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Yagmur Sahin

EDITOR'S NOTE

Hello everyone from the 8th issue of ERP News Magazine,

It is hard to describe the excitement and joy we felt preparing this issue. We would like to thank you once again for the interest and support you have shown us until now.

In the March issue, we dig a little deeper into how digital transformation has brought a tremendous opportunity for small and midsize companies, to become more competitive players in the global arena. If you want to succeed regardless of your company size, digitalization and its enabling technologies can be the answer! This issue is a digital transformation guide for SMEs, which are the backbone of the economy all over the world.

This month, Chris Pinaire, Director of Consulting and Application at Global Shop Solutions shares with us his vision of why digitalization is required for Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) to retain their global competitiveness. Also, Lee An Schommer, Sr. VP of Global Product Manager at Epicor talks about what the future holds for the ERP industry and she gives effective tips for the cloud transformation journey in 2020.

As in every issue, we have compiled for you the latest developments in the ERP industry and we firmly believe that ERP News Magazine will change your point of view about digitalization and help you keep the pulse of the ERP industry. Feel free to write to us.

See you in the next issue...

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SAGE COMBINES TOP CLOUD FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT SOLUTION WITH INDUSTRY-LEADING CONSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT SOFTWARE TO LAUNCH SAGE INTACCT CONSTRUCTION

New native cloud solution reduces financial consolidation for construction companies from 100+ hours to just minutes

Sage, the market leader in cloud business management solutions, announced the launch of Sage Intacct Construction. This new cloud financial management solution is designed to meet the unique needs of construction companies, by building the leading construction management functionality of Sage 300 Construction (formerly Sage Timberline) onto the Sage Intacct multi-tenant cloud platform.

A native cloud solution, Sage Intacct Construction empowers construction financial managers (CFMs) to make critical financial decisions, track and manage costs and productivity in real time, from any location, and reduces typical financial consolidation from 100+ hours down to just minutes. For the first time, CFMs have access to the preferred financial

management system of the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants (AICPA). Sage customers will have the option to leverage a best-in-class cloud financial management system at the time they need it most.

“Sage Intacct Construction brings together the most trusted names in the accounting and construction software industries – Sage Intacct and Sage Timberline,” said Dustin Anderson, vice president of Sage Construction and Real Estate. “Construction firms can easily integrate with an array of operational applications to ensure they are using the best technology available to address their specific business needs.”

In the recent Sage CFO 3.0 study of more than 500 top finance executives in the U.S., 98 percent noted that their job has significantly changed in the last five years. In addition, 46 percent of CFOs shared they are facing increased demand to provide overall business counsel.

“Sage Intacct Construction caters to the ever-expanding role of construction financial managers by giving them faster access to real-time financial and operational data, while streamlining processes to free up time for more business analysis,” said Nancy Harris, managing director, Sage North America. “For today’s CFM, it’s no longer enough to report on what happened yesterday. Financial leaders need to know what’s happening right now and need real-time data to anticipate what will happen in the future.”



SAGE INTACCT CONSTRUCTION CATERS TO THE EVER-EXPANDING ROLE OF CONSTRUCTION FINANCIAL MANAGERS BY GIVING THEM FASTER ACCESS TO REAL-TIME FINANCIAL AND OPERATIONAL DATA, WHILE STREAMLINING PROCESSES TO FREE UP TIME FOR MORE BUSINESS ANALYSIS

Sage Intacct Construction offers critical industry-leading functionality that CFMs need, including:

True Cloud Solution

A system with real-time access from anywhere, available at any time, and software that is always up to date.

Streamlined Multi-Entity Consolidation

The growth of business in construction drives the need for large numbers of legal entities. Sage Intacct Construction reduces the time for a typical financial consolidation from up to 100 hours down to just minutes.

About Sage

Sage is the global market leader for technology that helps small and medium businesses perform at their best. Sage is trusted by millions of customers worldwide to deliver the best cloud technology and support, with our partners, to manage finances, operations, and people. We believe in doing everything we can to help people be the best they can be, so the combined efforts of 13,000 Sage colleagues working with businesses and communities make a real difference to the world

Robust, Dimensional Reporting

It is now possible to analyze actual and estimated project costs using live data, without the need to export to a spreadsheet. CFMs can now assess their financial data by project, task, or other configurable dimensions to analyze the data for improved decision making.

Project Estimates

CFMs can now easily track and manage costs and productivity throughout the full life cycle of a project, with several specific functions including estimates, job controls, and accounting.

Additional functionality will roll out over the next several months and will include retainage billing and payables, Procore integration, and change management. Learn more about Sage Intacct Construction [here](#).





AGILOFT NAMED A LEADER IN THE 2020 GARTNER MAGIC QUADRANT FOR CONTRACT LIFE CYCLE MANAGEMENT (CLM)

Agiloft’s contract management software recognized in first-ever Gartner Magic Quadrant for CLM

Agiloft, the global standard in contract and commerce lifecycle management, announced it has been recognized by Gartner, Inc. as a Leader in the research and advisory firm’s first Magic Quadrant for Contract Life Cycle Management (CLM). Of the 12 vendors evaluated in the report, Agiloft is positioned in the Leaders quadrant. Get a complimentary copy of the report on the Agiloft website [here](#).*

In its first Magic Quadrant for CLM, Gartner says:

“This is Gartner’s first Magic Quadrant for CLM solutions. Historically, the CLM vendor market has been highly fragmented, with vendors narrowly focused on specific groups of stakeholders (e.g., legal, procurement or sales), making it difficult to evaluate them side by side. That has begun to change, as vendors evolve into enterprise-level solutions that can be used across all contract types. Customers expect that the capabilities of any leading CLM solution, regardless of its target audience, should excel at all stages of the contract life cycle.”

Agiloft’s no-code platform allows organizations to customize the most complex workflows without writing a single line of code. A robust AI Engine simplifies the intake and organization of existing contracts and also identifies the level of risk in documents and clauses. The result is cost discipline in procurement, quantifiable reductions in revenue leakage in sales operations, and most importantly, visibility into contractual risk and regulatory compliance by legal departments. The platform is easily extensible to the commercial processes adjacent to contracts such as spend management and integrates with enterprise systems.

“We are thrilled to be recognized as a Leader in the Gartner Magic Quadrant for Contract Lifecycle Management. We believe our no-code platform is a differentiator, but at the end of the day, customers choose Agiloft because of our company-wide focus on making their CLM implementation a success,” said Colin Earl, CEO of Agiloft. “We remain the only vendor in the industry with the confidence to provide an unconditional satisfaction guarantee that covers both software and implementation services.”

This announcement follows on the heels of other Agiloft news, including being named the [Value Leader and Customer Leader in Spend Matters’ Q4 2019 CLM SolutionMap](#), PC Mag Editor’s Choice for Contract Management Software for the fifth consecutive year, and winning the [2019 Excellence in Customer Service Award from Business Intelligence Group](#).

*Gartner “Magic Quadrant for Contract Life Cycle Management” by Patrick Connaughton, Kaitlynn Sommers, Marko Sillanpaa, Micky Keck. February 25, 2020.

**AGILOFT’S NO-CODE PLATFORM
ALLOWS ORGANIZATIONS TO
CUSTOMIZE THE MOST COMPLEX
WORKFLOWS WITHOUT WRITING
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AND ORGANIZATION OF EXISTING
CONTRACTS AND ALSO IDENTIFIES
THE LEVEL OF RISK IN DOCUMENTS
AND CLAUSES.**

| About Agiloft

Organizations ranging from small enterprises to U.S. government agencies and Fortune 100 companies depend on Agiloft’s top-rated product suites for Contract Management Software, Service Desk, Custom Workflow, and more. Agiloft specializes in automating processes that are too complex for competing vendors. Our best-practice templates and adaptable technology ensure rapid deployment and a fully extensible system.





NEW CFO BENCHMARK REPORT FINDS FINANCE TEAMS ARE PRIMED TO INVEST IN EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES FOR MORE STRATEGIC PLANNING, ENHANCED BUSINESS RESULTS

While Finance Execs are Embracing Innovative Technologies like Alexa in their Everyday Lives, Business is Still Playing Catchup with Modern Tools to Drive Data-driven Decision Making

Prophix Software, a global leader in mid-market [Corporate Performance Management](#) (CPM) software, shared findings from its new 2020 CFO Benchmark Report. The Report revealed 60% of financial executives plan to invest in forward-looking initiatives around cloud-based analytics and modern technology-enabled reporting tools in the next three to five years to help their organizations grow and thrive in today's competitive business environment. In collaboration with The CFO Leadership Council, Prophix surveyed 391 North American financial executives on the top priorities and challenges they face within their organizations in this inaugural benchmark of the state and future of the Office of Finance.

"The role of finance professionals is rapidly evolving from rote reporting based on manual spreadsheets to a more strategic advisory capacity, thanks to data-driven insights that actively support business objectives," said Alok Ajmera, President & COO, Prophix. "Many leading organizations are already experiencing the benefits of automating their financial planning & automation (FP&A) processes, including receiving more timely and insightful financial data through advanced analytics and AI-powered CPM. The CFO Benchmark Report offers financial executives an opportunity to gauge how their organizations compare to peers in terms of FP&A analytics maturity and better understand how advanced technologies can alleviate many of the issues they're facing within their departments by driving change, not just reacting to it."

Key findings from the report:

Top challenges and stressors for finance leaders:

- Of all the FP&A responsibilities finance leaders have on their plate, forecasting was listed as the top stressor that

"keeps them up at night."

Other areas that present challenges for finance leaders included:

- Improving company growth and/or achieving desired profit margins (42%)
- Managing costs & cash flow (28%)
- Lack of accurate real-time data (20%) and finding and retaining quality talent with the right skills (15%)

Top priorities for finance leaders over the next two years include:

- Improving revenue growth (22%) and financial information transparency and quality (18%)
- Directing more time to my team for business analysis (16%)
- Enhanced reporting (quality, timeliness, etc.) (15%)

Advanced technologies still slow to be adopted in business:

- The survey showed finance leaders are willingly embracing new technologies including virtual assistants such as Siri and Alexa (70%), online streaming (87%) and ride-sharing (72%) in their everyday lives. However, the application of these more efficient, automated technologies into their work lives has been delayed.

Most organizations are still in the early stages of FP&A maturity:

- Although the majority of respondents see enhanced analytics and reporting tools as a key enabler for them in the next couple of years, over half (51%) say they are still in the early stages of financial planning and analytics maturity, with the majority of time spent on low-value,

manual tasks. Over half of financial professionals cited spreadsheets as the number one area where their time is not spent effectively.

Finance leaders report technology is a key priority for improving their FP&A maturity:

- The majority of respondents (40%) said they would like systems that offer a more robust set of functionalities. But finance leaders also say identifying staff with the right skill sets and experience (26%) and access to higher-quality data (18%), alongside more robust software provides the beginnings of a roadmap to greater FP&A maturity.

"When asked about roadblocks leaders face in advancing the future of finance, responses generally fit into three categories: lack of the right people with the right skills, not having the time to pursue priorities, and budgetary constraints to invest in new tools and capabilities," said Jack McCullough, Founder of The CFO Leadership Council. "However, all of these roadblocks can be addressed through modern technology tools that automate manual processes and increase efficiency, helping organizations quickly realize the positive ROI of that initial financial investment."

The report shows corporate culture is shifting in favor of forward-looking finance departments and most organizations stand ready to invest in enhanced modeling and reporting capabilities. Respondents reported they're already contributing to strategy and growth in their organizations:

- 26% said they were improving their reporting and analytics, sharing more results with the rest of the business
- 19% said their department was taking on more responsibilities in managing and improving financial performance
- 13% said they were already impacting business strategy and planning

More than 60% of respondents said their organization was willing to selectively choose new areas to apply technology and run pilot programs, while another 12% were aggressively seeking new technologies to try. That means nearly three-quarters of organizations overall, are ripe for a pilot program of technology to empower and enable the finance function.

"The report showed finance leaders believe software with AI and machine learning capabilities can directly address some of their biggest challenges by providing real-time insights, more accurate data, improved forecasting, and better predictions – all of which map to the top challenges finance faces with forecasting, strategic planning, and risk management," Ajmera added. "The bottom line is finance leaders are ready to adopt new technologies to optimize their FP&A processes, deliver more timely, efficient reporting and analysis, and be viewed as true drivers of change in their organizations."

To see the full CFO Benchmark Report, click [here](#). Prophix will also host a free webinar on March 26 from 1:00 - 2:00 PM Eastern Standard, entitled "The 2020 CFO Benchmark Report: Finance Department Challenges, Capabilities & Solutions," with Prophix President Alok Ajmera and Jack McCullough of

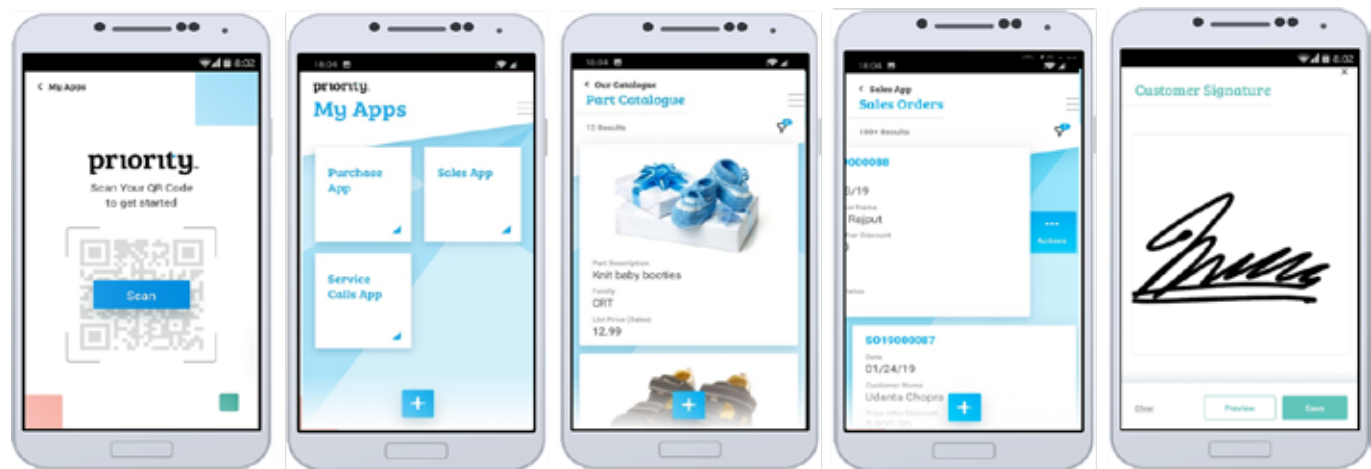
the CFO Leadership Council to review the full results from the report. Click [here](#) to register for the webinar.



THE BOTTOM LINE IS FINANCE LEADERS ARE READY TO ADOPT NEW TECHNOLOGIES TO OPTIMIZE THEIR FP&A PROCESSES, DELIVER MORE TIMELY, EFFICIENT REPORTING AND ANALYSIS, AND BE VIEWED AS TRUE DRIVERS OF CHANGE IN THEIR ORGANIZATIONS.

About Prophix

Your business is evolving. And the way you plan and report on your business should evolve too. [Prophix](#) helps midmarket companies achieve their goals more successfully with its innovative Corporate Performance Management (CPM) software. With Prophix, finance leaders improve profitability and minimize risk by automating budgeting, planning, and reporting, and puts the focus back on what matters most – uncovering business opportunities and driving competitive advantage. Whether in the cloud or on-premise, Prophix supports your future with a platform that flexes to suit your strategic realities, today and tomorrow.



PRIORITY SOFTWARE ANNOUNCES
NEW MOBILE ERP APPLICATIONS

Article by Eran Rozenfeld,
Managing Director, Priority Software U.S.

Includes expanded portfolio of out-of-the-box mobile apps, and
advanced Mobile App Generator capabilities

Priority Software Ltd., a leading global provider of business management solutions, today announced its enhanced suite of mobile ERP applications, offering customers a richer ERP solution in the field, and full access to core business processes from remote locations. Priority mobile ERP includes a variety of new out-of-the-box mobile apps and advanced capabilities in Priority’s Mobile App Generator.

Priority’s Mobile App Generator is an innovative tool that enables non-developers, system admins and users, to create mobile apps in just minutes, without any need for programming skills. With built-in security and user management, applications created with Priority’s Mobile App Generator are suitable for both Android and iOS mobile devices and tablets and can run everywhere – no need for porting to devices or operating systems.

In response to the fast-growing demand for business mobility, Priority enhanced its mobile ERP solution, introducing new capabilities to its Mobile App Generator, including digital document signature (e.g. price quotes), document sharing via email or text, camera activation, barcode scanning, secure payment via credit card processing and more – all in real-time, and directly from the mobile device.

Further, Priority now delivers new out-of-the-box mobile apps available for customers to download and use. These include CRM (Customer Relationship Management), Purchase Approvals, Sales Order Approvals, Inventory Management, Production

Reporting, Parts Catalogue, and Hour/Project Reporting.

Priority customer, Nadav Razon, CEO of Solara, a leading US manufacturer of eco-friendly, adjustable patio covers, commented, “Priority’s mobile apps have given us a better, more efficient way to integrate with our customers and our teams in the field. The ability to access Priority in real-time and perform core functions from a mobile device from any location has saved us time and resources. More importantly, we’ve boosted our level of customer service, from the call center to sales reps and field technicians – now, everyone is connected, and it’s all via Priority mobile apps.”

“One of the barriers in adopting mobile work in many organizations, is the fear of complex and costly processes to create accurate workflows that sync with their core systems,” said Keren Sherer-Taiber, VP Product Management at Priority Software. “This led Priority to become the first ERP vendor to develop a mobile app generator so that customers can build their apps with their business logic automatically embedded into the app itself. We are proud to deliver mobile ERP solutions that enable our customers to increase their efficiency and productivity.”

About Priority

Priority Software provides flexible, end-to-end business management solutions for organizations of all sizes in a wide range of industries. Recognized by top industry analysts and professionals for its product innovation, Priority improves business efficiency and the customer experience, providing real-time access to business data and insights in the cloud, on-premise, and on-the-go. With offices in the US, UK, Belgium, and Israel and a global network of business partners, Priority enables 75,000 companies in 40 countries to manage and grow their business. For more information, visit www.priority-software.com.



SMALL RESTAURANTS TAKE A BITE OUT OF COSTS
WITH ORACLE MICROS

New point-of-sale suite meets the service needs of small businesses

For restaurant owners and entrepreneurs, great food alone is not enough. With constantly changing consumer tastes and food prices, it is difficult to control cost and protect margins. With the new [Oracle Food and Beverage MICROS](#) and [Symphony Point-of-Sale \(POS\)](#) systems, designed for small and growing businesses, restaurant operators gain the intelligence needed to make fast, cost-conscious decisions on everything from menus to staffing—while providing a seamless guest experience.

With dependability and reliability at the core, the Oracle MICROS Workstation 6 Series can scale with restaurants from start-up to rapid-scale. The systems are stylish, yet rugged enough to exceed the typical performance of consumer-grade devices, all at a price point small business can afford. The 6 series features fast configuration, and includes advanced security features like disabling unused input/output (I/O) ports. They also can run on batteries, providing additional flexibility and longevity.

“Although there are common challenges and needs that thread through each restaurant environment, every brand is unique. The technology solutions we deliver are as diverse as the customers we serve and are designed solutions to support current and future aspirations,” said Simon de Montfort Walker, senior vice president and general manager for Oracle Food and Beverage. “We are invested in building solutions for the growing restaurant business because the technology they choose today will impact their ability to achieve their growth goals tomorrow.”

[New York Burger](#) is proof of the power and scalability of

the MICROS platform. “As the business grew, we found our existing solution was not up to the challenge, and inefficiencies meant our customers were kept waiting,” said Pablo Colmenares, founder, New York Burger. “Oracle has definitely helped us to streamline our operations. It is simple and fast to use, and utilizing the product helped us become a smarter business. Oracle has a great global reputation; there is a reason why the biggest brands in the world trust Oracle. Every strong tree needs strong roots and Oracle is our roots.”

Designed to work seamlessly with the latest release of [Oracle MICROS Symphony](#), small restaurant business owners can cost-effectively leverage one of the most intelligently designed and fully integrated POS solutions on the market, to establish a foundation for growth.

Learn more about the latest innovations in POS and how Oracle Food and Beverage is designing solutions to help businesses reach their growth potential: <https://www.oracle.com/industries/food-beverage/>

About Oracle

The Oracle Cloud offers a complete suite of integrated applications for Sales, Service, Marketing, Human Resources, Finance, Supply Chain and Manufacturing, plus Highly Automated and Secure Generation 2 Infrastructure featuring the Oracle Autonomous Database. For more information about Oracle (NYSE: ORCL), please visit us at www.oracle.com.



INTRODUCING BLACK AT INFOR (BAI): A NEW EMPLOYEE NETWORK

On February 12, Infor launched a new employee network (EN)-Black at Infor (BAI)-with leadership remarks and a panel of Infor executives representing various parts of our organization. Nearly 1,000 Inforians participated in the event, both remotely and in live group gatherings in several offices, to learn more about BAI’s mission and how all employees can get involved in planning and supporting future programming.

BAI Executive Sponsor, Rod Johnson, GM of Americas, sponsored the kick-off at Infor’s headquarters in New York City, with VP of Inclusion, Talent & Community, Diana Cruz Solash hosting a leadership discussion with BAI leaders. Panelists shared their career path to and at Infor, business insights on what makes Infor a leading-edge tech company, and reflections on why inclusion & diversity (I&D) matters.

The BAI leadership panel featured Infor leaders:

- Vynessa Alexander, VP, Infor Nexus
- Brandy Alfred, Regional VP, Sales
- Lynette Blatch, VP, Finance

- Dennis Creary, Account Director, Sales
- Nigel Stephens, VP, Government Affairs



Pictured left to right: Brandy Alfred, Regional VP, Sales; Rod Johnson, GM & Head of the Americas;

Vynessa Alexander, VP, Infor Nexus; Diana Cruz Solash, VP, Global Head of Inclusion, Talent & Community

BAI’s mission statement is to provide a support network that empowers Inforians to champion inclusion & diversity while creating opportunities for leadership engagement, mentorship, professional development, advancement and retention. Dennis Creary highlighted the importance of ENs like BAI, saying, “Representation goes a long way in motivating an employee. When an employee sees someone who looks like them and sounds like them making good progress and who knows how to navigate the corporate culture within Infor, that resonates and goes a long way.”

One question that the panel addressed was, “If inclusion & diversity is for and about all Inforians, why do we have employee networks that are focused on particular identities and backgrounds?”

Diana shared that ENs are an important way for us to address the desire of our colleagues to come together across different aspects of their identities and share experiences that may be unique to those identities – such as race, gender, veteran status, and sexual orientation. For example, it is widely recognized that the technology sector lags other sectors in gender and ethnic diversity, particularly Black and Latinx talent. With that, there is a natural question that arises: Are there role models and mentors that demonstrate I can be successful here?

ENs provide visibility and access to role models and signal to recruits that our organization is committed to improving representation and providing opportunities for historically underrepresented groups. They are a cornerstone of our strategy to increase employee engagement and enable us to meet the needs of our people, potential recruits, customers, partners, and stakeholders. While ENs are formed around shared backgrounds, identities and interests, they are **open to all**

About Infor

Infor is a global leader in business cloud software products for companies in industry specific markets. Infor builds complete industry suites in the cloud and efficiently deploys technology that puts the user experience first, leverages data science, and integrates easily into existing systems.
Over 68,000 organizations worldwide rely on Infor to help overcome market disruptions and achieve business-wide digital transformation.



REPRESENTATION GOES A LONG WAY IN MOTIVATING AN EMPLOYEE. WHEN AN EMPLOYEE SEES SOMEONE WHO LOOKS LIKE THEM AND SOUNDS LIKE THEM MAKING GOOD PROGRESS AND WHO KNOWS HOW TO NAVIGATE THE CORPORATE CULTURE WITHIN INFOR, THAT RESONATES AND GOES A LONG WAY.

Inforians. Currently, our other ENs include the Women’s Infor Network (WIN) and Veterans Infor Network (VIN), with Out at Infor (OAI) to be launched in the coming months. Additional ENs are actively being explored as we continue to receive interest from employees globally.

The timing of BAI’s kick-off during Black History Month is very important

The timing of BAI’s kick-off event is very important as it coincides with the week-long celebration that began in 1926 to honor the achievements of African Americans. Set during the birthdays of Abraham Lincoln on February 12 and of Frederick Douglass on February 14, Carter Woodson started Negro History Week, which combined both days into what we now observe as Black History Month.

In recognition of Black History Month, Infor participated in several internal and external events to honor the history and achievements of the African diaspora and the Black community. We also brought an intersectional lens to the BAI kick-off panel discussion, with Diana Cruz Solash highlighting that identity is multifaceted, and that various dimensions of identity influence leadership styles.

Brandy Alfred shared how her experience being a Black woman from Louisiana is indicative of how she leads. “I’ve had international assignments but I bring all that heritage with me and it shows up in probably every conference call I have, every board meeting I conduct or I’m part of... If I don’t hear your voice, I need your voice at the table, so we can yield the best decision and that’s really out of the heritage of family or heritage of southern Louisiana.”

What can you do to support I&D?

The panel also reiterated that all employees are invited to participate and explained how to engage with BAI or our other Infor employee networks. Hosting joint events with other internal, external employee networks and hosting events at Infor customer conferences like Inforum or external events like AfroTech were some of the ideas discussed.

Every Inforian plays a critical role in fostering an inclusive culture where our colleagues feel comfortable contributing ideas, providing feedback, and asking questions. Having that breadth of perspectives is critical for our organization, as Lynette Blatch pointed out during the panel: “Everybody has something to bring no matter what our differences are... I always try to recognize that other perspectives are hugely important to us being successful.”

Better Visibility to Make Quicker Decisions

Interview with **Chris Pinaire**
Director of Consulting and
Implementation at Global Shop Solutions



We are living in an era of digital transformation in which you have to decide if your business is going to lead or be left behind. Nowadays the size of the company is becoming less and less important for its success. So digital transformation, which was a must for large companies in the past, is equally important for SMEs today. If you haven't decided on your road map for digital transformation yet, this interview will shed light on your digital journey.

Chris Pinaire, Director of Consulting and Implementation at Global Shop Solutions, shares with us his vision about the steps you should take and challenges you might face within your digital transformation journey as an SME. Also, he talks about the secret behind the success of Global Shop Solutions, how it became an influential player in the ERP industry and the future strategies of the company.

Can you tell us about the advantages of being a privately owned company in a competitive ERP industry?

As a private company, the largest advantage we have is that we are extremely agile. We can adapt to demands or changes quickly and efficiently because the owners are involved in our decision making. Whether it is a new product, a change in standards, or making key decisions, these things happen faster than they do in a public company. Additionally, we have more stability in our management teams, which leads to a more comfortable employee base that supports our customers. No new private equity regimes are turning the business upside down to increase profits, which can lead to employee dissatisfaction and customer anxiety.

Could you give us some information about the global structure of Global Shop Solutions? Are there any planned global expansion moves in 2020?

Our largest markets are in North America, but we have continued growth year over year in our international markets as well. Central/South America, the United Kingdom, and Europe, Africa, Southeast Asia/Pacific, Australia, and New Zealand continue to grow each year. We will continue to nurture our international markets, but we still have a large opportunity right in our back yard, domestically.



As the Director of Consulting and Implementation, how do you visualize the future of the company in terms of growth and technology adoption?

For future growth, we are continually improving processes to adhere to an ever-changing technology-based world. We are proactive instead of reactive. In the coming years, we will look to use more automated metrics to track implementations. Data helps you make better decisions, and we plan to build more metrics that will assist in those decisions. We have to be fast, reliable and automate where we can. The smartphone has taught us people demand information now.

Digital transformation is crucial for companies that want to stay competitive and relevant. How do Global Shop Solutions' products and services support your customers' digital transformation journeys?

A large number of our new customers are using our Cloud ERP, which allows them to access and collaborate with real-time data from any place on the earth. Our software provides greater resource management with instant access to important information like open quotes, orders, history, utilization, costing, financials, and KPIs.

Additionally, our approach to implementation includes not only the tools but looking for ways to improve the process as well. Remaining competitive through digital transformation requires a critical review of current processes. Our society has become more dependent on information at their fingertips over the last several years; Global Shop Solutions is constantly developing products to keep up with these demands.

To support the demand for automation, we have developed streamlined integrations for EDI, machine integrations, CAD integrations, and more. Our software is constantly changing based on feedback from our customers and their needs.

How do you think SMEs can catch the digital transformation wave? Do you think SMEs have the most to gain from digital transformation?

All businesses can benefit from digital transformation, from Fortune 100 companies to SMEs. All require the same basic business principles to succeed, just on a different scale. SMEs have to realize the benefits to digital transformation – better visibility to make quicker, more informed decisions. SMEs should utilize tools to create automation and replace manual processes. As an example, SMEs might realize the benefit of understanding the costs of their products and their profit margins and decide to grow a particular product or change their offering. There is substantial time and cost savings for the organization by automating processes and creating immediate visibility into the metrics for the products they make.

How should SMEs determine the steps they should be taking for their digital transformation? What are the obstacles SMEs can face during this journey?

First, you have to identify your objectives. Why are we going to invest time and money into this transformation? What is our current



ALL BUSINESSES CAN BENEFIT FROM DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION, FROM FORTUNE 100 COMPANIES TO SMES. ALL REQUIRE THE SAME BASIC BUSINESS PRINCIPLES TO SUCCEED, JUST ON A DIFFERENT SCALE. SMES HAVE TO REALIZE THE BENEFITS TO DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION – BETTER VISIBILITY TO MAKE QUICKER, MORE INFORMED DECISIONS. SMES SHOULD UTILIZE TOOLS TO CREATE AUTOMATION AND REPLACE MANUAL PROCESSES.

state and why does it need to change? Will it lead to increased sales or a quicker time to market? Better products at a cheaper cost? Can we automate or integrate our vendors/customers into a streamlined system for increased visibility and improved experience? Do we hope to make better business

decisions with our data? You have to make sure you have a clear strategy in place that will positively disrupt your business to make these changes.

Second, determine a budget for your transformation project. This will help prioritize your transformation as well as identify technology that can be purchased or developed. Additionally, do not forget to weigh the technology cost to implement against the benefit. If there are items that would help your teams but would be cost-prohibitive, realize that. Don't try to implement things that are "cool" but will take years to pay back. You must keep your eyes on the overall initiative.

Third, plan out the rollout and training. It's smart to be realistic about what areas of the business this is going to affect. Most likely, everyone will have some sort of change to their business processes. You will need a communication plan identifying who and how it will affect your teams. Like all company initiatives and projects, it's important to be adaptive. In agile environments, you are constantly taking feedback to improve transformation or training. Make sure your team does not have blinders on, but rather takes the feedback and uses it for improvement.



Finally, don't stop with your first transformation project. Digital transformation, like the implementation of many large projects, is an ongoing effort. Always look for ways to streamline and improve your processes. Additionally, technology and the availability of new tools changes every day. Keep up with the ever-changing technology landscape and adopt it into your change initiatives.

Obstacles SMEs could encounter might include the ability to control your online business identity, hiring the right employees with the right digital backgrounds, or dealing with a segment of the workforce that is close to retirement and does not want to learn the new way of doing business. Creating a digital culture takes time. It's becoming much easier to get 3rd party applications to market, which is great, but it can be difficult to stay up to date with all of the integrations. Work with ERP consultants to identify the best things to implement and ensure you get the right benefits for your business.

Additionally, buy-in and adoption from employees can be a challenge. We often see teams underestimate the amount of work it takes to successfully implement change, especially digital, across an organization.

What do you think is the challenge of getting SMEs connected to global digital supply chains?

The world can be a very complex place when it comes to connecting people digitally. Of course, technology in certain areas may be cost-prohibitive to implement. Additionally, technology standards and availability in one country may be different than the availability in another country. Other external factors such as government oversight and stability could also play a role.

When it comes to large vs. small organizations, smaller

workforces mean that employees are already taking on multiple responsibilities within their organization. Transforming their processes and systems requires an investment of time that can be difficult to take on.

What else can SMEs do to stay competitive and profit from digital transformation?

It's always important to keep an open mind and try new things. Think big. You never know what new ideas may save your company time and money!

Don't be afraid to join groups and forums to stay up to date on trends and new tools or go to conferences and network. The next big thing may get created on a napkin or in a garage.

The alternative is the status quo; staying in the mindset of what has always worked limits an organization from growing in ways that may not have been anticipated.

Why should a manufacturer choose Global Shop Solutions over the competition?

Service. When we partner with a customer, we expect to be partners for life. We want our customers' businesses to grow as we continue to grow. Our employees take care of our customers, just as our management team does for our employees. We know that implementation can be a challenge, but we strive to make it as pain-free and efficient as possible.

By selling, developing, implementing, and supporting our software with our employees rather than a VAR or other outsourced solution, Global Shop Solutions can seamlessly guide customers through the entire process and relationship of our partnership.





Global Shop

SOLUTIONS

ERP SOFTWARE

About Global Shop Solutions

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

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- ✓ Achieve 99% Quality Ratings.
 - ✓ Maintain On-Time Deliveries.
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It's All Possible With Global Shop Solutions ERP Software.

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WHEN WE PARTNER WITH A CUSTOMER, WE EXPECT TO BE PARTNERS FOR LIFE. WE WANT OUR CUSTOMERS' BUSINESSES TO GROW AS WE CONTINUE TO GROW. OUR EMPLOYEES TAKE CARE OF OUR CUSTOMERS, JUST AS OUR MANAGEMENT TEAM DOES FOR OUR EMPLOYEES. WE KNOW THAT IMPLEMENTATION CAN BE A CHALLENGE, BUT WE STRIVE TO MAKE IT AS PAIN-FREE AND EFFICIENT AS POSSIBLE.

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THE TRANSFORMATION OF ERP: A STORY OF INTELLIGENT TECHNOLOGIES

Article by **Oliver Betz**,
Senior Vice President and Global Head of Product
Management SAP S/4HANA at SAP SE

In the world of technology, we all hear the words “digital transformation” around the clock. It may be a buzzword, but digital transformation is no joke. IDC predicts that digital transformation spending will eat up 53 percent of IT budgets by 2023, approaching \$7.4 trillion between 2020 and 2023. With all this transformation, it’s no surprise that ERP has seen significant recent changes in what it can do for organizations across more than 25 different industries.

Introducing: Intelligent Technologies

Deploying intelligent technologies like machine learning (ML), artificial intelligence (AI) and robotic process automation (RPA) has transformed ERP for good. These technologies are elevating ERP from driving function to being completely fundamental to the business.

In the past ERP was purely an administrative engine, responsible for functions like pulling reports and organizing data. ERP’s core was predominantly focused on finance functions, with the majority of users spending time on financial accounting, closing and reporting. Today, thanks to intelligent technologies, ERP plays a much more pivotal role in business processes. Intelligent ERP systems can identify trends and make predictions, recommend actions, process complex data and run autonomously. Instead of users needing to re-write the rules every time feedback warrants it, AI can enable the system to self-correct in real-time, allowing operations to run more smoothly and saving precious employee hours. Because of this, ERP adoption and innovation are spreading beyond the walls of finance to areas such as manufacturing, service and purchasing, HR, logistics and sales.

How it Works

The value of intelligent ERP is best illustrated when embedded in processes. Take sales, for example. For a sales manager working on inquiries, a bot can now pull data from email and interface systems so an RPA tool can receive inquiries and leverage the ERP to look for specific sales prospects for a customer, serving up suggestions from data that’s already been provided. This performance data can allow the sales manager to identify the best potential options for that customer on-the-spot. RPA embedded intelligence can also alert a sales manager if any information from an online form is missing and can generate a quote that can be sent to a prospect. Once the system works on a quote, situational handling takes over and alerts the handler, who can get inside of the data to provide action.

Creating Value

The level of intelligence that AI, ML and RPA lend to ERP can drive significant business value. While intelligent ERP can provide tremendous customer insights, it’s important to also remember the greater business value for employees. With intelligent ERP, businesses can reduce the amount of tedious, repetitive tasks designated to employees and instead give these workers the opportunity to focus on the insights that the system provides.

In the majority of business use cases, automating repetitive human tasks such as grabbing and downloading documents and inputting the data into systems – things that humans might need to do more than 60 times per day – is a huge benefit not only to individual employees but to the organization as a whole. A high degree of

automation frees employees to do more meaningful work, allowing them to generate more value than ever.

AI is also enabling more intuitive and assistive user interfaces for these employees, creating visual representations pulling from historical data and market information to allow workers to quickly glean insights from complicated data sets. This opens doors for smarter working, more accurate decision-making and better forecasting. In fact, according to IDC’s Alexandros Stratis, “An assistive user interface is key in enabling today’s knowledge workers to become the digital knowledge workers of tomorrow, and though true conversational interfaces are a future goal, the quality of the interaction will improve over time, enabling flatter organizations, a fluid work environment, and goal-oriented and redefined back-office processes.”

The Bottom Line: Trust

Over the next three to five years, we’ll continue to see ERP evolve. Technology is advancing and customers are becoming more savvy, standardizing core processes so they can be more easily automated. However, getting organizations to reap the full benefits of intelligent ERP ultimately comes down to trust – how much customers trust the software and the algorithms behind it.

To establish this trust, vendors need to be able to provide traceability to their clients in case any of the algorithms go wrong. If a user comes to a prediction that didn’t deliver the desired results, they need to have access to insights on why the system came to that conclusion so they can then adjust the algorithm. Traceability that allows users to find out why things went wrong will build trust and also allow further optimization. Building trust takes time, but in this case it is well worth the investment. Ultimately, when users are comfortable leaning on intelligent ERP systems as a way to make them smarter and more effective, they will hold the key to more efficiency, better decision-making, and greater overall impact.



Oliver Betz is Senior Vice President and Global Head of Product Management SAP S/4HANA at SAP SE.

In this role, Oliver assesses customer and market requirements and drives the SAP S/4HANA Product strategy. Under his leadership, Oliver’s team discovers key market trends and

collaborates with customers and partners globally to define SAP’s next generation ERP solution, helping customers gain competitive advantage. Oliver’s team also supports SAP’s field organization, industry analysts and the SAP partner ecosystem to assess client requirements and demands and map them with the SAP S/4HANA Product Roadmap.

Betz began his professional career as a software developer and consultant and joined SAP in 2000 as a technical support consultant. Twitter: [@BetzOliver](#)

About SAP

As the Experience Company powered by the Intelligent Enterprise, SAP is the market leader in enterprise application software, helping companies of all sizes and in all industries run at their best: 77% of the world’s transaction revenue touches an SAP® system. Our machine learning, Internet of Things (IoT), and advanced analytics technologies help turn customers’ businesses into intelligent enterprises. SAP helps give people and organizations deep business insight and fosters collaboration that helps them stay ahead of their competition. We simplify technology for companies so they can consume our software the way they want – without disruption. Our end-to-end suite of applications and services enables more than 440,000 business and public customers to operate profitably, adapt continuously, and make a difference. With a global network of customers, partners, employees, and thought leaders, SAP helps the world run better and improve people’s lives. For more information, visit [www.sap.com](#).





EPICOR.

Interview with **Lee An Schommer**
Sr. VP of Product Management
at Epicor Software

Experience is a New Product

The world is changing rapidly. Those who analyze this change correctly and adapting it to their business processes effectively will win. Those who cannot keep up with the change will lose control of their business. In this exclusive interview, we talk about the effects of change with Lee An Schommer, Sr. VP of Global Product Manager at Epicor. She talks about the challenges awaiting the product management leaders and she gives effective tips for the cloud transformation journey in 202

As you look back on your career thus far, could you tell us about how you climbed the stairs of success?

Early in my career, I was asked to lead a couple of challenging transformations. After the first few successes, I found that I was raising my hand when others were hesitant to take the risk. Some of these risks included consolidating platforms, launching a new product in a compressed timeframe, and transitioning multiple products and customers from on-prem to SaaS. I continue to work with amazing teams and customers, and that’s the true secret to success. There’s nothing more energizing than working with a talented group of people, and Epicor is full of amazing industry experts.

What do you think was your greatest accomplishment at Epicor as Sr. VP of Global Product Management? What was your toughest decision?

Shortly after I joined Epicor, we started to more formally listen to our customers. Through several communication vehicles, we solicit customer feedback including our Customer Advisory Boards, Product Advisory Boards, site visits, product surveys, etc. We then turn the input into action. By joining forces, we have made tremendous

progress in developing people-centric technologies and enhancements that are truly fit for purpose.

The challenge for any Product Management leader is where to invest and when to say “no” or “not now.” There is always more demand than hours and dollars. Therefore, your product strategy has to be well informed. Equally important is the need to explain the “why” associated with the investment strategy so that stakeholders understand your logic. I keep waiting for someone to give me an unlimited budget, but until then I will work to ensure I have a data-driven investment strategy that can be easily articulated.

What does the future hold for you? What do you think are the top strategic priorities for Epicor and how would you execute them in 2020?

In 2020, we continue our cloud transformation journey. Epicor does a wonderful job balancing its commitment to cloud and on-prem while building with cloud in mind and ensuring all boats rise or benefit from cloud best practices. Our key initiatives focus on helping our customers grow and transform at a speed that leapfrogs the competition vs. taking years to implement and realize value.



THE NEXT-GENERATION EXPECTS AN APPLICATION THAT SOLVES PROBLEMS AND IS AS INTUITIVE AS THEIR SMARTPHONE WITH A SIMILAR ABILITY TO PERSONALIZE. IT’S ONE OF THE MANY REASONS EPICOR IS SO COMMITTED TO OUR NEW KINETIC DESIGN SYSTEM – A FRAMEWORK THAT CREATES A DELIGHTFUL, INTUITIVE UI AND UX HELPING TO ENSURE OUR USERS ARE GETTING WORK DONE, NOT WONDERING WHAT FIELD IS NEXT.

What do you think the future holds for the ERP industry? What are the top emerging ERP trends in 2020?

Buyers have been burned by vanilla ERP systems, the price tag, and the inflexibility. The industry is waking up and understanding the need for vertical and sub-vertical specialization to protect a customer’s secret sauce without breaking the bank. We will see continued digital transformation improvements in 2020, and the best ERP’s will show you how it can be done without sacrificing personalization.

What does worry you about what’s ahead in the ERP industry?

New technologies and helping customers keep up with the rate of change keeps me up at night. There are so many options that it can feel more art than science in terms of when to ramp up an investment – getting ahead of these new trends. The size of the company and the micro-vertical can influence the level of adoption. IoT is a great example. It’s been around for



years, and yet some companies don't know where to apply it and so they stall in their adoption. A great ERP will break down barriers, making it easy for customers to implement change. If you don't, you will quickly become obsolete.

What do you think are the key factors that will motivate the next-generation workforce to adopt ERP solutions?

Experience is a new product. Any ERP system can handle quote-to-cash, but can you do it with ease? The next-generation expects an application that solves problems and is as intuitive as their smartphone with a similar ability to personalize. It's one of the many reasons Epicor is so committed to our new Kinetic design system – a framework that creates a delightful, intuitive UI and UX helping to ensure our users are getting work done, not wondering what field is next.

Many of the emerging vendors offer out-of-box cloud-based ERP solutions and they will continue to do so. Do you think the competition will be tougher in the industry over the next decade because of this?

One of Epicor's many differentiators is that we handle industry-specific requirements without needing years to implement. Many out-of-the-box solutions can be a great place for a small company to start. We take things a step further, showing how industry-best practices can be handled through configuration. We also have bundles to help jump-start a company's transformation. It's the best of both approaches.

What is the role of cloud ERP in digital transformation?

The rate of technology changes can be overwhelming. Some customers don't know where to start. ERP systems need to demystify buzz phrases like digital transformation and Industry 4.0, focusing on customer goals and pain points. Odds are, how you solve the problem will be digital, including shifting to omnichannel; automating manual processes; leveraging BI to take quick action;

and utilizing AI to assist, predict, and prevent issues.

As Epicor, do you think you can meet your customers' expectations when you consider 2020 ERP trends? Are you ready for the trends of 2020?

Epicor has been rolling out smart factory and smart supply chain applications for years. We will continue to offer these and new digital transformation tools that are tangible, not over-whelming, always keeping the customer top of mind. It's easy to get caught up in the cool factor associated with AI, IoT, and other trends. All of that is meaningless if you are not solving customer problems with people-centric technologies.



Lee An Schommer is the Sr. VP of Product Management at Epicor Software, a global leader providing flexible, industry-specific software designed around the needs of manufacturing, distribution, retail, and service industry customers. In her 25+ years of software experience – including Product Management, Development, Migrations, Operations, Strategy, and Mergers & Acquisitions – she has enjoyed the opportunity of turning strategic product vision into execution and success. As a proven, executive-level product leader with a healthy dose of customer obsession, she is passionate about helping customers solve business problems with innovative, easy-to-use, people-centric software.

About Epicor Software Corporation

Epicor Software Corporation drives business growth. We provide flexible, industry-specific software designed to fit the precise needs of our manufacturing, distribution, retail, and service industry customers. More than 45 years of experience with our customers' unique business processes and operational requirements are built into every solution in the cloud or on premises. With this deep understanding of your industry, Epicor solutions dramatically improve performance and profitability while easing complexity so you can focus on growth. For more information, [connect with Epicor](#) or visit www.epicor.com.



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ERP SYSTEMS NEED TO DEMYSTIFY BUZZ PHRASES LIKE DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION AND INDUSTRY 4.0, FOCUSING ON CUSTOMER GOALS AND PAIN POINTS. ODDS ARE, HOW YOU SOLVE THE PROBLEM WILL BE DIGITAL, INCLUDING SHIFTING TO OMNICHANNEL; AUTOMATING MANUAL PROCESSES; LEVERAGING BI TO TAKE QUICK ACTION; AND UTILIZING AI TO ASSIST, PREDICT, AND PREVENT ISSUES
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Article by **Jitendra Somani**,
CEO at Sage Software Solutions (P) Ltd.

THE DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION OF SMALL AND MEDIUM-SIZED ENTERPRISES

The Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) act as a backbone of the Indian economy due to their significant contribution in the areas of productivity, trade, and employment. With the fourth industrial revolution focusing majorly on manufacturing process enhancement through the internet of things (IoT), cybersecurity systems, artificial intelligence (AI), and cloud computing, SMEs act as a key contributor to the Indian economy. As per the figures released by [MSME Annual Report](#), SMEs have maintained an average growth rate of 9.13% with 31.83% contribution in the GVA (Gross Value Added) and 28.9% to GDP (Gross Domestic Product) in 2016-2017. At present, the total number of rural and urban SMEs in India is 63.38 million with 31% operating in the manufacturing sector.

Challenges for SMEs

Considering the above statistics, for a developing country like India, SMEs play a vital role in facilitating employment to millions of people. Yet, factors like adequate credit availability, storage issues, procurement, designing and packaging, global market access, skilled labor, low technology exposure, tax compliant processes, and proper infrastructure planning affect its capability to perform dynamically in global markets. However, taking into account the huge potential of the MSME sector, the

government is facilitating the development and growth of this area to enhance its market competitiveness.

Substantial Value Addition by Digital Transformation

Digital transformation has a significant impact on the SME business and its ecosystem. It rebuilds business strategy by leveraging modern technologies like big data, cloud, mobile, machine learning, and artificial intelligence acting at the nexus of next-gen enterprise solutions. Indeed, digital transformation has already showcased a paramount shift in the conventional methods of manufacturing, storage, material handling, and delivery.

Enterprise solution providers understand the need for digitization of SMEs to unlock its maximum potential.

Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) in the making

Businesses usually have three top priorities, namely, winning new customers, reducing operational costs, and growing revenue consistently. However, major challenges like increased costing outpacing the revenue growth, fewer

profit margins due to inefficiencies, and financing new investments can be quite daunting in the unprecedented business growth. ERP solutions can reduce the cost substantially resulting in 57% improved inventory turns, 20% faster order to shipment cycle time, 18% reduction in operational costs, and a 16% reduction in administrative costs. With modern ERP solutions, companies can grow 35% faster in terms of quality, usability, intelligence, and mobility.

ERP and Digital Transformation

ERP impacts digital transformation majorly. An [ERP application](#) is capable of bringing about radical changes through vibrant and customized process automation. ERP systems offer businesses digital benefits like mobile and cloud-based solutions to simplify key business functions like inventory management, accounting, resource management, and finance management. Additionally, ERP software can have add-on integrations with social media platforms to personalize business solution offerings.

ERP can lead to digital transformation in the following ways:

Cloud-based ERP

Users can better utilize resources to their optimal productivity by engaging them in work remotely. Instead of restricting employees to be stationed at desks, companies can leverage cloud technology to access data and extract reports anytime, from anywhere. Mobile ERP solutions make this even easier.



With over two decades of experience working in the business software industry with a focus on operational best practices in enterprises, Jiten has in-depth knowledge about Enterprise B2B technologies, Cloud, and Mobile. He is passionate about leadership and digital transformation through cutting edge technologies. [Sage Software Solutions \(P\) Ltd.](#) is the distributor of Sage Asia Pte Ltd in India. The ideas expressed in this article are based on personal opinions only.

About Sage Software Solutions Pvt. Ltd.

Trusted by thousands of customers worldwide, Sage Software Solutions (P) Ltd. is the distributor of Sage Asia Pte Ltd in India. They are one of the leading ERP software companies in India. A market leader for integrated business management software in India, Sage Software Solutions (P) Ltd., boasts of a PAN-India presence with headquarters in Mumbai and offices and channel partners spread across India. From startups to full-grown organisations, Sage Software Solutions (P) Ltd. has been helping businesses to manage all things including finances to resources with its robust suite of business software solutions including Sage 300cloud, Sage X3, Sage CRM, and Pocket HRMS.



WHEN WE SAY DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION FOR SMES, THERE ARE A NUMBER OF FACTORS THAT PLAY A DOMINANT ROLE IN SHAPING UP THE DESIRABLE OUTPUT. WITHOUT HAVING A PROPER BUSINESS GOAL AND SUFFICIENT TECHNOLOGIES AND TOOLS TO BACK IT UP, COMPANIES WILL CONTINUE TO SUFFER IN THE LONG RUN.

CRM Integration

ERP software simplifies and centralizes enterprise business processes while Customer Relationship Management (CRM) tools enhance sales and marketing efforts by capturing customer data and contact information. While CRM processes in the front-end, ERP takes care of the back-end. Seamless integration of the two provides companies with a 360-degree operational view of their business. Therefore, companies can enjoy the perks of detailed customer action views, improved efficiency,

eliminated data duplication, employee collaboration, and faster sales cycles.

Enhanced Scalability Technological

advancement is an inevitable process and in order to thrive in the competition, businesses should be scalable. If products and services offered by companies are restricted to future evolutions, they will eventually fade out in the competition. Some of the best ERP software is scalable and robust. Therefore, in the course of adopting newer technologies, companies can opt for periodic system updates instead of replacing the systems in its entirety.

Parting Thoughts

When we say digital transformation for SMEs, there are a number of factors that play a dominant role in shaping up the desirable output. Without having a proper business goal and sufficient technologies and tools to back it up, companies will continue to suffer in the long run. Indian economy is already undergoing a lot of turbulence, which can be stabilized by facilitating the growth of the Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs). With digital transformation wave leading the Indian economy through SME role, ERP solutions leveraging modern technologies like big data, cloud, artificial intelligence, machine learning, and the internet of things (IoT) can impact businesses substantially. Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs) should achieve digital transformation by continually investing in the latest software/ tools to gain a competitive advantage.



FOR AMERICAN AIR FILTERS,
THE FUTURE OF CLEAN AIR
IS IN THE CLOUD

Article by *Angelika Schwartz,*
Head of IT and Frank Kress, Vice President Finance -
Controlling - IT, American Air Filter Europe

AAF – or American Air Filter – was born in 1921 in Louisville, Kentucky. From the beginning, our company has been committed to delivering clean air.

Today, in the face of growing urbanization, industrialization, a booming middle class, and air pollution around the world, this mission is more important than ever. People need clean air to live. AAF strives to deliver it.

The backing of our parent company, Daikin Industries Ltd. of Japan, is helping us to follow through on our commitment to providing environmental solutions to mitigate some of the impacts. With support from Daikin, we are now #1 in the air filter industry globally.

Strides toward becoming an intelligent enterprise

But there’s always room for improvement. This has meant competing more effectively to meet the needs of our customers with high availability for desired products, total operational

visibility from order to cash, and fast delivery on demand. But things are complicated. In Europe, we operate in 16 different legal entities – all in different countries, following different procedures, and running on different systems. To start doing business in one way – not 16 different ways – we needed harmonization on a single, global ERP system. We needed digital transformation. We needed to become an intelligent enterprise.

For AAF, becoming an intelligent enterprise means nothing less than a jump into the future. This involves putting our data to work to achieve a consolidated view of operations throughout Europe. The aim is to improve transparency, increase automation, accelerate the pace business, and deliver the experiences that help us win and keep more customers.

The road forward with SAP and the cloud

For both of us, SAP was always a leading candidate for helping us to move forward. We both have deep experience



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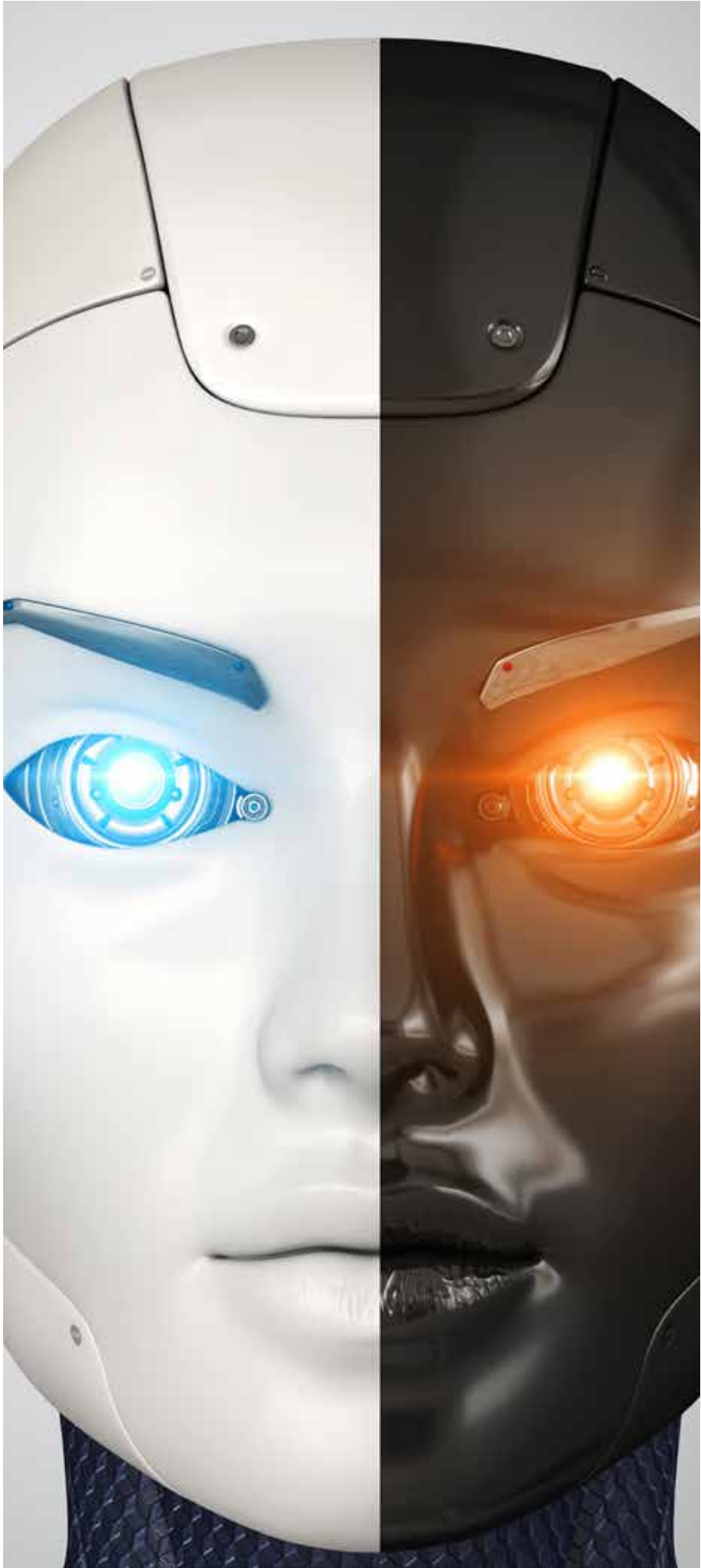
in implementing and running SAP solutions earlier in our careers. In manufacturing industries, SAP is virtually unparalleled. What has been new for us, though, is the cloud. To modernize our business and increase its agility, we wanted to move AAF to a cloud-based system. Fortunately, SAP has moved to the cloud as well as our implementation partner Allgeier.

Cultural change

Critically, we approached the transformation not as an IT project but as a cultural change for all of our people in all of our factories and facilities in Europe. Constant internal communications, with a common agenda for changing together, have helped to alleviate concerns and foster a shared commitment to seeing the transformation through.

The power of one

On the solution side of the equation, the foundation of everything we’re implementing is SAP S/4HANA. This





IN THE CLOUD WORLD, IMPLEMENTATION PROJECTS MOVE MUCH MORE SWIFTLY COMPARED TO THEIR ON-PREMISE COUNTERPARTS. THE EXPERTISE AND DRIVE OF OUR PROJECT TEAM HAVE HELPED TO KEEP US ON TRACK. TIME AND AGAIN, WE HAVE BEEN IMPRESSED BY THE SPEED AT WHICH THIS TEAM OPERATES.

will replace the wide array of disconnected ERP solutions currently implemented across our 16 legal entities.

Not only are we implementing in the cloud, but we are doing so in the public cloud. Arguing in favor of this choice were considerations such as economies of scale, improved infrastructure agility, and the proven security of SAP S/4HANA and public cloud providers alike.

Also, our roadmap forward calls for cloud solutions as part of our multi-cloud approach that will support:

- Our sales forces
- HR processes
- Travel and expense reporting
- Analytics for generating actionable insight based on data from anywhere

Our implementation begins in Germany and Austria in 2020 and will continue to other facilities according to a phased rollout plan. When we are done, we will have established one common system that provides a single source of truth for operational data across all facilities running in Europe.

About SAP

As the Experience Company powered by the Intelligent Enterprise, SAP is the market leader in enterprise application software, helping companies of all sizes and in all industries run at their best: 77% of the world's transaction revenue touches an SAP® system. Our machine learning, Internet of Things (IoT), and advanced analytics technologies help turn customers' businesses into intelligent enterprises. SAP helps give people and organizations deep business insight and fosters collaboration that helps them stay ahead of their competition. We simplify technology for companies so they can consume our software the way they want – without disruption. Our end-to-end suite of applications and services enables more than 440,000 business and public customers to operate profitably, adapt continuously, and make a difference. With a global network of customers, partners, employees, and thought leaders, SAP helps the world run better and improve people's lives. For more information, visit www.sap.com.

A dream team

Throughout our transformation effort, we have had the support of a dream team of colleagues across AAF, SAP, and our partner Allgeier. All teams have all worked together to help us overcome obstacles and execute change as required. Internally, colleagues from Japan, Finland, Slovakia, France and elsewhere have supported us with a diverse mix of on-the-ground knowledge and technical know-how to help us plan effectively and avoid the roadblocks that otherwise lead to delays.

One critical decision for our success was the choice to work closely with SAP service organizations. At first, we were a bit skeptical, but throughout the project, they have proven invaluable in various areas such as understanding the product hierarchy, building critical data feeds, and configuring the software for the unique needs of the filter manufacturing business. Access to industry experts and product development, and having a team of professionals dedicated to helping us achieve value, has been critical to the success of our transformation.

In the cloud world, implementation projects move much more swiftly compared to their on-premise counterparts. The expertise and drive of our project team have helped to keep us on track. Time and again, we have been impressed by the speed at which this team operates. In instances where we've encountered problems in the project, our team has invariably pulled together quickly to offer up a new solution – typically in days rather than weeks.

A big step toward ongoing success

The consolidation of European operations on a single ERP system is only the first step in a much longer journey that, if past is precedent, will continue indefinitely. Change is constant, and at AAF, we expect this first step in our transformation journey to give us a foundation for ongoing agility and innovation.

This foundation – based on data visibility and insight – will enable changes in business models and will mean taking responsibility for installing all filters and replacing them as needed. Data collected could be analyzed using machine learning. With this analysis, we'd be able to predict product failure ahead of time and optimize the product lifecycle. Ultimately, this will further support our mission of delivering clean air to customers – but now at levels of efficiency never dreamed of when our company started almost 100 years ago. This, we think, is progress.

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EPICOR

MANAGING THE CULTURAL
IMPACT OF INDUSTRY 4.0
IN MANUFACTURING

Article by **Andy Coussins**
Senior Vice President and Head of Inter-
national at [Epicor Software](#)

The success of digital transformation isn't just about investing in the right technology. As with any large-scale project—from a change in working location to a company merger—the impact on the people involved needs to be a key consideration when putting a strategy and implementation plan in place. However, in a bid to keep up with the latest technology trends, manufacturers could be shooting themselves in the foot by not addressing change management and cultural aspects from the outset.

In fact, recent research has found that only a quarter (26 percent)[1] of businesses consider change management strategies to be an important part of the move towards Industry 4.0 and the connected enterprise. This suggests that a large proportion of manufacturers are not putting steps in place to manage the impact of such a change on corporate culture, which could affect the ultimate success of any digital transformation project.

Six steps to success

Despite pressure on businesses and individuals to remain at the cutting edge, no one wants to be an early adopter and get it wrong. [A recent report from Deloitte](#) into Industry

4.0 readiness found that even in today's technology-driven world, senior executives are not as prepared as they think they are to reap rewards from digital transformation.

“Faced with an ever-increasing array of new technologies, leaders acknowledged they have too many options from which to choose and, in some cases, they lack the strategic vision to help guide their efforts. Organizational influences also challenge leaders as they seek to navigate Industry 4.0. Many leaders reported their companies don't follow clearly defined decision-making processes, and organizational silos limit their ability to develop and share knowledge to determine effective strategies.”

To make Industry 4.0 a success, no matter how big or small the change, manufacturers need to put key measures in place to manage the transition. This includes undertaking the necessary groundwork to ensure that whatever technology businesses invest in, they can get the best out of it.

Step one—Be realistic

Despite digital transformation being very much an industry buzzword, manufacturers don't need to take everything

on at once. It's important to assess what needs to be automated and why. If something is working and the process is efficient, it might not need to change just yet. The key to getting it right is to prioritize adoption rather than change for change's sake. A phased approach will be beneficial for everyone in the long term.

Step two—Get stakeholders on board

Following an assessment of priorities, manufacturers need to map and plan out what needs to happen next—from procurement to implementation and beyond. This ensures that all stakeholders from every department affected are clear about what is happening, why, and when. Only then can everyone involved be prepared and plan for the roll-out.

Step three—Keep talking

Communication at every stage is essential—, particularly before implementation. Users need to feel they are part of the process and that they can raise any concerns or questions before a new way of working is thrust upon them. Taking time to address any potential issues at the start of a project will ensure users are bought into the process, enable them to understand what is expected of them, and avoid any pitfalls further down the line.

Step four—Factor in ongoing training and support

For efficiencies and productivity to be realized, users need to have a good understanding of how technology impacts their working practices. This can only be done through comprehensive training and ongoing support. While this could be an overwhelming prospect, breaking

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FOLLOWING AN ASSESSMENT OF PRIORITIES, MANUFACTURERS NEED TO MAP AND PLAN OUT WHAT NEEDS TO HAPPEN NEXT—FROM PROCUREMENT TO IMPLEMENTATION AND BEYOND. THIS ENSURES THAT ALL STAKEHOLDERS FROM EVERY DEPARTMENT AFFECTED ARE CLEAR ABOUT WHAT IS HAPPENING, WHY, AND WHEN.

it down into bite-sized, digestible sessions will be more effective, rather than overloading people with too much information from the outset.

It is also worth considering that everyone learns in different ways, so whilst an online demo or training manual might be right for one person, someone else might prefer more visual tools, like a video or a step-by-step animated guide, for example.

Step five—Take your time

The choice of new technologies can be overwhelming and daunting for even a seasoned professional. Never lose sight of why you are investing in technology and keep your business objectives in mind—what your competitor is doing might not be the right approach for you. Jumping on the bandwagon or adopting new technology too quickly could be detrimental in the long-term if the process is not well thought-through or fit for purpose.

Step six—Undertake regular reviews

While following steps one to five will ensure your business has the best chance of successfully adopting new technology, it will all be in vain if you miss out step six. The hard work doesn't stop when you reach go-live—in fact, that is only just the start of the digital transformation process. For a project to be a true success, any technology investment needs to be reviewed and assessed regularly. Is it being used to its full potential? Are there any gaps in training? What more could the business get from it? What is the data showing? Can it be analyzed to improve future business growth?

Only by following these six steps will the manufacturing industry bring the whole business along for the digital transformation ride and ensure that Industry 4.0 is a success. Having clear change management and implementation strategy will enable businesses to realize the full value of technology, whilst guaranteeing strong ROI and user acceptance.



Andy Coussins brings senior international sales, operations and enterprise software industry executive experience to Epicor. In the role of senior vice president and head of international, Coussins is responsible for driving sales, focusing on accelerating company growth throughout Europe, Middle East, and Africa (EMEA), and Asia Pacific (APAC).



MORE CLOUD READINESS TIPS FROM THE COCKPIT: SMALL BUSINESS EDITION



Article by **Robin Irvine**,
General Manager at Avaap

Businesses of all sizes need to be focused on digital transformation, but it is even more important for small to medium size businesses. Investing in digital transformation can accelerate the development of new products, create new lines of business, and personalize the customer experience. Staying competitive relies on being proactive in introducing new technologies and the ability to implement change.

Smaller organizations, known for being nimble, can more readily put the transformation mindset into action and accelerate results. Just like airports have introduced automated systems to take care of dozens of processes from baggage sorting to air traffic control, manufacturers can leverage automation to introduce standards, accelerate data exchange, reduce errors in manual work, and increase the efficiency of operations.

Now is the right time for small and midsize manufacturers to take advantage of emerging technologies, including artificial intelligence (AI), machine learning, and the Internet of Things (IoT) to reduce costs, increase productivity, and introduce new products to market faster.

Last month, I shared the preflight checklist needed to ensure smooth travel when migrating from legacy solutions to cloud ERP. The before-takeoff checklist ensures necessary steps are completed to ensure a safe journey. With controls in check, it is time to start preparing for the rest of the journey. While the advice is applicable for manufacturers of all sizes, it's tailored for smaller manufacturers.

Baggage Check

Growth through acquisition is a strategy many smaller manufacturers consider to fuel their expansion. An acquisition may be a small financial transaction, but it is still a significant undertaking that needs to be taken seriously.

It's imperative to put the enterprise foundation in place before scaling up or implementing new technologies. It's easier to scale up a modern and agile digital foundation than it is to bolt-on solutions to a legacy tiered environment.

With fewer data and fewer integrations and complications, smaller businesses bring less baggage, and what baggage they do have, should be handled with care.

Aligning technology investments to new initiatives to grow the business is typically easier for a smaller business. The strong foundation means that the integration of an acquired business will be easier, quicker, and able to demonstrate faster ROI. Take the time upfront to gather detailed requirements to ensure the solution best meets the organization's needs.

When it comes to data, think of the airline rule for luggage - make sure it's not overweight, and what you do bring onboard is properly stowed. Examine data before bringing it into the new system and get your organization actively involved in the process. Whether historical or new, look after it, collect it, process it, label it, and stow it appropriately. Identifying requirements upfront and properly preparing data can make the implementation process go as smoothly as possible.

Is There Enough Runway?

Whether you are in the selection, pre-selection or have already chosen your implementation partner, look at your runway and plan. Review current hardware expectancy or hosting contracts, software upgrades required in the near term, and possibly existing subscription terms that may



NOW IS THE RIGHT TIME FOR SMALL AND MIDSIZE MANUFACTURERS TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES, INCLUDING ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI), MACHINE LEARNING, AND THE INTERNET OF THINGS (IOT) TO REDUCE COSTS, INCREASE PRODUCTIVITY, AND INTRODUCE NEW PRODUCTS TO MARKET FASTER.

expire or auto-renew. A common pitfall in many technology implementations is the setting of arbitrary deadlines that don't allow for proper people and technology planning.

It may be tempting to want to implement "by the end of the year" or "before our CFO retires," but if the runway isn't long enough to allow for the assessment and documentation of existing processes, identifying where there are gaps and opportunities for improvement, and deliberate change management processes, it may result in an implementation that stalls, crashes or burns.

Instead, be realistic in the urge to take off and get to go-live. Put in the cycles for proper planning. Allow enough time for testing, user adoption, and optimizing performance.

Think about phasing your implementation and how that may benefit your organization versus a big bang approach. Incremental improvements are much easier to consume. Try to not get bedazzled with all the added value that comes bundled in subscription software, and instead take time to document your requirements to understand how they will be met. While your objective should be time to value, do not risk success with unreasonable timelines that will overwhelm the project team.

Change of Crew

Your project team is the number one

variable in your successful outcome. Invest in backfilling key business process owners and ensure your top talent leads the implementation project - not just someone assigned to fill in or new to the business and not yet fully ramped with responsibilities. Managing an ERP implementation requires focus. It is not fair to expect team members to add the project to their workload and still have the capacity to manage their daily tasks. You may need additional support for legacy processes and a team to focus on the go-forward strategy.

Alternative Landing Plans

The journey to the cloud has many paths but the timing may not be right for every organization. Instead, think about cloud readiness and what you can do today to prepare for tomorrow. Optimizing existing software to drive the greatest value, and so the impact of change is mitigated, is a great idea. Smaller businesses might benefit from a managed services partner to focus on maintaining the existing solution so the project team can focus on implementing new technology that addresses the need for competitiveness.

Servicing and MOT Health Checks

There are a lot of opinions on an ERP project and the loudest one isn't always the right one. Use a MoSCoW document to help prioritize the must-have, should have, could have and won't be critical if not done items. Identify KPIs and check against milestones. One note: after the design phase is complete, avoid getting caught up in additional ideas that people may whip up without considering the consequences. When this happens, it is the cause of unnecessary changes and countless resource hours that can quickly take the project into a backward loop of changing requirements or configurations. Keep an eye out for warning lights: minimize project delays and budget overages by keeping the priorities in check and focusing on ROI delivery.

A structured Organizational Change Management (OCM) plan will also help your team build in necessary checks and ensure opinions are being addressed properly. Aligning your

change management strategy with your company's specific portfolio of changes not only ensures your organization sticks on schedule and budget but also prepares your employees and increases user adoption.

Pilots and manufacturing C-suite leaders alike need to ask these questions and overprepare for turbulence to ensure the best flight and landing experience. Small to midsize manufacturers want to ensure the most care is taken preflight to minimize disruptions to operations.



Robin Irvine is the general manager, global manufacturing at Avaap, where he is responsible for the sales strategy

and delivery execution. A 25-year industry veteran and chairman of the M3 User Association for UK, Ireland, and Benelux, Robin brings deep IT and Infor M3 experience, with emphasis on the food and beverage and consumer goods manufacturing industry. He also brings experience in the used oil recycling, bio digestion, and pet food industries.

About Avaap

Avaap is an industry-focused advisory services and IT management consulting firm. Headquartered in Edison, N.J. with global offices and customers around the world, Avaap has deep expertise in healthcare, retail, fashion, manufacturing and distribution, and other industries. Avaap has earned numerous industry accolades, including being named on Computerworld's list of 100 Best Places to Work in IT since 2014; recipient of Infor's Alliance Partner of the Year award since 2014 as well as winner of several other Infor partner awards; five-year honoree on the Inc. 500, KLAS Category Leader in Revenue Cycle, recipient of NJBIZ 50 Fastest Growing Companies since 2015, and multi-year recipient of Becker's Healthcare and Modern Healthcare's Top Places to Work awards. Avaap's culture is powered by passionate people who are relentless in driving customer satisfaction. To learn more, visit www.avaap.com.



MAKING THE ON-RAMP MORE ACCESSIBLE – WHAT STOPS SOME SMBS FROM GETTING ON BOARD WITH DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

Article by **Lucy Thorpe**,
Head of Content for the UK Based Company InCloud Solutions

Good news! SMBs are starting to understand what digital transformation means. From only a third 2 or 3 years ago to almost 60% today small and medium-sized businesses are seeing everyday just how much digital technology is changing the nature of business.

But the problem remains that only about a quarter of them are executing and only 20% or fewer have a strategy to do so in the future.

The SMBs that get it now have much higher revenue expectations but those still waiting on the sidelines are being outperformed. So what are the issues preventing them from getting started?

What are the barriers to tech adoption?

Integration

Many businesses already have systems in place and to move forward they have to figure out how to integrate what they have with where they need to go. Rip and replace is only an option for some.

For example, even if you focus on one area, like customer service, your solution may have to integrate with another

system that you're not ready to replace.

Too much choice?

The next challenge is working out what you need. According to SMB group tech expert Laurie McCabe, so many vendors are focused on going after small and medium businesses these days that they have become the belle of the ball.

“Big tech vendors are targeting SMBs, and so there are tons of solutions out there and figuring out which one is going to fit my business is very hard.”

Not enough of everything

It is an age-old problem, but SMBs, in particular, can be spread very thin. Lack of IT skills, lack of time and lack of money are the main reasons companies hold back from investing in new technology.

Not enough support

Not only are SMBs challenged by a lack of IT resources but there's not always the depth of knowledge both on the IT and the business side.

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FOR MANY COMPANIES, FULL-SCALE DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION IS NOT WHERE THEY'RE AT. IT MIGHT MAKE MORE STRATEGIC SENSE TO START BY TAKING THE FRICTION OUT OF THE SYSTEM – REDUCING THE NUMBER OF STEPS IT TAKES TO MAKE A PROCESS HAPPEN – AUTOMATING WHERE POSSIBLE AND MAKING THINGS EFFICIENT.

It's a big ask to expect business owners to have a deep knowledge of business process technology. It's easier to identify where things are not operating smoothly or where tasks simply take too long.

Solution partners and vendors need to step in to provide good quality educational material and face to face support. This kind of help will, in Laurie McCabe's words “make the On Ramp more accessible to SMBs.”

Finding a trusted partner

Trust is a valuable commodity in digital transformation.

The customer needs to find someone they are comfortable with – someone who makes the information clear and accessible, including pricing and timeline.

Making progress?

We have to be aware that digital transformation is a buzzword. If the surveys say that 57% get it, then 43% don't.

There's a huge leap from understanding something conceptually to knowing how to apply it and this might explain why the numbers around adoption are so low.

For many companies, full-scale digital transformation is not where they're at. It might make more strategic sense to start by taking the friction out of the system – reducing the number of steps it takes to make a process happen – automating where possible and making things efficient. Full-scale changes in business models, offering your product as a service and other digital transformation goals might be part 2 but the sound advice says get part 1 underway first.



Lucy Thorpe is the chief content creator for [In Cloud Solutions](#) – a Platinum SAP partner offering Business ByDesign. Her conversation with Laurie McCabe can be heard in the latest episode of her podcast [The Growth Business](#).

About InCloud Solutions

InCloud Solutions are an SAP Platinum Partner offering ERP software solutions, training and consultancy to SMEs and SMBs all around the United Kingdom. In Cloud Solutions Ltd is a proud member of the United VARS. In Cloud Solutions are experts in the ERP solution SAP's Business ByDesign, one of the best cloud-based ERP solutions in the world. The company already has over 35 ByDesign Customers in the UK and Europe, with operations across the US, Australia, Africa, Japan, and China.



“ HOW ARE SMES ADAPTING TO DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION ”

If 57% of SME's “get” digital transformation then 43% don't.
And there's a huge leap from understanding something conceptually to
knowing how to apply it.
That's why businesses need trusted partners to guide them through the
maze. That's why companies like ours don't just sell solutions. Don't be
afraid to ask – knowledge is power

Lucy Thorpe,
the chief content creator for In Cloud Solutions



INTELLIGENT AUTOMATION

Article by **Michael Grace**,
Director in the Infor practice at RPI
Consultants

Intelligent automation is many things to many people. It is a term widely being used to include things like artificial intelligence, robotic process automation, machine learning, optical character recognition, and many other tools. Suddenly, vendors that we've historically used for one thing are now calling themselves intelligent automation vendors. Are they really?

One thing is for certain. Businesses across all types of industries are beginning to realize that intelligent automation tools are a key factor in reducing costs, improving customer service, becoming more agile, and reducing risk. These tools are no longer a competitive advantage but are quickly becoming a competitive necessity. Companies choosing not to explore these technologies will quickly find themselves left behind by competitors that have achieved lower costs and have redeployed their human labor to more valuable tasks. The technology is not new. It has existed in various forms for well over 20 years. In the last 10 to 15 years it has been used extensively in the financial sector—primarily in Europe. Within the last 3 to 5 years it has started to make inroads into the United States.

While many of these technologies are still in development,

such as true artificial intelligence, plenty is ready to be deployed by businesses today. One of the most common tools that can be deployed is robotic process automation or RPA. The market is full of vendors providing an RPA product. Some of the key ones are Blue Prism, Kofax, UiPath, and Automation Anywhere. But which one is right for your business? Each one of these has key strengths that may make it a better fit depending on what you are trying to automate. Before we get product-specific, it is more important to highlight a few key facts. Possibly the most important thing is that this technology is attainable in both cost and time to ROI. Generally, a robot costs about \$15,000 to \$20,000 for a license. Many of the vendors will tell you that business users can configure the robot. I believe, while possible, that it is probably not the best approach. A robot is essentially given tasks to complete in a GUI type program. The issue with users configuring these is they typically don't address things like error handling when the robot is unable to complete the program. So, I generally recommend that companies hire a partner to initially help them configure their robots, train their people, and help them develop their intelligent automation program. But for a relatively low cost and rapid time to deploy, you can quickly begin freeing up your human labor to work on more important strategic tasks.

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THE CONCEPT IS SIMPLE; WHERE THERE ARE RULES-BASED PROCESSES DONE BY HUMANS, A ROBOT CAN MORE THAN LIKELY ALSO DO IT. THAT DOESN'T MEAN YOU DON'T NEED HUMANS. THEY SIMPLY CAN DO MORE VALUABLE TASKS, LIKE WORK WITH YOUR CUSTOMERS.

In almost any company, I can guarantee there are processes to which we can apply RPA. Some of the easiest areas are Finance, Payroll, Human Resources, and Supply Chain. Why? Because everyone has them. You may say, “but Unicorn, we have already revised these processes with technology.” My question to you is, did you do it in the last 1-2 years? Because this technology has evolved since then. Then, the opportunity simply expands beyond that and covers every aspect of every business. The concept is simple; where there are rules-based processes done by humans, a robot can more than likely also do it. That doesn't mean you don't need humans. They simply can do more valuable tasks, like work with your customers. It does mean that the processes

that are automated, however, will be done quickly and with little chance for error. Now robots essentially become your digital workforce and require maintenance and governance.

There is a heated debate in the IA space about whether you should plan it out first or simply get robots out there. There are definite pros and cons to each and how getting limited robots in production can help prove the concept and value. There is also a lot of misinformation about how easy the technology is to deploy. One vendor recently said after a few hours of training a subject matter expert was deploying robots into production. I call BS on this. I do think users can learn the basic components of simple intelligent automation tools like RPA, but complex uses of IA will still require IT so why not involve them from the start. If you simply download software and start using robots, eventually bad things will happen. You will lose track of what robots are doing what each is doing with what systems.... Yep, a lot of what's in there. IT will catch you and “react” by shutting you down, making your effort all for nothing. Having a plan, which doesn't have to take years to develop, is a key.

Space is now evolving as well with new acronyms (in case you were bored with the ones before) like robotic desktop automation (RDA), automated intelligent automation (AIA) and more. And it just keeps going to create market niches where businesses can claim to be first. Let me tell you, a lot of it is just hype and nonsense. From a business perspective, just focus on automating repetitive processes. Is that simple enough? Don't buy into the hype, how you automate and what tool you use is less important. Do something for free and to get yourself started. RPI will offer a 1-day visioning workshop and 1 free RPA process (very basic) for free. Yep, just call me and I will get it going. Did I mention it's free? I am that confident that you will then see the value and get moving. So, what is intelligent automation? It's a set of tools to help you drive costs down, improve employee work quality and be faster at key processes.



Michael Grace is an innovative technology leader who speaks about how businesses can achieve a transformation by leveraging technology. Several companies have called him a “unicorn” due to his ability to understand the business issue and solve it in partnership with the customer leveraging the latest technology and process enhancements. Michael is currently a Director in the Infor practice at RPI Consultants. Previously he was CEO of his own consulting company, Gravmetric specializing in transformation, enterprise resource planning software (ERP) and robotic process automation (RPA). He has created the personal brand Tech Pro Unicorn, where he regularly publishes blog posts on technology and other topics.

Michael has a history blending IT leadership, consulting, and innovation with a fierce determination to solve the root customer issues in a variety of industries. He has worked extensively in healthcare as well as finance, gaming and retail industries. He has worked for a variety of leading companies to include Dignity Health, Cancer Treatment Centers of America, Phoenix Children's Hospital, The Revere Group, Moss Adams, BearingPoint, Deloitte and The Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco.

Michael is very passionate about listening intensely to the customer and only once the problem is understood, does he collaborate on the process improvement empowered by technology. This blend of customer focus, innovation, business process and technology are what makes him so unique, thus a unicorn.

When not working, Michael enjoys his family. His wife Jennifer, mother Yvonne, 4 boys, 1 daughter, a dog, and a cat. His hobbies include cycling, cooking, keto lifestyle, reading, music, owning a DJ company and enjoying time with friends.

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BUSINESSES ACROSS ALL TYPES OF INDUSTRIES ARE BEGINNING TO REALIZE THAT INTELLIGENT AUTOMATION TOOLS ARE A KEY FACTOR IN REDUCING COSTS, IMPROVING CUSTOMER SERVICE, BECOMING MORE AGILE, AND REDUCING RISK. THESE TOOLS ARE NO LONGER A COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE BUT ARE QUICKLY BECOMING A COMPETITIVE NECESSITY.

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Michael Grace
Director in the Infor practice at RPI Consultants

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WILL AI-DRIVEN PRODUCTIVITY RESULT IN A SHORTER WORK WEEK?

Article by **Antony Bourne**,
Senior Vice President of IFS Industries

As businesses adopt artificial intelligence (AI) to streamline or even automate many decision-making processes currently handled by humans, what will humans do with the time they'd have spent on these tasks?

In the intermediate term, AI gurus like Bob De Caux suggest the [technology will be used primarily to help humans make better and faster decisions](#), and that we are some ways off from AI taking over key business functions. Increased per-employee productivity was a primary benefit the executives expect from implementing AI.

According to an IFS study, [90 percent of respondents were planning AI initiatives](#), and 60 percent expected these efforts to increase productivity. Only 15 percent said they supported something like a shortened work week, suggesting workers should instead be trained to use AI to do their jobs better. But even now, IFS teams are hard at work teaching AI algorithms to make common financial decisions in roles like accounts payable and accounts receivable—even doing basic forensic accounting. Technologies like this may enable a single AR or AP person to do the work currently completed by several people, and in time, could automate these roles entirely.

In some industries like [construction](#), industrial maintenance and [manufacturing](#) engineering, a shortage of workers is already a real problem and automation of

many of these tasks may well come earlier than in other industries. But as the more tedious elements of jobs are performed by AI algorithms embedded in business software like [enterprise resource planning \(ERP\)](#), what will people do with the time formerly occupied with these duties?

Shorter work week?

The idea of a shorter work week may have a hard time winning over executives and business leaders simply because it runs counter to conventional wisdom. If you are paying people, you want to get as much as you can for that spend. But more is not always more, as [Microsoft Japan](#) and Scottish cosmetic and soapmaking materials supplier [Elizabeth Carnahan's Gracefruit](#) found when they tried cutting back hours required of full-time workers. Productivity rose 40 percent at Microsoft Japan and was unchanged for the Scottish cosmetics supplier.

Even the newly-elected president of Finland, Sanna Marin, [advocated for a four-day, six-hour work week](#) at a forum prior to the election.

"I believe people deserve to spend more time with their families, loved ones, hobbies and other aspects of life, such as culture," candidate Sanna Marin said. "This could be the next step for us in working life."



COMPANIES THAT HAVE IMPLEMENTED SOUND ENTERPRISE-WIDE AI INITIATIVES MAY BE HAPPY TO OFFER A SHORTENED WORK WEEK, SECURE IN THE KNOWLEDGE THAT HOURS AND OUTPUT ARE NOT DIRECTLY LINKED. PREPARING FOR THIS MAJOR ECONOMIC SHIFT WILL REQUIRE MORE THAN TECHNOLOGY—IT WILL REQUIRE EXECUTIVES TO COME TO UNDERSTAND THE ETHICAL CHALLENGES AI PRESENTS.

And in February, the entire Valencia region of Spain announced plans to move to a four-day work week, starting with jobs in the public sector.

Change from the top down

Despite successes we are seeing from these early beta efforts and the inexorable trend towards enterprise AI, senior executives may be resistant to the idea of paying workers the same amount for shorter hours. In fact, in many corporate cultures, being present and available at all hours, taking calls or completing tasks while on vacation and staying late are either mandatory or evidence a worker is committed to the organization. [Senior executives are the worst offenders](#)—in a recent study, "44 percent of executives work an average of 52 hours a week, and that number increases to 58 hours among the 65 percent of senior executives who report working overtime."

As new generations enter the workforce, it may be

harder to convince them that slavish devotion and long hours will bring them success. Companies that have implemented sound enterprise-wide AI initiatives may be happy to offer a shortened work week, secure in the knowledge that hours and output are not directly linked. Preparing for this major economic shift will require more than technology—it will require executives to come to understand the ethical challenges AI presents.



As the Senior Vice President of IFS Industries, Antony Bourne leads a team of global industry experts covering IFS focused industries, product marketing, and supports sales, marketing and partner enablement. He is an advocate for the need for flexibility and proactivity within the industry, is a lead spokesperson for IFS, and is well respected for presenting innovative ideas at conferences (Gartner, IDC and ARC included). Penned authority pieces include insight into next steps for intelligent tech and its impact on the future of manufacturing.

About IFS

IFS develops and delivers enterprise software for customers around the world who manufacture and distribute goods, build and maintain assets, and manage service-focused operations. The industry expertise of our people and solutions, together with a commitment to delivering value to every one of our customers, has made IFS a recognized leader and the most recommended supplier in our sector. Our team of 3,700 employees and growing ecosystem of partners support more than 10,000 customers around the world challenge the status quo and realize their competitive advantage. Learn more about how our enterprise software solutions can help your business today at [ifs.com](#).





NEXT GENERATION CONSULTING SERVICES: PROVIDING MARKET AGILITY AND RAPID DEPLOYMENT OF CLOUD SOLUTIONS

Article by **Rama Vadakattu**,
VP, Solutions & Innovation, Infor

Our customers tell us that agility is a major concern. Enterprises today need to quickly react to changing market demands. The pressure to remain relevant in a transformative landscape is driving their strategies. It's also driving their investments in software solutions. At Infor we're keenly aware of this need for agility and expectations for streamlined deployments. Our teams are focused on accelerating value to customers. As our new leadership team "doubles down" on our conviction to customer-centricity, tactics to aid rapid deployment are a high priority. Next generation Implementation accelerators (IA 4.0) provide the foundation.

Combined with another business process assessment concept, simply called "60-30-10" is at the heart of a key Infor value to customers. This article will explain the concept, how it works, and what we're doing to roll it out globally.

Why is this important?

For our customers, being well-prepared for change is critical for success—no matter the industry, region, or size of the company. Even highly alert, tech-savvy companies can be negatively disrupted by rapid change if their reflexes are slow. Companies can find themselves in a desperate, reactive mode, fighting to retain market position as competitors push out bigger and better offerings—overnight.

On the other hand, forward-thinking enterprises strive to be proactive and ahead of the curve. They want to anticipate the next market pressure before it becomes a threat.

Modern software solutions, deployed in the cloud and equipped with the latest functionality—like augmented analytics, process intelligence, machine-learning, artificial intelligence, and Internet of Things (IoT) capabilities—provide valuable tools for future-proofing the business. Infor is one solution provider that is addressing customers'

need for rapid deployment of advanced business solutions—without sacrificing their unique differentiators.

Less than perfect

In the past, traditional ERP deployments on premise with heavily modified business processes were often massive projects, taking years to roll out and resulting in a complex solution to maintain. Complex is the enemy of speed the organizations are under pressure to adapt and stay competitive. The "Big Bang" cut-over from one solution to the new one was often highly stressful as crews of consultants scrambled to migrate data, fix broken links, and create workarounds. Few companies can absorb this level of risk and cost today.

Cloud computing provides a smart alternative. But, as organizations realized the value of cloud deployment and decide to adopt the technology, they often faced limited, disappointing options. Many solutions providers that offer multi-tenant cloud deployment, expect customers to adopt "generic" software to take advantage of the economies of scale and rapid implementation. Or, they offer to take the existing cumbersome structure and put it in a single tenant cloud environment, keeping the complex personalizations that make it difficult to upgrade.

Neither option is ideal. The highly simplified, generic software doesn't support complex business models in industries like manufacturing, retail, and supply chain management. The highly customized solution, though, can be difficult to keep modern. Each upgrade will require re-aligning customized links. This slows down modernization and adds costs.

A better way

Infor understands the need for agility in today's business climate. Customers need high value from their business software quickly. With cloud computing's subscription model, customers start paying for their solution on day-one. Of course, they want to see savings from process improvements soon after. Return on Investment (ROI) should



INFOR UNDERSTANDS THE NEED FOR AGILITY IN TODAY'S BUSINESS CLIMATE. CUSTOMERS NEED HIGH VALUE FROM THEIR BUSINESS SOFTWARE QUICKLY. WITH CLOUD COMPUTING'S SUBSCRIPTION MODEL, CUSTOMERS START PAYING FOR THEIR SOLUTION ON DAY-ONE.

be close at hand, not a long-range goal. How can we make this happen?

Infor has developed a three-prong approach to greater agility.

Standardizing CloudSuites

The first step was to simplify and standardize our CloudSuites. We took a hard look at each industry-specific solution and refined what functionality should be included in the standard suite. We clearly documented the footprint for each solution. Being consistent in our approach enables us to focus on key deliverables and achieve better results. This is proving to be highly effective. Sticking to proven implementation methodology and clearly defined data migration paths speeds the go-live process, creating some early-wins and building momentum.

Implementation Accelerators (IA)

To further speed the process, we have developed implementation accelerators for our major solutions. These are fourth generation of IAs, which comes with native process

mining capabilities integrated with our CloudSuites. IAs are industry focused preconfigured, yet flexible, solutions based on Infor application suites. They are designed to deliver industry leading business processes, along with application configurations, implementation playbook, tools and templates. The tools provide a framework for implementing industry business processes, migrating data, establishing workflows, and educating users on the features and functionality of the solution. Change management and training are important to major roll-outs. Our consulting services teams are ready to help.

"60-30-10"

This is a Business Process Assessment (60-30-10) approach. Implementation Accelerators (IA) provide industry specific business processes for Infor CloudSuites, however, we believe that "Not all business processes are created equal". We created an unique approach to help customers determine which processes are most important to differentiate themselves. With this approach, both our customer and Infor will focus more time on these key processes to realize maximum value.

60% - These are core industry leading processes provided in IA that our customers can adopt this with very little effort, where the time spent will be on validation of the standard IA processes. These are the processes that are required but do not provide differentiation for our customer. So, the goal for these 60% of the processes: Adopt as is.

For the 30%, these are the processes that are differentiators for our customers. We will spend more time in the project on these processes, with specific guidance on configuration options to operate this process, or how to tweak an output document or interface. While this is going to take some effort we are not starting with a blank sheet, we are going to give them some options that they can tailor and configure to best fit their business needs.

The goal is to free up more time and capacity to focus on the 10% which are the processes that are

- highly differentiating/unique to help make dramatically better decisions or better customer experiences, or better experiences within their customer supply chain.

By reducing the work within the 60% of the processes, freeing up time and making customer and Infor resources focus on the 30% (differentiating) and 10% (unique) processes and help our customers achieve a better business outcome.

“IA Business Process Assessment (60-30-10) workshop” to jointly identify which of the processes provide differentiation to the customers.

This approach keeps implementations on track, keeps teams from wandering off into uncharted “wish lists” and getting lost in theoretical ways of engineering a better mousetrap. By adopting 60% standard business functionality and shifting focus on 30% differentiators, and 10% unique processes—the secretsauce that separates the company from the competition.

Final thoughts

Looking at these steps individually may paint an overly simplistic picture of deployment. It is still a complex and amazing adventure with many moving pieces and cross-

functional teams impacted. Moving to the cloud is a big step for companies. But necessary. We are doing everything we can to make it easier and faster. When these tactics are used together in a strategic CloudSuite deployment, the customer sees major benefits. Not only are the benefits of cloud deployment achieved quickly—the customer also receives the benefits of industry-rich functionality. And, we don’t stop there. We ensure that the highly personalized attributes special to the company are implemented as well—in a way that complements the overall system. This supports an always-modern enterprise platform. The company can embrace new features as they are offered on an ongoing basis. Companies can be proactive and quick to take advantage of emerging opportunities. Infor Agility is the key to success in a world of continual change.

About Infor

Infor is a global leader in business cloud software products for companies in industry specific markets. Infor builds complete industry suites in the cloud and efficiently deploys technology that puts the user experience first, leverages data science, and integrates easily into existing systems.

Over 68,000 organizations worldwide rely on Infor to help overcome market disruptions and achieve business-wide digital transformation.



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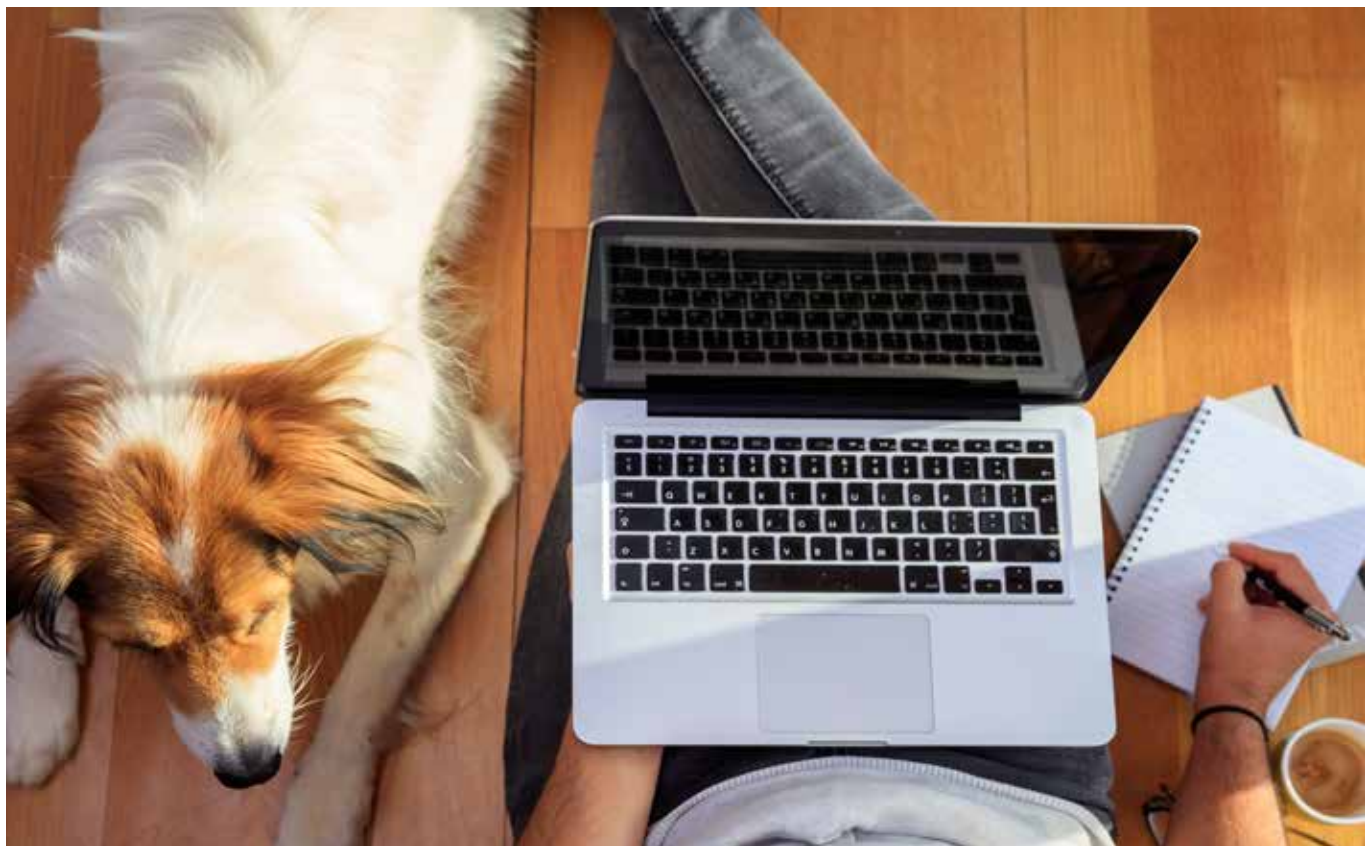
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canias^{ERP} **WE INVESTED IN THE FUTURE WITH CANIASERP**

*Interview with Murat TARHAN,
Lider Petfood General Manager*

“caniasERP is a software that is open to development, forward thinking and flexible. With us on this journey as we grow up. We invested in the future with caniasERP.”

Lider Petfood, one of the leading companies in its sector, continues its rapid growth with a capacity of 30 thousand tons. Company exports its products to 52 countries while making production also for the big chain-markets in Turkey. Telling the story of the company’s rapid growth, Lider Petfood General Manager Murat Tarhan said, “The market has great potential and our company is growing rapidly. In this process, our needs often change. We wanted to invest in the future by using software that is open to development, forward-thinking and flexible like caniasERP. On this journey, we walk together and develop. We can easily plan the next step with caniasERP, which offers us traceability, speed and freedom of movement.”

Can you tell us about your company?

Our brand was established in partnership with Tavas Pet and Sera Pet, with well-established and successful history companies operating in almost 2000 sales points of the country with almost 2000 different pet products. Our company, which continues to grow with a rapid acceleration,

today produces an annual capacity of 30 thousand tons in a total area of 11 thousand square meters, of which 5,500 square meters is covered. We also have the opportunity to stock up on 10 thousand pallets. As a company that attaches importance to technology investments, it has been designed according to the latest technology so that our products produced in our facility can be delivered to the end consumer in a quality manner, protected from environmental conditions. We carry almost all sales to supermarket chains in Turkey. Besides, our actual export to 52 countries continues.

How did you start the digital transformation process?

Before the ERP system, we were using software that we run only accounting. Our rapid growth made the need for tracking in logistics and storage areas much more important. Too many shelves, too much stock ... We have an average stock of raw materials. We started to have a hard time following this stock. We knew that we needed to digitalize to manage these

processes in a healthy way. We also met IAS while doing research on the subject. We made on-site inspections on reference projects before making a selection. As a result of our reviews, we decided to work with IAS. In fact, when we first started, our goal was to manage only our warehouse and logistics processes. However, now we manage all our business processes with caniasERP.

TROIA Brought Freedom on Our Movement

What was your criterion when looking for ERP software? Why did you decide on caniasERP?

The most important feature of caniasERP for us is that custom development is easy. TROIA development platform, which is offered to customers by caniasERP with open source code, was the determining factor for us. When we examined the packaged programs in the market at that time, we observed that there were deficiencies in development. If we were to choose software that cannot be stretched or developed, it would not be able to fully meet our needs. We are growing every day and our needs are constantly changing. We needed software that could keep up with us on this journey. If we wanted to invest in the future, we had to use software that is open to development, forward-thinking and flexible like caniasERP. Growing has been our goal from the very beginning and as we grew up we wanted software that would evolve with us. We have seen that caniasERP can easily take us to the next step.

How was your transition to live use? What did you experience during the adaptation process?

In the first phase, we commissioned the modules related to logistics and warehouse processes. It took us like three months. At the end of a year,



OUR INDUSTRY NEEDS PROCESS MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS SLIGHTLY DIFFERENT FROM OTHERS. AT THIS POINT, THE FLEXIBLE STRUCTURE OF CANIASERP, BESIDES ITS STANDARD MODULES, ALLOWED US TO MAKE SPECIAL DEVELOPMENTS EASILY.

we had included all our processes, including accounting, in the ERP system, we started using caniasERP with full capacity in two phases. Except for the Quality Management (QLT) module, we use almost all the modules in the standard of caniasERP. Our adaptation process was also very fast. Our management was extremely determined in this regard and strict priorities were set. All necessary equipment investments were made and trainings were supported. Simple interfaces are used to minimize the margin of error of the operators in screens developed specifically for us in the caniasERP standard. We also had a good process thanks to the correct guidance of the IAS consulting team in the initial setup. We have seen how important it is in this process to give the materials the right codes and create the articles correctly. The process went well by itself, since we did it right from the beginning and were guided correctly. In this sense, we thank IAS consultants.

Besides the standard applications of caniasERP, what kind of special improvements have been made for your company? Our industry needs process

management systems slightly different from others. At this point, the flexible structure of caniasERP, besides its standard modules, allowed us to make special developments easily. We are a produce to stock, rather than produce to order company. Therefore, we need to act on our planning screens according to our own setup. Accordingly, various screens were designed specially for us. Again with the support of the development and consultant team of IAS, pallet tracking systems and traceability systems have all been customized according to our way of doing business. In addition to this, a system was created to control our errors in logistics, to follow loading procedures, to automatically arrange processes such as dispatch notes, and to enable us to use hand terminals. To summarize, thanks to the interfaces developed with the support of IAS, we had previously produced a product and just put a batch number on it and palletized it. After caniasERP, we have been able to follow the statuses of all those pallets through square codes. This gave us the freedom to move and traceability very quickly. We can reach which raw material was used in the product, which operators worked, the actual cost incurred, the raw material cost used at the moment and the final product costs. In the past, all of these things were extra cost to us, we got rid of them. Now we can give much more accurate prices and stay ahead of our competitors.

What’s the vision of Lider Petfood? What are your goals for the next step?

Over time, our needs are ever evolving. New requirements are shaped according to these needs. We have always gone from macro to micro in processes. We aim to make more detailed reports in all business processes. For example, in logistics, we were tracking by the lot number, but our goal is to go by the pallet or even the package. We want to get detailed information from the batch number of the package to which palette and even who takes part in its production. In addition, we plan to commission the Quality Management module in 2020.

Speed and Data Analysis is Everything

What has changed in your company since you started managing your business processes with caniasERP?

Whether it is caniasERP or not, Lider Petfood would draw a certain growth process. But could we manage this growth process correctly? This is a big question mark. caniasERP has become critical for us at this point. It allowed us to take the right steps to manage our growth. The market had a demand, and our industry was growing rapidly. Luckily, we started to take the right steps with caniasERP in terms of responding to this growth. Because we really needed an ERP to communicate with our customers, applications, and requested data. Both financially and in terms of production. The fact that caniasERP contained such a wide spectrum of data also gave us a great advantage. We see everything from the product collected in the warehouse to the variety, quality, error rate and employee efficiency, and we can reliably protect all data. This situation has brought us a lot not only in production but also in managerial sense.

Why digital transformation is important for companies?

The most obvious thing we see when we compare the past with our present day; overall speed improvements. It is vital that companies have quick access to all data and their details. For example, one of our customers says, “How many products you have in your stock, if you give me that information today, I will buy it.” The number mentioned is around 10 trucks. When you think that each customer has different types of goods and the company has 300 kinds of products, it should be very fast to find the product group of that customer, to take stock, to price and present it. All these processes can be handled in 15 minutes thanks to caniasERP! If we go back to the past, companies that cannot respond to this will either stop growing or lose after a point, even if they will still grow. Now speed and time are very important. You need to take quick action and examine the data very well.



caniasERP Brings Advantage

Would you recommend caniasERP?

Of course I recommend caniasERP. With its flexible structure and ease of use, it allows you to easily manage your business processes. Thanks to its speed, it helps you stand out among competitors, while allowing you to create time for different projects. However, I should add that; The companies that decided to switch to the ERP system should focus on this project with the full participation of all their employees. Otherwise, the project will fail. I definitely recommend it for companies that have the power and ability to do this.

| About Canias

IAS is founded in Karlsruhe, Germany in 1989 by a handful of talented and dedicated people. Since the early days of IAS, the dream was to be the game-changer in the ERP industry by providing best-in-class solutions. IAS developed its own unique software development platform, TROIA in 1997 and released caniasERP 6.01 in the year 2000 as one of the first few ERP solutions available online with full functionality. TROIA, open-source and platform-independent integrated development environment, and its exceptional flexibility feature are the core strengths of caniasERP, as evidenced by various third-party studies. Over the years, the brand “caniasERP” has played an important role in helping companies gain Operational Excellence in Industries such as Automotive, Aviation & Defense, Printing, Packaging, Textile & Garment, and Machinery & Industrial Automation. IAS, a global ERP company, catering to over 1000 companies with more than 30.000 concurrent users across diverse industries in more than 30 countries, its core competency has always been in being quality conscious and providing innovative solutions that can be delivered quickly and cost-effectively in a complex environment. With over 250 professionals and consultants and excellence R&D centers and subsidiaries in Germany, India, Turkey, UAE, and Korea along with business partners in across the world, IAS is one of the highest-rated ERP vendors with its solution, caniasERP, available on-premise, on-the-cloud and also mobile devices. IAS, over the years, has received many prestigious awards and acknowledgments in various countries, such as ERP Excellence by GPS Germany in 2017 and Best of 2018 in ERP Solutions category by Initiative Mittelstand in Germany. IAS is also ISO/IEC 27001 Information Security Management and as well as ISO/IEC 15504 Software Process Improvement and Capability Determination (SPICE) certified company. IAS, today more than ever, is committed to providing superior quality on its solutions and services to leverage efficiencies in companies to reach operational excellence and expand its operations into further global markets

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WHETHER IT IS CANIASERP OR NOT, LIDER PETFOOD WOULD DRAW A CERTAIN GROWTH PROCESS. BUT COULD WE MANAGE THIS GROWTH PROCESS CORRECTLY? THIS IS A BIG QUESTION MARK. CANIASERP HAS BECOME CRITICAL FOR US AT THIS POINT. IT ALLOWED US TO TAKE THE RIGHT STEPS TO MANAGE OUR GROWTH.

Murat TARHAN
Lider Petfood General Manager





FOUR WAYS TO TRANSFORM FIELD SERVICES

Article by **Jonathan Weiss** ,
Vice President, Emerging Technologies at Software AG

Field services is undergoing dramatic change, thanks to the Internet of Things and artificial intelligence.

More than half of field service organizations still use manual methods for servicing clients, according to Salesforce - which means they still have to send a representative out into the field to either check or fix a system.

Whether it's unplanned outages or scheduled maintenance, traditional field service is time-consuming and costly - and it can be challenging to get the right technicians to the right place at the right time.

Think of technicians servicing a wind turbine. They get word that it is not spinning as it should, so they drive a few hours out into the rural fields where the wind farm is located. They put on their harnesses, grab their tools and climb to the top of the wind turbine (this can take hours). They finally get to the top, exhausted, and begin troubleshooting the issue.

Within minutes, they identify the problem and, unfortunately, they do not have the proper tool to fix it. They now must climb down the turbine, search for the tool on the truck and, if they don't have it, go back to the shop to get it. Once found, they need to climb to the top of the turbine again and begin fixing the issue.

But what if they could remotely diagnose the problem, and save a tremendous amount of time and, ultimately, money? If the technicians knew what the problem was ahead of time, they could ensure they had all the appropriate materials with them to quickly and effectively resolve the issue.

Data, IoT and AI

This is where the IoT and AI come in. Here is how:

Real-time monitoring

With IoT sensors, you can continuously monitor assets for position, speed, and any other variables that could impact product quality or arrival time. ETAs would be calculated continuously as well, based on speed and distance. Dynamic notifications keep you in the loop at any given time.

Remote Asset Management

A connected asset allows operators and field services professionals to connect to the it from anywhere in the world and remotely diagnose problems to begin troubleshooting. This is invaluable because it can provide information on a problem and, more importantly, how it can be resolved, without stepping foot into the field.

Proactive technicians

As your devices report their status, an IoT platform deploys analytics including AI to detect issues that may require repair. Alerts are sent to technicians in the field, advising them on the urgency of the situation and enabling them to proactively address issues.

Predictive maintenance

Catastrophic failures are the problems of yesteryear as AI-powered predictive and prescriptive analytics are being used to address complications in real-time. Asset and equipment maintenance are moving from scheduled to an as-needed basis, reducing costs and increasing up-time.

From condition-based monitoring and digital twin creation, to remote asset diagnosis and troubleshooting, the uses cases seem to be never-ending and truly transformative for AI and IoT in field service.


Today, companies are already seeing the financial benefits of lowering maintenance costs and reducing unplanned downtime events through these technologies. As they mature and evolve, and organizations continue to invent new ways to leverage them, we will see industries truly transform field services.

Read more about how Software AG can help you implement analytics and IoT in field services by clicking below.



Jonathan Weiss is Vice President, Emerging Technologies at Software AG. Jon is an innovation and technology thought leader with extensive experience in leading customer engagements, explaining technical topics in an easy-to-digest fashion and understanding not just technical architecture, but also the strategy behind implementing effective solutions. He has proven skills in team leadership, technical management, IoT/IIoT and software sales.





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