to access and leverage meaningful data has become critical in gaining a competitive edge and meeting the ever-changing demands of the market. As manufacturing operations continuously evolve to keep pace with consumer needs, the role of data in planning, forecasting, and delivery has become increasingly vital.

The power of data

The power of data in production cannot be overstated. At every step of the process, from product design to assembly line, operations generate vast amounts of information. However, the real challenge lies not in collecting this data, but in transforming it into actionable insights that can benefit the business. Recent advancements in technology, for example, artificial intelligence (AI) and automation, are already helping manufacturers overcome the constraints they once faced when trying to utilise data effectively. To truly unlock the potential of data in manufacturing, it's essential to harness three critical forms of data.

Key performance indicator (KPI) data

First and foremost is KPI data, which serves as the backbone of both manufacturing operations and wider company management. KPI data provides crucial metrics that allow managers to assess the efficiency and effectiveness of various processes. By tracking against KPIs, manufacturers can identify areas for improvement, set realistic goals, monitor progress towards objectives, and make data-driven decisions to optimise operations.

AI/machine data

The integration of AI and machine learning in manufacturing has opened up vast possibilities for data analysis. Machine data can help to focus production efforts by identifying patterns and trends in demand, helping decision-makers to forecast more accurately.

Article by
John Knight
Supply Chain Consultant,
Nexer Enterprise Applications
NEXXER

This can feed production plans with real-time insights, allowing for more agile and responsive manufacturing processes that result in reduced waste and improved inventory management in turn.

Enterprise resource planning (ERP) data

Effective ERP systems like Microsoft Dynamics 365 are a game-changer in modern manufacturing operations. Integrated, cloud-based software provides a unified perspective and a holistic view of the entire manufacturing process and can span diverse business functions from finance to marketing. This instant access to data and visibility means that manufacturers can make informed decisions and ensure that factors like costs, labour time, and process time are optimised. Cloud-based solutions also offer the scalability that traditional on-premise systems can't match, allowing manufacturers to adapt their ERP systems to specific needs and extract maximum value from their data.

By leveraging real-time data from ERP systems, manufacturers can optimise their planning and execution strategies. For instance, precise labour time tracking facilitates effective workforce management, ensuring appropriate staffing levels for each shift. Detailed cost data enables more accurate budgeting and financial forecasting while processing time information helps refine production workflows.

Another key benefit of ERP data is its ability to enhance cross-departmental collaboration by centralising critical information. This unified data access empowers teams to make well-informed decisions that benefit the entire organisation.

ERP systems like Microsoft Dynamics 365 are also continuously evolving, with new features promising to elevate business operations introduced regularly. From IoT integration to CoPilot AI, manufacturers have the opportunity to continuously boost their operations and remain up to date.

> "By leveraging real-time data from ERP systems, manufacturers can optimise their planning and execution strategies."

Leveraging data for manufacturing success

To truly harness the power of data, manufacturers need to adopt a holistic approach that combines these different data types. This involves breaking down data silos and integrating information from various sources to gain a comprehensive view of operations.

With this being said, manufacturers must prioritise cultivating a data-driven culture to reap the benefits, encouraging employees at all levels to embrace evidence-led decision-making. This cultural shift can lead to continuous improvement and innovation across the organisation.

The future of data in manufacturing

As we look towards the future, the role of data in manufacturing is set to become even more critical. By the start of the next decade, we can expect to see increased use of data ecosystems and intel-driven innovation, the evolution of job roles to include more data-centric positions and greater integration of AI and data visualisation. Manufacturers who want to stay ahead of the curve must understand data's role and value, as well as how people, processes, technology, and data itself will continue to evolve in the coming years.

In conclusion, unlocking the power of data is now business-critical. By effectively leveraging KPI, AI, and ERP data, manufacturers can optimise their operations, enhance decision-making, and drive innovation. As we move towards an increasingly data-driven future, those who master data utilisation will be best positioned to thrive in the competitive manufacturing landscape. The journey towards data-driven manufacturing may be complex, but the rewards – in terms of efficiency, productivity, and competitive advantage – are well worth the effort.

About Nexer

Nexer UK is a leading digital transformation expert, specialising in Microsoft Dynamics. It advises, implements, develops, and manages Microsoft Dynamics applications, alongside other technologies, to help clients strengthen their market position, grow revenue, and improve productivity. Working with businesses in the manufacturing, field service, wholesale distribution, construction, retail and fashion industries, its leading product lines include Microsoft Dynamics 365, Internet of Things, AI, Business Intelligence, Connected Field Service, the Smart Office and Smart Retail.

Article by John Knight

Aldridge Security Overhauls E-commerce, Customer Services and Inventory Management Using Forterro's Orderwise

Aldridge Security, the UK and Ireland's largest security and locking product wholesaler, has overhauled its operations after implementing Forterro's ERP and Warehouse Management Solution, Orderwise.

The implementation enabled Aldridge Security to boost productivity and efficiency, resulting in significant upturns in e-commerce, customer service and inventory management.

Aldridge Security works with organisations such as locksmiths, architectural ironmongers, builders merchants and DIY shops, offering more than 25,000 different products from its Birmingham and Manchester branches. It is a supporter of independent businesses, with a pledge not to supply large DIY chains, but was facing the evolving demands of a market seeking faster and more efficient services.

Aldridge Security's switch to Orderwise marked a real turning point for the business.

"Orderwise has genuinely helped us to grow, and we're still scratching the surface of where it can go next," said Patrick Cook, MD, Aldridge Security. "We knew we needed to be faster, more efficient, and to deliver even better customer service, and Orderwise has helped on all counts."

Alridge's previous approach to customer service, especially in handling returns, included navigating a maze of third-party systems. Orderwise has streamlined this

into a seamless, integrated process and a single source of truth for the organisation's data.

E-commerce has also taken a leap forward. Previously, updating the website with product changes was a manual, time-intensive task. With Orderwise, these updates became automatic, saving three hours every single day. This meant the team could focus more on providing greater quality customer service. This has meant an increase of 9.5% in web order value and 48% growth in average goods received per operator rate.

Distribution and inventory management also saw drastic improvement. The previous system frequently extended employees' work beyond the 8pm cutoff, leading to logistical challenges and excessive staff overtime. Orderwise introduced new levels of efficiency, enabling operations to conclude within the set hours.

The once complex task of inventory management has now turned into a manageable one. Full visibility and control over every stock item meant managing vast resources became less about guesswork and more about strategic planning.

"Aldridge Security is one of a kind, known throughout the industry as a business of integrity, and of service and product excellence," said Jon Roberts, Director, Forterro. "It also knew that it needed to modernise, and we are delighted that it chose Forterro to do so. Orderwise is a compelling ERP solution and one that helps users with digital transformation and accelerating growth."

Orderwise is an ERP solution that provides wholesalers, distributors, retailers and manufacturers with a platform for growth. It's used by stock-focused businesses across the UK to automate order management, stock management, warehouse management, ecommerce, point of sale, business intelligence, transport management, financials and more.

FORTERRO

About Forterro

Founded in 2012, Forterro has grown to become a category leader in industrial software – with strongholds in Europe's top production economies, as well as regional service hubs and development centres around the world. From more than 40 office locations, its 1,600+ employees provide and support software for more than 13,000 industrial businesses. Its products are deeply rooted in the demands of their local geography and each is designed to strengthen and accelerate customers' ability to operate efficiently and compete effectively.

New Process AI Capabilities for SAP Signavio Offer Instant, Tailored Recommendations

The promise of generative AI is in its ability to support individual businesses with individual needs; not just automating work, but identifying what work can or should be automated, as well as the best place to start.

With the release of new process AI capabilities for *SAP Signavio* — process recommender and performance indicators recommender — SAP is taking a step closer to realizing this promise.

Embedded into SAP Signavio Process Transformation Suite, these novel capabilities deliver instant, tailored process and metrics recommendations that will help

Article by
Lucas de Boer
Global Marketing Program Lead,
SAP Signavio

process owners and process analysts accelerate process model design, more readily define their process monitoring strategy, and improve the quality of business outcomes.

SAP Signavio and SAP LeanIX solutions are core elements of the Business Transformation Management portfolio, which leverages SAP Business AI technology, initiatives, and principles to help customers on their transformation journeys, and deliver generative AI capabilities that are specific to the process world.

The latest release of SAP Signavio Process Transformation Suite features the following:

- An AI-assisted process recommender provides process owners with preconfigured process models suggestions out of a database of more than 5,000 best practices from SAP. This new generative AI capability will help process owners move fast from the initial exploration phase to process design by instantly narrowing down hundreds of options to those that present a best match to their business.

- Users are suggested preconfigured process models which serve as a great foundation they can save, edit, and further perfect, saving weeks, if not months, of stakeholder interviews and lengthy workshops currently required to design a new process or redefine an existing one.

- An AI-assisted performance indicators recommender delivers instant recommendations on the most relevant process performance indicators (PPIs) to be applied to a specific process, based on a database of thousands of KPIs and PPIs.

- A capability to identify key process metrics among a variety of options, which is critical to measure success, can recommend the most relevant measures to assess the performance of a business process, providing companies with much needed insight into how they can streamline operations and reduce overhead.

> "SAP Signavio and SAP LeanIX solutions are core elements of the Business Transformation Management portfolio, which leverages SAP Business AI technology, initiatives, and principles to help customers on their transformation journeys, and deliver generative AI capabilities that are specific to the process world."

"Generative AI is impacting every facet of modern organizations, and every process — from finance to sales, procurement, and supply chain management — can benefit from this transformative force," shared Dee Houchen, head of Market Impact for *SAP Signavio*.

"With generative AI serving as a catalyst, we are developing the third generation of our business process management solutions to make people's work easier and help them perform it faster. When it comes to process management, generative AI can also extend the horizon of our thinking, by providing suggestions that experts can build on. At the same time, we can see generative AI lowering the entry barriers to disciplines such as process analysis, acting as a knowledge multiplier and helping companies to scale."

In addition to these newly released capabilities, a process mining co-pilot currently in beta testing is expected to be released in November this year. The AI-assisted process analyzer, also known as text-to-insights, will empower users with any skillset to extract deep insights and obtain valuable knowledge from process information simply by using natural language and a question/answer approach. Along with improving the time to insight, this new co-pilot will help continue the trend of democratizing process mining, ensuring as many people as possible within an organization can contribute to process excellence.

About SAP

As a global leader in enterprise applications and business AI, SAP (NYSE:SAP) stands at the nexus of business and technology. For over 50 years, organizations have trusted SAP to bring out their best by uniting business-critical operations spanning finance, procurement, HR, supply chain, and customer experience. For more information, visit www.sap.com.

Article by Lucas de Boer

Why bother with Enterprise AI?

Generative AI (GenAI) is transforming industries with its cutting-edge capabilities. From customer insights to innovative revenue models, the potential is immense. Consider a retailer, who once relied on basic demographics for marketing, now diving into customer behavior and sentiment with precision. Such advancements are setting a new benchmark.

In this blog, we'll delve into the nuanced uses of GenAI, focusing on customer segmentation, enriched value propositions, and strategic reach. We'll also touch on bolstering customer relationships and exploring new revenue streams.

Redefining Customer Segmentation

GenAI revolutionizes customer segmentation by moving beyond traditional methods. Instead of just relying on age or location, imagine identifying customers based on their buying behaviors, online interactions, and even sentiments in real-time extracted throughout the customer journey to learn their needs! For example:

- Analyzing browsing history, geographic data, past visits, and purchase history to predict future purchases
- Understanding cultural contexts to personalize marketing approaches

This deeper understanding helps businesses craft campaigns that genuinely resonate with their audience. Transitioning from classic demographics to a more intricate and dynamic model sets the stage for genuine engagement.

Article by
Sandeep Kumar Singhdeo
Data & Analytics Manager,
Infosys

Enhancing Value Propositions

With GenAI, businesses can uncover new features enhancing their value propositions, delivering a superior return on investment. Consider a software company using AI-driven data to identify features that matter most:

- Evaluating customer feedback and usage patterns
- Adding functionalities that address specific pain points

This precision ensures that every development effort is aligned with customer needs, making products not just useful but indispensable. By focusing on real-world utility, businesses can foster loyalty and drive sustainable growth. Smoothly transitioning from understanding customers to delivering unmatched value.

Expanding Social Reach

Gone are the days of blanket marketing campaigns. GenAI explores unconventional marketing channels tailored to the habitual lives of millennials and Gen-Z. Think about leveraging GenAI to provide personalized insights:

- Crafting targeted campaigns based on daily user interactions
- Utilizing data to recommend relevant products or content

This method is more than just marketing; it's about creating meaningful connections. By tapping into the digital lives of younger generations, brands can remain relevant and appealing. Equipped with AI technology, transitioning towards a personalized marketing approach can be seamless and impactful.

> "With GenAI, businesses can uncover new features enhancing their value propositions, delivering a superior return on investment."

Conclusion

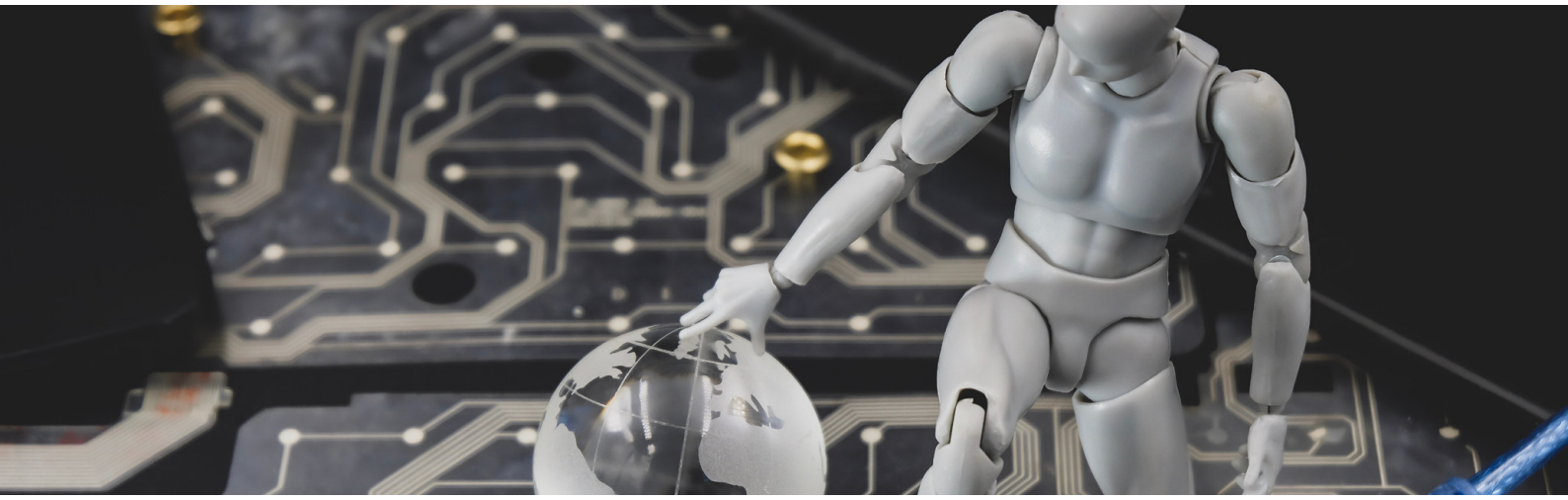
Generative AI is reshaping the business landscape with nuanced customer insights, enhanced propositions, and strategic market reach. By focusing on genuine engagement, delivering practical features, and utilizing personalized marketing, businesses can stay ahead in an ever-evolving market.

The integration of GenAI offers a pathway to innovation and success. Embrace this technological marvel to discover new opportunities and drive your business forward.

Infosys®

About Sandeep Kumar Singhdeo

Sandeep is a seasoned Data & Analytics consultant with over 29 years of experience in Program Management, Solution Design, and Technical Solution Implementation to deliver innovative and high-value initiatives for clients across various sectors. He has worked for many Fortune 500 clients across various industries like Retail, High-Technology, Banking, Utilities, Railroad, Oil & Gas, Logistics and Manufacturing verticals at USA, UK, Singapore, Canada, India. He is passionate about driving transformative growth for businesses in a dynamic and ever-changing landscape, and thrive on challenges, collaboration, and continuous learning. He enjoys guiding clients in defining and measuring their business goals through continuous improvement methodologies.



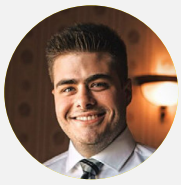
3 Ways Performance Management Has Changed

Check out how shorter feedback cycles, co-creation of goals, and a focus on potential changed performance management.

Did you know that performance management was *first introduced into a workplace* more than 100 years ago, in 1920? Since then, it has slowly changed over the decades, but this change has accelerated in the past 10 years.

The traditional approach to performance management involved a rigid, annual cycle that focused on employees' performance in the past year. It didn't involve any discussion about the future, thus limiting employees' growth opportunities.

Its evolution into *agile performance management* is structured in a way that will help employees use feedback gathered to grow their performance.



Article by
Bruno Boksic
Freelance HR writer

It's no wonder that Founder of Bersin & Associates, advisor, and HR analyst *Josh Bersin* estimated that around 70% of multinational companies are transitioning into an agile performance model.

So in this article, you'll explore how performance management changed, why performance alignment is important, and what you can do in your company to evolve the process.

Why old performance management is no longer working

Performance management is changing, alongside shifts in HR. The old performance management process looked something like this:

- Track and measure what the employee does throughout the year.
- Wait until the end of the year to have a meeting with the employee.
- Use the meeting to tell the employee all the things they could have fixed in the year and give them a score.

There are several problems with this type of performance management:

- The employee had no idea if they were doing well or not in their job.
- *Receiving feedback* only at the end of the year isn't helpful to either the employee or the company. The employee can't fix something that they didn't do well a couple of months ago (because the window to fix it has passed) and the company doesn't benefit from the employee fixing the mistake, which causes lower performance levels overall.
- Measuring only what happened puts the emphases firmly on the past. There needs to be a discussion about future steps, growth, and progression.

Instead, it's now necessary to adapt your processes to keep up with the trend for regular cycles of feedback as a new phase in performance management begins.

> "The marketplace today functions on innovation and fast iteration so employees, along with companies, have to adapt their processes to it."

Modern performance management: 3 tenets

The marketplace today functions on innovation and fast iteration so employees, along with companies, have to adapt their processes to it.

A recently commissioned *report from Sage* found that more than half of HR and business leaders (58%) think that performance management is important now more than ever.

As many as 74% of respondents said they find it more difficult due to hybrid working.

However, 75% believe their performance management processes are out of date, showing there is a renewed demand to improve processes and provide suitable access for remote workers.

To keep up with this demand, you need to reassess and revise your performance management processes. Here are 3 tenets to remember:

1. Shorter feedback cycles

The old way of doing performance management was all about the yearly review; the new way is about having shorter feedback cycles.

This is where gamification comes into play.

Imagine you're a character in a game and you're leveling up.
To increase your character's level, you need experience that you get by successfully finishing a mission. You have a bar that shows your current experience and you just completed your mission.

You will have no idea whether the mission was a success or a failure until you receive feedback on it—in a year. After a year, you learn that the mission was a failure.

In a game today, that would be ludicrous, but this was how performance management used to be.

Employees had to wait for about a year to find out if they were doing a good job or if they needed to learn and adapt.

It's no wonder that the *2017 McKinsey Global Survey* found that 54% of respondents said their performance reviews had no positive impact on performance.

So companies started implementing *shorter feedback cycles* with their employees. 1-on-1 meetings really help with this, allowing managers to focus on 1 employee at a time and go over their performance in the meetings.

These meetings usually happen every 15 days or once a month. This way, the employees can continuously see if their performance aligns with the company's standard.

And if their performance isn't meeting the desired level, there's a solution for that as well: performance development.

> "According to the Sage report, more than half of HR and business leaders (59%) said they're not using data to inform performance conversations and over half (55%) can't spot high and low performers."

2. Performance development

The old way of doing performance management focused on past performance, but the new and evolved performance management splits the focus between performance appraisals (the past) and performance development (the future).

Agile performance management also encompasses the growth potential of employees, using meetings to talk about their development.

Companies have started using development tools such as Massive Open Online Courses (*MOOCs*) to help their employees learn new skills and improve their current ones.

Because of the speed of innovation in the marketplace, employees will have to learn new skills every few years if they want to have a relevant skillset in the shifting market.

Companies should start focussing more on *developing their existing staff* because it's more effective than hiring new employees.

A study done by *Bain&Co* discovered that inspired employees are 225% more productive than engaged employees.

To inspire employees, you need to invest in them and make sure they're growing on their job— performance development is one of the best ways to do this.

According to the Sage report, more than half of HR and business leaders (59%) said they're not using data to inform performance conversations and over half (55%) can't spot high and low performers.

This presents an opportunity to refresh your performance identification process and create a more accurate development pathway.

With investment in performance development, you can create growth plans and goals with your employees and track their progress to ensure that their skills remain relevant in the organization and the marketplace.

Look at *Human Capital Management (HCM) software* that can help you make the best investment decisions for your teams. Upskilled workers will be happier and more productive

3. Co-creation of goals

The old way of doing performance management was almost 100% top-down structured and the employee had little input in the process.

The new way of doing performance management is more of a bottom-up process, where the employee forms goals together with the manager (co-creation of goals).

How this works is that the manager talks with the employee about the company goals and objectives and what the employee's role in accomplishing them is.

The employee talks about their (personal and professional) *development goals* that will ensure that they hit those targets and keep their skills relevant in the market.

In a recent *Gallup survey*, employees whose managers involve them in goal setting alone are over 3 times more likely to be engaged than employees who aren't involved.

This is a win-win situation where both the manager is satisfied with the situation because the company's objectives are going to be met, and the employee is satisfied because they will learn new skills and grow during the process.

Performance alignment brings goals closer

Performance alignment goes hand-in-hand with performance management. The difference between them can be described as the difference between efficiency and effectiveness.

Effectiveness is doing the task right while efficiency is doing the right task.

Performance management investigates how productive, dedicated, and focused your employees are. Performance alignment re-steers your employees into being productive, dedicated, and focused on the right operations, tasks, and objectives.

The objectives the employees pursue need to be aligned with the overall organizational goals. So make sure that your employees are productive (performance management) about the right things (performance alignment).

Using technology to enhance the process

Tech and applications should be used to enhance the performance management and performance alignment process. If the employee and the manager aren't in the same physical location to conduct their 1-to-1 meeting, they can use video call applications like Zoom or Teams to do them.

There are other applications that can really make your managers' jobs easier. So, consider investing in apps that:

- Help them track their employees better
- Enable them to communicate more easily with their team members
- Provide them with insights into the employee's wellbeing and employee experience

The easiest way to understand which tech you should use is to divide the entire performance management process into its essential steps and then see which app would be helpful for which step.

The 4 main steps of a performance management process are:

Planning

The tech in this phase should help you communicate better with your employees, set the right expectations, and clarify any questions regarding roles and responsibilities in the manager-employee relationship.

Reviewing

In this phase, you should use applications to help you set up meetings and track your employee's performance during their daily tasks.

Coaching

This phase of performance management is focused on the performance development and growth of the employee. So have apps that can establish micro-learning in the workplace and guide the employees through the learning process.

> "The new focus on employees and the transformation of managers into coaches will help you achieve better results for your business."

Rewarding

The last part of the performance management process is the *rewarding stage*.

You can use apps in this process to set up a point system and have employees know where they stand with their points, what the rewards are, and how often can they exchange their points for a reward.

Final thoughts

Performance management has evolved and so should your company.

Following the above steps will help you restructure your performance management process and make it agile.

You will experience multiple benefits in having shorter feedback cycles, implementing performance alignment, and investing in your employees' growth and wellbeing.

The new focus on employees and the transformation of managers into coaches will help you achieve better results for your business.

If you're looking for a performance management tool that can empower your workforce, support and retain your best and brightest people, and elevate communication, explore more resources for performance management and *sign up for a free demo session here.*

About Bruno Boksic

Bruno is a freelance HR writer who specialises in talent management, employee engagement, gamification, and learning and development. Before that, he was the head of HR of a global organisation.

About Sage

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

Gig Workers: Transforming IT Departments Today

As the gig economy burgeons, it profoundly remodels the landscape of labor, notably within IT departments. A sweeping 36% of U.S. workers now contribute to this burgeoning section of the job market. This changing workforce has granted IT departments a dual-edged sword—unprecedented opportunities intertwined with formidable challenges. Departments must adeptly balance the scales, harnessing the benefits of a flexible workforce while navigating the complexities that accompany such significant structural changes to traditional work paradigms.

This influx of gig workers confers upon executives the power to enlist specialized expertise precisely when it's needed. They now have the ability to dynamically scale their operations for projects that require particular, sometimes highly specialized, skill sets. There's no longer a need to bear the enduring costs associated with full-time positions, especially when the need for certain skills is transitory. Such strategic shifts in hiring practices are redefining how IT departments address their staffing requirements, promising them increased dynamism and resilience.

Integrating Flexibility: The Gig Economy's Impact on IT

The gig economy has ushered in an unparalleled level of agility within IT departments. With a prevailing 36% of U.S. workers taking part in gig-related endeavors, either as their primary or secondary form of employment, IT departments are presented with a unique set of opportunities and challenges. This environment allows these departments to respond enthusiastically to shifting project demands and technological advancements, adapting their workforce composition as needed without

the constraints of traditional employment models.

> "36% of U.S. workers taking part in gig economy"

This new paradigm empowers executives to hire specialist expertise for short-term projects, without incurring the ongoing costs associated with full-time hires. This can be particularly advantageous in executing high-skill, niche projects that require sophisticated expertise for a definitive period. For instance, bringing on a cybersecurity expert to spearhead a critical system overhaul can be done swiftly and without the long-term expense or commitment that a full-time position entails.

The shift toward a gig-centric workforce is not just a reaction to the economic landscape; it is an innovative strategy that enables IT departments to become more dynamic and resilient. The capacity to rapidly engage and disengage resources means that IT departments can remain nimble, testing new technologies and undertaking a diverse array of projects that push the envelope of current capabilities without the traditional risks of workforce expansion.

Streamlining Costs, Maximizing Resources

Cost efficiency stands out as one of the gig economy's chief advantages for IT departments. Avoiding perennial employment contracts affords businesses the agility to optimize their fiscal landscape, focusing their resource allocation on pivotal, project-specific ventures and groundbreaking innovation with greater flexibility. According to findings by Statista, nearly half of the businesses surveyed turn to freelancers to curtail expenses and scale down operational costs. This approach supports IT departments in crafting a strategy that aligns financial investment directly with project outcomes and technological evolution.

With this newfound flexibility, IT departments are discovering the means to embark on varied projects with cost structures that adapt to their immediate needs in real time. The strategic use of freelancers allows departments to allocate funds where they're most needed—whether that's in researching new technologies, pursuing ambitious development projects, or acquiring specialized talent for a complex system integration. By leveraging the gig economy, IT executives no longer face the daunting prospect of securing considerable investment for long-term staff before validating the success and viability of innovative tech projects.

Tapping into a Global Talent Pool

The gig economy eradicates geographical barriers that once limited the hiring reach of IT departments, providing access to a vast global marketplace of skilled professionals. This expansive network enables department heads to engage with experts in specific technologies or methodologies that might be scarce or unavailable in their immediate locale. With freelancers, specialty skills are brought in from various corners of the world, each bringing unique perspectives that can often lead to innovative solutions and enhanced creativity in problem-solving.

Enhanced diversity is a natural outcome of this broadened recruitment horizon. IT projects stand to benefit immensely from the myriad cultural perspectives and varied professional experiences that a global workforce contributes. Beyond the infusion of diverse thinking, this also sets a fertile ground for cross-pollination of ideas, where different approaches are considered, and the best practices from around the world can be integrated into the workflow.

The shift to a globally distributed team demands a mastery of robust, practical communication tools and workflows. IT departments, therefore, evolve to adopt more agile practices, enhancing their resilience and preparedness for a future that is increasingly digital and interconnected. Such adaptability is a crucial aspect of staying competitive in the tech industry, where the fast-paced nature of change is the only constant.

> "The gig economy eradicates geographical barriers that once limited the hiring reach of IT departments, providing access to a vast global marketplace of skilled professionals."

Bridging Skill Gaps with Precise Expertise

The prevalence of skill gaps presents an acute challenge for IT departments globally. Reports from *McKinsey & Company* highlight that a staggering 87% of organizations are either currently grappling with these gaps or anticipate them shortly. The gig economy offers a tactical

approach to this issue, equipping IT departments with the ability to swiftly engage with professionals who possess the exact skill sets required for specific projects. This flexible staffing model negates the need for extensive training of permanent staff, immediately filling the void with ready-to-deploy expertise.

The entry of gig workers into project rosters is less about stopgap measures and more about strategic talent management. By sourcing talent on an as-needed basis, IT departments can maintain a lean team composition while ensuring that individuals with the ideal qualifications and experience manage each project. This approach not only hastens project timelines but also enhances the quality of the output, as each task is handled by a specialist attuned to the nuances of that particular domain.

Managing the Gig Economy Transformation

Navigating the gig economy's influence on IT departments necessitates a robust infrastructure for onboarding and integrating freelance talent. This effort extends beyond simple orientation; it's about developing processes that quickly assimilate gig workers into the company's culture, ensuring they align with ongoing projects' core values and immediate objectives. A meticulous approach to this ensures that all team members, whether temporary or permanent, work cohesively towards common goals.

Challenges, such as logistical and legal complexities, are part and parcel of employing a gig-based workforce. This is especially true for IT departments that must uphold stringent data security standards and intellectual property rights. IT executives, therefore, are tasked with creating clear, concise freelance agreements and building an infrastructure that supports secure, remote collaboration. Establishing these frameworks is vital to harnessing gig workers' full potential while maintaining the integrity of IT operations.

Securing Gig-Based IT Operations: A Balancing Act

Cultivating a secure IT ecosystem remains imperative in a gig economy structure. IT departments must enforce rigorous standards to ensure data – the lifeblood of any modern enterprise – is uncompromised. Meticulous attention is required to teach freelancers with a firm understanding of security policies, ensuring their compliance is as stringent as that expected from full-time staff. This is a delicate endeavor, as it involves imparting comprehensive training while managing the transient nature of gig workers.

Notwithstanding the flexibility that gig workers bring to the table, securing operations demands an increase in vigilant cybersecurity measures. IT departments must craft definitive processes that address secure remote access, precise data handling, and streamlined project management. The successful integration of gig workers hinges on their seamless adherence to such protocols, guaranteeing that even with a rotating roster, the organization's digital security posture is never compromised.

Navigating Potential Setbacks in the Gig Economy

Incorporating gig workers into IT frameworks isn't without its drawbacks. The transient nature of such employment can lead to a lack of long-term commitment, potentially affecting the consistency and continuity of projects. Project knowledge and operational intricacies may be lost with the departure of short-term workers, posing a risk to ongoing maintenance and scaling efforts.

Additionally, while gig workers can bring specialized skills to a team, they may not always be in sync with the established company culture or processes. This misalignment can result in friction among team members and disruption to the workflow, requiring careful management and integration strategies from department leads.

The Gig-Powered IT Revolution

The gig economy has proven itself to be a formidable force within the IT sector, offering a blend of versatility and innovative problem-solving. As businesses continue to harness the gig model's strengths, they are discovering not only cost savings but also progressive ways to execute their strategies. IT departments are adopting a harmonious blend of permanency and fluidity in their staffing, taking firm strides into a future where agility is paramount.

Clearly, the gig economy does not merely challenge traditional norms, but rather, augments the capabilities of IT departments. This harmonization of flexibility and security is what will propel IT departments forward, allowing them to tackle future technological challenges with confidence and exceptional expertise. The gig economy isn't just shaping the present; it's paving the way for a resilient and dynamic future in IT.

DXone ERP

Gig economy: Rewriting the HR Framework

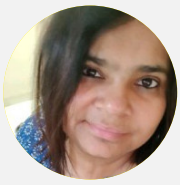
The gig economy has started seeking global attention in the era of blurred digital boundaries.

Gig and its risks

The era of the new normal brought unprecedented changes in how we function at work. The need to focus on self and well-being became a priority for many employees, forcing enterprises to adopt newer working models that allow more flexibility. Owing to the blurred digital boundaries, the recurrence of the concept of the gig economy started seeking global attention. The gig economy, also known as the "freelance," "on-demand," or "sharing" economy, is a labor market characterized by temporary and flexible work arrangements. It involves individuals working as independent contractors, freelancers, or on a project-by-project basis, often through digital platforms and apps. Gig workers are not traditional employees; they have greater autonomy and are typically paid for specific tasks or services they provide. The working style of some cab service providers, where a driver is at will to accept/reject a service request, is a perfect example of a gig worker. A similar work pattern is predicted for the future across work domains.

Some are adopting gig work patterns across the globe owing to the accrued benefits of autonomy, availability of talent pool, optimal utilization of resources, and better work-life balance. If the platform economy expands substantially in the future, the risks associated with such short-term gigs would also threaten the overall work culture, such as long working hours, lack of legal protection, brittle occupational safety and health (OSH) policies, and so on.

Let us look at the implications of the gig economy on working style.



Article by
Madhura Kulkarni
Head of Marketing, TCS Chroma

Article by Madhura Kulkarni

Implications

The gig economy can have several implications:

- ***Flexibility:*** In the gig economy, workers can choose when, where, and how they work, improving work-life balance.

- ***Challenges in job security:*** Gig workers may need more job security, stable income, and traditional employment benefits.

- ***Impact on traditional employment:*** Traditional employment models may evolve as more workers embrace gig work.

- ***Legal and regulatory complexities:*** There are challenges related to employment classification, tax compliance, and labor laws.

While this working model can have implications, the fact that we anticipate the gig economy's wider adoption is owing to its benefits both for the employees and the employers. Let's look at these benefits at large.

> "In the gig economy, workers can choose when, where, and how they work, improving work-life balance."

Enterprise benefits

Organizations can benefit from the gig economy in several ways:

- ***Cost savings:*** Hiring gig workers can be cost-effective as companies pay for specific tasks rather than traditional employee salaries and benefits.

- ***Access to specialized skills:*** Organizations can tap into a global talent pool and access specialized skills on demand.

- ***Scalability:*** Businesses can quickly scale up or down as per project necessities without long-term employment obligations.

- ***Innovation:*** Gig workers often bring fresh perspectives and expertise to projects.

> "HR must facilitate communication and collaboration between gig workers and full-time employees, often through digital platforms and tools."

Embracing gig

There's a growing number of global workforces engaged in this working style; the gig economy is likely to continue evolving:

- ***Expansion:*** It is expected to grow, with more workers and industries embracing gig work, such as the IT sector, other service sectors, and project-based organizations.

- ***Technological advancements:*** Technology will be central in shaping the gig economy's future.

- ***Regulation:*** Governments may introduce new rules to address labor and worker protection issues.

Policymaker's readiness

As HR policymakers, we must consider the following factors to remain prepared for this new working model.

- ***Recruitment and talent management:*** HR must devise policies to adapt, attract, and retain gig workers. This includes developing strategies to identify and engage with independent contributors.

- ***Legal and compliance issues:*** HR must navigate the legal complexities associated with gig work, such as classifying workers correctly, complying with labor laws, and managing the nuances of contracts and agreements.

- ***Benefits and compensation:*** HR must create flexible compensation structures to attract and retain gig workers. Traditional benefits such as health insurance and retirement plans may need to be reevaluated or adjusted to accommodate gig workers, who do not typically receive these benefits and provide them with a safety net.

- ***Onboarding and training:*** HR must design onboarding and training programs catering to gig workers' unique needs and schedules. This can involve online training modules and flexible orientation processes.

- ***Performance management:*** HR must develop new metrics and assessment methods for gig workers. Evaluating the performance of gig workers can be more challenging, as they may have a different level of oversight than traditional employees.

- ***Engagement and company culture:*** HR must maintain a sense of belonging and company culture among gig contributors who may not physically work in the office is crucial. HR must find ways to keep these contributors engaged and aligned with the company's values.

- ***Workforce planning:*** HR departments must become more agile in their workforce planning to accommodate the fluctuating needs of gig contributors. It would be necessary to understand when and where to source gig talent.

- ***Data and technology:*** HR must leverage technology and data analytics to manage gig workers efficiently, from hiring to payroll. This involves implementing a modern HRMS platform that can handle a more dynamic workforce.

- ***Communication and collaboration:*** HR must facilitate communication and collaboration between gig workers and full-time employees, often through digital platforms and tools.

- ***Risk management:*** HR must work to mitigate the risks associated with gig workers through their policies and security measures. Gig workers can introduce unique risks to a company, such as data security and intellectual property concerns.

- ***Regulatory frameworks:*** HR must develop or adopt labor laws and regulations to address the needs and rights of gig workers.

- ***Taxation:*** HR must ensure the revision of tax policies to certify fair contributions from gig contributors.

Adopt and adapt

Recent times have shown us that adopting any new concept has a short timeline and high clout. With the mass resignations that swooped several economies, it isn't wrong to predict that the gig economy, too, may see a sudden influx, which can significantly impact human resources in several ways. HR must adopt new strategies, policies, and tools to manage and engage gig contributors while conforming to legal and ethical standards in a dynamic work environment.

About Madhura Kulkarni

Madhura leads marketing for TCS Chroma. A seasoned communication professional and a GTM strategist with a growth mindset, Madhura brings a diversified experience of more than 15 years across the Marketing and Mass Communication domains.

Article by Madhura Kulkarni

Five Ways Working from Home Can Help You Upskill or Reskill in Your Career

Are you maximizing the potential of remote work to upskill or reskill in your career? Working from home offers unparalleled opportunities for professional growth, allowing you to acquire new skills and qualifications without leaving your home office.

Remote work has revolutionized how many professionals work, offering greater flexibility and new opportunities for professional growth. One of the most significant advantages of working from home is the potential for career upskilling and reskilling. These are necessary endeavors for virtually all professionals with the quickening pace of change in how work is done across industries.

According to *Coursera*, upskilling "means learning new and enhanced skills that relate to your current role" and reskilling "involves learning new cross-functional skills" to move into a new role or widen the scope of your current role. In this article, we present some ideas suggested by remote workers and those working remotely with our client companies. Upskill or reskill from home by leveraging these ideas to take greater control of your professional development.

Article by
Alan Margulis
Marketing Content Writer

Earn degrees, certificates, credentials, and microcredentials online

Working from home provides the ideal setting to upskill or reskill by attending online classes. Online education has evolved, offering a vast array of options to meet your professional development needs.

Advanced degrees: Professionals working remotely can pursue graduate and post-graduate degrees, such as a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration, a Master of Business Administration, or Master of Computer Science and Cybersecurity. Take advantage of the technologies that make online education possible, without having to relocate and take time away from work to enroll in a traditional on-campus program. Many of these programs even offer the flexibility to listen to lectures and complete coursework at your convenience.

Certifications and credentials: Consider earning industry-recognized certifications, such as Project Management Professional (PMP), Certified Business Analysis Professional (CBAP), Certified Supply Chain Professional (CSCP), Certified Solutions Architect (CSA), or Oracle Certified Professional (OCP) to boost your qualifications.

> "If you're in project management, joining PMI offers access to exclusive resources, networking opportunities, and certifications like the PMP credential."

Microcredentials: Microcredentials, often offered through platforms like Coursera or edX, provide quick, focused skill development. Examples include Certified ScrumMaster (CSM), HubSpot Content Marketing Certification, Tableau Desktop Specialist, and Cisco Certified DevNet Associate.

Use online skill development resources

Remote work offers access to a wealth of *online tools and resources* for upskilling and reskilling, making you more indispensable in your field.

Coding bootcamps: Le Wagon is a renowned coding bootcamp that offers a full-stack web development program. In just nine weeks, beginners can transform into proficient web developers, capable of building web applications from scratch. General Assembly is a global education company that provides a wide range of tech-focused bootcamps and courses, from software engineering and data science to digital marketing and UX design.

Google Analytics Academy: This is an excellent resource for individuals seeking to become experts in web analytics, a skill that is highly sought after in digital marketing. Through Google Analytics Academy, you can master the art of data analysis, understand user behavior on websites, and gain the ability to make data-driven decisions.

LinkedIn Learning: This platform offers a vast library of courses covering a wide range of subjects. Whether you're interested in leadership and management, project management, data science, or graphic design, you can find courses taught by industry experts, tailored to your specific career goals.

Enroll as a mentee in a mentoring program

Mentorship is a cornerstone of career growth, and remote work makes it easier than ever to find and connect with experienced mentors who can help you upskill or even reskill. If you work in a small to midsize company without these programs, seek a mentor through a professional or industry association. If you work in a larger organization, explore your intranet for these programs or ask human resources what your company has to offer.

Industry leaders: Connect with seasoned professionals in your organization, or outside of your organization, who can provide insights and guidance related to your field or industry.

Cross-functional mentorship: *Remote work* allows you to establish mentorship relationships with individuals from different departments or industries, providing diverse perspectives on career growth.

Join a professional association

Joining a professional association is a strategic move for career advancement as it offers a multitude of upskilling and reskilling benefits that can significantly impact your professional growth. These include access to industry insights and experts, real-world and virtual events, networking opportunities, certifications and designations, and mentoring programs. Here are two popular examples:

Project Management Institute (PMI): If you're in project management, joining PMI offers access to exclusive resources, networking opportunities, and certifications like the PMP credential.

Article by Alan Margulis

American Marketing Association (AMA): Marketers can benefit from AMA's wealth of industry insights, conferences, and workshops.

> "Working from home isn't just about flexibility and convenience; it can also be a gateway to expanding your intellectual capabilities and career potential."

Plot out your learning and career growth moves with career mapping tools

Career mapping is a strategic and proactive approach to planning and managing your professional trajectory. It involves setting clear goals, identifying key milestones, and charting a path toward achieving your aspirations in your chosen field.

SMART objectives: Utilize the SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, time-bound) framework to set precise career objectives. For instance, set a goal to earn a certification in data science within six months.

Skill enhancement plans: Map out a plan for upskilling or reskilling, whether it's learning a new programming language, improving data analysis techniques, or enhancing leadership skills.

Working from home isn't just about flexibility and convenience; it can also be a gateway to expanding your intellectual capabilities and career potential. Embrace the era of remote work and take advantage of online education, skill development resources, mentorship, professional associations, and career mapping tools. By proactively upskilling, reskilling, and charting your career path, you can position yourself for success and personal fulfillment, no matter where your workspace may be. There has never been a more empowering time for career growth, so seize the opportunity to invest in your future.

Remote work is more than just a convenience—it's a pathway to expanding your career potential. By embracing online education, skill development resources, mentorship, and strategic career planning, you can upskill or reskill effectively. Take control of your career journey and turn your home workspace into a launching pad for future success.

About ECI

ECI Software Solutions provides cloud-based business software for running small and mid-sized businesses end to end. Built by experts in manufacturing, residential construction, field service, building supply, office technology, and wholesale/retail distribution industries, ECI's industry-specific software connects businesses and customers, improving visibility, operational efficiency, and profitability. With ECI, businesses seamlessly integrate sales and marketing, business intelligence, CRM, data and analytics, ecommerce, mobile apps, and payment processing. With more than 30 years of industry leadership, ECI is trusted by 24,000 customers in more than 80 countries globally. Headquartered in Westlake, Texas, it has offices in the U.S., Canada, Mexico, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, and Australia. For more information, visit www.ECIsolutions.com.

Digital Factories are Shaping the Future of Manufacturing

The digital factory movement is gaining momentum as manufacturers embrace transformative technologies that are helping them achieve greater productivity and update their business models for today's marketplace. From artificial intelligence to advanced robotics systems, Industry 4.0 is changing the way manufacturers run their businesses, creating opportunities for efficiency and productivity that would be impossible without deep use of digital solutions in the factory.

In simplest terms, the move toward digital factories gives manufacturers the ability to make more informed decisions as they work to optimize operations. This begins with building data into every process and eventually leads to sustained innovation as the lessons learned from that data fuels progress. While the move toward such digital factory systems is already well underway in the form of modern enterprise resource planning systems and Internet of Things projects, transformative technologies could take the movement to another level.

Transformative Technology Drives Digital Factory Innovation

Transformative is a term thrown around a great deal in conversations surrounding digital technologies, but it is more than a buzzword. An IHS Markit study asked business leaders about six technologies the research firm dubbed transformative. The technologies were AI, 5G networks, the IoT, blockchain, cloud computing/virtualization and the move toward video everywhere.

Article from Abas

Approximately *56% of those polled* said these technologies will have a "high-to-significant disruptive impact" in their sectors within the next three years. Just 4% said they aren't expecting such disruption.

> "With disruptive technologies driving a move toward digital factory systems, the larger smart manufacturing industry is rising fast."

Digital technologies are starting to drive major changes in how companies operate. IHS Markit explained that the disruption being driven by today's emerging technologies will likely lead to major operational changes, creating new market opportunities and changing how competition unfolds within an industry.

This is evident in manufacturing, where the digital factory movement is changing many longstanding perceptions. Among major disruptions driving this change are:

- An increased ability for small manufacturers to compete by offering specialized, highly customizable products.
- A heightened use of robotics and software that deepens the role of automation through better real-time data transmission.
- An accelerated adoption of modernized supply chain strategies that reduce operational costs and streamline production.
- A greater capacity for forecasting and inventory optimization to better adapt capabilities to market demands at a given time.

These efforts to drive operational excellence are leading to the move to digital factories as businesses seek ways to create new revenue opportunities in highly competitive markets.

Smart Manufacturing Rises

With disruptive technologies driving a move toward digital factory systems, the larger smart manufacturing industry is rising fast. Smart manufacturing refers to data-driven technologies used to allow for more intelligent, informed decision-making both in everyday operations and for big-picture strategies. In many ways, the idea of the smart factory is interchangeable with the digital factory. Grand View Research reported that the global market for smart manufacturing solutions was valued at *$198.21 billion in 2018*. From that point, it is expected to grow at a compound annual growth rate of 10.7% to 2025.

According to Grand View Research, the move to smart manufacturing is evident in a variety of key trends, including:

- Increased digitization across the industry.
- Converged IT and operations technology systems.
- Modernization of legacy control solutions.

The study found that advances in these areas are impacting the entire manufacturing value chain.

Take Steps Toward the Digital Factory

Taking advantage of the cutting-edge technologies transforming manufacturing isn't about a huge one-time project. It is instead a matter of taking a digital journey, making iterative updates and changes to adapt processes, equipment and staffing strategies to better take advantage of digitalization across the manufacturing process. The long-term vision of a digital factory is one in which processes are digitized across the entire business, meaning:

> "Manufacturers can't simply sit back and wait for the digital factory movement to mature. Instead, it's vital to start taking steps now to keep up with innovation in the sector"

- Sales teams have insight into production data, vendor capabilities and existing supply so they can accurately quote projects and forecast resource availability when speaking with clients.
- Production runs blend robotic processes, additive manufacturing and human interactions to ensure each part of production is handled in the most efficient way possible.

- Testing and quality control systems feature digital imaging and video-based capabilities to provide deep analysis faster, and more accurately, than human testers.

- Warehouse and field services teams have full insights into inventory levels, including items in transit, and that data is easily accessible for stakeholders across the business.

A digital strategy doesn't just incorporate these isolated capabilities. Instead, the data collection and management capabilities across lines of business ensure cohesion and efficiency. This innovation won't happen overnight. It requires iterative progress that builds over time. Steps you can take in this process include:

- Update your ERP system to a future-proof platform designed to be adaptable for the specific workflows created by emerging technologies.

- Implement IoT solutions to solve specific pain points and create immediate value to justify further investment.

- Deploy AI that allows machines to adjust how they function with minimal human intervention.

- Equip staff with modern devices that ensure they have easy access to the data they need to create value in digital factory settings.

Manufacturers can't simply sit back and wait for the digital factory movement to mature. Instead, it's vital to start taking steps now to keep up with innovation in the sector. We can help you on that journey with an ERP system designed with future needs in mind.

ABAS FORTERRO

Article from Abas

Why You Should Embrace the Gig Economy

The gig economy is changing the way we work and hire. Gone are the days of the traditional career, a long slog where you work your way up within the same company. Instead, we're now embracing greater flexibility in the way we work, and we expect it, too.

For businesses, there's certainly some unease when thinking about truly untethered employees. But there are many notable benefits when it comes to working with freelancer or interim talent. In this blog we'll look at some key stats about how the modern workforce is adapting, and we'll consider the benefits to businesses of adopting this employment model.

36% Increase in Contingent Workers

Since 2008, according to a survey by *Labour Force*, the number of freelancers has jumped from 1.4m to 1.91m. This is a 36% increase, and according to *PeoplePerHour*, an online freelance platform, this trend will continue and by 2020, 50% of the workforce will be freelancers.

So, for businesses looking to stay agile, now and into the future, embracing the emerging contingent and freelance workforce matters. But to do so, understanding the gig economy, and how it works, will make all the difference in remaining competitive.

> "The gig economy is a thriving online marketplace where freelancers and interim talent offer their services on an ad-hoc basis."

A Thriving Online Marketplace

The gig economy is a thriving online marketplace where freelancers and interim talent offer their services on an ad-hoc basis. Although the term has some negative connotations thanks to poor press via companies like Uber and zero hour contracts, at the highly skilled end of the spectrum, the gig economy has plenty of benefits to both employees and employers.

There's greater flexibility for businesses, meaning they can hire the specific talent they need, as and when the need arises. And there's greater flexibility for employees as they can work when they want, selecting jobs that suit their particular skills.

Plus, when businesses employ professional freelancers and expert interim talent, they don't have to worry about training, learning on the job, or the interim's career path. A business can work with highly skilled talent that already specialises within the area the business needs.

Disruption for Consultants

Of course, this type of working has been around for a long time, with writers and construction workers being primarily contingent for decades. But there are other industries that are experiencing disruption thanks to the way the gig economy is shaping employment. Interim consultants, for example, are now finding it easier to work via agencies and online platforms, matching their talents with the right businesses and the right jobs.

These talented employees are available for hire as and when they are needed, meaning that businesses can lean on this talent pool when relevant jobs come up.

It also means a business doesn't have to completely outsource a project; instead it can supplement its own employees' skills. This is often a good model to implement,when up scaling inhouse talent is simply too costly or time consuming.

> "With the notable economic benefits this workforce brings to businesses and the economy as a whole, it's worth working out how to better utilise this highly-skilled workforce."

But it is still important to carefully search out and screen these highly talented freelancers and interims in order to find the best people for the job. This is especially true when hiring freelancer or interim talent from a niche or industry your business doesn't specialise in.

New Consultancy Models

Traditional consultancies work on a model where they rely on a "bench" of employees to work on their clients' programmes. This is changing as new, leaner consultancies make use of the gig economy to bring a far wider pool of consultants to this virtual "bench" — giving their clients a much better match of skills to their needs — in a far more cost-effective way.

The Gig Economy is Here to Stay

In 2015, according to the *Association of Independent Professionals and Self Employed*, 'freelancers contribute(d) approximately £109 billion to the UK economy'.

With the notable economic benefits this workforce brings to businesses and the economy as a whole, it's worth working out how to better utilise this highly-skilled workforce. With the turmoil of the *UK election*, and the fallout from Brexit, flexible approaches to hiring will become increasingly sensible for both employees and employers.

About Andy Mckendry
Known to put words on paper, Andy Mckendry is a freelance writer and editor with an MA in Professional Writing -writing in conjunction with B2E Consulting.

Rootstock Study Reveals Manufacturers' Shifting Expectations for Cloud ERP Solutions

Cost reduction and business agility emerge as the new top priorities

Rootstock Software, a recognized leader in Manufacturing ERP, continues its in-depth series with Part 4 of its comparative analysis of 2023 versus 2024 Manufacturing Technology Survey Results. This part of the study explores the evolving expectations manufacturers have for Cloud ERP solutions, highlighting the shifts in their priorities and desired benefits.

"This comparison underscores a clear change in what manufacturers want from their Cloud ERP. In 2024, the focus is now on an ERP's ability to deliver savings and agility," said *Stu Johnson*, VP of Product Marketing at *Rootstock Software*. "Rootstock is committed to delivering a cutting-edge ERP that continuously evolves to meet manufacturers' changing needs. We aim to help

them thrive in today's economic landscape by supporting their desire for cost control, enhanced workforce productivity, and an ability to adapt to market volatility."

The *2024 State of Manufacturing Technology Survey Results* revealed manufacturers' changing perspectives on what an ERP is expected to deliver in terms of benefits:

- Cost Reduction: Now the Top Expectation. Today, manufacturers expect Cloud ERP to help decrease costs. This expectation increased from 40.9% in 2023 to 56% in 2024. It aligns with manufacturers' sentiments in other parts of the survey, where they emphasized a desire to support financial performance amid economic uncertainty.

- Focused on Business Agility. While agility wasn't a top priority in 2023, manufacturers have seen the consequences of rapid shifts in customer demand, as well as disruptions to their supply chain. They see these factors as ongoing risks, and as such, 46% of manufacturers expect their ERP to help them adapt to market conditions.

- Security Remains Essential. IT security remains a consistent expectation in the ERP market, with a slight increase to 46% in 2024. Manufacturers want an ERP with a highly reliable and stable platform, as well as providing robust cybersecurity to protect sensitive information and maintain business continuity.

- IT Simplification. Manufacturers want to standardize their IT infrastructure—44% of respondents said they wanted this as an ERP benefit. Recognizing the power of Rootstock's platform approach, many manufacturers chose Rootstock because it reduces infrastructure complexity by providing a unified data platform and cohesive user experience.

- Productivity and Workforce Optimization. Improving staff productivity and/or reducing the size of their workforce are emerging priorities, with 42% of manufacturers expecting an ERP to deliver benefits in this area. In light of today's tight labor market and tech skills gap, manufacturers want an ERP that can optimize staff efficiency with automated tools, decision support, and improved resource management.

Conversely, while the outcomes above have taken center stage, other benefits have lost traction. For example, "improving compliance" and "driving innovation" were top priorities in 2023, but they dropped off the list of key ERP expectations in 2024. This shift is in sync with other areas of the survey where manufacturers expressed prioritizing cost-saving measures over strategic long-term planning. Rootstock Software remains committed to supporting manufacturers to achieve their most pressing objectives. The company continually updates its *Manufacturing ERP* to meet new priorities for manufacturers.

For complete 2024 survey findings, check out Rootstock's study here: *https://clouderp.rootstock.com/rootstock-state-of-manufacturing-survey*. And tune into *Rootstock's press releases*, where additional parts of this comparative analysis will be announced.

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 future-proof solution. With it, manufacturers gain the agility to continually transform their business 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.

Boll & Branch Weaves Finances and Inventory with NetSuite

Luxury home textile brand leverages the power of the suite to increase efficiency, expand business visibility, and drive sustainable growth

Boll & Branch, a luxury bedding and home décor brand, is using *Oracle NetSuite* to support its mission to change the way home textiles are sourced, made, and purchased. With NetSuite, Boll & Branch has been able to take advantage of an integrated business system to help automate financial processes, optimize inventory, and efficiently scale its operations.

Founded in 2014, Boll & Branch began as an online direct-to-consumer business, with an emphasis on ethically sourcing the highest quality raw materials, including 100% organic cotton, and was the first in the industry to offer Fair Trade Certified bedding. Today, it is a leading designer and retailer of luxury home textiles and furniture, operating brick-and-mortar stores, and selling its

products through Amazon and major retailers including Bloomingdales and Nordstrom. As it expanded its operations, product portfolio, and sales channels, Boll & Branch's manual financial and inventory processes led to data inaccuracies and disrupted business insights and reporting. To help support its continued growth and improve efficiency, Boll & Branch decided it was time to replace its previous software and selected NetSuite as its new *enterprise resource planning* (ERP) system.

"As our company grew, we knew we needed more automation when it came to our data and finances," said David Reid, CFO, Boll & Branch. "With NetSuite, we have been able to improve productivity and create a real-time view of performance across the business. In addition, better access to insights has helped us identify new revenue opportunities and drive more profitable growth."

With NetSuite, Boll & Branch has been able to save time, improve reporting accuracy, and gain insights to inform its growth strategies by integrating and automating finance and inventory workflows. For example, *NetSuite Advanced Inventory* helps Boll & Branch optimize fulfillment with a real-time view of inventory and orders across sales channels. NetSuite enables Boll & Branch to understand customer demand by location to improve product availability and avoid stock-outs, and inform targeted marketing campaigns. To uphold its commitment as a Fair Trade partner, NetSuite also helps Boll & Branch improve supply chain visibility and calculate the premiums it pays to invest back into local farm and production communities.

"As a retailer committed to quality and sustainability, managing margins is central to Boll & Branch's success," said Sam Levy, senior vice president of growth and operations, Oracle NetSuite. "With NetSuite, Boll & Branch has a unified view of its business and can easily access the insights it needs to improve productivity, manage costs, and optimize profit margins. As Boll & Branch expands its operations, NetSuite has the scalability to grow with its business and act as a force multiplier for efficiency."

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.

Acumatica Customers are Moving Beyond QuickBooks with a Comprehensive and Scalable Business Management Solution

QuickBooks graduates experience growth and success with a modern cloud ERP platform that enhances visibility and automates processes

Many small to mid-sized businesses (SMBs) reach a crossroads when growth outpaces the capabilities of basic accounting software like QuickBooks. As business operations become more complex, QuickBooks's limitations can result in roadblocks that hinder efficiency, productivity and scalability. An increasing number of businesses have graduated from QuickBooks and succeeded in achieving their growth ambitions with *Acumatica Cloud ERP*. The comprehensive business management solution offers advanced accounting capabilities, seamless application integrations, superior usability and scalable solutions tailored to specific industries.

"We are seeing more and more companies that need to scale their operations and are ready to leap to a comprehensive business management solution," said John Case, CEO of Acumatica. "For growing SMBs, Acumatica is not just an upgrade; it's a complete reimagining of business management, designed to meet their changing needs."

One customer that has outgrown its basic accounting software and embraced cloud ERP is *Phoenix Renovation & Restoration*, a contracting company that previously relied on QuickBooks for accounting. The system struggled to support expanding operations, making simple accounting

tasks time-consuming and inhibiting cash flow projection. Once team members finalized reports, they were often two to three weeks outdated due to manual data entry. The company needed a more robust solution to simultaneously manage hundreds of open projects.

"Acumatica has made our lives easier by providing enhanced visibility, creating a culture and expectation of accountability and providing our team with real-time data at their fingertips anytime, anywhere," said Eric Hugunin, chief operating officer of Phoenix Renovation & Restoration. "Since going live on Acumatica, we've eliminated the need to tap into our line of credit, becoming cash flow positive for the longest period in 25 years."

"Many businesses have been using QuickBooks alongside other disparate systems such as CRM and inventory management," said Case. "Acumatica Cloud ERP goes beyond just replacing these starter systems like QuickBooks and consolidates all these operations into a single platform, offering a powerful system that enables businesses to transform their operations through streamlined processes, enhanced visibility and access to real-time data for better decision-making. Additionally, customers have the flexibility to customize and integrate Acumatica with hundreds of other solutions."

Acumatica customer DiamondBack Truck Covers, a truck bed cover manufacturer, struggled with inefficiencies when feeding several systems into QuickBooks. These obstacles resulted in hours spent on manual data entry, creating bottlenecks in order tracking and customer relationship management. Acumatica reduced the time needed to gather data by 90%, enhancing efficiency through automation.

Similarly, *Q-PAC Systems, Inc.*, a custom plug-and-play fan system manufacturer, needed more visibility into its production and inventory, which hindered its growth potential. After adopting Acumatica, Q-PAC benefited from automated processes, saving valuable time and improving inventory and production tracking. The company also experienced enhanced billing accuracy and more efficient warehouse management. Leveraging Acumatica, Q-PAC will be able to support its growth plans of increasing production by five to 10 times.

These customers are only a handful of the hundreds of organizations that have found business success *transitioning from QuickBooks* to Acumatica Cloud ERP. Businesses across industries are growing rapidly, and *Acumatica delivers* the modern ERP solutions they need to reach new heights.

"QuickBooks is suitable for small organizations needing basic accounting capabilities. However, as businesses embark on their growth journey, they require a more comprehensive and adaptable solution. That's where Acumatica comes in," said Case. "We deliver a scalable business solution engineered to grow their operations and tailored to their specific industry needs."

Companies can confidently manage growth and complexity with Acumatica and ensure long-term success. To learn more about how Acumatica can support your business's growth objectives, request a demo at *https://www.acumatica.com/request-a-demo/.*

About Acumatica

Acumatica Cloud ERP is a comprehensive business management solution that was born in the cloud and built for more connected, collaborative ways of working. Designed explicitly to enable small and mid-market companies to thrive in today's digital economy, Acumatica's flexible solution, customer-friendly business practices and industry-specific functionality help growing businesses adapt to fast-moving markets and take control of their future. For more information, visit acumatica.com or follow us on LinkedIn.

CVC Joins CD&R as an Investment Partner in Epicor

Clayton, Dubilier & Rice ("CD&R") and CVC, announced that funds managed by CVC have agreed to acquire a significant ownership position in Epicor, a global provider of industry-specific enterprise software to promote business growth. CD&R, which first invested in Epicor in 2020, and CVC will each have equal number of Board seats, with Jeff Hawn continuing to serve as Chairman. Steve Murphy will continue in his role as CEO of Epicor. Financial terms of the private transaction were not disclosed.

Founded in 1972 and based in Austin, Texas, Epicor is a leading SaaS provider of multi-vertical Enterprise Resource Planning ("ERP") software designed to fit the precise needs of customers in a range of industrial sectors in the "Make, Move, and Sell" economy. The company's flagship products are curated to support highly complex, industry-specific workflows and provide mission-critical support to customers seeking to drive growth and profitability in their own businesses. Epicor is an acknowledged leader in the industrial end markets it serves, including manufacturing, distribution, retail and services categories. Epicor serves approximately 23,000 customers in more than 150 countries.

"Our customers and their ambitions are the focus of what we do as we work to provide the most innovative solution sets possible," said Steve Murphy, Epicor CEO. "CD&R's support and partnership has been invaluable as we have accelerated the growth of our business, invested significantly in our portfolio and released a number of next-generation, cloud-ready products. We look forward to working with CVC as we continue to grow our platform capabilities, with a keen focus on better serving our dynamic customer base."

Since CD&R's acquisition of Epicor in 2020, the company recently surpassed $1 billion in annual recurring revenue (ARR) as a result of organic growth, including a successful transformation into a SaaS-first company, as well as complementary strategic acquisitions which expanded product capabilities and geographic reach. Epicor's SaaS transformation and 45% annual growth in SaaS ARR have been powered by significant R&D and Go-to-Market investments, while laying the groundwork for further innovation. In May 2024, Epicor unveiled its new Epicor Grow portfolio, an integrated set of artificial intelligence

(AI) and Business Intelligence (BI) capabilities powered by an industry-focused data platform tuned specifically for the requirements of the Make, Move, and Sell industries. The company's portfolio redefines how AI-powered ERP software serves the supply chain industries and their workers, and includes Epicor Prism, a patent-pending generative AI service embedded across Epicor's Industry ERP Cloud solution.

"When we invested in Epicor nearly four years ago, there was an attractive opportunity to build on the company's strong foundation and to create an industry leader focused on best-in-class enterprise SaaS," said Jeff Hawn, Epicor Chairman and CD&R Partner. "Epicor has grown to become a preeminent global platform, led by a fantastic management team which has delivered more value for customers and organizations worldwide. We are confident that by leveraging our collective experience we can continue to unlock Epicor's potential. Our continued partnership highlights the conviction we have in this next chapter, and we are enthused to continue to support Epicor's growth with the experienced CVC team."

"We are thrilled to partner with Steve Murphy and the Epicor management team, along with CD&R, to support the company and its growth plans. Epicor has developed a differentiated value proposition based on its industry-leading SaaS product portfolio and demonstrated commitment to customer service excellence," said Aaron Dupuis, a Managing Partner at CVC. "We look forward to enhancing Epicor's next chapter of growth with further SaaS migration and geographic expansion into international regions, while continuing to drive product innovation that will benefit Epicor's many valued customers, partners and employees," added Sebastian Künne, Senior Managing Director at CVC.

"Steve and the rest of the management team have built a tremendous organization at Epicor," said Harsh Agarwal, CD&R Partner. "We look forward to working with CVC to drive Epicor's next phase of growth, while supporting the company's culture that is essential to its success."

Barclays is serving as lead financial advisor, with Goldman Sachs & Co. LLC serving as financial advisor, and Debevoise & Plimpton is serving as legal advisor to CD&R and Epicor. Jefferies LLC and Evercore are serving as financial advisors and White & Case is serving as legal advisor to CVC.

CVC will invest in Epicor through CVC Capital Partners IX. The transaction is subject to customary closing conditions and is expected to close in Q4 2024.

EPICOR

About Epicor

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

About CD&R

Founded in 1978, CD&R is a leading private investment firm with a strategy of generating strong investment returns by building more robust and sustainable businesses through the combination of skilled investment experience and deep operating capabilities. In partnership with the management teams of its portfolio companies, CD&R takes a long-term view of value creation and emphasizes positive stewardship and impact. The firm invests in businesses that span a broad range of industries, including industrial, healthcare, consumer, technology and financial services end markets. CD&R is privately owned by its partners and has offices in New York and London. For more information, please visit www.cdr-inc.com and follow the firm's activities through LinkedIn and @CDRBuilds on X/ Twitter.

About CVC

CVC is a leading global private markets manager with a network of 29 office locations throughout EMEA, the Americas, and Asia, with approximately €193 billion of assets under management. CVC has seven complementary strategies across private equity, secondaries, credit and infrastructure, for which CVC funds have secured commitments of approximately €235 billion from some of the world's leading pension funds and other institutional investors. Funds managed or advised by CVC's private equity strategy are invested in approximately 130 companies worldwide, which have combined annual sales of over €155 billion and employ more than 600,000 people. For further information about CVC please visit: www.cvc.com. Follow us on LinkedIn.

informXL Expands Product Offerings for Hyphen Solutions BRIX Clients to Deliver Better Data Insight

informXL, a leading provider of reporting and process management solutions, is excited to announce the expansion of its product line with new informXL for BRIX solutions. The new offering includes a range of tools and applications designed to give homebuilders rapid, focused access to critical business information.

With over 100 years of collective experience and a track record of serving more than 250 homebuilders across North America, *informXL's Analyzer* has become a trusted application among BRIX customers, widely used by many homebuilding organizations.

The newly developed *informXL for BRIX solution* will now include:

- Visual Analytics: Quick and easy insights into your data.
- User-Friendly Apps: Intuitive applications right at your fingertips.
- Outsourced BI Department: Comprehensive BI solutions tailored to your needs.

"Having worked with Hyphen Solutions for many years, we are thrilled to offer their BRIX clients enhanced capabilities to dive deeper into their *ERP data* and make more informed decisions," says Nathan Sybrandt, Chief Operating Officer at *informXL.* "Most of our experts come from the homebuilding industry so we are very in tune with the day-to-day pain points of our audience, hence we continue to develop solutions that help solve or minimize all those challenges."

"ERP systems house vast amounts of data that help drive business decisions. informXL's expanded offerings enable BRIX clients to extract actionable insights from their data and optimize revenue, enhancing decision-making and operational efficiency in every department, including Purchasing, Finance, Operations, and Sales," adds Stephen Candy, Division President, Builders Solutions at *Hyphen Solutions*.

"The early adopter's program was exciting!" says Jennifer Johnson, Founder & President at *Olivia Clarke Homes*. "The informXL team listened to our feedback and the needs of our organization to produce real time solutions. The visualization tool is powerful as one can easily identify issues, roadblocks, or errors in the data and take steps to correct them. It's easy to see the winners in the organization as well as areas for improvement. Power BI enables you to see your business from a 45,000 ft view as well as take a deep dive into the data when needed."

Ready to harness the power of your ERP data? *Schedule a demo* now to learn more about the new informXL for BRIX solutions.

informxl

About informXL

informXL makes your information your greatest asset. Since 2009 we've helped North America's fastest growing builders make smarter, more informed decisions through visual analytics, dashboards, and mobile reporting. Your vision, our information know-how. Let us help you see your business – better.

VitalEdge Technologies Recognized on the 2024 Inc. 5000 List of Fastest-Growing Private Companies in the United States for the Second Straight Year

VitalEdge Technologies, a leading provider of global dealer management software solutions, announces that it has been recognized on the prestigious Inc. 5000 list of the fastest-growing private companies in the United States for the second straight year. The list ranks companies based on their percentage of revenue growth from 2020 to 2023.

"We are thrilled to be named among the nation's fastest-growing companies, a testament to our unwavering dedication to innovation and client-centric solutions," said Jeff Hart, President and CEO of VitalEdge Technologies. "This award is a testament not only to the talent of our associates, but also to our clients and the 4,400 dealership rooftops we serve throughout the globe. Organizations across the sector are eager to adopt technology to improve their business performance, and we've been dedicated to providing them the digital transformation and data intelligence solutions they need to enhance the customer experience, unlock efficiencies and grow market share."

For more than 20 years, VitalEdge has focused on the equipment distribution space and its specific market sectors, including agriculture, construction, heavy truck, material handling and more. The company's software suites, e-Emphasys ERP and IntelliDealer, allow clients to connect every aspect of their dealerships to standardize and automate workflows, access real-time analytics, and make data-driven decisions.

VitalEdge's appearance on the 2024 list comes amid an accelerated period of corporate growth. Following the 2023 merger with CDK Global Heavy Equipment, the company has grown to become the industry's largest dedicated technology provider with more than 800 global associates. In addition, the company has made significant investments in improving the client experience, including additions to the senior leadership team, the release of innovative new products across both product suites, and further enhancement of their client support capabilities.

About VitalEdge Technologies

VitalEdge Technologies is a leading global provider of dealer management solutions. Its e-Emphasys ERP and IntelliDealer software suites give agriculture, construction, heavy truck, material handling, and other equipment dealers digital transformation and data intelligence technology to transform and grow their businesses. Designed to meet these clients' industry-specific needs, its platforms connect every aspect of dealership operations and provide insights to increase efficiency, client satisfaction, and profitability. For more information, visit www.VitalEdge.com.

Sage Intacct Expands Its AI-Driven AP Automation to Support Businesses Globally

The latest upgrades and features for Sage Intacct, extends regional-specific tax, banking and certifications

Sage, the leader in accounting, financial, HR, and payroll technology for small and mid-sized businesses (SMBs), announces new enhancements and updates for Sage Intacct customers globally, to streamline financial operations and enhance security worldwide.

As part of this major expansion, Sage Intacct is rolling out AP Automation globally. In the US, businesses are already processing over 10,000 bills per month using this innovative tool, which utilizes AI to halve the time taken for accounts payable processes while saving organizations over $100,000 per year. AP Automation streamlines financial workflows by automatically creating draft bills from uploaded documents, promptly identifying issues such as duplicates, and significantly reducing data entry efforts and costs.

"Supporting our customers to focus on growing their business is fundamental to the technologies we are building," said Dan Miller, EVP Financials and ERP Division at Sage. "AP Automation is a prime example of this and makes us the first mid-market solution to offer this outside of the US. What's more, our ongoing global expansion and the achievement of significant certifications, showcases our commitment to providing globally compliant, secure, and robust financial solutions that meet the diverse needs of businesses everywhere."

Sage Intacct Product Release 3 2024 Enhancements Also Include:

- ***Elevated Time Entry Experience:*** This new Sage Intelligent Time feature, with enhanced AI assistance, supports customers with the creation of more descriptive activity card titles and the option for automatic time entry descriptions, improving clarity for approvers and users alike.

Availability: US, Canada, Australia, South Africa and the UK

- ***Automated Employee Expense Submission—Early Adopter:*** Employees can email receipts directly from any device, while AI and machine learning enhance coding accuracy and adapt to user modifications for future submissions, significantly simplifying the expense reporting process.

Availability: US

- ***Sage Intacct Financials Certified by AFNOR in France:*** Achieving NF 203 certification from Infocert, Sage Intacct meets stringent French standards, enhancing security and reliability while ensuring regulatory compliance. This certification offers our customers peace of mind, knowing their financial operations are supported by a system that adheres to the highest standards of data integrity and compliance required by French law.

Availability: France

- ***German Electronic Tax Submission:*** Simplifying tax compliance for German organizations, Sage Intacct now supports the DATEV file format, ensuring security and ease of financial data exchange. The seamless integration simplifies tax reporting and financial statements preparation, improving both accuracy and workflow efficiency.

Availability: Germany

- ***Enhanced Interactive Custom Report Writer (ICRW):*** New reports in ICRW, provides customers with deeper, actionable insights, facilitating compliance and operational efficiency. These customizable reports provide detailed views on order summaries, customer aging, and purchasing activities, empowering users to make data-driven decisions swiftly.

Availability: Globally

- ***Enhanced Email delivery and insights:*** The latest update introduces an enhanced email delivery service that leverages DomainKeys Identified Mail (DKIM) to ensure emails reach their intended recipients securely and efficiently. This service also provides detailed email delivery logs for better visibility and supports multiple domains and sub-domains, making it ideal for businesses managing communications across diverse operational areas.

Availability: Globally

- ***Sage Intacct and Kanso Solution for Affordable Housing:*** Sage Intacct has partnered with Kanso, a housing management platform, to deliver a comprehensive cloud solution for public housing management, enhancing compliance, data accuracy, and property management. The solution, inspired by customer feedback, broadens Sage Intacct's reach into diverse housing sectors, including public, native communities, and supportive housing.

Availability: US & Canada

- ***Hold And Resume Contract Schedules:*** Users can now simultaneously hold or resume billing, revenue, and expense schedules across multiple contracts, enhancing operational efficiency with a refined user interface. This updated interface features new filters like customer type, contract type, and transaction currency, all within a streamlined layout for improved navigation and action management.

Availability: US, Canada, Australia, South Africa and the UK

- ***Exporting Taxable Payments Annual Reports:*** Simplifying compliance with the Australian Tax Office, users can now export Taxable Payments Annual Reports (TPAR) files using this new feature. By eliminating the need for manual data reformatting, this functionality not only saves time but also reduces errors, ensuring compliance and enhancing efficiency for Australian businesses.

Availability: Australia

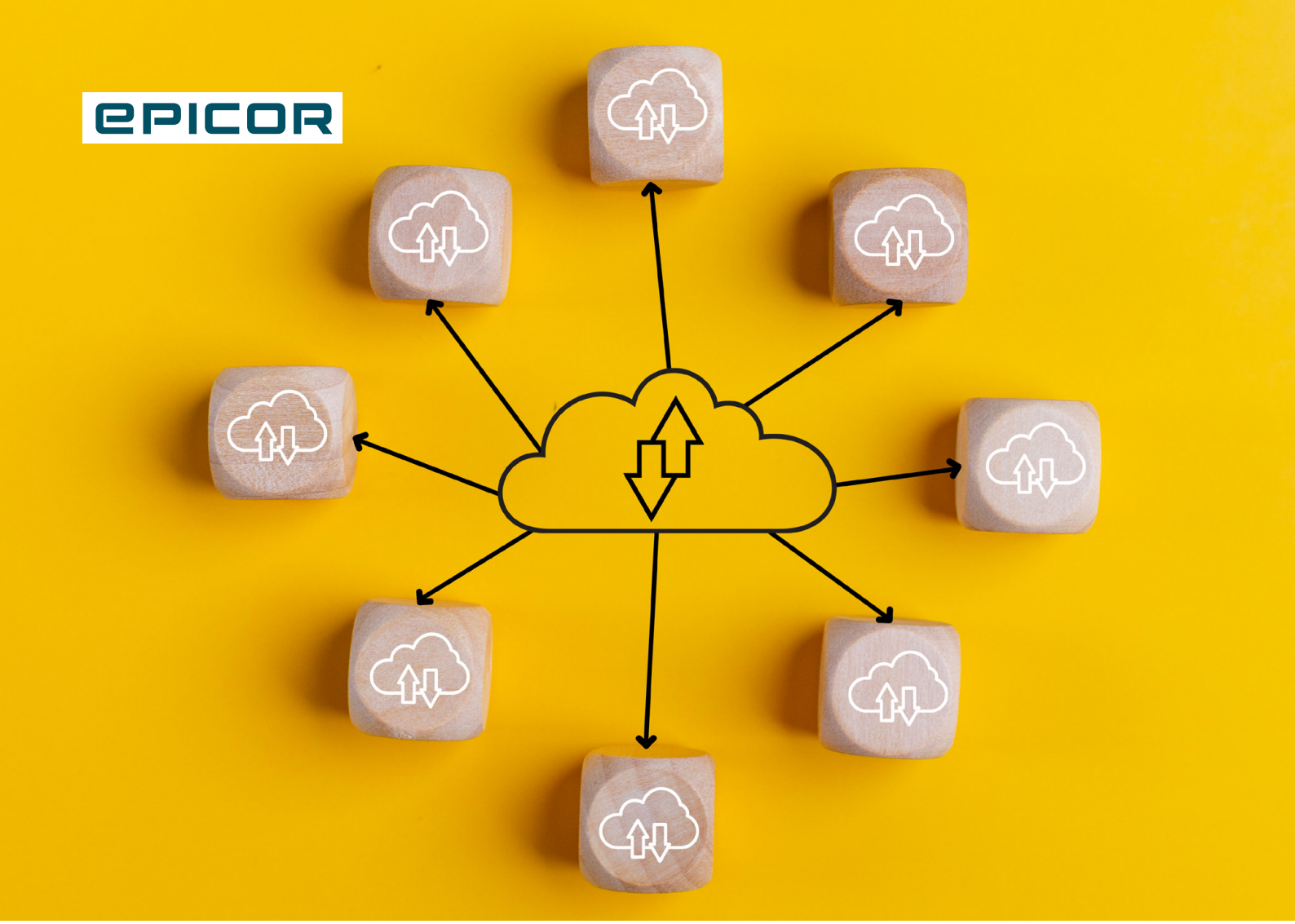
- ***Joint Checks Payment Method for Construction:*** Introducing a joint check payment method specifically for the

construction industry. This new feature simplifies payments to downstream two-party construction vendors, reducing the risk of unpaid claims and rights. Construction companies can now easily create and track joint checks directly within Accounts Payable, eliminating the need for complex workarounds.

Availability: Australia, US, Canada & EA customers in the UK

- ***Boosted insights in Revenue Recognition:*** Enabling direct links between billing events and revenue recognition entries to source contract amounts, Sage Intacct's Revenue Management now includes basic contract tracking as part of its subscription. This integration allows users to utilize the contract dimension in Order Entry transactions for detailed categorization, tracking, and analysis—enhancing visibility, accuracy, and forecasting capabilities without requiring a full Contracts application subscription.

Availability: Australia, Canada, South Africa, UK and US



Stokes Electric Company

Powerful Cloud-Based Solutions Enhance Competitiveness, Energize Productivity and Optimize Operations

Challenges

- Resource-demanding on-premises servers
- Inability to fully adopt the latest cloud solutions
- Inconsistent, unreliable user experience

Benefits

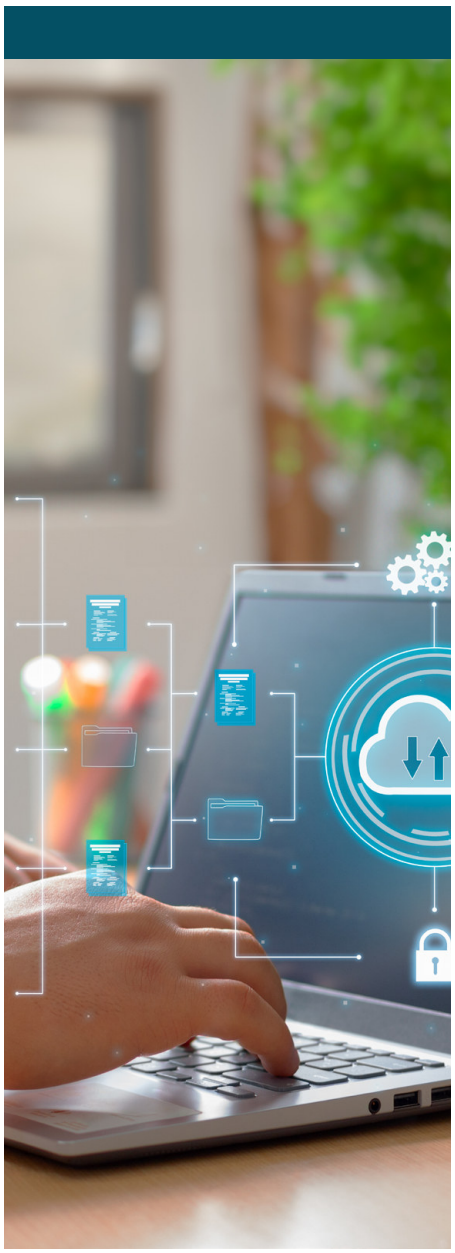
- Cloud-based solutions eliminate maintenance demands while ensuring up-to-date features
- Deployed Wireless Warehouse for optimized warehouse operations
- Data-driven process improvements including a 63% decrease in pick time
- Improved staffing

Solutions

Distribution *Epicor Prophet 21* *Epicor Wireless Warehouse* *Epicor EDA* *Epicor EDI*

A Legacy of Innovation

Stokes Electric has a rich history of innovation and has been serving East Tennessee's electrical and lighting needs since 1933. Established as part of President Roosevelt's New Deal, the company played an essential role in building the Oak Ridge National Laboratory and Y-12 National Security Complex which supported the war efforts in the 1940s. It has also been an essential supplier to the University of Tennessee (UT). Today, the fourth-generation, family-run Stokes Electric business maintains a close relationship with UT, providing practical experience to students through internships.



An Epicor Prophet 21 customer since 2006, Stokes Electric is dedicated to deploying advanced technological solutions to empower the business. Facilitating that effort, the company adopted several Epicor modules, including Epicor Data Analytics (EDA), Epicor Wireless Warehouse, and Epicor Electronic Data Interchange (EDI).

"If you want to keep up, you have to keep up," Don Stokes, CEO & Co-owner at Stokes Electric shared. "Technology changes so rapidly." The company's commitment to maintaining a future-focused technology position led them to move to Epicor Prophet 21 deployed in the cloud.

A Smooth Switch

With four locations serving Government, commercial, residential, and industrial customers across East Tennessee, Stokes Electric had outsourced IT to maintain four on-premises servers. "Any special modifications needed to be upgraded across all four servers plus desktops," Stokes revealed. "In addition, our outside IT resource is planning to retire, which prompted us to look for a smarter solution. The cloud was the answer."

The migration was seamless. Working with Epicor consulting, Angela Dunaway, Director of IT and Purchasing at Stokes Electric, used Smartsheets to align the entire team around an action list of more than 200 items to be tracked and tested for the move. Stokes recalled, "We left on Friday, came in on Monday and everything worked, down to the printers. It is unbelievable how smooth it was compared to doing in-house updates."

Leveraging Cloud for Efficiencies

Epicor Prophet 21 deployed in the cloud has liberated resources from managing an on-premises footprint while help to deliver up-to-the-minute features and speeding the pace of business. Dunaway acknowledged, "Being in the cloud has made Epicor EDI connections smoother, and it helped enable us to also adopt Epicor Lockstep/ Cash Collect, which supports our AR team with customer credit card payments, invoice, and statement requests."

Additionally, business process rules—such as those for tracking special order costs from sales order to PO to invoice and payment—can be written once and forgotten. Stokes admitted, "Before the cloud, custom rules would be lost each time we had an update. Now, rules are preserved without any extra effort on our part."

Epicor solutions deployed in the cloud level the playing field for us. Big players pay millions of dollars a year to SAP. Epicor gives us the flexibility and capabilities to accomplish the same objectives at a great value.

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A key reason for moving to the cloud was utilizing Epicor Wireless Warehouse to optimize picking and put-away functions. Stokes elaborated, "Managing a warehouse is all about footsteps; we need to minimize the number of steps our staff takes each day."

Wireless Warehouse helped to enable Stokes Electric to identify the shortest and most efficient picking route as well as for putting products away. "Epicor EDA allows us to see total average pick time by employee, by branch, and for the whole company," Dunaway described. "We can see if an item is taking too long to pick because of where it's located, or if a route needs to be adjusted."

Stokes also noted, "The biggest advantage of Wireless Warehouse is that it incorporated time into the product. Now, we have empirical productivity data, so instead of counting widgets, we count widgets per second. In this way, we were able to trim pick time from 120 seconds to just 43.63 seconds."

The data also gives management the ability to easily identify the highest demand times and staff accordingly. And because, like most small businesses where everyone wears multiple hats, productivity insights helped to enable people to move more agilely to where they are needed. Dunaway observed, "If someone is done with transfers, they can jump over and help with picking or run a special delivery. Epicor helped to enhance our flexibility and cost-effectiveness."

The data also help deliver a secondary, more playful benefit: motivating the team to compete against each other for better times.

Plugging into Potential

"Something that I think is not recognized enough is how versatile and accessible Epicor is," Stokes remarked. "Because it uses Microsoft Windows and a SQL database, it's an open architecture that is a universal language. We can send information to India or China and it will come back in Windows. Epicor communicates very well with the rest of the world."

And with Epicor Prophet 21 deployed in the cloud, Stokes Electric gained a more consistent experience across locations, and beyond. "Moving to the cloud gave us steady, reliable speed at every location," Dunaway disclosed. "And the ability to work remotely is much easier because we don't need a VPN."

> "Being in the cloud has made Epicor EDI connections smoother, and it helped to enable us to also adopt Epicor Cash Collect, which supports our AR team with credit card payments."

Stokes highlighted the Epicor Learning Center curriculum as a particularly valuable service, saying, "A new person can easily get up to speed and if they are using the software, clicking the question mark takes them straight to the tutorial. It's a huge value."

He added, "There is so much good functionality in Epicor, but we have to use it to realize the benefits. Epicor Learning is the key to unlocking those advantages."

Insights to Grow With

A regular reference account for Epicor, the Stokes Electric management team attends the Epicor Insights Conference yearly to discover the latest products and learn how to use them.

Stokes' pioneering spirit was evident when he said, "Epicor Insights is great for seeing trailblazing solutions and networking." Dunaway adjoined, "I sign up for lab courses where I can train directly with Epicor developers."

Stokes summarized, "Epicor solutions deployed in the cloud level the playing field for us. Big players pay millions of dollars a year to competitor solutions. Epicor gives us the flexibility and capabilities to accomplish the same objectives at a great value."

About Epicor

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Remote Monitoring Delivers Cost Savings and Compliance Benefits for Medical Equipment Manufacturer

Meet our customer hero:

Our customer is a major medical device manufacturer based in North America that builds and manages medical devices globally for a variety of uses including heart mapping, cardiac rhythm management tracking, and kidney stone management.

Challenges

- Need for speed: To change *device management solution* following a sunsetting decision from previous vendor
- Pressure to find an enterprise-grade, scalable solution capable of managing hundreds of thousands of devices around the world
- Demand from business to generate revenue through new services
- Tough regulatory environment with multiple different obligations across different territories
- Lack of in-house resources for development and *device management*

Outcomes

- Saved the customer an estimated $3.5 million per year in update costs
- Connected tens of thousands of devices around the world in a matter of days
- Enabled devices to be updated according to varied location-based regulatory requirements
- Remote assistance completely eradicated need for software update field visits
- Prolonged device life: Regular checks save capital costs for tight hospital budgets
- Added value across customer and end-customer lifecycle with *Professional Services* support

Solution

Cumulocity IoT

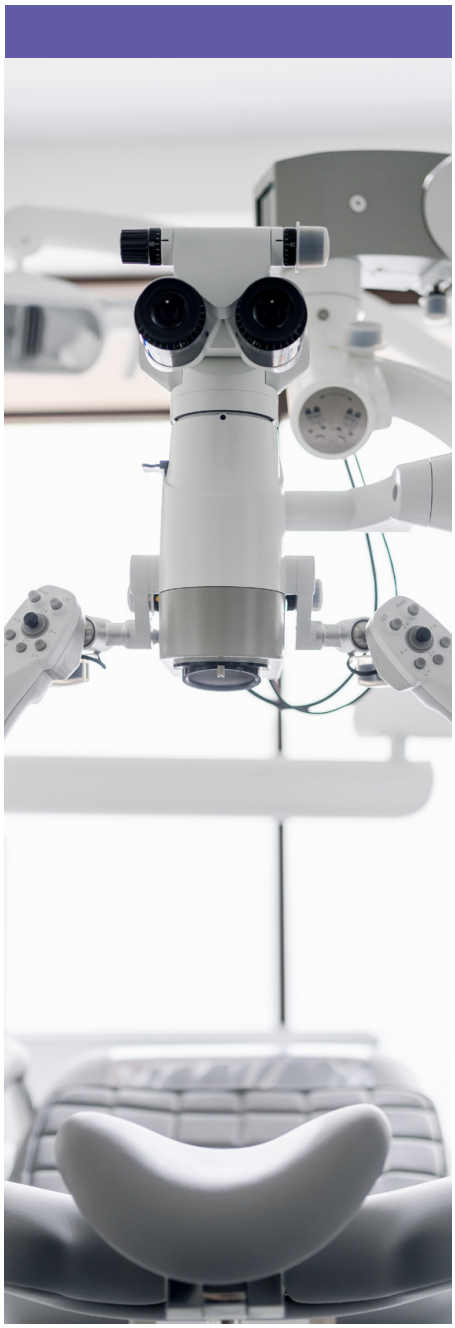
> "Cumulocity IoT helps businesses get started fast with device management and scale faster. Extensive device compatibility, and local adaptability, enables us to offer highly secure *remote monitoring services* to our customers—with estimated savings so far of $3.5 million."
>
> *IoT Platform Manager_ Major Medical Device Manufacturer*

IoT that benefits patients worldwide

Smart, connected medical devices which allow patients to reduce hospital visits and live more independent, productive lives are becoming an increasingly important part of healthcare management. The number of such devices around the world more than doubled in the three years to 20241 , and the global healthcare IoT market is forecast2 to be worth over $322 billion by 2025.

With hundreds of thousands of medical devices in hospitals, clinics and patients' homes around the world, remote product management is vital for this customer—a major player in the healthcare equipment sector with products including cardiac rhythm monitors, heart mapping devices, and kidney stone management. So, when the vendor they relied upon for remote analytics announced it was sunsetting its product, they needed a new solution, fast.

The owner of the existing solution tried to persuade the customer to adopt another of their products—at triple the cost we were paying—but couldn't prove it would work. And with patients' lives at risk, not to mention often complex regulatory obligations to fulfil, that was too big a risk to take. It was time to look elsewhere.



"We considered a number of options," explains the company's IoT Platform Manager, "and rejected them due to either a lack of product maturity or the suppliers' unwillingness to work closely with us to tailor their product for our specific needs."

The company soon decided to go with *Software AG's Cumulocity IoT.* The out-of-the-box device management solution, capable of handling multiple devices for multiple customers with multiple regulatory obligations.

The *Cumulocity IoT platform* offers customers 80% of everything they need out of the box, allowing them to start fast and deploy quickly. Then it makes it easy for to create the customized solutions businesses need to set themselves apart from the competition.

"Like so many other things in business, the final choice was about the relationship. *Software AG* really clicked with us: They listened, they answered our questions, and they just seemed to get what we needed to achieve together. It was a great start—especially since it cost less than we were paying before," says the IoT Platform Manager.

Outcomes and savings from day one

Connecting devices—even at scale—takes a matter of minutes for Cumulocity IoT, thanks to simple SDKs and APIs. And the benefits don't end there.

"Now every single device around the world is automatically updated in minutes, according to the requirements of its location," explains the Platform Manager. "And in the rare event a device can only be connected in the field, the process is so simple we can

talk people through it over the phone or by chat. No more visits, no unavailability, and the absolute minimum in downtime."

"We've estimated that remote updating alone means Cumulocity IoT is saving us more than $3.5 million every single year in the flights, car rentals, hotels and other travel costs associated with manual software updates happening around the world. We are already doing procedures with the latest software when the thumb drives we used to use would still be sitting waiting to be shipped."

Cumulocity makes the latest updates available almost instantly, ready to be approved and updated at the user's convenience. So, patients get the latest and greatest care from their devices while healthcare providers know they are compliant with local regulations. Moreover, monitoring these devices remotely improves device lifetime—so they stay more useful for longer, helping ease stretched hospital budgets and boosting the company's sustainability objectives as its transforms healthcare and improves patients' lives.

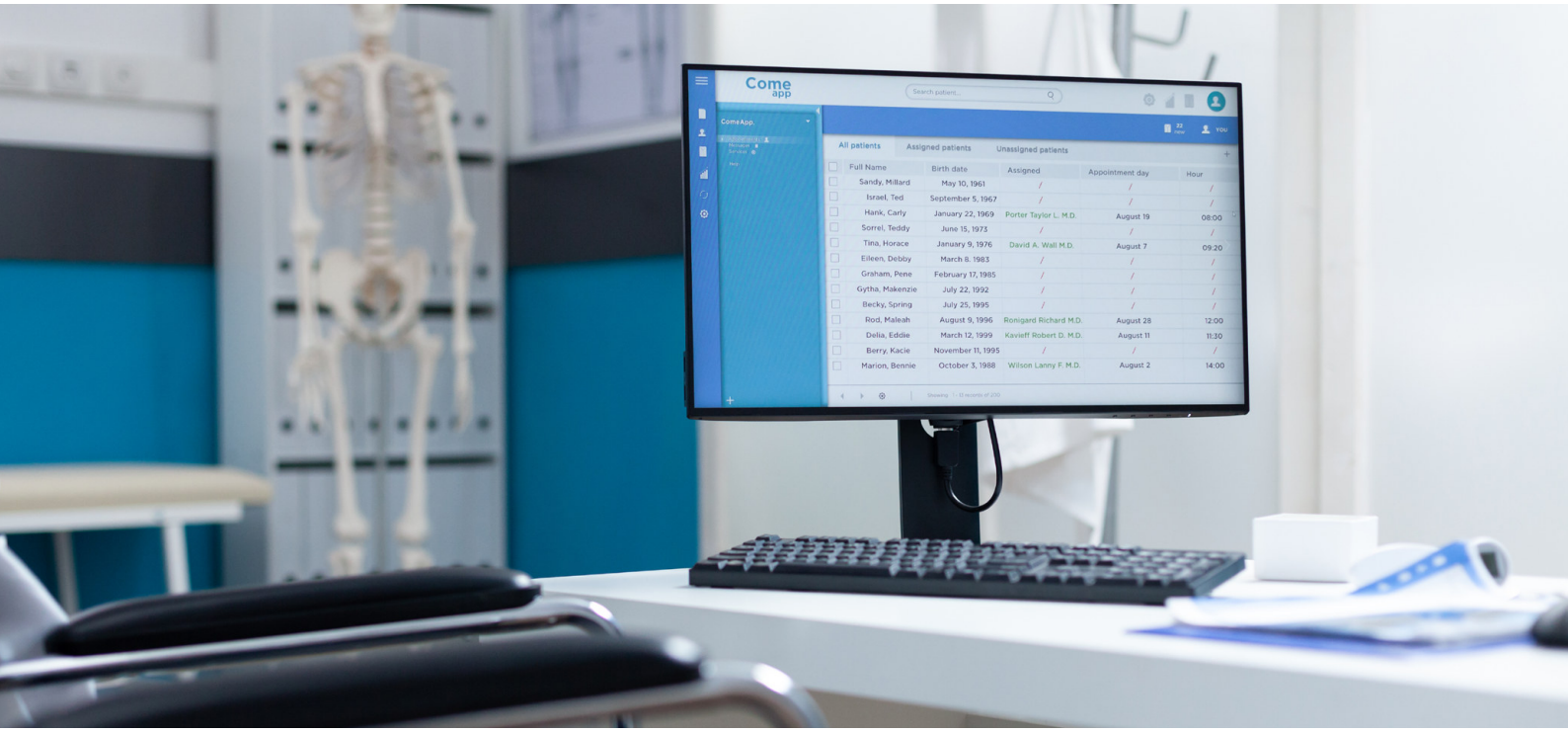
"Data compliance and resiliency are becoming more challenging in the European Union and other regulatory zones. It's Software AG's job to find the best way forward for our customer" says Stefan Bucholz, Professional Services, Software AG. "As with any healthcare application there is an absolute need for data security and privacy protection, so our Professional Services team worked with our customer to define a roadmap that could handle a variety of different data sovereignty laws and use cases."

A strong relationship based on mutual respect

As soon as the customer started using Cumulocity IoT for device management and *field services*, other internal teams responsible for further devices began to hear about its advantages. They too wanted the cost savings and automated regulatory compliance. And they were hugely impressed by the quality of streaming analytics sent in real time by every device straight to customizable dashboards.

"We were also glowing about the support we had gotten from Software AG. First, they helped us solve our device management problem, and now they're helping us answer new questions about getting more value out of our devices for actionable insights that we might seek to monetize."

"I always know that when I speak to Software AG I'm going to be involved in a clear, transparent process, that they'll take my questions seriously and they'll do their best to find an answer that works for everyone. I've been in this business a long time. And trust me: it's not always like that!"



With Acumatica Powering Its Backoffice, Sunshine Lighting Faces More Efficient and Brighter Future

Sunshine Lighting operated on disconnected spreadsheets, a legacy system that often crashed, and manual processes that all hindered its ability to grow. When an aging platform shut down operations for a day, executives knew they needed more modern technology. Sunshine Lighting adopted Acumatica Distribution Edition, which provided a flexible cloudbased ERP platform that streamlined operations, automated manual processes, and allowed its developers to create customized workflows that seamlessly connect to the platform.

SUNSHINE LIGHTING

Key Results

- United disparate systems into a single, connected, and modern ERP platform
- Shaved $200,000 from annual technology budget by moving to the cloud while reducing IT footprint and outsourcing IT
- Improved data accuracy, restoring faith in the information while reducing stress and frustration
- Gained peace of mind and restful sleep knowing system doesn't crash and daily operations won't be disrupted
- Acquired real-time data for reporting, resulting in better and more analytical-based decisions
- Gained flexible platform with open APIs, allowing technical team to create apps and processes specifically related to its business
- Automated manual business processes, freeing employees for higher-level tasks
- Acquired easy-to-use business solution, speeding user adoption and increasing productivity
- Gained cloud-based, mobile platform increasing productivity with smartphones and remote devices on-site and from remote locations
- Acquired data visibility that allows employees to solve problems and implement new processes to grow revenue
- Increased inventory accuracy from 40 percent to 90 percent or higher accuracy levels
- Cut 50 percent of time it previously took for KPI reporting and month-end closes

Challenges

Sunshine Lighting develops and manufactures lighting technologies under its brands, which include Sunlite®, MKS, and Ambiate. It distributes other significant brands. The 43-year-old company prides itself on offering the most tech-advanced lighting solutions and constantly strives to be as operationally efficient as possible.
It operates in a 100,000-square-foot brick facility in Brooklyn, NY that once housed multiple businesses and is highly compartmentalized. While the firm initially sold to the tri-state area, it now sells its products nationwide.

Legacy System with Disconnected Spreadsheets

Sunshine Lighting operated on a legacy system augmented by spreadsheets. Over the years, its original business software system was sold multiple times, and development stagnated. Process modules were non-existent so Sunshine Lighting developers created their own work-arounds.

"It was probably a great program in the year 2000, but when we reached 2020, we couldn't get anywhere with it," says Yisroel Hartman, Chief Operating Officer and full stack developer.

Adds Vice President Joel Gross, "Instead of being able to grow on that platform and grow with the times as technology became more available, it really hindered our processes and ability to grow. The core was extremely weak."

"There was no mobility, no email system and no website to tie it too," says Yisroel Hartman. "We were stuck to a Windows application that we had to build a lot of Band-aids around to try to improve it."

Sunshine Lighting had a separate system that handled the company's email processing and print processes, which often failed. Employees had their spreadsheets, and thus their sources of truth since they couldn't put information into the legacy ERP.

The website was built on an SQL database. The company used Starship for shipping, but printing and labels were handled manually. The company's warehouse management system was homebrewed. Even its EDI was standalone.
The company's multiple, cobbled-together systems worked for a while but became challenging as the company grew. For example, "once an order was placed, it wasn't locked for shipping, and changes used to happen," says Gross. "Nobody had an idea from sales to shipping to logistics if something was changed. It was a total mess."

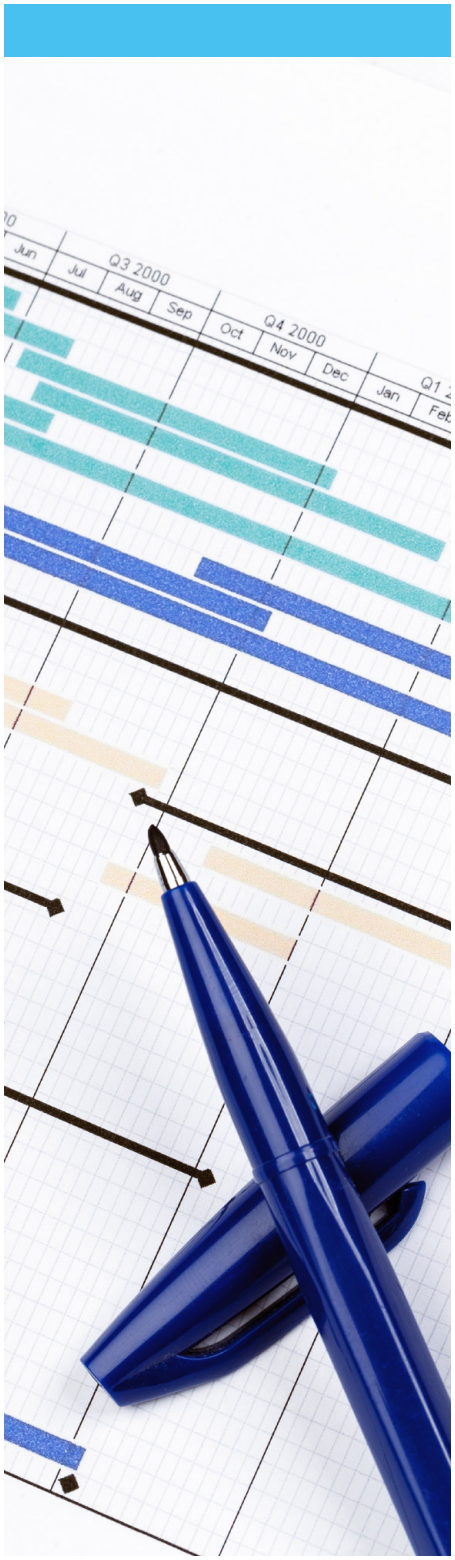
Manual Processes

Because many of the processes were paper-based and printed, if someone updated an order, he or she had to run down to the printer in one of its four shipping departments to ensure the first paper wasn't accidentally picked and shipped. Sometimes, "The paper got lost," says Yisroel Hartman. "The order never got sent and nobody knew about it. It was a fun time."

With information stored on disconnect spreadsheets, it was challenging to pull together reports. "It was very hard to get reporting on customer and information to understand where orders were, why things were delayed, or where items were in production," says Yisroel Hartman. "Reporting was a real pain and challenging. Achieving clarity in our reports required significant effort"

Sunshine Lighting used on-premise servers to house the data and the infrastructure to support the legacy ERP had its own set of challenges.

"The straw on the camel's back came when we knew that a simple thing as a license registration can put us out of business," says Gross. "We knew we needed to change and that's when we started looking for new software seriously."



Solution

Acumatica Distribution Edition

The selection team wanted a modern system connecting with its custom processes, offering better reporting, and providing operational efficiencies. They reviewed SAP Business One, Sage, and a cloud version of Infor. As they narrowed their choices, Sunshine Lighting discovered Acumatica Cloud ERP, which offered a unique licensing model and a flexible, open development platform.

Yisroel Hartman and Schneur Perl, Senior Technical Project Manager and head of business development "were very excited about Acumatica," says Gross. "They wanted to take a look under the hood, and that's why they weren't impressed by anything else."

"Bruce Baron of Appsolute Consulting gave us a demo that was something no one else offered," adds Yisroel Hartman. "We started playing with it and learned it was a modern framework that could be customized."

Executives also liked that Acumatica didn't charge by the number of users, which makes it more affordable than competitors that do charge by the number of users and thus are "a lot more expensive," Yisroel Hartman says.

Revamped, Streamlined Processes

Before its implementation, Sunshine Lighting re-examined its processes. "Once we started really diving into Acumatica, it allowed us to explore and revamp a lot of areas in our business," says Gross. "Between Yisroel and Schneur, they went through everything on paper. We revisited every process and tweaked them up to a point where it allowed us to reduce quite a bit of employees' manual work."

The reexamination also allowed the company to eliminate the majority of its outside IT support, which reduced its technology budget.
Appsolute Consulting helped Sunshine Lighting deploy Acumatica. Although the team put in some long days, "we stayed open throughout the implementation, and going live," says Yisroel Hartman. "We didn't close down trucks; they went out every single day and we hit our first targets."

"From a system perspective, I would say implementation was very smooth," he adds.

> "Acumatica gave us a heart to our business. Now if we need to do something, we learn how the system can do it and do it, which has changed our culture."
>
> *Schneur Perl,_ Senior Technical Project Manager and Business Development Manager, Sunshine Lighting*

Benefits

Streamlined Operations Saving Time

With Acumatica, Sunshine Lighting executives manage the company more efficiently. The platform connected disparate systems, brought operational and financial data together, and allowed the company to automate workflows based on how they do business.
Employees now work with data that is accurate and accessible from anywhere.

Acumatica's automation eliminated much of the extra manual work employees did, eliminating a significant amount of daily overtime, and allowing employees to spend more time with their families.

Acumatica's flexibility helped Sunshine Lighting better manage its core business processes, including inventory management, financials, sales, and production planning.

Reduced Technology Overhead

Although having a cloud-based system wasn't a high priority, access from anywhere and not having to worry about system crashes lowered employees' frustration.

"Our IT footprint was reduced tremendously because we eliminated many on-site servers and the supporting network infrastructure," adds Perl. "That's a huge benefit. And I can sleep at night because I don't have to think about the on-prem overhead."

"We've probably saved more than $200,000 a year," says Jacob Hartman, Chief Financial Officer, adding that number includes licensing, servers, and other support costs.

Proactive Cultural Shift

Employees no longer complain about legacy technology or use it as an excuse. "The bottlenecks aren't there anymore, so we're not thinking about it," says Perl. "Acumatica gave us a heart in our business. Now if we need to do something, we can learn how the system can do it and then

do it. That's been a huge benefit and change in our culture."

Adds Yisroel Hartman, "With Acumatica, we have the ability to take a problem and solve it, and take another problem and solve it, and then just keep solving problems as we grow and grow."

With a better understanding of Acumatica's robust features, employees took ownership of their roles and are working with the executive and technical teams to streamline their tasks in Acumatica. "They are saying, 'Okay, I want a dashboard for this, or a report on these KPIs.'

They are coming up with ideas of how to accomplish more," Yisroel Hartman says.

"These are things that are users would never have had in the old system. They never had the ability to even imagine a way to make their lives easier."

Adds Gross, "We've found ourselves in a place where we can be proactive versus reactive."

Easy to Use, Onboard Users

It helps, says Gross, that Acumatica is easy to learn, which played a large factor in their decision to buy it. "When we were considering SAP Business One and others, we knew that training on those systems usually takes weeks if not months to onboard," he says. "But with Acumatica, onboarding new users is as easy as cake. It's very simple and straightforward. And the help is amazing."

Onboarding new employees takes a mere three days or less, helping them be productive as soon as they join the company, adds Jacob Hartman. "With our old system, it used to take three to six months until the person understood exactly where all the hidden keys and hidden keywords were."

Increased Financial Visibility

Automating manual processes in the finance department saved a lot of time and has allowed employees to use their recouped time more efficiently. For example, Gross says, billing took a week and was one person's full-time job. Now that job is automated, and that person has shifted focus to other financial tasks.

Sunshine Lighting has shaved days off the time it takes to close a month, and running reports "is like a breeze," says Jacob Hartman, explaining he had two choices if he wanted to create a financial report: he could ask the development team to pull the data and create one for him, a process that could take a month, or he could try to pull five different reports, and hope the information matched, a process that used to take him three weeks. Either way, the information was old and dated.

> "Acumatica is an easy-to-use tool that gives us the flexibility to do business our way."
>
> *Schneur Perl,_ Senior Technical Project Manager and Business Development Manager, Sunshine Lighting*

Now he has personalized dashboards that allow him to pull real-time data in minutes, which gives him instant visibility into how the business is performing.

"When I ran or when I looked at the financials on our old system, I wasn't confident that everything was there or accurate," he says. "With Acumatica, I'm very confident with what I see."

Increased Inventory Accuracy

Previously, inventory counts and reconciliations were time consuming, manual and often inaccurate. The stock-on-hand was physically located in a number of different rooms and areas. Counts often resulted in errors, often when someone forgot that a pallet of goods could be in another room.

Inventory in the old system "was 50 percent accurate and what we had in the warehouse, and that was probably charitable," says Yisroel Hartman. That's because of the way one had to transfer items from bin to bin. The company had a primary bin and another for overflow. But the system did not actually keep track of what was in each bin, he says. "Things were out of whack very quickly. Today, we're probably above 90% accurate."

Perl oversaw the company's EDI efforts and backorders. He previously had to ask the warehouse to verify they had the needed parts for back orders. It sometimes took two days for a reply, he says. "But now I can look it up myself. The system counts it, and the warehouse team is confident they don't need to verify the number with a physical count."

More Efficient Warehouse Management

The warehouse manager previously physically checked inventory for some 30 requests daily. Now, he may field two or three calls a week. The manager is no longer tied to his desk. "Now he's walking around with an iPad or while traveling, viewing orders, approving orders, or releasing orders," says Yisroel Hartman. "We could never do that in the old system."

Warehouse employees used handheld scanners that crashed if a pick list was too long; an incident previously would mean restarting because information was stored on the scanner and lost.

Now, shipping labels are automatically printed, and changes can quickly be made within Acumatica; no running is required.

Flexible Open Platform

Because Acumatica doesn't force companies to do business "Acumatica's Way," it has an open API and encourages third-party developers, partners, and customers to create necessary processes and applications. Developers are free to use Acumatica University and tap into a large developer community willing to help anyone with questions. Most of its ERP competitors lock data and force companies to do business their way rigidly.

Sunshine Lighting developers Yisroel Hartman and Schneur Perl leveraged Acumatica's open APIs and import scenarios to create many enhancements around truck routing, shipping, and kit processing. They also became part of the Acumatica development community, earning recognition as Acumatica MVPs.

Growth

With Acumatica up and running and refinements underway, Sunshine Lighting is redefining its growth strategy. They are considering building a new, taller 150,000 square-foot warehouse that will allow them to consolidate inventory locations and shipping stations. The company has some 20,000 SKUs.

"Our cubic feet and utilization will triple that of our old-school Brooklyn building where we don't have the height, and will consolidate operations now spread in 10 different buildings," says Perl. Adds Gross, "If you wanted to pick an order, you would have to travel through a true maze from building 1 to building 2 to building 3 to building 4, and so on."

Having a solid, flexible platform in Acumatica gives Sunshine Lighting confidence in its numbers, and the confidence to accelerate its growth plan. The team regularly recommends Acumatica to their peers.

"Our success has come because we really care about our business and know it so well," says Perl. "Acumatica is an easy-to-use tool that gives us the flexibility to do business our way."

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