

Mobility, Internet of Things and ERP equals the need to invest in business systems

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The enterprise resource planning (ERP) landscape is going through a period of accelerated change as end-user organisations and ERP vendors alike prepare for a world of mobile-first customers and employees, massive data volumes, and intelligent, connected sensors and devices in the workplace.



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Together, these trends mean that organisations across industries are under enormous pressure to embrace innovation and look for opportunities to better leverage business systems for a competitive edge. Many enterprises are seeking alternatives to the monolithic ERP packages of old, looking to replace these legacy systems with newer solutions that are architected for a new world. Here are some of the trends we see transforming the ERP landscape.

Changing customers, employees, and partners

Enterprises need to give customers, employees and business partners access to business applications and data wherever they are. We're seeing a distinct shift in the marketplace from inflexible desktop applications to modular, intuitive apps that people can as easily use on a smartphone as on a traditional computer.

Today's ERP app is designed to make collaboration easy and draws inspiration from consumer mobile apps and social networking tools for its look and feel.

The result is a more responsive, flexible workforce that can respond to problems and opportunities in real-time. Executives can sign off processes from their tablets or check KPIs, while field sales and service staff can better serve customers because they have access to inventory, customer and service level data wherever they are.

Intelligent, connected things

Everyday devices in the home and factory are increasingly equipped with internet-connected sensors that allow them to monitor themselves as well as gather contextual information (temperature or GPS location, for example), and share it with other devices and services. This is called the Internet of Things, where an ecosystem of connected devices can take automated actions without a human being in the middle to make decisions.

For example, sensors in a retail environment could trigger a request for stock when a shelf is becoming bare or a factory could monitor the uptime and condition of its robots and machines, alerting a technician when preventative maintenance is necessary. The benefit is that machines can process data faster than people can, bringing higher levels of efficiency and automation to the business.

In the Internet of Things, the ERP system will have an important role to play in collecting, analysing and processing data from sensors and devices. That means ERP systems need to be more scalable than ever to cope with the reams of big data generated by the Internet of Things.

Data, data everywhere

Mobile access, the Internet of Things, and growth in unstructured data in the business mean that companies need ERP platforms that can feed their strategies for big data analytics. It's becoming increasingly important to have business solutions in place that can help the business react in real-time to business trends - an example is using data to interact with customers in increasingly personalised ways or to rapidly adapt your manufacturing output in response to a sudden change in demand.

Cloud power

Cloud is an important enabler for mobility, the Internet of Things, big data, and other disruptive trends in ERP. It gives organisations flexibility and choice in how they purchase ERP, provides the processing muscle to cope with massive data sets, and provides easy access to applications and data wherever people are.

Against this backdrop, enterprises need to invest in modern business systems that are designed for mobility, the cloud, self-service business intelligence and other current technology trends. Today's world of connected services and mobile apps demands core business and ERP solutions that are leaner, more focused, more modular and more agile. Such solutions are platforms for innovation that help organisations be more competitive, efficient and responsive.

Enterprises should seek out ERP systems that are designed for the web and the mobile world, and make it easy for them to access the quality information they need to better manage their businesses and grow their profits and revenues. Such solutions should be integrated but modular in nature, allowing the business to add features and functionality as it evolves.

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