

MOBILE AND ANALYTICS

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Best Practices for Midmarket Customers Implementing Mobile and Analytics

To remain competitive in 2015, midmarket companies must consider the advantages of adding mobile capabilities and analytics to their existing ERP systems. Investing in mobile and analytics technology can lead to improved cost and operational efficiencies, expanded real-time collaboration with customers, vendors and partners, as well as faster and more personalized customer experiences. With technological advances in mobile, analytics, and business intelligence more accessible to the midmarket, now is the time for organizations to update their ERP systems to support the latest technical applications and capabilities.

While a successful ERP update can yield many benefits, a poorly planned and implemented update

can hurt your company in terms of productivity and delays if you lack current ERP expertise. In many situations, the last time an organization may have updated their current system could have been about ten or fifteen years ago. That's why it's important for companies to not base their expectations of today's ERP updates on their past experiences, and instead turn to industry best practices to guide their planning.

Here are three best practices to consider when updating an ERP system.

Best Practice 1: Issue a Standard Company Mobile Device

One of the most common mistakes organizations make when implementing mobile and analytic capabilities is allowing employees to use their personal devices. Employees will have a

wide range of devices, carriers, and operating systems, which creates an unnecessary security headache that is continually hard to manage. Offering support across the various platforms is not only difficult, but costly, as the IT team is tasked with fixing multiple operating systems instead of just one.

From a security standpoint, organizations don't have control over personal devices to implement the proper safety measures. Many employees have access to confidential company data as well private customer names and addresses on their smartphones, which can be easily hacked without the proper firewalls in place. Therefore, it is best to issue all employees a standard mobile device that can be easily regulated.

Best Practice 2: Use Analytics



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Another common struggle when updating ERP systems to include mobile and analytic capabilities is how to make sense of the overwhelming amount of existing company data. Enter analytics. Properly implementing an analytics strategy allows companies to turn their data into immediately meaningful and actionable information for business analysis purposes. Without leveraging analytics to summarize large amounts of detailed data, companies are left with an enormous amount of detailed data simply displayed in another format, which is no easier to interpret than before.

While detailed data is great for drill-down analysis, it does not provide the necessary insight to make decisions quickly and produce action. Analytics can help companies sort through the clutter of data to identify the most useful

fragments, such as what is selling where, and what is profitable in specific markets.

Best Practice 3: Choose Data Over Your Gut

Too many organizations rely on their “gut” feelings without the proper information to support them. Don’t be afraid to take advantage of analytics here. It’s important for organizations to understand what they want to get out of their analytics, and how they can use analytics in a competitive landscape. Once companies understand and recognize their specific business needs, they’ll be able to use their data to make more informed, smarter business decisions.

A good example of this is Berk Enterprises, a food service disposable’s supply company and VAI customer. Berk needed real-time visibility into sales and inventories to continue to operate at a high volume. Berk

is using analytics data to build management dashboards that give unmatched visibility into operations by customer and by product, which in turn, eliminates guesswork and errors. For example, if Berk sees a customer dropping off in volume, the company can now determine if the problem is inventory-related, usage-related or just a spike in activity, giving Berk better awareness from a purchasing, sales and margin management perspective.

With mobile, analytics, and business intelligence becoming more accessible to the midmarket, companies should take advantage of the benefits they provide to better their operational efficiency and collaboration efforts. While the implementation phases can be challenging, midsize companies can enjoy the immediate benefits of mobile capabilities and analytics by following the best practices above; and they can do so well ahead of the competition.