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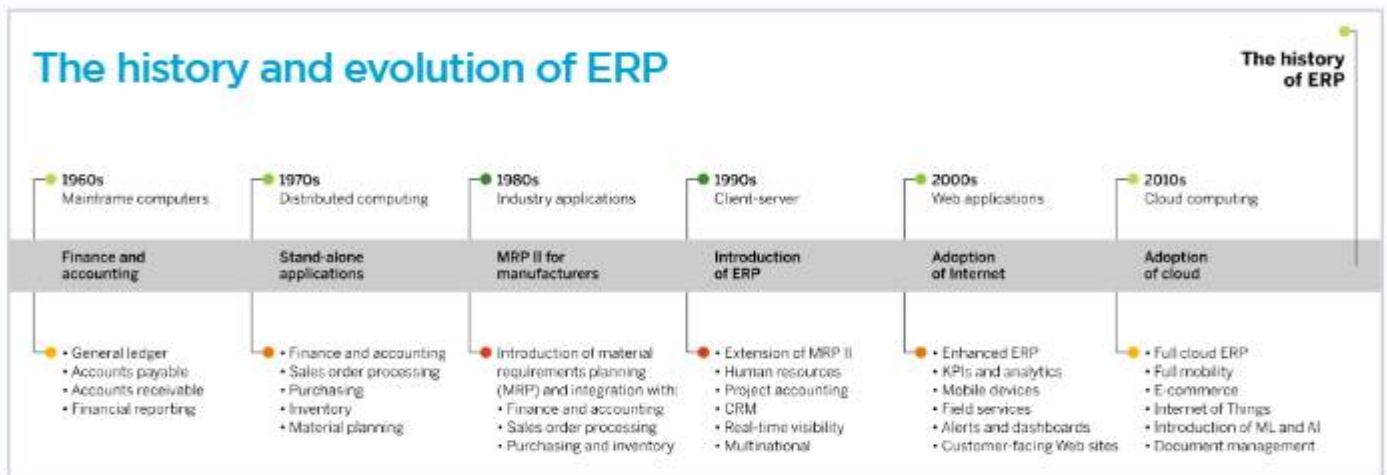


WHY ERP NOW?

How do you know if you are ready for
an ERP system?

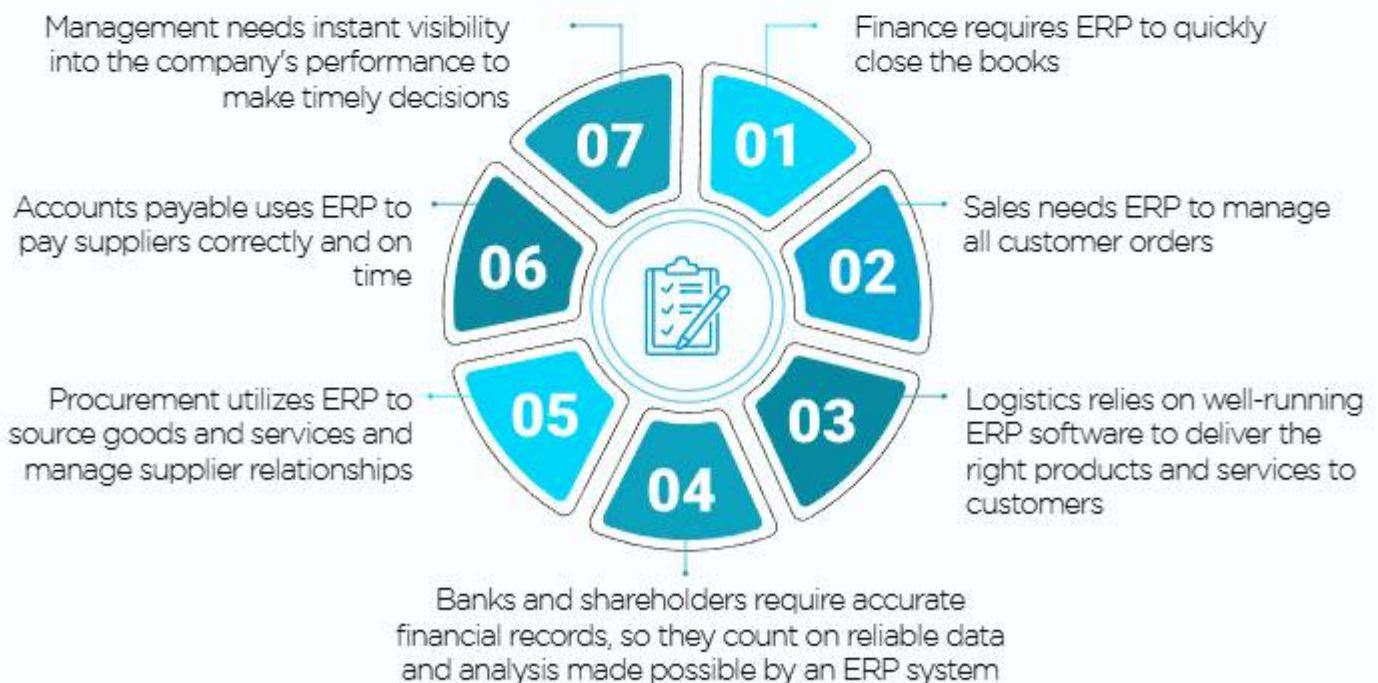
An easy way to understand ERP is to picture a company as a human body. Like a body, it has core processes that are vital to its health and functionality—instead of sleeping and digestion, think supply chain and sales. While many of these processes take place independently, they're still linked by how they impact the body—or the business—as a whole. This also means that issues with one process can and often do affect the rest.

An ERP software system acts as an enterprise's central nervous system, helping efficiently manage all these crucial processes and operations by connecting them together in an integrated system.



Why is enterprise resource planning important?

Most or all of an organization's data should reside in the ERP system to provide a single source of truth across the business. For example:





ERP examples by industry

How organizations rely on their ERP software varies significantly depending on the industry. Nonetheless, businesses in every industry—from automotive to wholesale distribution—need accurate, real-time information and effective business processes to compete and thrive.

Here are just a few examples of industry-specific ERP use cases:

Manufacturers

Discrete, batch, and continuous process manufacturers rely on ERP to meet product quality goals, manage asset utilisation, control overtime costs, and more. Manufacturers also gain end-to-end inventory control by monitoring stock movements, pinpointing top and underperforming products, and managing procurement more efficiently.



Retailers

Retail underwent a significant transformation when brick-and-mortar stores merged with e-commerce and other digital sales channels. Consistent, integrated data is crucial for providing self-service options for identifying, configuring, purchasing, and shipping products. ERP also helps retailers reduce cart abandonments, improve website conversions, and boost average order value.

Wholesalers

Wholesalers, importers, direct store delivery, and 3PL/4PL firms want to reduce distribution costs, increase inventory turns, and shorten order-to-cash time. To achieve these goals, they need integrated inventory management, logistics functionality, and customised automated processes.



Service-centric companies

Professional accounting, tax, engineering, and legal services require powerful, real-time mobile ERP technology to balance service delivery commitments with financial health. The ability to stay on schedule while managing project profitability, resource utilisation, and growth opportunities is key for professional services.

Utilities

Utility companies need to constantly review their capital assets, not only to meet demand for future services but also for the replacement of aging assets. Without ERP, managing these asset investments is a challenging, error-prone process.

ERP also helps solve another critical utility company



issue—forecasting spare parts. Not having the right parts during an outage creates a significant customer service issue. On the other hand, having too many spare parts means excessive costs and out-of-date stock.

How do ERP systems work?

An ERP system consists of integrated module solutions or business applications that share a common database that connects them and lets them talk to each other. Each ERP module typically focuses on one business area, but they work together using the same data to meet the company's needs.

Companies pick and choose the module solution they want—such as financing, logistics, procurement, and HR—and can add and scale as needed. ERP systems can also support industry-specific requirements, either as part of the system's core functionality or through application extensions that integrate with the suite of modules.

While modern ERP systems provide an enormous range of business functionality, they must connect to and synchronise with other applications and data sources to be effective, including CRM and HCM software, e-commerce platforms, industry-specific solutions, and even other ERPs.

This integration gives companies a unified view of information from different systems, which helps increase business process efficiency, improve customer experiences, and facilitate collaboration across teams and business partners.

The flexibility of an ERP system allows it to integrate with a wide range of software products using connectors or customised adaptors, such as application programming interfaces (APIs). Other methods for ERP integration include enterprise service bus (ESB) and modern integration platform-as-a-service (iPaaS).



On-premise ERP

On-premise is the traditional model for deploying ERP software, allowing for the greatest level of control. The software is typically installed on-location in a company's data centre. While total control is certainly a benefit, it also comes with the responsibilities of installation and ongoing maintenance.

Cloud ERP

With cloud ERP, the software resides on a remote, third-party server. It's accessed via the internet as a subscription service (SaaS), with the software provider handling maintenance, updates, and security on the business's behalf. Today, cloud ERP is the most popular ERP deployment method, offering lower upfront costs, greater scalability, faster innovation, and easier integration.



Two-tier ERP

Companies undergoing major operational changes—such as mergers, expansions, or acquisitions—will often opt for a two-tier model. For example, the tier 1 ERP may be an on-premise server at the parent organisation's headquarters, and the tier 2 ERP could be a cloud-based subsidiary system handling local or specialised functions. A two-tier strategy enables companies to start a controlled move to the cloud, migrating specific functions or business units without disrupting operations.



Hybrid ERP

A hybrid model is a type of two-tier ERP system that combines on-premise and cloud-based deployment to give businesses the flexibility to choose the best deployment for each application. Hybrid cloud ERP can be a steppingstone to a cloud-only two-tier model while still accounting for applications that may need to be on-premise to meet industry regulations or security requirements.

Six key benefits of ERP

Higher productivity

Streamline and automate core business processes so people throughout the organisation can do more with fewer resources

Improved agility

Identify and react to new opportunities with efficient operations and ready access to real-time data

Deeper insights

Eliminate information silos, gain a single source of truth, and get fast answers to mission-critical business questions

Simpler IT

Use integrated ERP applications that share a database to simplify IT and give everyone an easier way to work

Accelerated reporting

Fast-track business and financial reporting and easily share results to act on insights and improve performance in real time

Lower risk

Maximise business visibility and control, ensure compliance with regulatory requirements, and predict and prevent risk



How do I know if I'm ready for an ERP system?

Many organizations—especially smaller ones—often start out using simple, standalone tools to manage their business processes, such as QuickBooks or Excel spreadsheets. Adopting an ERP system might feel unnecessary, like an extra complication. However, as a business of any size matures and expands, these management tools may become inefficient and unsustainable, holding back scalability and hindering optimization.

Here are some common signs that a company has outgrown its management tools and is ready for a modern ERP system:



Difficulty accessing critical business data

Can you easily answer important questions about your business, such as revenue per product line or number of returns? If not, segregated systems and a lack of access to metrics and KPIs may be holding you back.

Lack of standardized processes and duplicate data sets

If different departments are all using their own applications and processes to get things done, you're probably spending too much time on duplicate data entry. When information can't flow between systems, reporting takes longer, and errors are more likely, all of which hampers decision-making.



Too much time spent on day-to-day tasks

If managing daily activities like closing the books is taking longer and longer, the culprit may be too many disparate applications. ERP software integrates solutions and data into one system with a common interface, making it easier for business units to communicate and do their jobs effectively.

Runaway business processes

Are there areas where your processes are getting away from you? Maybe it's harder for you to manage inventory, satisfy customers, or keep costs in check. If so, your business processes may need restructuring to accommodate growth or changing priorities—a natural fit for integrating new ERP software.

Too many missed opportunities

If business units spend all their time just keeping the business running, then there's no bandwidth to pursue potential opportunities or innovations. Many ERP systems include intelligent capabilities, like machine learning and predictive analytics, making it easier to identify and capitalize on profitable new ventures.

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