

From Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) to The Digital Enterprise

Optimize Your Investment

We hear about it every day: technology is changing business like never before.

Part of it is due to new technologies such as cloud, mobile business, the constant online exchange of information with customers and suppliers, and connecting equipment controllers to business systems with the Internet of Things (IoT).

Another big part of it is how technology replaces our current systems. New software can now deliver on the promises of ease of use, speed, continuous improvement and cost-effective IT management.

One example is Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) systems. Today, new and old terms are mixed such as business intelligence, finite scheduling, post-modern ERP, key performance indicators (KPIs), and material requirements planning (MRP).

You don't want to miss the opportunities from merging new technology with proven capabilities – and you don't want to make the wrong investment.

In this whitepaper, you will see how the combination of new technology and ERP systems achieves digital enterprise performance for manufacturers and distributors.

Meeting today's needs

What companies require more than anything is flexibility and agility. Because markets, products and technologies are changing faster than ever before, a company cannot afford to be stuck with software that just supports the way the company

The term ERP is widely used in the software industry—but many application suites don't have the needed functionality. True ERP requires a complete manufacturing order-to-cash work flow, and it benefits from customer relationship management (CRM), eCommerce, warehouse management systems (WMS), and other capabilities. Unfortunately, many vendors with accounting and limited inventory call themselves ERP. These financial systems will not support the planning and operations functions required for a growing company.

operated a year or two ago when a system was first implemented. If the software doesn't help you pursue new business opportunities, it is holding you back.

You'll want an ERP system that supports the requirements of your own industry, but also one that has product features for other types of manufacturing and other market requirements, with the ability to add these functions seamlessly if and when needed.



Specialization

Of course, specialization matters. You need a system that works the way your business works. That's why there are systems that are designed for electronic assembly, metal fabrication or food and beverage production. They include the specific functions that the target industries demand. But few firms fall strictly within the definition of one specific "industry" – most have parts of their operation that lie outside of the standard limits of a single industry's "normal" practices.

A maker of high-volume consumer goods, for example, may also make small batches or single examples of custom products. A company that makes mechanical equipment may also make and package consumable supplies or accessories that are produced and sold like consumer goods. So, their systems need to support more than just the standard practice of a defined industry. And those practices are likely to change as well, as demand shifts and new kinds of products spin out from existing business.



Adaptable

You'll also want to install a system that can be changed, adapted and even modified without actual programming. The users, with the help of internal resources and perhaps a hand from the supplier's team, should be able to change the appearance and content of individual displays (or groups of displays for, say a department or a function) to better match the way they want to do their daily tasks. They should be able to tweak the actual processes as needed (within limits, to maintain system integrity) for a better fit. Built-in capabilities like document management and flexible dashboards and analytics are also a big help.

Matching business changes

This brings up the issue of scalability – the ability to support large and small businesses equally well. A fast growing business can't afford to stop and replace its ERP system when it needs it most as business expands. Be sure to install a system that can grow with you; one capable of supporting a much larger organization than your current size...just in case. But be aware that system pricing can be full of surprises. Many companies have been blindsided by dramatically higher costs when they just want to add a few more users or another application. A supplier that is a true partner in your success will offer growth friendly pricing alternatives.

Equipping your team

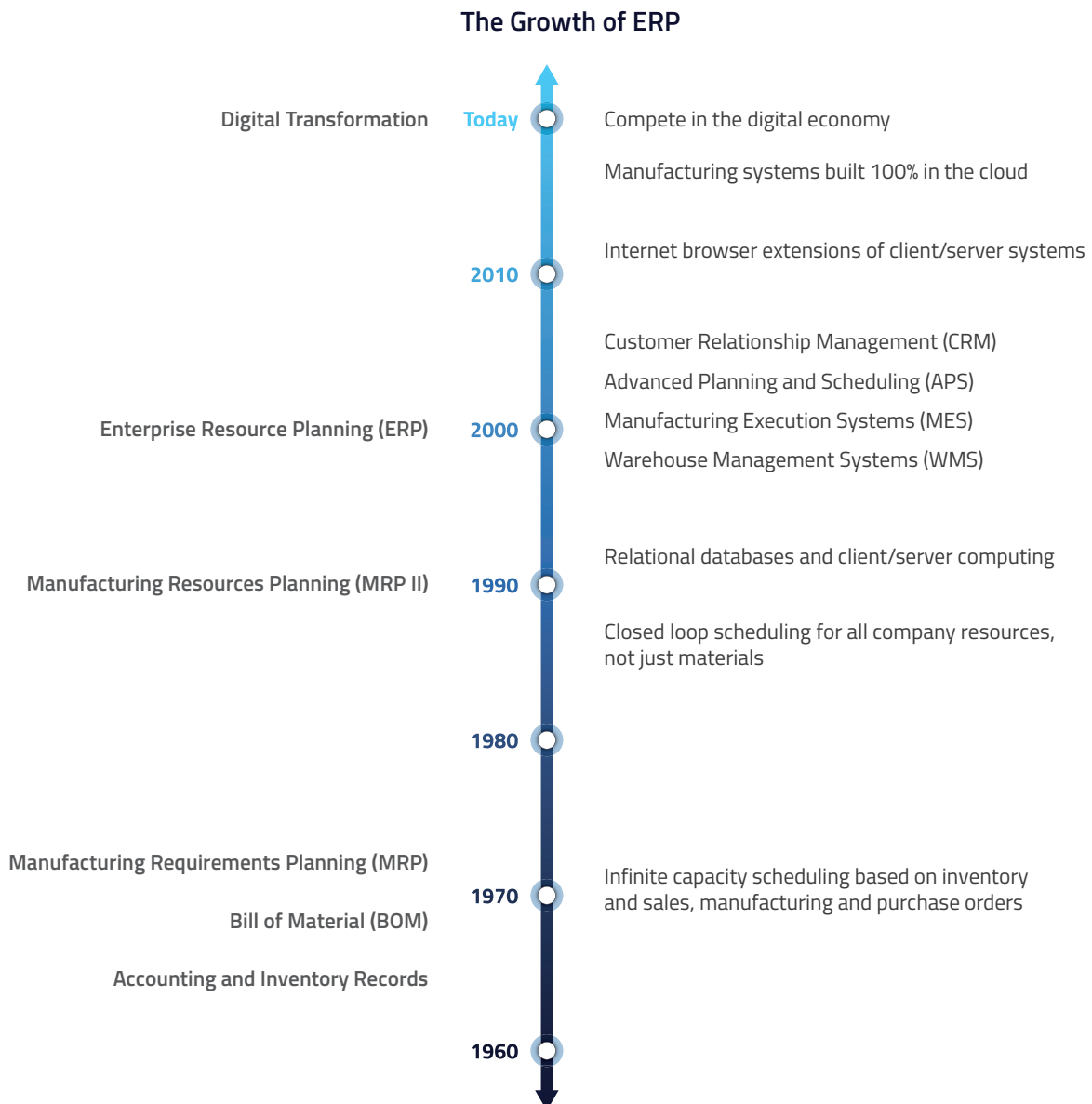
And speaking of supplier-partners, you truly need to think of your ERP developer and implementation team as partners in your success. Be sure that they are financially stable so that they will be there when you need them. Ask current users how well they support them during

implementation, and more importantly, on a continuing basis over the long term.

Does the supplier regularly update and expand the systems as technology evolves and as requirements change? Are local and central resources available to support customer needs for routine requests as well as additions and enhancements? Are the support resources well acquainted with, and experienced in, your type of business and your industry?

Moving forward

As you can see, today's ERP is a huge step forward and more capable than the ERP of the 1990s that existed when the acronym was first coined. No matter what it's called, ERP is continually evolving to provide new capabilities for pursuing business around the globe and around the corner.



Acumatica can help you find the right ERP solution for your business. Get helpful resources at acumatica.com/ERP.

About Acumatica

The Acumatica Enterprise Resource Planning system delivers adaptable cloud and mobile technology with a unique, all-inclusive user licensing model. Acumatica provides a complete real-time view of your business anytime, anywhere, on any device. Through our worldwide network of partners, Acumatica ERP provides a full suite of integrated business management applications, including Financials, Distribution, Project Accounting, and CRM, as well as separate Field Service, Commerce, Manufacturing, and Construction Editions.

Acumatica's recommended pricing structure does not charge per user, but by the resources (hardware, memory, data throughput, etc.) required to operate the system. This lets companies add unlimited users as needed, allowing everyone in the organization access to the system at no additional cost.

Acumatica can be deployed on premises or in the cloud, depending on your business need. Plus, all Acumatica ERP and CRM modules use the same database—that means everyone in your organization has real-time access to a single version of the truth. And you can back up your data at any time.

Acumatica also sells 100% through partners. This allows us to match potential clients with the partner that is best for their location, size, and industry.