

Next-Gen ERP

Dylan Persaud, Managing Director, Eval-Source

Next-gen ERP products allow organizations to quickly create new processes, reconfigure and tweak existing processes, as well as add additional functionality that they may already have but need to configure.

In an effort to discredit the term “ERP,” even SAP is moving away from the term it is credited with creating. New IDC research shows that SMB organizations do not have the agility to compensate for their quickly-changing business environments (a main ERP problem from the old monolithic suites). In an effort to stem this dilemma, ERP software vendors have become more cognizant of this and have started to adapt to newer technologies and practices, following the lead of the cloud agile cloud vendors.

The next-gen ERP products being created as we speak are addressing these concerns and are being adopted by customers with less interaction with the vendor after the sale. These next-gen trends allow organizations to quickly:

- Create new processes
- Reconfigure and tweak existing processes
- Add additional functionality that they may already have but need to configure (which they can do themselves)

By speaking with our customers lately, one of things they are looking for is the ability for the system is to include agility based on business practices. Known as business agility, this has gained prominence in the last several years. Traditionally, on-premise vendors were slow to react. The SaaS and cloud vendors have forced the on-premise vendors to react faster than previously expected.

There are several approaches to take when evaluating agility in software applications. Mentioned below are a few that you may find useful in your software section when evaluating the business agility capabilities of the vendors.

PaaS (Platform as a Service) allows you to build your ERP by creating a common SOA platform. This also allows you to add applications built on that platform by either the same vendor or several different vendors. Usually integration is a little more difficult, but with vendors using the preset REST API's provided by the platform creators and the corresponding API's created by the other software that wants to be integrated makes it a little simpler to employ. An issue that may become apparent using this approach is the different vendors that support each task or module. Is there a common support practices strategy? Examples of this are Force.com, Amazon, Zoho.com, etc. These all integrate to other software. What you are looking for is the degree of seamless integration and ease of use.

Next-Gen ERP

Published on Industrial Maintenance & Plant Operation (<http://www.impomag.com>)

Another common area of how vendors are attacking business agility is SOA by vendor. This usually consists of a vendor providing the platform and configuring its software as you require upon their platform. The underlying architecture is the more common approach now, as vendors have started to deploy this methodology as well. Most vendors provide you with the modules and functionality you require. As you need more from them to enhance functionality, they “turn on” the rest of what is required. This provides a little easier implementation path and allows the organization a quicker approach to utilize the new functionality when switched on.

A third area for business agility is the new use middleware. Since older ERP systems are difficult to understand and use, middleware is now being deployed as a method to unlock the data within these systems. The use of middleware is also being used to add functionality, such as agility, workflows, and aids in integration. Middleware provides a very fast way for vendors to gain functionality and integrate to existing applications without much structural change to their existing ERP (legacy type) code. This new middleware layer can aggregate data, build workflows, and push the transactions to other systems for further processing. Middleware is making a comeback .It is also not as hard to use as some thought several years back.

These trends cover the business agility portion and capabilities from vendors and offer a few areas companies should investigate further when doing their software evaluation. Chances are one of these trends may align with your corporate IT strategy and should account for a portion of your software selection final decision.

Eval-Source is consulting firm that provides enterprise software selection and strategic consulting services for organizations to achieve success in their IT initiatives. We are the source for your technology solutions. Visit Eval-Source’s blog at www.eval-source.com/blog.html [1] or its website at www.eval-source.com [2] or on Twitter @eval_source.

Source URL (retrieved on 05/04/2015 - 2:00am):

<http://www.impomag.com/blogs/2012/07/next-gen-erp>

Links:

[1] <http://www.eval-source.com/blog.html>

[2] <http://www.eval-source.com/>