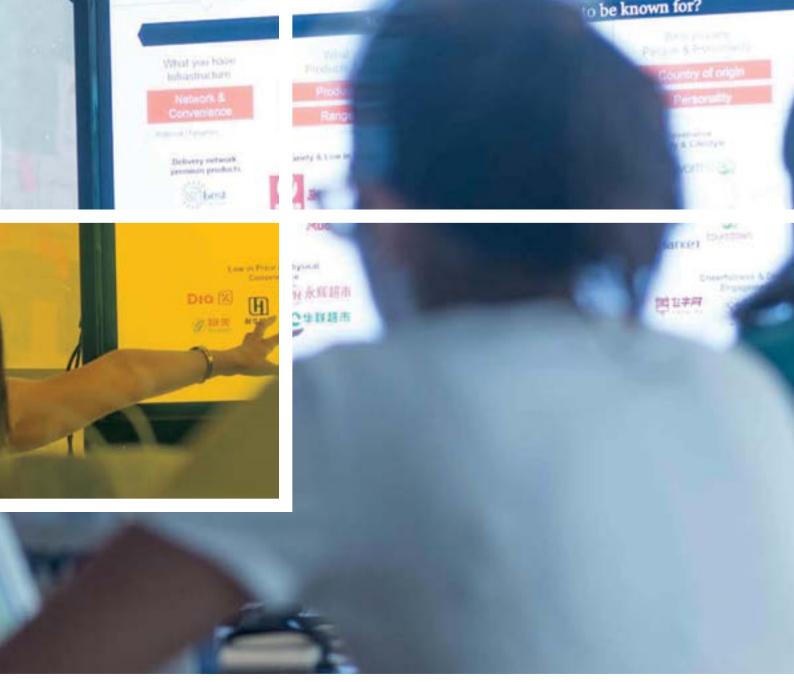




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Editor's Words



s starts go, it's been a good one. The reaction to our first issue has been inspiring and everyone at ERP Today is very grateful for the kind words and encouragement. We

know we have a lot of hard work ahead of us, and we certainly won't be resting on our laurels, but so far so good. Our team is growing, the list of partners we are working with is expanding, and the number of CXOs subscribing has been incredible. Who said print was dead?

A lot of people have asked how is the best way to engage with us? We are still a very small team and although we have established lots of connections already, we rely on our contribu-

tors, advertisers and partners being proactive. If you have a great idea for an article, would like to see your organisation featured, or have a partnership idea, say hello and tell us your story.

We announced our awards initiative at our launch event and the response has been exceptional. We have already secured partnerships with a dozen leading brands and we can barely contain our excitement to announce the guest of honour, compère, and entertainment. The event will be a showcase for purpose-led innovation with a strong emphasis on young talent and customers. The awards will recognise excellence across the three pillars of the economy, the environment and society and will be the only truly independent recognition of merit within the sector.

It's been a busy few months for acquisitions, mergers and partnerships; IBM, Salesforce and Google have all snapped up targets; EQT's acquisition of Acumatica puts them in the same stable as IFS; Oracle and Microsoft have become friends (at least their cloud divisions have); and NTT has merged all its businesses into one giant entity to enhance its position in the enterprise transformation market

There have been many others too and they all have one thing in common; the next generation of the cloud revolution. The first phase, which started almost 20 years ago, and has been in full swing for the last decade, was all about taking the tech we already had and putting it in some sort of cloud. Most of it wasn't, and still isn't, true cloud but the idea was simple enough and we all got on board. Applications, databases, and workloads are run on infrastructure that someone else maintains - the server room was a thing of the past and we all got used to thinking remotely rather than locally.

As we enter the second phase of the cloud era, the hybrid cloud era, we are now thinking about smarter, more secure, and less risky ways to deploy cloud technologies and better ways to derive meaningful insights from the data we capture. I expect to see no let-up in marriages of convenience between cloud

vendors and analytics companies as they race to capture the business of savvy CIOs who don't want all their eggs in one basket and demand more value from their data.





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With a strong focus on purpose-led innovation, the awards will recognise excellence across the three pillars of the 'Economy', the 'Environment' and 'Society', in the following categories:

INDIVIDUAL EXCELLENCE

- CIO of the Year
- · CFO of the Year
- Purpose Leader of the Year
- Sustainability Leader of the Year
- Mentoring Leader of the Year
- Young Professional of the Year

PRODUCT EXCELLENCE

- Finance
- HCM
- Supply Chain
- Experience (CX & EX)
- Data & Analytics
- EPM

CUSTOMER EXCELLEN<u>CE</u>

- Education
- Science and Medicine
- Environment
- Healthcare
- Public Sector
- Third Sector

PROJECT EXCELLENCE T

- DNI
- Sustainability
- Start-up
- Scale-up

EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES

- Cloud hyperscale
- · Cloud integration
- Artificial Intelligence
- Blockchain
- · APIs & Microservices
- RPA
- IoT

Supported by the strongest brands in the industry, this event will recognise companies and individuals who have contributed the most to creating a better, cleaner and fairer world through the innovative use of purpose-led enterprise technology.

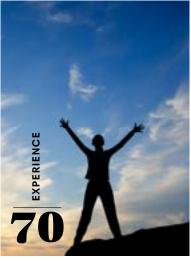


















Articles

11 News, Deals & Wins
Industry news from across the enterprise apps sector

32 ERP Today launch eventReview of our executive luncheon and awards announcement

Cover story, Jens AmailThe future of business is experience

48 ERP platforms matter
Holger Mueller analyses the key vendor platforms

56 Mike Ettling
Unit4 gets a new CEO to add some sizzle

70 Experience and expectation

How to get ahead in the experience economy

76 RIP system integrators
The role of the system integrator is changing fast

82 The changing face of consulting
Digital transformation isn't just disrupting end users

Power to the people

Everything you need to know about digital HR

110 Digital retail
How enterprise technology is transforming the high street

126 EPMPower up your enterprise with performance management tools

132 Advanced supply chain

The art of delivering everything intelligently

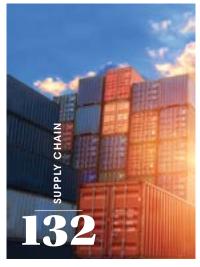
140 SAP S/4HANA review

Deep dive with the SAP partner network on everything S/4

150 BI & Analytics
How to derive meaningful insights from your data

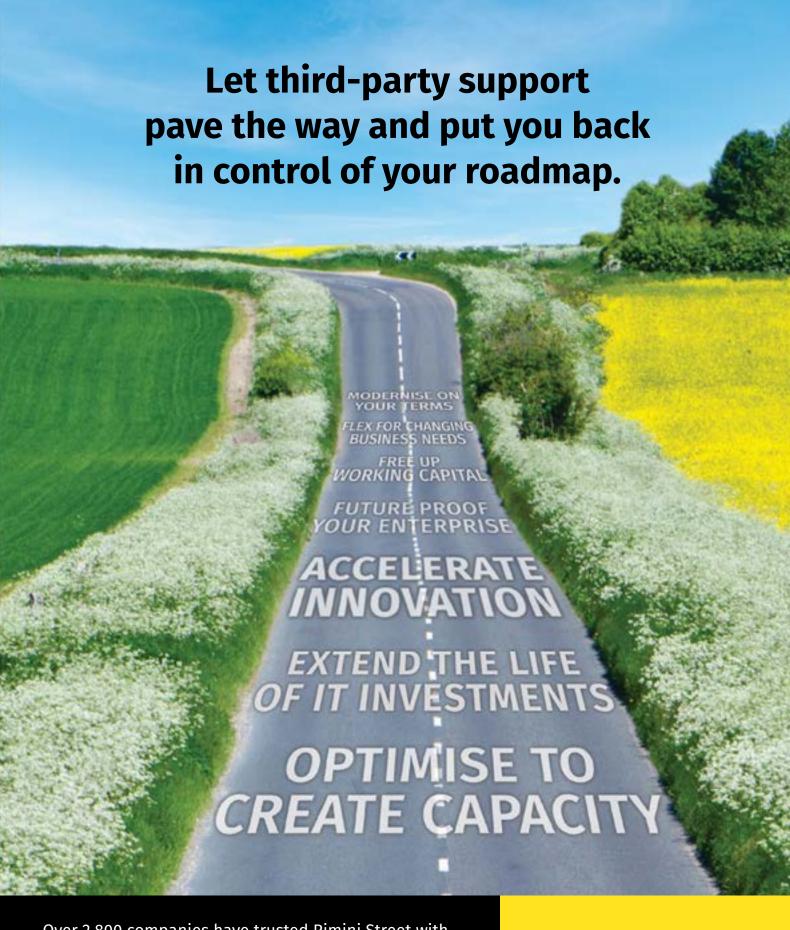
156 ERP Today on the road
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QT partners, the equity house which owns IFS, has acquired Acumatica joining the two ERP vendors together in a marriage, of sorts. All parties have been keen to stress that this is not an acquisition but a 'joining together' of two companies under one umbrella that share a common DNA. IFS is a global leader in field services and asset management, focussed on the services sector and other 'asset-heavy' enterprises. Acumatica operates in similar verticals selling mainly into manufacturing, distribution and SMEs with its easy to use and install SaaS products.

Although the two vendors fish in different ponds in terms of client size, Darren Roos, CEO of IFS, was quick to point out that the tie-up between the two organisations will deliver significant additional value to both sets of customers.

He said: "IFS can learn from Acumatica's ability to develop and deploy ap-

plications with speed and agility. As the SaaS market matures even the largest enterprises, who have historically been accustomed to a slow pace, are now demanding rapid deployments across all new technologies, and Acumatica is world-class at delivering that. Equally, Acumatica will leverage IFS's rich functionality, scale and resources to harden its offering and break new markets across the globe."

The deal was initiated by Roos and the IFS team after exploring options to future-proof the lower end of their customer base. IFS increasingly target the enterprise market and this deal gives IFS a new platform for its smaller customers as well as some interesting channel opportunities – an area that Acumatica is particularly strong in for its size. Originally conceived as an acquisition, both vendors have a stake in each other's businesses, and Roos will sit on the Acumatica board while Jonas Persson from EQT will serve as chairman at both companies.

So why didn't IFS acquire Acumatica to complement its previous acquisition of Work Wave? Acumatica and Work Wave have many synergies; they both operate in the same geographies and are both focussed on the same verticals. However, Roos highlighted other vendor mergers where it hadn't always worked out and he stressed that IFS would not make the same mistakes. "Our revenues are growing at 30 percent and Acumatica's even higher at 50 percent. We don't want to do anything to derail that trajectory and bringing the two companies together now would mean we had to focus on the integration rather than what we both do best - and that is delivering for our customers. It's likely that Acumatica and Work Wave will come together in the future and IFS will be at the centre of a single entity at some point. But for now we are focussed on driving the maximum customer value from the deal and thinking about how to learn from each other rather than pushing for an acquisition."



Accenture appoints Julie Sweet as new CEO

Julie Sweet will be the new CEO of Accenture from September. She is currently the head of Accenture North America where the company generates more than half of its global revenues. Sweet has been at the forefront of Accenture's purpose-led agenda and her appointment to the top job is largely in recognition of the company's prosperity, which in part has been attributed to her thought leadership on matters of ethicise, equality and diversity. David Rowland, interim CEO, said: "Julie is the right person to lead Accenture into the future, given her strong command of our business and proven ability to drive results in our largest markets."

Oracle and **Microsoft** partner-up for cloud interoperability

racle and Microsoft have entered into a partnership to allow cloud interoperability enabling customers to migrate and run mission-critical enterprise workloads across Microsoft Azure and Oracle Cloud. Enterprises can now seamlessly connect Azure services, like analytics and AI to Oracle Cloud services, like Autonomous Database. By enabling customers to run one part of a workload within Azure and another part of the same workload within the Oracle Cloud, the partnership delivers a highly optimised, best-of-both-clouds experience. Taken together, Azure and Oracle Cloud offer customers a onestop shop for all the cloud services and applications they need to run their entire business.

Connecting Azure and Oracle Cloud through network and identity interoperability makes lift-and-improve migrations seamless. This partnership delivers direct, fast and highly reliable network connectivity between two clouds, while continuing to provide firstclass customer service and support that enterprises have come to expect from the two companies. In addition to providing interoperability for customers running Oracle software on Oracle Cloud and Microsoft software on Azure, it enables new and innovative scenarios like running E-Business Suite or JD Edwards on Azure against an Oracle Autonomous Database running on Exadata infrastructure in the Oracle Cloud.

"The Oracle Cloud offers a complete suite of integrated applications for sales, service, marketing, human resources, finance, supply chain and manufacturing, plus highly automated and secure Generation 2 infrastructure featuring the Oracle Autonomous Database," said Don Johnson, executive vice president, Oracle Cloud Infrastructure. "With this partnership, our joint customers can migrate their entire set of existing applications to the cloud without having to rearchitect anything, preserving the large investments they have already made."

SIGNAVIO RAISES \$177 MILLION

Signavio, a provider of business transformation solutions has raised \$177 million to fuel continued international expansion. The transaction was led by Apax Digital, the growth equity team of Apax Partners, with participation from DTCP. Signavio has grown its revenue by more than 70 percent in the last twelve months and the company's software is used by more than one million users including leading companies such as SAP, Deloitte, Liberty Mutual, and Bosch. Gero Decker, CEO and cofounder of Signavio, said: "Ten years ago, we set out on a journey to tackle the timeconsuming practices that limit business productivity. This significant new investment further validates our approach to solve business problems faster and more efficiently, unleashing the power of process through our unique Business Transformation Suite."

SAP LATEST QUARTERLY **FIGURES**

SAP's latest quarterly figures show cloud revenue grew 40 percent year on year to €1.69bn. Software licenses revenue was down 5 percent year on year to €948 million (IFRS), down 5 percent (non-IFRS) and 6 percent (non-IFRS at constant currencies). Cloud and software revenue grew 11 percent year on year to €5.49bn. Total revenue grew 11 percent year on year to €6.63 billion (IFRS), up 11 percent (non-IFRS) and 8 percent (non-IFRS at constant currencies).



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NTT chooses London for global HQ of new business

ippon Telegraph and Telephone Corporation (NTT Corporation) has chosen London for its global HQ of the newly formed NTT Ltd., a global technology services provider that brings together the capabilities of 28 companies, including NTT Communications, Dimension Data and NTT Security into one \$11bn business.

Employing around 40,000 people in offices across 70 countries and regions, the new NTT company will deliver unparalleled capabilities and global scale focused on doing great things for people, businesses and society.

President and CEO for NTT
Corporation, Jun Sawada, said:
"I'm delighted to announce that we launched NTT Ltd. today. Going forward, we will accelerate our execution as one NTT in order to contribute to a smarter and better world through digital transformation. We are also excited to confirm that our global headquarters for NTT Ltd will be in London and that our commitment to the UK remains



extremely strong. We considered several locations as the headquarters for NTT Ltd and made a deliberate decision to choose London. It has many benefits, including a stable economy, wealth of skills and talent, diversity in population and thinking, strong infrastructure, schools and housing for global talent moving to the city. In short, it's a great city to live and work in, and we're excited that we are making it the home for our new business".

UK Prime Minister Theresa May, said: "Britain has a long standing and

proud reputation as a global tech leader and it's fantastic that NTT Ltd. has chosen London for its global headquarters. A key part of our modern Industrial Strategy is to put the UK at the forefront of the tech and data revolution, and they will join many other world-leading companies who call Britain home".

The new company partners with over 10,000 clients around the world including the world's leading organisations in financial services, pharmaceuticals, telecommunications, energy, utilities, manufacturing, automotive, and technology sectors.

Jason Goodall, CEO for NTT Ltd., commented: "I'm extremely proud to lead NTT Ltd. into a new and exciting era. We've created a global technology services provider that

delivers a full breadth of industry-leading products, solutions and managed services that address our clients' business needs. We know technology doesn't stand still. And nor do we. We will continue to move our business forward to ensure we deliver solutions that are both relevant for today and tomorrow. We are excited to be part of one of the world's largest technology and business solutions providers and look forward to partnering with our clients around the world with our full range of capabilities."

BackOffice Associates rebrands to Syniti

BackOffice Associates, a global data solution provider, has rebranded and created a new name for itself as part of its on-going transformation. Founded in 1996, the company has extended its consulting and software business to include data quality, data replication, information governance, and data strategy. It partners with SAP, systems integrators, ISVs, and solution providers to solve business integration data-related needs.

Kevin Campbell, CEO of **Syniti**, said: "When we set out in the late 90s, our name reflected what we did. Since then, the role of data has evolved. What was once a back-office function is now a strategic growth driver. In the digitally transformed world, data has become a powerful asset, if well managed. Data-

empowered companies are re-inventing industries, leveraging data as an asset. That's why we are stepping out of the back office with a new name. Syniti is a blend between synergy and infinity, evoking infinite potential unlocked for clients through mindful synergy between data and business."

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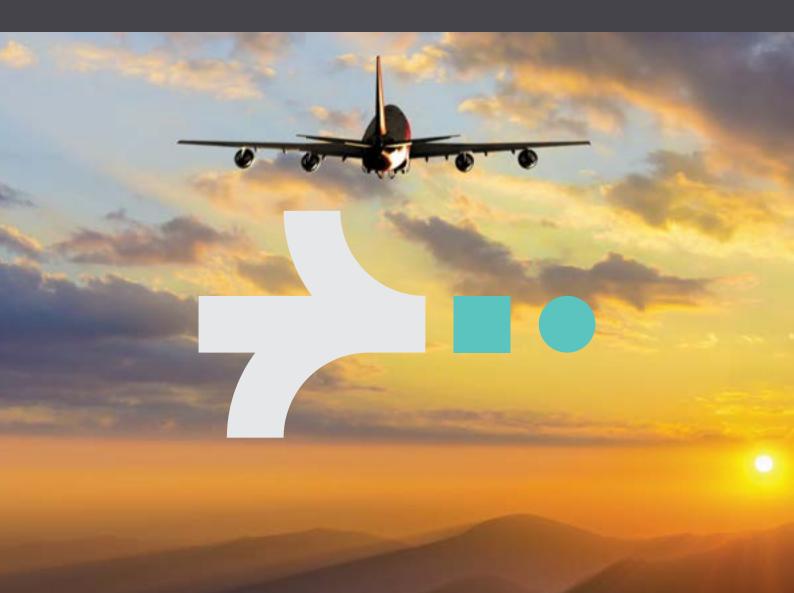
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Rob Snelson, Chief Technology Officer, Travel Counsellors

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Deloitte appoints first female head of consulting in UK

eloitte has appointed Anne-Marie Malley as managing partner for consulting in the UK, taking over from Richard Houston following his election to senior partner and chief executive of Deloitte NSE and UK.

Anne-Marie is the first woman to hold the position at the firm, having led Deloitte's human capital consulting practice since 2011. In this role, she worked with some of the

firm's largest
clients to
implement
business
transformation
projects and
develop strategies for the
future of work.

Commenting on the appointment, Richard Houston, senior partner and chief executive of Deloitte NSE, said: "Anne-Marie has a proven track record of being a bold and visionary leader and is keenly focused



on our clients' success. I know she will bring the same enthusiasm and dedication to her new role and reinforce our leading position in delivering digital transformation programmes for our clients."

Malley added: "Organisations across the

UK are having to navigate significant obstacles and market developments. By tackling these issues head on, organisations can achieve their business objectives, whether that is to remain globally competitive, attract and retain the best people, benefit from emerging technologies or futureproof the skills of their workforce. Consultancy plays a crucial role in helping businesses solve challenges and grasp new opportunities, and I look forward to leading a dynamic team that aims to bring about a positive change throughout business and society."

Namos wins Investec deal to manage global operations

Namos Solutions has won a deal with Investec Asset Management to manage its global operations. Founded in in 1991, Investec Asset Management has grown from emerging market roots into a global asset manager serving an international client base.

Namos is an award-winning Oracle Platinum Partner and will provide Investec Asset Management with a flexible, modern and scalable ERP solution that offers a 360-degree



view of the company's financial health, delivering real-time business information whilst keeping all financial data safe and compliant.

Namos will deliver a Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) financials solution enhanced using Oracle Enterprise Planning and Budgeting Cloud Service (ePBCS), giving Investec Asset Management the ability to quickly adapt to market conditions, whilst also providing visibility on an everevolving market environment. The solution will provide the footprint for further cloud enhancements with additional products to complete business flows and enhance accountability and business process.

Richard Eltham, chief technology officer at Namos, said "We are delighted to be helping Investec Asset Management achieve their digital transformation and business goals, further demonstrating Namos's capacity to deliver complexed cloud solutions to global organisations."

Sage continues its investment in North East

Sage has committed to spend £40m over the next three years as it opens a new office in Newcastle and looks to boost the region with up to 200 new jobs. It plans to move its headquarters to two existing office buildings in the Cobalt Business Park complex, and said it plans to refit the buildings before it moves in. Dr Liam Fox MP, Secretary of State for International Trade, said: "The UK boasts one of the strongest tech industries in Europe, attracting more investment than any other European country and Sage is one of the UK's best tech success stories. This investment shows a firm commitment to the UK and will help create high-quality jobs and drive prosperity into local communities in the North East."

ATOS AND GOOGLE

STRENGTHEN
PARTNERSHIP TO
BENEFIT ORACLE
DB CUSTOMERS

tos has strengthened its strategic partnership with Google Cloud to support Oracle database

customers with two high-performance regional extensions of existing Google Cloud data centres. These two regional extensions will be equipped with Atos' high-performance BullSequana S servers and will enable Oracle database customers to run their workloads efficiently and effectively and benefit from Google Cloud Platform (GCP).

The BullSequana S from Atos is a high-performance, modular and



highly scalable server and can be easily configured to fit specific customer needs and therefore optimise costs for Oracle customers. These regional data centres are certified by Google Cloud to provide direct, secure and high-performance network connectivity, for faster and optimised access to Google Cloud resources.

Thierry Breton, Chairman and CEO of Atos, said: "I'm delighted to expand

our global partnership with Google Cloud, to now bring Oracle database customers the benefits of Google Cloud Platform so that they may harness the power of AI and ML to solve business challenges and innovate."

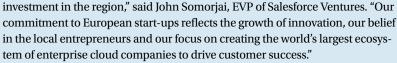
"Running
Oracle database
workloads, while also
taking advantage of
all the features of
the Google Cloud
Platform is a priority for

many customers, so we are delighted to partner with Atos to help them do so," said Thomas Kurian, CEO at Google Cloud. "This solution from Atos means Oracle database customers can take advantage of Google Cloud's performant infrastructure and scale, as well as our strengths in areas like AI and ML, backed by Atos' expertise in business transformation and migration."

Salesforce launches fund to fuel Euro tech start-ups

Salesforce Ventures, the investment arm of Salesforce, has launched a \$125 million Europe Trailblazer Fund to fuel enterprise cloud start-ups. Salesforce Ventures was the most active corporate VC in Europe last year and has invested in companies pioneering digital payments, machine vision, artificial intelligence, blockchain and the API economy.

"Europe is a clear leader in cloud technology and we are excited to deepen our



There was €28bn invested in European and Israeli start-ups last year, representing over a three times growth compared to the level in 2013. Of the overall funding, SaaS companies received more than 35 percent. The global shift to the cloud has created new, cutting-edge technology that has fueled customer success across industries. IDC forecasts that the EMEA public cloud services market will more than double between 2018 and 2023, surpassing \$105.3bn in 2023.



EY appoints two new UK board members

EY has appointed Justine Belton to its UK LLP Board and Tonia Lovell as a UK independent non-executive. Steve Varley, EY's UK chairman said: "Justine and Tonia take on their new roles at a significant time for the profession. They are both hugely experienced and I'm confident that they will bring the challenge and insight needed to further strengthen our UK leadership, governance and how we run our business. I am proud that we are further strengthening the diversity of our senior leadership. Justine's appointment will mean that six of the 10 positions on EY's UK LLP Board will now be held by women."



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IBM buys Red Hat in biggest software acquisition of all time

Red Hat in a deal worth \$34bn making it the biggest software acquisition ever. Red Hat, a leading provider of enterprise open source software solutions, using a community-powered approach to deliver reliable and high-performing Linux, hybrid cloud, container, and Kubernetes technologies.

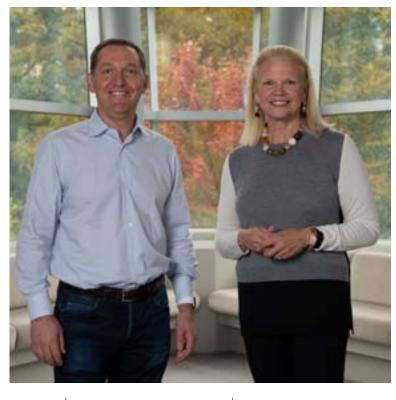
IBM has been struggling with its cloud business and has seen its revenues grow at a much slower rate than many of its competitors. It occupies a single-digit share of the overall cloud market and has been looking for a way to boost its cloud proposition as the clamour for hybrid cloud picks up pace.

\$34bn is a pretty big bet but still not big enough to catapult IBM into the

same league as AWS or Azure which own nearly half of all cloud spend between them. But IBM's plan will not be to compete with AWS, rather to position itself as a hybrid cloud leader with the flex and elasticity to deliver a hybrid cloud platform at the lower

end of the market right up to the largest of enterprise scales. That proposition, through the utilisation of Red Hat's OpenShift platform and Kubernetes, could give IBM a real advantage in the hybrid cloud era.

Ginni Rometty, IBM CEO, said: "Businesses are



starting the next chapter of their digital reinventions, modernising infrastructure and moving missioncritical workloads across private clouds and multiple clouds from multiple vendors. They need open, flexible technology to manage these hybrid multi cloud environments. And they need partners they can trust to manage and secure these systems. IBM and Red Hat are uniquely suited to meet these needs. As the leading hybrid cloud provider, we will help clients forge the technology foundations of their business for decades to come."

Third Stage enters European market

Third Stage Consulting Group, a technology-agnostic digital transformation and ERP consulting firm has expanded its operation into Europe, appointing Stuart Robb as vice president. Robb will be responsible for developing Third Stage's business in the European marketplace following the company's strong growth since its launch in the US a little over a year ago.

Eric Kimberling, founder and CEO of Third Stage, said: "Stuart's appointment is the next significant step for us in our bid to extend our capability internationally. This move strengthens our ability to help businesses across the US and Europe deliver transformational benefit from their digital initiatives."

Robb added: "Third Stage is one of the very few fully independent consulting firms that's entirely focused on delivering digital and ERP business transformations. I'm extremely excited to become part of the Third Stage family and to bring their insight, methods and independent approach to the UK and European market."

SALESFORCE LATEST QUARTERLY FIGURES

Salesforce's latest quarterly figures for Q1 FY2020 show revenues of \$3.74bn, an increase of 24 percent year-on-year, and 26 percent in constant currency. Subscription and support revenues were \$3.50bn, an increase of 24 percent year-on-year. Professional services and other revenues were \$241m, an increase of 23 percent compared to the same period last year.

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Mark Tweddle



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Enterprise Management





GOOGLE ACQUIRES LOOKER TO BOLSTER ANALYTICS CAPABILITIES

oogle has acquired data analytics and business intelligence company, Looker, in a £2.6bn deal. It may seem odd that the world's biggest cruncher of data is spending big on an acquisition in this space, but Google needed to close the gap on its competitors (Azure and AWS) in this space, and Looker brings new capabilities to the Google Cloud Platform (GCP) offering.



Google said, Looker will help Google provide customers with a consistent way to define business metrics across data resources. Consistency makes it easier for anyone to query data while maintaining steady definitions in their calculations, ensuring teams get accurate

results. Looker will also give users a comprehensive analytics solution, data insights, embedded analytics and visualisations. And enterprises that take care of their cloud computing needs via Google Cloud can better leverage the power of analytics, machine learning and AI, according to a press release.

Commenting on the acquisition, Sundar Pichai, CEO at Google, said: "One of the most important ways we advance Google's mission is by helping other businesses realise theirs. We are excited to welcome



Looker to Google Cloud and look forward to working together to help our customers solve some of their biggest challenges."

Looker CEO, Frank Bien said change is never easy but that Google and Looker have been close partners for four years.

"This is not, by any means, the end for Looker, but simply the closing of our first chapter with many more to come," Bien said. "We have only just started together on this mission, and I look forward to continuing to build Looker within Google Cloud."

Mulesoft releases new updates for Anypoint Platform

MuleSoft, the API and application networks firm, has released a major new update of Anypoint Platform with the launch of Anypoint API Community Manager and other advancements across the platform. API

Community Manager combines a full-featured API portal and industry-leading digital experience capabilities, transforming how teams collaborate across the entire lifecycle of an API program. For the first time, companies can easily build connected digital experiences for their API products with API Community Manager, empowering anyone to quickly begin collaborating

and co-creating value with a broader ecosystem of developers, partners and employees.

Mark Dao, chief product officer at MuleSoft, said: "In this digital age, companies must shift their mindset around APIs from a technology to a strategic business approach to create value for their customers and get ahead of the competition. This requires an organisation to

understand its partners and developers and build API products that directly meet their needs. This release represents an important moment in the industry – providing companies with both the product and organisational capabilities to easily build and engage API ecosystems so they can innovate faster and deliver business value together with their partners and developers."

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Unit 4 appoints Lisa Dodman as chief people officer

nit4 has expanded its leadership team with the appointment of Lisa Dodman as chief people officer. Dodman has spent 25 years in HR working globally within generalist roles, and 18 years in the software industry largely in ERP and PLM organisations where talent enablement has always been a key focus.

"It's an exciting time for Unit4, and one where we're more focussed on our approach to talent enablement and employee experience than ever," said Mike Ettling, CEO of Unit4. "Lisa is fully committed to developing people so they are successful and empowered to make their own career choices. She has the drive and passion to take us in a new direction when it comes to putting people's careers in their own hands."

Dodman added: "The experience our people have at work and how they're supported in their career journeys is a subject I'm very passionate about. We're focussed on the way we develop and create opportunities for our people to excel, and I'm very pleased to play a central role in promoting a culture of freedom and ownership that enables an environment of career choices for our people."



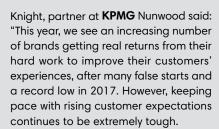
KPMG report highlights growth in customer experience

Now in its tenth year, the Customer Experience Excellence (CEE) analysis reveals the second year of improved performance, with the overall CEE score increasing from 7.13 in 2018, to 7.21 this year. This follows a record low of 7.08 in 2017, when brands very visibly struggled to keep pace with what

customers expected of them.

The latest findings suggest that meeting, managing and surpassing customer expectations, as well as achieving a better understanding of their circumstances, is where the most improvement has been felt by consumers.

Commenting on the overall findings, Tim



"Cross-category leaders are setting new levels of performance, raising the bar for everyone, regardless of sector. This year's research shows that it's those brands with the most motivated employees that are best reacting to change, whilst also generating the best returns for share-holders."



Workday's Q1 FY2020 figures showed total revenues were \$825m, an increase of 33.4 percent from the first quarter of FY2019. Subscription revenue was \$701m, an increase of 34.3 percent from the same period last year. Operating loss was \$123m, or negative 15 percent of revenues, compared to an operating loss of \$71.3m, or negative 11.5 percent of revenues, in the same period last year. Non-GAAP operating income for the first quarter was \$107m, or 13.1 percent of revenues, compared to a non-GAAP operating income of \$80m in the same period last year.





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The University of Edinburgh chooses Oracle for cloud journey

he University of Edinburgh is moving its core finance and human resource functions to **Oracle** Cloud Applications. With Oracle ERP Cloud and Oracle HCM Cloud, the university will deliver smarter ways of working, take advantage of data driven insights and access new innovations in finance and HR.

"At The University of
Edinburgh we aim to make life
simpler and better for everyone across
the university whilst supporting our
academic mission," said Gavin Ian
McLachlan, vice principal and chief
information officer. "We already
have an ambitious programme of
transformation underway and moving
to the cloud will help to underpin and
support our future ways of working
in finance, HR and across all of our
schools and departments."



Debbie Green, vice principal of applications at Oracle, said: "Delivering world class education requires an insatiable curiosity for innovation beyond the lecture theatre. Bringing finance and HR together in the cloud will enhance The University of Edinburgh's business processes, security and overall efficiency, ultimately helping improve the experiences of both students and staff."

NetSuite releases improved localisations

NetSuite has launched a series of new innovations to help organisations across the world achieve the visibility and control needed to navigate change and accelerate growth. The latest innovations within the NetSuite solution include new global financial management capabilities

that streamline currency and trade management and localisations to support customers in some of the world's largest economies, including China, France, Germany, India, Japan, Mexico, Singapore and the UK.

"The pace of change around the world is increasing and organisations need to be agile in order to stay ahead of the competition and meet changing customer expectations," said Evan Goldberg, EVP, Oracle NetSuite. "To help our customers manage increasing demands and reach new heights in every market they operate in, we are committed to making the most complex business processes simple through continued global enhancements to NetSuite."

SERVICENOW AND MICROSOFT TEAM UP

ServiceNow and Microsoft have entered into a broader strategic partnership intended to enhance the integration and optimisation of the companies' products, platform and cloud capabilities. Through this expanded partnership, the two companies will enable enterprise customers in certain highly regulated industries, as well as government customers, to accelerate their digital transformation and drive new levels of insights and innovation. And, for the first time, ServiceNow will house its full SaaS experience on Azure in addition to its own private cloud. "There is an enormous opportunity for customers, including in the public sector, to apply the power of the cloud to become more efficient and responsive," said Satya Nadella, CEO of Microsoft. "Our partnership combines ServiceNow's expertise in digital workflows with Azure, our trusted cloud, so that customers can accelerate their digital transformation, while meeting their security and compliance needs." "Expanding our strategic global relationship with Microsoft enables ServiceNow to more fully leverage and integrate our platform and products with Microsoft's leading enterprise technology and capabilities," said John Donahoe, president and CEO of ServiceNow.





IoD launches ERP focus group

he Institute of Directors (IoD) has launched an ERP/Digital group with the primary focus of driving engagement between IoD members and C-suite digital business leaders. The initiative was launched at the iconic Lord's cricket ground just a few weeks before the Cricket World Cup final where the England team are hot favourites to win the event. The new group will work with its members, and organisations within the ERP eco-system, to drive an agenda that

covers artificial intelligence, cloud technologies, cyber security and broader ERP technology trends.

IoD and ERP Today have teamed up to help drive the ERP agenda within the IoD member network. IoD members can subscribe to **ERP Today** on a dedicated link www.erp.today/IoD where they will receive unique content specifically tailored to IoD members.

A packed Lord's media centre hosted the inaugural meeting where keynotes were delivered by Daryn Edgar, VP at SAP; Guy Lavender, CEO at the MCC; and Joel Singh, Chair at IoD London.

ORACLE LATEST QUARTERLY FIGURES

Oracle's latest quarterly figures for Q4 FY2019 were released at the end of June and highlighted total quarterly revenues of \$11.1bn, up one percent in USD and up four percent in constant currency compared to Q4 last year. Cloud services and license support revenues were \$6.8bn, while combined license revenues were \$2.5bn. Total cloud services, support and license revenues were \$9.3bn, up three percent in USD and six percent in constant currency.

SAP SuccessFactors commits support to 12 start-ups

SAP will be supporting twelve European start-ups as part of its StartupSelect HR initiative, which is designed to highlight the most innovative HR start-ups, facilitate their technical integration, and allow SAP customers to easily access their services.

Two of the 12 start-ups are British brands, **TheJobPost** and Irish brand **Sonru**; both disrupting the HR and recruitment sector and changing the way companies approach recruitment.

In addition to being integrated into SAP SuccessFactors, the start-ups will receive invaluable benefits including attendance at the launch event in Paris. The companies will also have access to a series of webinars helping them maximise the benefits of SAP SuccessFactors, as well as SAP experts helping them to integrate efficiently. Célia Laforêt, head of StartupSelect HR Europe, SAP, said: "We are very proud to welcome this new promotion to SAP. Digital technology, new generations and fresh ways of working are changing the world of human resources. Employees are looking for new experiences and companies are constantly looking for innovations to meet their talent acquisition, development and retention needs. Through this program we go further than integrating these start-ups into our solutions, we open up the field of possibilities for our customers who are looking for new ideas and do not want to be

limited by technology."



Making Tax Digital and digital transformation go hand in hand. Many future-focused organisations are already using these new compliance changes as an opportunity to tidy up their back office and make their processes more productive.

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EXECUTIVE LUNCHEON

The ERP Today official launch event was held in the magnificent surroundings of One Great George Street on 4th June. 90 leading professionals from the biz apps community joined the ERP Today team to celebrate the launch of our publication and to listen to Dr Zara Nanu deliver a thought provoking keynote on the topic of equality, diversity and gender bias.

he **ERP Today** event wasn't the only game in town that day; President Trump arrived in Westminster with 1,000 secret service staff and half of the Met police and almost scuppered our plans. Our loyal readers and contributors had to battle through crowds of protestors and several police security checks but nothing could stop them getting to their free lunch, and thankfully everyone on the attendee list, apart from two



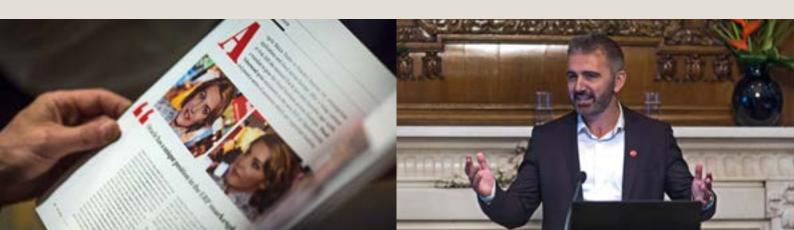
people, made it to their seats in time.

Leadership from every major ERP vendor were in attendance along with a host of senior figures from global transformation consultancies. The food was excellent, the conversations were engaging, and the feedback from all has been very encouraging.

Paul Esherwood, editor of ERP Today, welcomed the guests with a rousing speech extolling the virtues of print media in a world where digital and online media consumption has reached saturation point. Esherwood relayed some of the feedback we have received from hundreds of readers who described ERP Today as a breath of fresh air; a publishing triumph; and a very welcome addition to the ERP sector. Esherwood talked about 'experience' – the key differentiator between online publishing and print media – and asked the audience to think about the feeling they had when they

first saw the publication. "That's the same feeling 10,000 CIOs and CFOs had when they first saw ERP Today, and that's very difficult to replicate online, no matter how strong the content is. That is the essence of experience", he said.

After lunch, Esherwood announced the launch of the ERP Today Awards initiative. A bold and ambition event that will recognise companies and individuals who have contributed the most to





creating a better, cleaner and fairer world through the innovative use of technology. The awards event will take place in October 2020 at the Brewery, London, and will be attended by 1000 people from across the ERP and enterprise apps space.

The event is being promoted under the strapline 'the power of purpose' and will focus on excellence across three pillars; the Economy, the Environment, and Society. There

will also be particular emphasis on encouraging young professionals to share the experience. Esherwood explained that bringing the next generation of business leaders in to an event like this was crucial to its success and would ensure they understood why technology matters and what's possible when we all work together with a purpose.

Esherwood said: "There's a very good reason for insisting that young

professionals are involved. The world is changing. Not just in terms of our capabilities, but in terms of what is acceptable and right. We've all been asleep at the wheel for a long time – you only have to look outside and see the crowds waiting to greet the most powerful human in the world and realise that's what you get when you don't pay attention to what you're doing. Everyone in this room works for, or has worked





for, an organisation that has profited during a time that we have lost focus on what matters in the world. For 70 years, we have collectively put our efforts into making things bigger and more powerful while consuming the resources of the world and building a legacy of pollution, inequality and elitism. The next generation will not tolerate it. Since the invention of the silicon chip, 99 percent of the effort has been towards bigger, faster

and more. Today, the smart money in on better, cleaner and fairer."

The initiative has already captured the imagination of many of the world's leading technology business and over half of the partner and sponsor opportunities have already been snapped up. Take a look at our event promotion on pages 4 and 5 to see who we are already working with.

The inaugural ERP Today Awards will be held at The Brewery, London,

on 22nd October 2020. We will announce our judging panel, awards categories and provide further information on the nomination process in the next issue of ERP Today.

If you would like to know more about the event or enquire about partnering with us please email awards@erp.today



The awards
event will take
place on 22nd
October
2020 at the
The Brewery,
London

JENS AMAIL

The Future of business is

BY PAUL ESHERWOOD

In his first media interview since taking the helm of the UK & Ireland operation, Jens Amail spoke exclusively to ERP Today about life at SAP, its purpose-led mission to create a better world, and what it's like being a German running a business in the UK.

AP is a global technology powerhouse with 425,000 customers across the world and revenues of \$30bn. It provides customers with a range of software and cloud solutions and is at the forefront of the experience revolution. Last year it acquired Qualtrics in an \$8bn deal which Bill McDermott, CEO, said was "the most important acquisition SAP has ever made". Not only does SAP lead the way in experience management for its customers, it too has reinvented itself through the software and ideals that it sells. SAP is a company on a mission; it wants to sell more and drive shareholder value, but also to do more for the wider economy, society and environment. Three quarters of global GDP touches an SAP system in one form or another and this gives the company an unprecedented oppor-

tunity to influence the purchasing habits of enterprises around the world. Its mission statement to be the 'best run' trickles down to its customers, partners and Ariba eco-system, and is helping to drive a new purpose agenda.

I've interviewed a lot of people over the years; internet millionaires, celebrities, business icons and plenty of politicians. Few have been more surprising than my sit down with Jens Amail, the UK&I leader at SAP. On paper this had none of the ingredients to make a great interview, less so an interesting story. A German tech executive talking about a German tech company....I can feel readers falling asleep already. But hold on, Jens Amail is not what it says on the tin. He is funny, light hearted, patient and totally relaxed as we spend two hours discussing everything from tennis to artificial intelligence and Britpop culture.



Amail joined SAP in 2008 and has held senior positions in locations including China, Germany and the US. He lives in London with his wife, four children, a Chinese dog and an English cat and leads an organisation that is not just disrupting industries and enterprises with its technology, but one that has a refreshed focus on purpose and doing good – with real actions to back it up (rather than lip-service to satisfy market trends). SAP has bet big on experience having invested heavily in the acquisition of Qualtrics and is positioning itself as the leader in the race for supremacy in the experience economy. It is also heavily involved with a range of initiatives that

are focussed on creating a better, cleaner and fairer world such as WRAP UK, the plastics initiative which tackles single-use plastics, and it works closely with organisations like the Prince's Trust to drive grass-roots change.

I start the interview by asking Amail about his heritage and how it impacts his role here in the UK. His answers are surprising; not least when I learn that he has always been a supporter of the English national football team – much to the annoyance of his father.

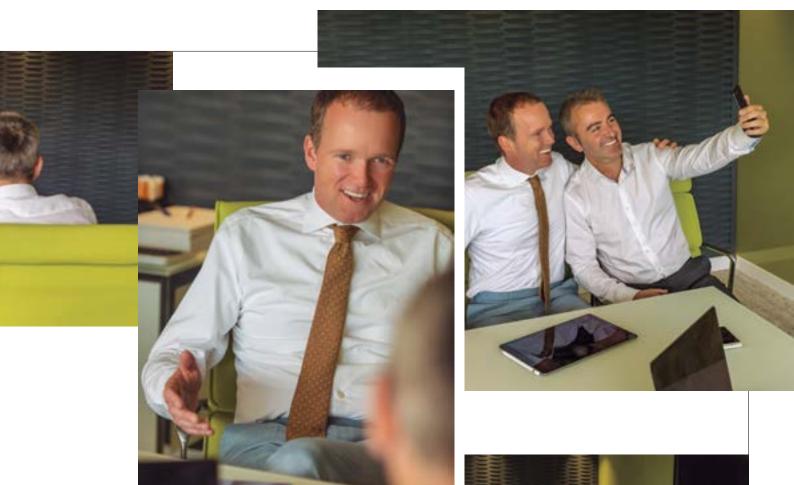
"I'm always respectful of the fact that I am a guest in this country. I am not British and don't own a British passport. But I have always felt like this is home. As a boy I grew up supporting the Three Lions and was fascinated with British culture. I've worked around the world for SAP but every location always felt temporary until I came to the UK. When my wife and I landed at Heathrow it felt like we were home and I am living out a boyhood dream of being part of British culture. I always thought life was more colourful in the UK and if I could pick any country to live in forever it would be here."

I can well imagine the difficult conversations in the Amail household in Mannheim regarding his football allegiances, so convincing his customers to move to S/4 should be easy compared with selling the idea of supporting England to his family.

Amail is clearly a man who is comfortable in his own skin and talks openly and enthusiastically about his passions; tennis, music and his family. An avid tennis player, coached as a child by none other than Steffi Graf's father, he still plays regularly and claims to have a flat forehand that is reminiscent of the seven-time Wimbledon champion. He also cites one of his tennis heroes



"As a boy I grew up supporting the Three Lions and was fascinated with British culture. I've worked around the world for SAP but every location always felt temporary until I came to the UK"



- Boris Becker, when talking about getting accustomed to life in the UK and how a sense of humour helps to break down stereotypes.

"When I started my journey here I always remembered something that Boris Becker said when he was asked if he was aware that he was the most popular German in the UK. His answer was that he didn't feel like there was very much competition for that accolade and it was a great way to bring some humour to the topic."

The list of great German humourists may be as short as the list of great English lovers but Amail's sense of fun and adventure is refreshingly genuine for someone in his elevated position. The conversation turns to music, and again, Amail is full of surprises; he is a serious music fan and says he was hooked on the UK music scene from the moment he heard The Beatles. He explains how he personally hand picked all of the music for SAP's InnovationX event and walked out on stage to Bowie and Changes ahead of his keynote address.

"Everything started from The Beatles but I was really into the Manchester scene in the 90s and loved listening to Oasis, The Stone Roses and The Happy Mondays. However, I'm not what we would call back in Germany 'a sleeper' (someone whose tastes don't evolve as you get older). Today I still love those bands but I also listen to Sleaford Mods, The 1975 and King Krule." Who would have thought it....?

Driving culture and values in the UK

You can't manufacture culture. You either have it or you don't. In a world where buyers and employees are as fickle as they are today, SAP leans on its reputation as a company with a strong purpose and a clear focus on innovation to attract top talent deliver value for its customers.

Amail said: "SAP has a very strong culture and a clear identity. We are totally customer focussed – I know everyone says that but at SAP we really mean it. We all want to do what's right for the customer. If you look at the first 20 ac-

counts SAP had, they are all still SAP customers today, apart from one that unfortunately went out of business. We define our success by the success of our customers. We only win when they win."

However, one of the key tasks for Amail was to instil those values and culture from the SAP DNA into the UK business. Globally, SAP has always scored well for employee feedback ranking well on Glassdoor and other similar sites. However, the UK lagged behind the rest of the business both in terms of employee engagement and customer satisfaction.

Many of SAP's customers and partners that operated in global markets commented that SAP in the UK felt disjointed from the rest of the business and addressing those reputational issues was the first task Amail took action on.

"We were always a little bit different here in the UK. I spoke with lots of CIOs and CFOs in my first weeks and months and many of them, who also had an international background and traded with SAP globally, said they felt like they were dealing with a different company in the UK. My charter was to re-establish trust and stability throughout the partner network and with our customers. My job is to bring the best of SAP in terms of its innovation agenda, its customer focus, and bringing the best people to the UK to lead on those principles. If you look at what we have achieved in the first 18 months you will see that we have gone from being ranked 47th for employee satisfaction to now being a top 10 best place to work."

"I'm a firm believer that the more you talk about teamwork and collaboration the less you actually do it. I believe that the only way to drive these things is to lead by example. We don't have private offices here and I sit

with the rest of the

team in an open plan environment. I meet customers with the account executives or presales team and don't just turn up to sign the contract. I make a point of going for lunch every day with a different person in the SAP team. One day that might be a new recruit, a sales person, one of the engineers or someone from marketing."



"If you look at what we have achieved in the first 18 months you will see that we have gone from being ranked 47th for employee satisfaction to now being a top 10 best place to work"

SAP's big bet on experience

Investing \$8bn in the acquisition of Qualtrics, with the firm belief that taking the high ground in experience management will keep the SAP brand ahead of its competition, is a confident bet. Although full scale technical integration between Qualtrics and the C/4HANA suite is currently in progress, the financial performance of Qualtrics is already being reported alongside other LOBs within the SAP portfolio and is very much part of the enhanced experience offering.

SAP has the deepest reach into operational data of all the tech vendors through its large customer base and Ariba platform. This huge data set coupled with the ability to provide real experiential insights will connect dots for enterprises that were previously unknown quantities. Historically, enterprises knew what was being bought, what was making money and who was performing. But there was very little appreciation into the 'why' of it all. Or, moreover, the 'why not?' Experiential data unlocks new insights into the thoughts and feelings behind buying habits and employee behaviour closing a loop in the commerce of all enterprises, that until now, had never been fully mastered. Understanding why a customer bought or did not buy is a very powerful tool. Equally, learning what motivates an employee to do well, what drives them to succeed or what caused them to leave is invaluable to organisations who rely on attracting and retaining top talent.

Ryan Smith, founder of Qualtrics, said: "If a company ignores the experience economy, it can expect to plummet as an organisation. The rise of technology has resulted in a customer base that expects more out of its services and punishes companies that don't follow through with a personalised experience"

Bill McDermott said shortly after the acquisition that Qualtrics would fill the gap in the SAP offering and stated that experience was now the organising principle of the global economy. He said: "Every CEO I meet is trying to solve the experience gap - it's the difference between what people expect and what they see. To deliver an experience, SAP is already the richest source of O-data, but we didn't have X-data. This is what people want."

And Amail was equally endorsing of the Qualtrics proposition and said: "I believe Qualtrics is the most exciting acquisition we have ever made. When I joined SAP in 2008 we were ba-

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JENS AMAIL

sically a one product company. We had just acquired Business Objects and one of my first conversations was about how to integrate the two businesses. Since then we have acquired SuccessFactors, Concur, Ariba and Fieldglass so we know what it takes to successfully bring other organisations into the SAP family. Qualtrics opens up a new category of software for us. We elevated ourselves through the other acquisitions with best in class products for supply chain, expenses and workforce management, and now we have an opportunity to take our offering to the next level and provide enterprises with the data they need to understand their business better. With Qualtrics we are joining together two companies with very similar cultures and ideas. I've met with Ryan and Jared (the two founding brothers) and we immediately had a meeting of minds on how Qualtrics and SAP would work together. Just after the acquisition was announced we were due to hold our annual senior leadership meeting, about 200 execs in total, and Bill wanted us to hold the meeting in Utah where Qualtrics is based. It was a great idea and really demonstrated our commitment to bringing Qualtrics into the SAP portfolio as a partnership.

"I like the acquisition for many reasons because I think it's a gamechanger for what we can do for our clients. Everybody is paying lip-service to the topic of experience management. Everybody says it's important - 80 percent of CEOs say that they deliver superior customer experience but when you ask the customers only eight percent agree. That's what we call the experience gap. Qualtrics can help narrow that gap and provide new insights into customer behaviour and employee engagement."

Purpose and the Millennial's manifesto

Head of purpose is not a job title you would have heard of ten years ago. Companies of all sizes had one raison d'etre; make more money and drive shareholder value. However, the idea of having a higher purpose in business has taken hold and while not all supposedly purposeful activity has much substance behind it, SAP's narrative (and action) on the subject is compelling.

It was noticeable at the SAP InnovationX event back in March that the language and emphasis had changed. The look and feel of the event was markedly different to a typical software vendor's showcase. But it wasn't the venue and décor that made it feel different, rather, it was what was being said. Amail's keynote opening address didn't talk about cloud revenues, new product launches or customer wins. It talked about SAP's responsibility as a global technology company and what it was trying to do to make the world a better place. There was no glitz or glamour. No selling at all. It was a statement of intent about a higher purpose and set out an agenda that was refreshingly brilliant.

"I want to be able to tell them about the work we are doing with The Prince's Trust, how we are tackling plastic pollution and how our SAP network is helping to solve some of the hardest problems in society"

Of course, SAP isn't turning itself into a charity and it knows that having a strong purpose-led agenda is good for business. Not just in the customers that it can engage with who share similar outlooks but also from a talent point of view. Whether you choose to call them Gen Y, Gen Z or simply young professionals, the fact remains that a lot of people born after 1980 are now the sharpest minds in the brave new world of enterprise apps, artificial intelligence and blockchain. And they want to work for an organisation that has less focus on ruling the world and more focus on making it a better place.

Stephen Jamieson – our contributing editor for innovation – and head of sustainable business innovation at SAP wrote in our last issue that by 2025 Millennials will make up 75 percent of the world's working population. Millennials want change and are committed to doing something about it. The Millennial manifesto is different to the one their parents lived by and they will put purpose above profit and seek out a business that does good.

SAP works with 92 percent of Forbes' Global 2000 and its technology touches three quarters of the world's supply chain. Its Ariba network connects 3.6 million businesses and transacts more than \$2.3tn of commerce where it encourages sustainable sourcing and procurement. That's a huge lever on the global economy and SAP wants to 'move the needle' in a direction that has a positive impact on the economy, the environment and society at large.

Amail said: "Every company wants to do more in the world but at SAP we really mean it. We are the operating system of the world. That's great for us but it also gives SAP an opportunity and a responsibility to do more. We work very closely with social enterprises – some of that is simple things like giving our employees days off for volunteering or working with the Ronald McDonald foundation. But the real lever SAP has is different. If you look at our Ariba network where we have transaction value of \$2.3tn - we can now help them to make an educated decision to work with social enterprises – if just one percent change

I ask Amail where the momentum for SAP's purpose-led initiatives comes from and question whether it's a great marketing plan or if the sentiment is rooted in a deeper belief that SAP, and other tech companies, should take more responsibility for shaping the world around us.

their buying habits as a result of our efforts, that's \$23bn that could go to social enterprises."

Amail cites the founders and their principles as being key drivers but also recognises the role that the current CEO plays in keeping the SAP agenda focussed on a higher purpose. He said: "It does not hurt when the boss supports it and Bill stands behind our purpose-led agenda. But I believe it's really part of our core DNA. We are now 47 years old and we still have a very strong connection to our founders and if you look at the work they are doing now it's no surprise that SAP has continued with these guiding principles.

"From a personal point of view, when I go home I don't want to tell my children about a deal that we sold; I want to be able to tell them about the work we are doing with The Prince's Trust, how we are tackling plastic pollution, and how our SAP network is helping to solve some of the hardest problems in society."

S/4 and the end of life for ECC

The hottest topic in the SAP world is the perceived end of life to ECC (its ERP product) and the adoption, or lack of, S/4HANA, the replacement stack of applications which can be deployed on-premise or in the cloud. SAP announced in 2014 that it would effectively bring the curtain down on ECC in 2025 in the hope that a clear roadmap would drive new sales of S/4. However, the announcement on ECC gave a slightly muddled message to customers and many felt that they were being given an ultimatum by the vendor to buy the new product, or else. You can read a full review of the S/4 story starting on page 140 in this issue so I won't get into the detail here. However, it is worth noting that while SAP does want its installed cus-



tomer base off ECC and onto S/4, it didn't specifically say that it would kill off ECC at a fixed point. Amail concedes that the messaging could have been handled better but stresses that all its customers can trust SAP to find the right solution to help migrate to the new platform.

He said: "I look at this from a glass half full perspective. We didn't say we will stop maintenance 11 years from now. We announced that we would extend maintenance until 2025. However, we know that some customers and partners are concerned about this and we have to take it seriously. First and foremost, we need to work with our partners and customers to demonstrate the value of S/4. Big British brands like Dixons Carphone and Dyson made the decision to invest in S/4 because they are convinced of the value and we know that many other customers will also follow suit. How-



ever, I'm not a big believer in forcing customers to do anything. We tried it before, it didn't work, and we aren't going to make the same mistake again. I am sure that we will find a way to do the right thing for every one of our customers."

All set for change but some challenges remain

SAP and Amail have some challenges. But don't we all. In his first 18 months, Amail has made big in-roads into the structural and reputational issues that SAP faced in the UK, and the company has been revitalised through a range of measures to improve employee engagement, satisfaction and performance. The introduction of Qualtrics to the C/4HANA suite adds a new dimension to

enterprise insights and joins dots for CHROs, CFOs and CIOs in ways that until now were impossible. Its lead on purpose and innovation sets it apart from the other vendors who are still assessing the value and opportunity in this space and deciding where and how to position themselves – SAP is already there.

SAP's biggest challenge is S/4 and converting the product into a true cloud proposition. SAP has a very strong partner network backed by some of the biggest names in the business and they are all working extremely hard to turn S/4 into the product it was always designed to be. It will be interesting to see how many of the accelerator platforms are able to drive new sales of S/4 and whether SAP itself can reframe the proposition so that its ECC customer base 'feels' better about the journey towards S/4 and the intelligent enterprise.

COMMERCIAL EVENTS MANAGER

ERP TODAY is hosting more than 20 events during 2019 ranging from small round table discussions through to 150 attendee lunches. And the big one comes later in 2020 when we will be hosting the inaugural ERP Today awards.

We work with our partners and sponsors to develop innovative event-based platforms that deliver credible editorial value for our printed product and allow our partners to get close to a carefully selected audience.

As the commercial events manager you will have previous experience organising and managing events in a professional services or technology environment and be able to manage complex logistics and commercial considerations.

Your remit will be to work closely with our partners to ensure every last detail of each event is organised to a tee. This will include:

- Ensure the attendee experience is exceptional
- Provide first-class liaison with our sponsors and partners
- Produce engaging marketing collateral, pre and post event
- Work closely with the editorial team to align event goals with our editorial values
- Manage on-day activities including speakers, exhibitors and AV etc

MEDIA SALES LEAD

ERP TODAY is the new kid on the block but that doesn't mean our sales process is all cold calls and rejection.

Our biggest task at the moment is fulfilling the commercial opportunities that we have so we are looking for an experienced sales lead to join our team and capitalise on the amazing start we have made.

Everything that we do centres around our print product - the only publication dedicated to ERP in the world.

We have very bold ambitions to launch our European edition in 2020, with a global version planned soon after, and we are looking to bring an experience media sales or sponsorship executive into our team to help realise that ambition.

To be considered for this role you will have considerable media sales experience and be equally comfortable working with buying agencies as well as direct clients.

This is a remote role with a lot of flexibility so whatever your circumstances, if you know how to sell print, we want to hear from you.

ALLIANCES & ENGAGEMENT MANAGER

EXPERIENCE is a big theme for our clients – and it is for us too. We work with the world's largest technology companies and leading global transformation partners and it is vital that our customers have a warm and glowing feeling whenever they work with us.

To be considered for this role you will live and breathe customer success. You won't just go the extra mile, you will walk to the ends of the earth to ensure that all our partners love working with us. However, you will also be a realist and manage expectations within the bounds of what is possible to deliver. You will report directly to the MD and provide feedback and offer advice and guidance where necessary, to fine tune engagement and experience across the printed product and events platforms.

You will certainly have a strong marketing background, preferably in print, advertising or events and you will be comfortable working with leadership as well as marketing and PR teams with one goal – ensure the experience of working with ERP Today is second to none.

GROWING CONTRIBUTION OF THE PROPERTY OF THE PR

ERP TODAY IS A SMALL AND AMBITIOUS COMPANY WITH ONE PURPOSE - TO CHAMPION ENTERPRISE APPLICATIONS AND ASSOCIATED TECHNOLOGIES.

You are reading our second issue – there will be one more UK-focused issue in 2019 and then we will be publishing across Europe (either as one happy European family or as a Europe, UK&I edition).

To be considered for any of our roles you will need all of the following attributes:

- Relentless desire to exceed our customers' expectations
- A belief that technology can improve lives and create a better world
- Ability to self-manage and work autonomously
- Always do your best

In addition, you will have a good understanding of enterprise technology and probably come from a sales or marketing background. However, we are an entrepreneurial business and are open to discussing our opportunities with anyone who thinks they can make a difference. All situations considered including flexible arrangements to accommodate other commitments.



Our recruitment process starts with a call so if you are interested in working with us or would like to find out more,

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| ERP PLATFORMS |

It used to be that functionality was all and everything for ERP selection, but this has fundamentally changed as platforms are the base that powers successful enterprises in the 21st century.

It's 2019 and ERP platforms matter

BY HOLGER MUELLER

t used to be that functionality was all and everything for ERP selection, but this has fundamentally changed as platforms are the base that powers successful enterprises in the 21st century. Previously, in the era of finite computing – when enterprises had to buy and operate the hardware to run their ERP systems, platforms were largely exchangeable. Often the same machines would run different ERP suites, the hardware cost being the lowest cost of the top five costs of an ERP project.

Enter the era of infinite computing, and suddenly platforms are everything. The wrong platform may put an enterprise on the backfoot in its markets because it may not be cost effective, it may not be statutory compliant, it may not enable modern user experiences (UX), it may not support needed artificial intelligence (AI) / machine learning (ML) practices, it may not connect with the next generation applications that an enterprise may be building in house, and so on.



So let's take a look at ERP platform riteria:

• Elasticity. The elasticity of compute resources (compute, networking and storage) is the defining characteristic of 21st century IT that is powered by the cloud. Compute will gracefully scale up and down as an enterprise uses their ERP systems. Enterprises will only have to pay for what they use transforming the CAPEX of the era of finite computing with the OPEX of the era of infinite computing.

• **Compliance.** Platforms need to be compliant with legislative, statu-

tory and privacy laws, rules and best practices. Operating software opens up enterprises from a liability perspective and these risks need to be addressed by the selected ERP platform. These are not only the traditional security standards, but also the fast-evolving privacy regulation in regards to consumer / customer data (access) and data storage locations.

• Innovation Speed. Using cloud-based platforms means that higher innovation speeds are

| ERP PLATFORMS |

possible, and necessary. Enterprises need to evaluate the platform innovation track record and gauge the platform speed of the respective platform vendor going forward. A key area to assess where a platform vendor may be trailing substantially behind their competitors and understand if that gap will be addressed – and if so, when.

• Total Cost of Ownership (TCO). At the end of the day, operating ERP is still a cost to enterprises. Understanding TCO and controlling costs of platforms is a necessity, especially given the elastic nature of today's modern platforms. Tying costs together with business success is a wise best practice, as it ensures the necessary revenue has come in to pay for the OPEX of platforms.

So where are the ERP vendors with their platforms? Let's look at the top four – and a European contender:

SAP

Is now all on HANA – so what?

It took SAP until spring 2019 to bring the cloud divisions on SAP HANA, its in-memory database (only SAP Concur apparently has a rain check and will remain 100% on Amazon AWS). SAP also is moving its SaaS products to its PaaS platform, SAP Cloud Platform (CP). SAP CP allows SAP to operate a multi-cloud strategy for IaaS - supporting (in parts of its large portfolio) the major IaaS vendors (alphabetical order) Ali Cloud, AWS, Google Cloud and Microsoft Azure, that is enabled by the Pivotal Cloud Foundry base of SAP CP. TCO has not been and is not going to be SAP's friend as in-memory instances are amongst the most pricey instances at IaaS, and given SAP HANA's in-memory only database, elasticity is mute as these instances cannot be turned off or reduced in utilisation. It is unlikely though that this will deter SAP customers to move to the new products based on SAP HANA, due to functionality benefits of the new SAP offerings and lockin from a mindset and resource side into the SAP ecosystem. But customers should demand that all of the SAP SaaS portfolio can run on the same IaaS vendor, and if not yet available, ask for roadmap dates.

Oracle

Will the "chip to click" stack pay off?

Oracle is betting on its integrated "chip to click" strategy that reaches from the chip silicon all the way to a user's click in a SaaS application passing all 7 ISO / OSI layers. Oracle has shown that this can yield positive TCO results in the database area with its Oracle Exadata offerings. Especially the self-driving capabilities are attractive to enterprises that need to ruthlessly automate IT in order to remain successful. Oracle still has to articulate and deliver the same approach, of a self-driving application stack for its SaaS offerings. The recent partnership with Microsoft, allowing to run Oracle SaaS applications on Microsoft Azure is a win for customers, but may also be an indication that the self -driving application stack maybe farther out than expected.

TCO is in the Oracle organisational DNA, starting with its very first database offering. TCO of Oracle SaaS applications is attractive for most enterprises, giving the integrated, single schema architecture of Oracle SaaS. The Oracle Exadata database offerings help here further. However, Oracle has a subpar sales track record to transform these TCO advantages into SaaS market share wins. But Oracle's sales year just started in June and the pressure for cloud revenue is massive. Never say never in enterprise IT.

Workday

How long will the platform change take?

Workday has been very successful as an ERP vendor with its in-house developed, object oriented and in-memory platform. Largely based on avoiding dependencies on other technology players, this approach has served Workday customers well, but even the most successful platform needs upgrading after an almost two decade run. And Workday is addressing this after a short 'love affair' with OpenStack, a partnership with IBM for in-house development and test systems, and seems to have now settled on a partnership with AWS. Workday maintains that this is not a replatform process but the length of time and the slow move of Workday customers towards AWS (in the few dozens right now) makes one think otherwise.

Overall Workday is an expensive offering, so hardware costs remain relatively small in the overall cost structure. With Workday using customer dedicated instances on the traditional deployments, it is hard for those customers to benefit from elasticity. This could lead to limitations when it comes to exploring the full power of AI / ML and conversational UX, as they need a lot of compute power. But then Workday could accelerate its install base to AWS, only Workday customers have to keep their fingers crossed that AWS catches up to Google Cloud and Microsoft Azure on the AI and ML side.

Infor

Can a single cloud platform be the answer?

Infor was the first ERP vendor moving to the public cloud, with its CEO Charles Philips announcing the move to AWS back in 2014. He created the by now famous moniker of "friends don't let friends build data centers." And while Infor still offers on-premise installation, when customers want cloud, it's on AWS. This was a smart choice, picking the market leader for IaaS, except for AWS recent stumbling and need to catch up on the AI / ML side. With Infor OS, it has built one of the most attractive ERP platforms, giving enterprises access to its Coleman AI, the Infor Data Lake, Birst Business Analytics, integration with Infor Ion and a low code PaaS with Infor Mongoose.

For Infor customers deployed on AWS, TCO is attractive and beats TCO incurred for similar loads by SAP and Workday, and likely for Oracle as well. Infor's challenges in the platform side are that Google Cloud is leading in the AI algorithm on chip race amongst the IaaS vendor with its TPU / Tensorflow combination. It needs to re-virtualise its platform to the latest container platform war winner, Kubernetes. While the former can be a TCO issue, the latter is something that Infor can address soon.

Unit4

Headstart with a modern platform – and now?

Writing for a European publication, it's worth mentioning the European vendor that has done a very good job at offering a cost effective, ERP cloud platform, **Unit4**. The early decision for Microsoft Azure over five years ago has created success for Unit4, not only with the abilities of its conversational AI Wanda, but also with the ability to create smart services for better user productivity. It's probably the only major ERP vendor using a microservices architecture and the ability to use a cloud based extension kit.

TCO for Unit4 is attractive compared to ERP vendors with a similar footprint, thanks to the usage of Microsoft Azure. When for instance nobody talks to the Unit4 assistant Wanda, there is no cost for Wanda. Or when nobody uses the microservices, there is equally no cost. Very good examples for the elasticity that ERP platforms need to have in 2019 and beyond. But there is still work for Unit4 to do, building more smart automations, providing more extensions and most importantly to find a low code strategy. Though the biggest mystery is why has Unit4 been so quiet about its platform?

The CXO Takeaway

What do CxOs need to consider when selecting ERP vendors in 2019?

- Platforms matter. A bad platform choice means ERP re-implementation, a nightmare for any enterprise. This makes platform choice critical.
- No shortcut on compliance. Everything stops when there are compliance and privacy issues. AWS is the leader in this area, both from a certification and location perspective.
- ERP is not a standalone app. It needs to be integrated with an enterprise's productivity applications, this

gives both Microsoft (with Office) and Google (with GSuite) an advantage. Both vendors – from a pure screen time base – are in the best position to power an improved people experience.

• Big Data capability is a must. An ERP platform with no Big Data capability almost guarantees irrelevance in a few years – as we know already data is what fuels deep learning networks (DL). Big Data can practically only be operated cost effectively in the public cloud. All IaaS vendors have solid offerings here.

The better AI platform today makes the winners of tomorrow. The speed, cost and capability of AI will shape the winners of tomorrow. Today Google Cloud has a substantial lead here, but the battle for AI leadership between the IaaS vendors has only just started.

Holger Mueller is a VP and principal analyst at Constellation Research which is a technology research and advisory firm based in Silicon Valley. They deliver strategic guidance to companies seeking to transform their businesses through the early adoption of disruptive technology. Their analysts draw on their experience as practitioners to deliver pragmatic advice to CXOs leading digital transformation within their organizations.

VENDOR	ON-PREMISE SUPPORT OF SUITE	CLOUD PARTNERS	COMPLETENESS OF SUITE IN CLOUD	CLOUD ADOPTION OF CUSTOMER BASE	AI READINESS OF IAAS PLATFORM
SAP	Partial (S/4 HANA)	AliCloud, AWS, Azure, Google Cloud	Still some SAP ECC capabilities missing	Small	Good for Google OK for AliCloud, AWS and Azure
ORACLE	Fully supported	Azure (for Apps), Oracle (for all)	100%	Medium	OK for Azure Questionable for OCI
WORKDAY	Not supported	AWS	100%	100%	OK for AWS Questionable for traditional infrastructure
INFOR	Fully supported	AWS	100%	Medium	OK for AWS
UNIT4	Fully supported	Azure	100%	Small	OK for AWS

INTELLIGENT TECHNOLOGY WON'T HELP IF WE AREN'T INTELLIGENT ABOUT

Climate Change

BY STEPHEN JAMIESON

t's something of an understatement to say there's no lack of intelligent technology in the world today. From blockchain and artificial intelligence, to the sprawling possibilities of the Internet of Things (IoT), technologies are changing the shape of the world as we know it. But are they being used as effectively as they could be to tackle some of the biggest problems we face as a global society? I'm not sure they are. Yet.

Earlier this year, the UK Parliament declared a climate emergency, and the UK Government has also just amended its carbon neutrality goal to almost zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. But it is not just a government directive. Consumers, in both their work and personal lives, feel strongly about the issue too. A recent study of more than 2,000 UK employees, taken by culture and behavioural change

consultancy Kin&Co, found that 35 percent of employees want their employer to act against climate change. Similarly, 66 percent of consumers said that they would feel more positive about companies that can demonstrate they are making efforts to reduce the carbon footprint of their products. Yet only 10 percent of UK companies have a set carbon emissions reduction target. How can we, as technologists, help bridge this gap between people's expectations and what businesses and policy



makers are prepared to do?

For many years the technology industry has been at the forefront of driving business performance and

> excellence, a position we should use to champion the use of our tools in driving this next vitally important chapter in business evolution. We also know, from the statistics mentioned earlier, that there are significant 'soft' benefits such as better customer and employee engagement around shared values. There are also discernible commercial benefits to being a more sustainable business. Reducing energy use in a data centre, for example, is as much a cost issue as it is

a carbon one. So we have every reason to lead the charge on using technology to better understand our footprint on the planet.

Just one example is in the way we harness the effectiveness of data - the currency of the technology industry - for the greater good. Data analytics can provide the basis for a variety of potential solutions from helping locate and identify harmful emissions, like AI company WattTime is doing, to creating optimised mobility patterns by examining traffic movements. It can also flag pressure points along the supply chain. For example, data from the Argo project - a global initiative of 3,800 free-drifting profiling ocean floats - is being used to aid the monitoring of environmental conditions that affect fish stocks and biological productivity.

nalytics programmes can connect disparate sources of information to create more circular material usage. Initiatives such as the Plastics Cloud collects existing and live data from across the plastics supply chain to spark new ideas for waste reduction. Plus, we already know the power of algorithms in driving customer activity. So, what if we used them to guide customers towards making more carbon friendly choices? What if we designed our ERP systems to tell us when these positive choices were made so that we could reward and reinforce the behaviour we want to encourage?

How can we help bridge this gap between people's expectations and what businesses and policy makers are prepared to do?



The traditional model for many technologies has been to focus on the benefits they bring for business. Instead we must begin with what our tools can do to support much more meaningful long-term objectives and then work on the best way to commercialise them. This requires a shift in vision and mindset, but it is possible and necessary.

very business, regardless of what it does, has some of the same basic building blocks – premises, online presence, supply chain, production process – all of which contribute to its carbon footprint; as well as to that of its customers, suppliers and partners. Many businesses know they are part of a commercial ecosystem but they don't always realise that this circular connection matters when it comes to carbon emissions policies

as well. Once we realise that we all stand to gain from a more sustainable ecosystem, the closer we are to setting new norms. This could be a rare instance of where commodisation of a process could come to be viewed as a positive!

I have the good fortune to work for a company whose purpose statement is 'to help the world run better and improve people's lives' and it is a statement which

truly defines and underpins all our business decisions and operations. I don't bring this up to be self-congratulatory, but rather as an illustration of a change we need to see more widely. To quote renowned meteorologist, Eric Holthaus: "We're about to enter one of the most creative, meaningful,

44

This requires a shift in vision and mindset, but it is possible

transcendent eras of human history - simply because we must." The time to use our knowledge and expertise to navigate that era is now. And if our collective societal ambitions around climate change are to be realised, the imperative to do so has to be built into the heart of every business, not tacked on as an afterthought.

Stephen Jamieson is head of sustainable business innovation, Northern Europe, SAP. Stephen leads the innovation function at SAP in the UK where he works with organisations to improve performance and find new markets through the use of digital technology and design thinking.

ATAgents WHAT DOES 'GOOD' LOOK LIKE - AND WHY SHOULD YOU CARE?

BY CATHY COBEY

rtificial intelligence (AI) is a core component of many companies' digital transformation strategies today. However, a lack of trust in AI is holding some organisations back from moving forward. To overcome their underlying fears we need stronger performance monitoring mechanisms that can be relied upon to detect, or better yet, predict failures before they occur.

What 'good' looks like in terms of an AI agent's performance will depend, to a certain extent, on the nature of the agent and how it is being used. AI agents are generally expected to make better, faster and higher quality decisions, but they have operational boundaries outside of which their performance will start to fall. It's important for AI operators to detect when an AI agent has shifted past their optimal performance conditions.

How can they do this when the performance of AI agents can vary significantly according to their training and operating conditions? A diverse set of metrics can be used to monitor an AI agent against a set of performance targets or thresholds. AI operators then need to be ready to take corrective action as performance begins to shift or is not operating consistently. This could trigger the involvement of a humanbased exception routine or re-training.

Addressing the challenges

A current challenge with AI is that it's being developed in an iterative fashion, making it more difficult to develop a full set of success criteria. Problems can arise when an AI agent



is given a loosely defined objective or when training starts before a complete objective is in place. There can be further challenges if performance data is not available to measure the full spectrum of an agent's behavior.

To address these challenges, companies need to develop a detailed problem statement (a framing of the problem that will be solved using AI) with specific objectives. These objectives should then be mapped to a robust set of qualitative and quantitative performance metrics that measure the behavior of the AI agent. And don't forget the power of feedback; you need to tell the AI system its 'score' so it knows if it's getting closer or further away from its objectives.

Using healthcare as an example, AI agents will play an increasingly important role in the diagnosis and prevention of disease. A framework for measuring the performance of AI agents needs to be sensitive to the 'life or death' implications of failed predictions, which means that failures are not created equally. A patient could be more accepting of a positive cancer diagnosis when they don't have cancer, than a negative cancer diagnosis when they do have cancer.

Autonomous vehicles (AVs) serve as another example. Although studies have demonstrated that AVs have greater safety records than human drivers, many individuals would still choose a human driver over an AV. Why? Because they don't understand the limitations of AVs, and ultimately, its failure conditions. As they can't predict when it will fail, they can't predict when it can be trusted.

Successful digital transformation in any business doesn't just happen. It is the outcome of careful planning and design. The same principle applies to AI. Companies will only get "good" AI agents if they put upfront effort into setting the right objectives and performance metrics.

Taking a close look at performance will go a long way to address the lack of trust that's the leading barrier to the adoption of AI. For AI to reach its full potential, we need a more standardised approach to measure performance and a better definition of what 'good' looks like. ■

Cathy Cobey is EY's global trusted AI advisory leader.

The views reflected in this article are the views of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the global EY organization or its member firms.



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ERP Today has partnered with the biggest names in the industry to bring you a series of free to attend round table sessions on the topics most affecting modern CXOs. There is a maximum of 12 places available for each session, open to CXOs at end users, to join us and share stories with peers, listen to the latest market trends and gain insights from leaders from the world's best organisations.





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They are free to attend but over half of all places for these events have already been allocated. To ensure you don't miss out please send us an email to events@erp.today to express an interest.

PEOPLE PLATFORM FOR PEOPLE **BUSINESSES**

MIKE ETTLING TAKES

OVER AT UNIT4 AND

TALKS EXCLUSIVELY

TO ERP TODAY ABOUT

THE DRIVING FORCE

BEHIND THE PEOPLE

AGENDA AND WHAT

IT TAKES TO BE A

SUCCESSFUL CEO

IN THE FAST-PACED

WORLD OF ERP AND

HCM TECHNOLOGY.

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MIKE ETTLING





ike Ettling is a South African entrepreneur and the new CEO of Unit4. He is the former President of SAP SuccessFactors and has a long track record of leading people-focussed businesses. In his early career he utilised emerging technologies to launch several companies by replicating existing models and using technology to do things more efficiently. He was at the forefront of the BPO era in the 80s and managed large

parts of **EDS**'s (Electronic Data Systems – now DXC Technologies) business in the 90s. He has been involved with HR and payroll organisations for two decades, and since leaving SuccessFactors, has had a strong relationship with Advent International, the private equity company which owns Unit4. I spoke to Ettling on his first day in the job at the Ambassador's Connect event and then caught up with him 100 days later to see what he had achieved so far and how he intended to put 'some sizzle on the Unit4 steak'.

"Everything is pretty much as I expected", said Ettling, when asked how his first 100 days in the job had gone. "Most things are better with just a couple of things that I've already identified we need to improve."

I'm keen to find out what those things are, particularly the ones that need the most attention, but I also want to understand more about Ettling's journey and what has led him to the top job at Unit4. I said in the introduction to

this article that Ettling was an entrepreneur; and that statement is important. You see, Ettling has started businesses from scratch. He's run small companies. He's grown some of them into big companies. He's been involved with acquisitions and mergers. He's invested his own cash in start-ups, and he has sweated over paying the bills several times. You can't really succeed as an entrepreneur unless you've had to worry about how everyone is going to get paid, and you can't really succeed in growing a private equity backed business if you don't have the entrepreneurial flair to bet ahead of the curve, spot the opportunities and carve out a niche.

EARLY CAREER

Ettling's career began while he was still a student at university. He started a marketing business selling discounted magazine subscriptions to students and although the business wasn't technology related, Ettling says he always looked for the tech angle, even in those early days.

"My father was in newspapers and publishing so I decided to try and get into that. There were lots of similar businesses in Europe doing the same thing but I managed to build my company using Novell networks (an up and coming technology that eventually surpassed mainframe computing) and managed to build a sizeable business with a fraction of the people my European equivalents needed."

Ettling was backed in his first business by none



other than **Time Inc.** (now WarnerMedia) and says the business flourished to a point where he needed to make a decision whether to continue his accounting career or put all of his efforts into being an entrepreneur.

"I was studying to be an accountant and did an exchange with KPMG in New York for a few months. I really got a taste for the financial markets and when I came back to South Africa I got involved with setting up the first Future's Exchange and I built a new clearing system for KPMG to manage risk. I became an expert in financial instruments, but again it all came back to technology. I still have McCracken's Guides to Fortran and Cobalt on my book shelf and having that underlying knowledge really teaches you the logic and how to ask the right questions in software. The problem came after I had qualified at KPMG. I was officially moonlighting with my own business and eventually my boss said it was time for me to make a decision - I chose to go the entrepreneurial route."

Ettling left KPMG to focus on his marketing company and shortly after, separated the business into two. He says that one part of the business ultimately failed which was a pretty good learning experience, but the other, which diversified into publishing magazines, radio media and on-campus promotions, flourished and is still going strong in South African today.

Ettling's next move was to build a fulfilment company which he modelled on the US business, **Neodata**. Through a mixture of good and bad fortune, Ettling's business was sold to one

of the publisher-investors, but it had caught the attention of Neodata – the business he had mimicked - and before long Ettling was invited to demonstrate some of the technology he had been building.

"The fulfilment business didn't really work out as I had hoped. The whole culture in South Africa around outsourcing hadn't really developed, IBM and EDS had not gone back into the market and sanctions were still in place. We had built this technology to run fulfilment on Microsoft SQL Server with Delphi as the development tool - this was early client server days, when everyone was still building on Mainframes - I got a call from the CEO at Neodata and was asked to show them the software. One thing led to another and I was asked to join Neodata to run all their technology in the UK. In February 1997 I came to the UK with my then-girlfriend to run it for them. That led to another great opportunity when Neodata bought a business that was one of the first loyalty scheme ventures. They were trying to sell a new concept called 'enterprise customer management' and eventually EDS picked up on this and thought it was going to be huge. They bought Neodata and rolled it into a larger organisation with all their call centre and database businesses. This was the first global CRM play and was the way I got into EDS where I spent many years running big chunks of their BPO business."

After five years with EDS, Ettling made his first private equity move with **Synstar**, an IT services business, which was involved in break-fix maintenance and business recovery systems. He

MIKE ETTLING

ran the business as CEO for the UK, Ireland and Germany until HP bought it in 2004. A short run in Australia was followed by a spell in Asia before returning to the UK to manage global BPO for Unisys. However, it was Ettling's next move which put him on the HR and people focussed trajectory – he joined NGA and says this was the first time he encountered the different dynamics of selling to people leaders rather than IT leaders.

"I'm now dealing with the CHRO for the first time having spent all my career selling to the CIO – and they buy very differently. The first dinner I went to within this circle lasted for five hours and everyone was talking about the people experience and how's this going to affect my employees. I'd never had those conversations with CIOs and it really highlighted the difference in buying and thinking."

fter leaving NGA in 2013, Ettling spent a year doing private equity advisory work before finding himself at SuccessFactors where he spent the next four years. Some more advisory work and angel investing kept Ettling busy until his relationship with Advent took a different direction. Advent had been trying to sell Unit4 for 12 months and hadn't managed to get the deal away

so they asked Ettling to join as CEO, and the rest as they say, is history.

Why am I telling you all this?

Well to understand how good Ettling is going to be, or not, at running an ambitious mid-market ERP company, it's important to get under the skin and find out what makes the man tick. His background is eclectic. He has been a founder, investor, manager, director, CEO and president of many companies – not all in the ERP space and certainly not all \$500m businesses with ambitions to double that. But there are three themes that run through every one of Ettling's previous roles. Entrepreneurship, people, and technology

ENTREPRENEURSHIP

To be successful in the very fast paced world of enterprise apps, where product lifecycles are short and the next app or platform that is going to blow your product out of the water is always just around the corner; you need to be an entrepreneur. You need to be able to cut through the hype,



assess the market and make your play before anyone else does. Or at least make your play where nobody else does. This spirit of entrepreneurship is something that Ettling holds dear and cites it as an invaluable tool for all business leaders. He remembers a time from his very early business ventures when he would look at a big white board with all the sales and cash collections and wonder if he was going to be able to pay everyone.

"Unless you've sweated a payroll you really don't know what it's like to run a business. You've got to learn to look at the business from the eyes of the entrepreneur. I think it brings value to a person as a CEO and I would encourage my leaders to take non-exec positions because it enables you to develop a different lens to look at the business."

Ettling also points to his work in private equity advisory, and his own investments, as being key ingredients in the mix for successful business leadership and says that he has introduced some of the ideas that he has seen into the Unit4 culture already.

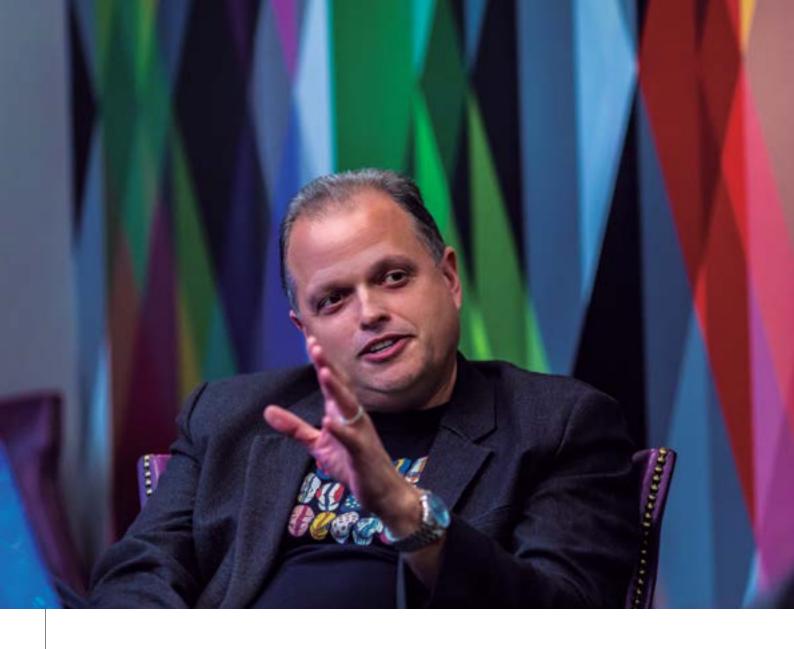


"I was heavily involved, almost full time, with a private equity fund helping them with their tech investments and doing some angel investments myself in the HR tech space. I was looking at opportunities where I felt I could add more than just money and also where I thought the majors were unlikely to get involved. A lot of the best technologies in this space are coming out of start-ups and being invested in them has given me a great insight into the minds of the modern entrepreneur and the way they are all so people orientated. I bring a lot of what I've learned over the years into the way I lead a business today. One example is that we involve our brightest young professionals in senior management meetings. It's a great way to get a different perspective on things and something that we really believe in at Unit4."

So, can you be an entrepreneur and a CEO? Ettling told me that being around so many interesting start-ups had reignited his desire to lead a

business again but I was unsure whether Unit4 was going to satisfy his entrepreneurial needs.

"I wanted to get back in the saddle but that wasn't about starting up a new company or being an entrepreneur again. Getting back in the saddle was about building a team, engaging people and creating a purpose both in the market and with your people. If you get that right, it's like the wind in your sails. Entrepreneurship in a \$500m business like Unit4 is different to a start-up. You've got to choreograph things differently and think about how it all fits together. You can still drive the principles of entrepreneurship, but you have to do it in a more holistic way. One of the big reasons people leave start-ups is that the founders have so many ideas that the other people in the business can't keep up with a new idea every day. We've got lots of ideas at Unit4 but I'm a big believer that people can only really deal with three things at any one point in time. Let's do three, let's do them well, and then we can do another three."



PEOPLE PLATFORM

Since ERP platforms were first developed it has been the user experience that has largely weighed them down. They have been systems of record; the record creation, record keeping and analysis have been more important than the usability of the overall process. Many ERP systems still make their users suffer from that legacy because it is hard to overcome the underlying concepts of ERP design and architecture. Effectively, only platform and functionality innovation can address the usability challenge that ERP users face. And Unit4 has put a lot of time, money and effort addressing these issues.



ore importantly, Unit4 is also addressing people productivity with a more holistic approach than just user experience - that is, with people experience. Traditionally, user experience has been narrowed down to the experience of a user of a system. Given the layered and multisystem nature of ERP, and the addition of

often acquired systems thrown into the mix, the ERP user experience has been fragmented and incongruent at best. Unit4 is aiming at a consistent and holistic user experience across the company's solutions, focused on people productivity. That means that integration to other key people applications (Microsoft Office, for example) needs to be enabled because users spend time in the ERP and document applications. Specific areas where the People Platform wins out are;

Loosely coupled integration. To enable 'meshups' of business capabilities at the speed that service industries need, Unit4's People Platform allows for loosely coupled integration via REST-based APIs. This allows the automation of business needs on a faster and more agile basis, ultimately enabling a better people experience.

Dynamic data interoperability. Being able to exchange and interoperate on data without having to move it across systems is a key factor for faster and better insights. Instead of having to wait for IT resources to move and prep data, Unit4 users can bring the data together when they need to answer their business questions.

Ontology business object taxonomy. What



sounds like a boring technology topic is the enabler for Unit4 users to achieve a better people experience. People in service industries must combine capabilities in a dynamic way, and a common taxonomy of business objects is needed so that their systems can speak to each other.

Message hub. Modern architectures scale through messages and achieve their agility through a low-latency but asynchronous messaging architecture. Being able to integrate and communicate via a messaging hub makes applications and integration using the Unit4 People Platform easier to integrate.

TECHNOLOGY

I asked Ettling at the very start of this interview what he had discovered in his first 100 days and he told me the most encouraging bits that exceeded his expectations were all to do with the product. I won't go into too much detail on the Unit4 platform and applications here as we will be covering this extensively in the next issue of ERP Today. However, it is worth noting that the Unit4

platform, architecture and application stack is one of the most complete and genuine cloud propositions on the market. Its platform moved to Azure in 2016 and has been enhanced with a range of 'experience improving' features built on its microservices architecture. Features like the Extension Kit allow smoother integrations with other software and applications. Its Smart Automation Service manages repetitive and low-value tasks like service orders and invoice processing, improving the experience for uses who are now able to migrate to more meaningful, high-value activities. And its interactive chatbot, Wanda, is one of the first to be offered to customers as part of the broader offering. When it works, it is able to answer questions, provide data, make notes, schedule meetings, record absence, make request and provide a unique interface into the ERP system. This gives users a taste of the technology experience many have already started to take for granted in their personal lives.

IN CONCLUSION

Ettling has a wealth of experience in the HCM and enterprise apps sector, coupled with a deep understanding of technology, and more importantly, how that technology can be made to work for people. Considering how advanced the Unit4 platform, architecture and application stack is, it is somewhat surprising that more noise has not been made about it. Ettling says he is addressing the marketing issue with the appointment of a new CMO where the brief will be to "put some sizzle on the steak." The ERP mid-market is ripe and its where the highest volume of opportunities are. It's unlikely that Unit4 will be pitching against Oracle and Workday any time soon, but that's fine - there is enough business in the mid-market for them to achieve their ambitions of doubling in size without having to think about fishing in a new pond. The Unit4 student management suite (again this will be covered in the next issue) is potentially a market leading product and Ettling says their first 25 customers are in various stages of going live. This could be a very interesting addition to the portfolio as many of the main HCM vendors (who offer student management) are unlikely to have products as functionally rich as the Unit4 offering. Ettling's biggest challenge will be to find a way to capitalise on the excellent work already done on the platform and make sure customers know about it before the other vendors catch up.

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Together





Artificial Intelligence

CREATING FAIRNESS OR ACCELERATING BIAS?

Atomation and AI are both supporting businesses to make better decisions but at the same time are embedding age-old biases.

BY DR. ZARA NANU

utomation and AI are both supporting businesses to make better decisions but at the same time are embedding age-old biases. As online and HR platforms increasingly turn to AI (artificial intelligence) and data-driven decisions to attract and retain talent we must include the wider society in doing more to achieve fairness. At Gapsquare, we work to ensure that equality takes centre-stage in such developments.

A few decades ago, as I was deciding which university degree to go for and what skills and qualifications I needed for my future career, tech, engineering and maths were not among

my options. In fact, if anyone had told me that I would be using statistical regression models and leading a company that builds software to help create more fairness in employment in 2019 I would have seriously questioned them. But I have had to turn to technology, maths, and artificial intelligence because they enabled by far the best opportunity to solve a global problem: that of unequal and unfair pay in

44

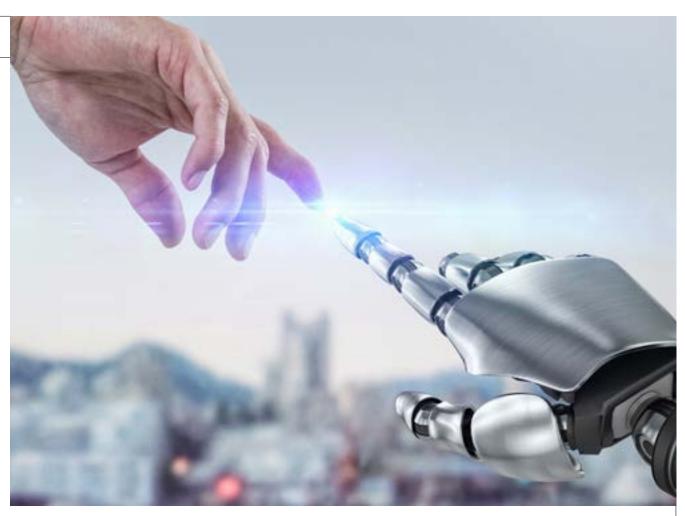
Tech offers up both the issues of ongoing bias, and the opportunity to resolve inequality for good. many companies around the world.

What I have learned during years of working in equalities and technology is that software can help companies create fair pay on a scale and magnitude that no other solution can. What I did not expect is that I would find myself in a world where, while tech and artificial intelligence could offer a solution to

equality and fairness at work, it also brings one of the biggest roadblocks to equality.

As I pondered my options and weighed up my future at the beginning of my educational journey, the conceptualisation and design of AI that engendered biases was already on its way too. The biases in how humans were moved through the workforce and beyond were being engendered, steadily and often unknowingly, into the technologies defining our future. Nowadays, there are a range of examples of tech and AI demonstrating such bias. It is often easy to see that the data we feed our technology - and the teams that work to develop software - are mostly masculine, mostly white and often middle class.

o give an example, you might remember that last year Amazon hit the headlines because of its AI based hiring tool. The platform was developed by a team of data scientists in Edinburgh, Scotland, using CVs from a ten-year period to train models to identify top engineering talent. The models were programmed to recognise some 50,000 terms showing up in past CVs and select candidates based on the use of terms previously



associated with 'successful' individuals. Perhaps inevitably, the algorithms began to prioritise applications that included more male-dominated language; words associated with success such as: 'captured', 'created', and 'lead'. Candidates who used, for example, the word 'woman' in their CVs (i.e. women's soccer club) were automatically downgraded.

It wasn't long before this intrinsic bias became apparent. The candidates being selected were unanimously representative of a group already dominant within the workforce. The technology had ruled out gender diversity in particular. When the company realised what was happening it worked on making the terms more gender neutral, taking backward steps to undo historical bias. The program has since been scrapped, there was just no guarantee that it would not continue to discriminate in other ways.

Though this may not exactly give you hope about the potential of AI and automation, I believe stories like this should help us to see the potential of technology to do more. Technology that embeds bias reveals itself quickly and signals a need for change. It is inevitable that organisations offering ERP (enterprise resource planning) solutions are going to use more artificial intelligence and data-driven decision making to optimise processes, including HR. But there are a few things that can ensure that biases are accounted for.

It's time to take a magnifying glass to the assumptions our technologies are making and build fairer systems from the ground up.

At Gapsquare we want to see technology developed to demonstrate a higher level of objectivity and fairness than occurs naturally in human societies (at the moment). But we must all work to make sure that these technologies create fair systems and processes for all. It is time, we think, to question the data going into a system,

It's time to take a magnifying glass to the assumptions our technologies are making and build fairer ground up.

question the algorithms developed and observe their resultant conclusions. It's time to take a magnifying glass to the assumptions our technologies are making and build fairer systems from the ground up. In doing so, we ensure that we are embracing the potential and the pay off of building systems from the inclusive workplaces and inclusive companies. In doing so we guarantee that the world of tomorrow will look

substantially better than the world as we know it today.

Dr. Zara Nanu is the CEO and cofounder at Gapsquare. She is an expert on how diversity and inclusion can shape more dynamic and productive teams and a more engaging and empowering workplace. She is an entrepreneur who believes business can generate social impact as well as revenues and profits.

OVERCOMING THE FEAR OF Decentralisation

BY WAYNE LLOYD

arlier this year, in London, I presented at the Blockchain World Summit. The title of my presentation was 'Bitcoin isn't Blockchain' and the focus of my work was how the media had portrayed and sensationalised Bitcoin to such an extent that Bitcoin and Blockchain were perceived, by many, to be one of the same. The stories written on both topics can often be exaggerated or misinformed and for those that do not find time to do their own research, readers are drawn in by 'click-bait' headlines that subconsciously shape a person's thinking before they have had a chance to quantify the real story.

The belief that bitcoin and blockchain are no different to one another has led many businesses to base their blockchain strategies on the perceived limitations of Bitcoin. As a consequence, they have unwittingly placed

their future at risk and are at threat from new incumbents or forward-thinking competitors that have recognised the transformative impact that blockchain technology can have. My team and I have met with and spoken to the CEOs of some of the UK's biggest brands and they have openly admitted to believing the hype around bitcoin. The objections we have faced before they have even started any proof-of-concepts is that blockchain was either too



slow or not scalable enough to support their business operations; whilst others have gone further and concluded blockchain as being 'that scammy

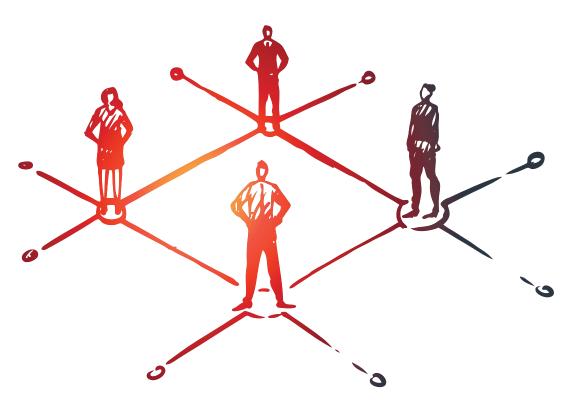
thing' linked to financial crime, silk road or other sensationalised stories that have stigmatised the maturity curve of bitcoin over the last decade. As a consequence, blockchain has been rejected out of hand before the technology has even been tested.

If you do find yourself working for a company that has decided not to pursue a blockchain strategy on the basis of such ideals, you should understand that you are aligning your business strategy against those of the companies you are constantly trying to keep up with. Whilst you allow sensationalised stories of bitcoin and its fluctuating price shape your thinking; behind the scenes almost every Fortune 500 company is currently looking for ways to extract more value from their business processes and how that can be applied to create more meaningful experiences for their customers. For those Fortune 500 companies that are not looking towards blockchain... well they won't be in the Fortune 500 for much longer.

f you're part of a company that operates in heavily regulated environments such as financial services, commodities, food, automotive and healthcare it is perhaps more important than ever to get to grips with this emerging technology. Within these industries regulation can become so burdensome that being compliant often comes at the expense of innovation. In such instances it can force many businesses to operate in silos, meaning you have to work tremendously hard to keep the lights on legacy ERPs that are simply incapable of providing your customers (both internal and external) with the types of digital experiences they have become accustomed to in the modern world (when using applications such as Facebook, Amazon and Uber, for example).

Indeed, whilst it is impossible to compete with the amount of money they have at their disposal, millennials simply do not care. They aren't loyal

Readers are drawn in by 'click-bait' headlines that subconsciously shape a person's thinking before they have had a chance to quantify the real story



and will switch over to a company that can provide them with the speed of service they have come to expect. To counter this, we have seen many companies compete against one another in the race for digital excellence, but the experiences are still so far off what they could be.

any companies today still run large scale digital business transformation projects by focussing the effort on linear customer journeys, effectively structuring data to assume that what you did in the past will be an event certain to take place in the future. Whilst I understand the logic, to me that is merely a guess. With the advent of blockchain technology, businesses (and the big consultancies guiding them) have to quickly realise that the digital transformation projects of today will simply end up being tomorrow's spam.

A decentralised digital business transformation – the convergence of Blockchain with other emerging technologies such as IoT devices - will add much longer-term value to brands across all industries and sectors. Used

correctly these technologies will help companies unlock new sources of value that will enrich customer experiences and relationships with a brand. Rather than telling customers things they already know, focus on telling them things they don't know. Now that is a real digital experience.

For those readers responsible for managing ERP systems, the idea of unlocking new data and becoming decentralised simultaneously might well sound like a

paradox. We have worked with clients who are concerned by the thought of creating more data and giving it away, when they are already struggling to manage what they have. Once we take them through a process of education, however, they quickly understand that they should not be fearful of becoming decentralised, for decentralisation sits on a scale. It represents the process of compressing steep, inefficient, hierarchical business structures into something much flatter and more manageable. It is simply a process of optimisation and automation.

44

The idea of unlocking new data and becoming decentralised simultaneously might well sound like a paradox

lockchain technology will enable businesses to work from a single, immutable record of truth which will provides opportunity to break down the data and culture siloes of your organisations whilst offering a whole new level of transparency to your company. By working from a single record of truth it will put to an end the need to continue using expensive legacy systems and

inefficient processes that exist within your ERP environment today. Whilst it might seem like a daunting concept to take onboard the truth is that nothing quite like blockchain has ever been seen before.

Wayne Lloyd is the Founder and CEO of Smarter Contracts. He is also a partner of London Derivatives Exchange, an advisor to the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Blockchain and a founder member of the Oxford Blockchain Foundation.

What does the X factor say about your company? Wanting to deliver great experiences is one thing but doing it well is quite another. In this section, Helen Peatfield looks at understanding what is driving the X movement and what it means for the mechanics of base business elements.

rience & expectation era

FEATURE

onsumers and buyers are becoming more fickle by the hour, it seems, regarding their experience with companies, apps and services. Expectations are high, judgement is brutal and fast. If it takes an hour to save a few pennies the inner calculator kicks in, frustration levels go up and we look elsewhere. Traditional loyalty schemes and low prices just aren't enough any more.

Nan Russell, XM scientist at Qualtrics gave us the details in numbers: "Today, organisations that don't manage every aspect of the experience they provide struggle to compete. Why? Because in the experience economy, 80 percent of consumers will choose to switch brands due to a poor experience, two-thirds of the workforce is actively disengaged and two million employees turn over every month because of negative experiences in the workplace." These numbers are alarming. Yet the biggest problem lies with business leaders' perceptions. Whether it is down to a lack of data or simply looking at the wrong data, CEOs and customers have wildly different opinions on what a superior experience is. Russell described this as The Experience Gap and highlighted that while 80 percent of CEOs believe that they are delivering a superior experience only eight percent of customers agree. That's a huge gap in understanding the true picture.

Whatever kind of business you operate there will always be a competitor close by and companies cannot win a race based purely on price. Neither can they win without differentiators that matter to their ideal customers. Today that differentiator is experience. At Drift's Hypergrowth London event, Brian Halligan the CEO at **HubSpot** told a packed conference hall: "It's not enough to be a tech disruptor any more. Now you have to be an experience disruptor."

Are you ready for all manner of X-data sources?

We are busier than ever before and whether we want to order a pizza, open a bank account or procure materials for our manufacturing plant, we are inclined to follow the path of least resistance so that we can focus on the next task. It is no longer enough to look at operational data to see if business is keeping up with demands. Failing to listen, understand and respond to changing customer behaviour can be devastating; product launches can fail, revenue can fall fast, and employees head for the door leaving you in an empty office wondering what happened. Alex Love, managing director at customer experience consultancy, **Enigen**

UK said: "Consumers are on the move all the time. They have so many channels and apps, actually they just want to get things done quickly. It's all about speed and value. Price isn't always top priority either, people often choose experience over cost."

Just as an ERP system is built to enable business strategy, CX apps are here to support a people centric approach. Without looking inward to see what you need to improve you cannot select the right tools for the job. Love explained the strategy that underpins a winning customer experience model. "CX is a way of designing and improving the way you interact with your customer. That could be through your front office. It could be through marketing, sales and even backoffice functions like PO (purchase order) and invoicing processing. CX is about standardising your approach so that customers get the same message through any interaction." He urges the need to look at all channels from a customer's perspective: Are the right communication strategies in place? Can customers access your services through the channels they prefer with the speed and value they have come to expect? "Technology should enable customers to interact with your brand more easily. You need to design your CX with the right customer journey so that customers find it easy to engage with your business," said Love.

Merging the Experience Effort

The 2017 Gartner's Customer Experience in Marketing Survey revealed that 81 percent of the marketing leader respondents expected to 'mostly' or 'completely' compete on the basis of CX (customer experience) at the end of 2019. Tick tock. The thing is, while marketers have had their fingers on the experience pulse for a while now it is not their sole responsibility. You can have the best salespeople, help-desk, and marketing minds at work but if back-office processes such as procurement, logistics, and finance are not aligned with demand, and if the data being collected is not shared you can never deliver frictionless interactions, let alone sumptuous experiences. Love described the shift from department-level CX programmes to a company-wide approach. "As recently as three years ago business departments were talking about CX in silos. In reality, you can't drive experience in silos. You need to break down those internal boundaries and look at CX holistically. Departments need to talk together to build and implement a joined-up strategy."

Thankfully a helpful raft of fixes, from heavy hitting software names as well as SaaS start-ups, are keen to demonstrate how their wares can help businesses achieve experience excellence. Consolidation in the market is also gaining momentum. For example, the Qualtrics IPO became an \$8bn (£6.33bn) cash acquisition by SAP in January this year. Qualtrics' experience management (XM) offering combined with operational data capabilities from SAP software (O-data) should provide businesses with the means to deliver exceptional customer, employee, product and brand experiences; as well as better manage supply chains, networks and core processes. Hot on the heels of the SAP Qualtrics deal, Adobe announced its partnership with ServiceNow. Integration between the two platforms promises to enable better experiences for their mutual customers such as streamlining work between teams and building rich, real-time customer profiles. ServiceNow's digital workflows, knowledge management and service catalogues will be integrated into a personalised engagement layer through Adobe's Experience Platform to create consistent, contextual experiences and services.

The X Factor for Customers

Today, if a business isn't able to deliver the right service or product through the right channel, customers will find one that can. This power shift is what has become known as 'the experience economy'.

A successful experience strategy must be founded on research, empathy and a commitment to continuous improvement.

Companies that fail to keep up with modern consumers could find themselves in the same boat as the retail giants that have floated down the liquidation river. Not only can CX help to keep existing customers happy, it can boost growth on a large scale. The insurance industry isn't the first to spring to mind when thinking about 'delightful' experiences but, for industries like ecommerce and travel, insurance



A successful experience strategy must be founded on research, empathy and a commitment to continuous improvement.

options offer an additional revenue stream. It is here where satisfaction or frustration levels can rise or lower: and therein lies an opportunity to exploit the experience gap left by large, mature businesses. Angus Mc-Donald, CEO of InsureTech company Cover Genius explained this a little more for us: "Policies that require a law degree to understand, slow approvals and even slower payouts all leave consumers frustrated." The company's business model is based on improving the customer journey. "Cover Genius was built from the ground up on an experience management model. With easy-todigest policies and instant payouts our partners experience NPS scores exceeding 65 with one travel giant reporting 25 percent year on year growth in policies sold."

Love echoed the sentiment in terms of what it takes to build a successful experience management strategy. "The way that we work with our customers is to identify their overall objectives, understand more about their customers, and then build them a roadmap of change - typically over a three year period. Then over that three year period we underpin some of that change with different modules or tools from the Oracle CX suite to deliver it." One of Enigen UK's customers, H&T Pawnbrokers has 182 stores around the UK. The company wanted to change the face of pawnbroking and how it interacted with people in order to better offer the right services to customers. For example, when it comes to financial products that businesses like H&T offer, it could be very frustrating for someone to be offered a loan only to find out

later that they will not actually be approved for it. "At that moment, their customer strategy was based by store. If you went into one store, that store would know you and have your information. But if you went into one of their stores in the next town they wouldn't know anything about you. Obviously, that's not great customer experience," said Love. But now H&T has the strategy and tech in place to deliver a smoother, happier experience across every branch.

FEATURE

X + O for measuring the feedback economy

Customers rate services on independent review sites, a brand's social media page and through word of mouth both online and offline. Gathering, analysing

and benchmarking CX successfully means pulling together swathes of qualitative and quantitative data. ERP systems are great at gathering operational data (O-data) from sales, finance, HR systems, inventory levels and the supply chain. But on its own it does not answer the 'why.' To get the full picture, businesses must look deeper and delve into the tricky world of human behaviour and motivations.

Qualtrics' Russell describes X-data as, "the beliefs, emotions, and intentions that tell you why things are happening, and what to do about it. X-data comes from things like customer feedback, purchase intent, Net Promoter Score, product satisfaction, brand sentiment, or employee engagement. O-data tells you what is happening. X-data tells you why it's happening."

"To succeed in the experience economy, companies have to embed X-data into their operational systems and business processes. This means combining X-data with the organised schemas of operational data in order to make decisions and take the actions that lead to customers who stay longer, buy more, and tell friends and employees who deliver more, build a positive culture, and advocate for your brand," said Russell.

"O-data tells
you what is
happening.
X-data tells
you why it's
happening."

Employee experience is just as important

A disgruntled employee can be just as damaging as a bad customer experience review as well as expensive in terms of frequent recruitment drives. High employment levels and skills gaps have created a candidate's market but these days competing for talent takes more than brightly coloured beanbags and a pool table. There are simply not enough cupcakes to quell a stressful or mundane work life – nor stimulate loyalty.

From an HR perspective the importance of monitoring experiences isn't new at all. It's the way that we track, measure and respond to it that has changed. If productivity is low, is it really the human at fault? Before telling an employee that 'bad workers blame their tools', first look inwards. How many applications and people does it take to get an order processed from sale

to delivery? Understand where the sticking points are. Be ready to hear and respond to hard truths. Again, this is reflected in EX.

ore and more is expected of us in our working week, largely perhaps because there is an assumption that the tools a business gives its staff are reducing workload. Mike Ettling, CEO at Unit4 said that the entire leadership team is responsible for employee experience. But as the pressures of cloud migrations settle, he would like to see the role of the "CIO stake a claim, and make its fame again, on being the owner of employee experience." Russell said that while individuals or functions can kick-start an XM transformation "long-term success depends on empowering people around the business and embedding XM within your organisation's operating fabric," later saying: "In the EX space, people teams can get things off the ground, but improving experience across the employee life cycle - from recruitment to exit - means involving a vast cross-section of a company from the c-suite and mid-level managers, to the employees themselves."

Technology has given people the power to switch allegiance, advocate or criticise brands to vast audiences with a few touches on a smartphone. So it falls to businesses to improve how they interact with their greatest human assets: their staff and their customers. And the new breed of 'experience officers' in place at businesses all around the world need to be supported by a company-wide strategy to at very least satisfy; better still would be to exceed and become absolute champions in the effort to attract revenue-generating repeat business.

THE FUTURE OF BUSINESS HAS FEELINGS.

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Because businesses need to do more than just keep track of operational data like costs, accounting and sales. They need to understand experience data—the beliefs, emotions and sentiments of customers and employees. And when businesses connect experience data (X-data) with operational data (O-data), they can turn customers into fanatics, products into obsessions, employees into ambassadors, and brands into religions. Experience more at sap.com/XM

Experience Management is here. Powered by Qualtrics and SAP.







as fast as the technologies that they are implementing.

Can SIs disrupt themselves as well?

BY PAUL ESHERWOOD

hen the crumbs from the table are the size of giant Dairy Milk buttons, it's no surprise that those feeding on the spoils have grown fat. The table in question is the ERP implementation market and those gorging themselves on the resultant upgrades and reimplementations are the plethora of system integrators that have

built huge businesses on the coattails of the SAP and Oracle gravy train.

For decades the SI market has burgeoned in pace with the sale of vendor licenses as businesses were faced with a series of problems, to which the only solution was customising the hell out of stock systems so that they worked with legacy processes. A global ecosystem of beneficiaries has boomed, headcount has risen, and profits have soared on the back of traditional ERP project work.

However, the advent of cloud applications and infrastructure has changed the game; not just for the vendors and users, but also for the hundreds (if not thousands) of consultancies, integrators and partners that have made a life's work out of ERP projects. The fundamental nature

of cloud-native applications means that source-code customisation is a thing of the past putting an end to the role of the technical developer. Endless functional workshops used to capture processes are being scrapped in favour of standardised design. And digital infrastructure has all but ended the value of the IT manager and killed off DBAs at a stroke. Those SIs who kept pace with the demand for traditional project services over the last twenty years are looking at a stockpile of resources without the skills and experience being demanded by digital transformation.

So, what is the outlook for the SI market in the face of such a changing landscape? Can the bigger SIs continue to feed the beast, or will they need to embrace the kind of radical disruption that so many of their customers are considering? What demands are CIOs placing on their technology partners and how will the SIs move from a deliverables model to become an outcome-based enabler?



THE ADVENT **OF CLOUD** APPLICATIONS AND **INFRASTRUCTURE** HAS CHANGED THE GAME, NOT JUST FOR THE VENDORS AND USERS, BUT ALSO FOR THE HUNDREDS, IF NOT THOUSANDS. OF CONSULTANCIES. **INTEGRATORS AND** PARTNERS THAT HAVE MADE A LIFE'S WORK OUT OF ERP PROJECTS.



obin McBurnie, a partner at PwC and leader of the Oracle practice, said: "The role of the SI has to change as customers look at business outcomes. Large scale investment in technology will no longer be measured by questions such as 'did the system go in?' But more by 'were the business outcomes delivered?'

SaaS applications and cloud changing the game for everyone – trust is front and centre

The challenge for SIs to disrupt themselves is almost as great as it is for end users wishing to use cloud applications and infrastructure. The entire business model of the SI has changed and the phrase itself, 'system integrator', is almost redundant in today's market. The process of implementing SaaS applications is so fundamentally different that organisations - that historically had been at the centre of making a system fit with a business - now have to work with a business to make it fit with the system, usually as part of a much broader transformation programme. That change in dynamic puts a completely different emphasis on the SI's role – and at the core of the new role – is trust.

Customers always needed to trust their partners, so in one sense it's not a new concept. However, now the trust has to run much deeper as CIOs and CFOs look to their business partners not only to help integrate a new finance or HCM system, but to radically change the way in which their enterprise operates. If you are **PwC** or **Accenture**, you land with a good deal of trust in the bank by reputation. But if you are an up-and-coming challenger that has ridden high on the wave of

on-prem installations, without the global brand and heavy-hitting partners behind you, the task ahead could be daunting.





artin Burden, director, ERP offering lead at Avanade, said: "An SI needs to be a trusted advisor and support the CIO in taking technology and turning it into value driven solutions. CIOs also expect industry expertise optimised for their industry with knowledge to support technology implementations. The astute CIOs want to understand and get advice on what they need to do as an organisation to make the overall programme successful. Technology is only one aspect of change. Managing internal client expectations, supporting changing ways of working and making the project land well is often more challenging than the technology itself. I spend time with my clients making sure that they are supported and prepared for the change that is about to happen."

Rapid ROI and smaller projects - do they create opportunities or threats for the large SIs?

Historically, as soon as Oracle and **Deloitte** walked through the door you knew, as a CIO, that you were two years away from seeing results. Today, customers expect tangible benefits from investment in ERP technology within months, sometimes in weeks. Small innovations

that make a big difference can be integrated in rapid time with much smaller project teams and far less disruption to BAU activities.

There will be very few, if any, projects that follow the time-worn path of historical ERP implementations. Projects with a timeline of two or three years are a thing of the past and have been replaced with much more agile and rapid deployments of technology that





can bring almost instant benefit to a business and its employees. A traditional upgrade or reimplementation project would be front loaded with effort and cost and rear-loaded with benefits and results. Digital

transformation is much more of a fluid process where small chunks of activity can have a significant effect in a relatively short space of time. It's an ongoing activity that will likely see businesses in a constant state of evolution as newer technologies emerge and businesses react quickly to adopt the next step in development. The challenge for the large SIs is how they can flex their resources to be as agile as the technology they are implementing.

ain Fox, Group CEO at KPMG said: "For some time to come there will be the need for 'the Big SIs' because big corporates have big needs for their core transformation programmes. Usually these

are the only organisations that can deliver at scale, across borders and have the financial muscle to accept the commitments that come with large scale programmes. However, it's clear many digital programmes are smaller and more agile in their nature, regardless of the size of the organisation undertaking them. For this, the large SIs need to adopt a different approach; they need to be more agile, willing to accept different contracting models, usually more focussed on outcomes rather than deliverables.

"The real question is if large SIs can prosper, not in the FTSE 250 but in the upper mid-market where the majority of transformation programmes exist in terms of volume. The move to cloud and SaaS, especially in the ERP space, is creating a fundamental shift in upper mid-market and low corporate clients, of how they want to consume their digital programmes. They want less customisation and the easiest path to the evergreening future SaaS promises. This means they have to adopt not only from a process perspective but also to traditionally sacred cows such as the design of CoA. To this end, in order to prosper, the large SIs need to evolve solutions that can be adopted rather than adapted to. They need to bring their industry knowledge and investment muscle to develop solutions that can be implemented in a fraction of the time of traditional programmes. Clients will be willing to accept less customisation, less configuration, to speed up time to value and will spend more time focussing on solutions that bring value, often through products like the Microsoft Power set of solutions that support the development of differentiated outcome focussed solutions."



A TRADITIONAL UPGRADE OR REIMPLEMENTATION PROJECT WOULD BE FRONT LOADED WITH **EFFORT AND COST** AND REAR LOADED WITH BENEFIT AND RESULTS. DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION IS MUCH MORE OF A FLUID PROCESS.

We know the projects are smaller and we know they take less time. We also know that the skills required by customers to implement digital technology requires far less heavy-lifting in terms of headcount. Automation may be the happy hunting ground for manufacturers and distributors, but it is also playing an increasing role in the world of tech integration and ERP deployment. Most large consultancies have developed their own integration tools and methodologies, that leverage the very same technology embedded in the ERP platforms, to cut a lot of the grunt work out of ERP deployment. So, what are they going to do with all the people who have historically set up ledgers, tweaked code in applications or run data migration routines?



eil Thomas, SAP practice lead at HCL, said: "This is definitely a challenge for large scale SIs. In order to meet that challenge, we are investing heavily in automation accelerators in order to utilise the increasing capability of these techniques. This, of course, then presents the challenge of what we do with our head count, but we have (and continue to) repurpose teams to support building the routines and intelligence in the automation and RPA areas to further refine the algorithms. Some of the obvious questions we are asking ourselves are; where is my market? What is my USP? How committed am I to that market? Asking these questions may indeed lead to a change in the

FEATURE

resource pool for SIs but in order to mitigate this, successful large SIs have diversified business portfolios. HCL is focussed on digital engineering as a mainstay of future business. This, in essence, means we don't just provide the ERP solutions with our teams, we can engineer the IoT sensors, the hardware, etc. to provide business outcomes rather than 'just the ERP bits'.

"We are looking at training and upskilling people in new technologies, such as RPA, in order that we give clients new efficiencies. Equally, in the functional areas we are now spending more time investigating process differentiators, such as the segmentation solution we have developed in Life Sciences, as this is where organisations can make gains in their markets. Undoubtedly, the losers in the new world of projects will be those who don't gain the broader consulting skills to add value to their clients. Successful people will develop their rounder consulting and advisory skills in order to help develop new and entrepreneurial ways of working for their clients. As it happens, it is a longembraced philosophy at HCL where we encourage 'ideapreneurism' - allowing all staff to develop innovation ideas for our clients and rewarding people for their successes."

urden from Avanade also recognises the challenges but argues that while automation will play an increasing role in technology deployment, the functional and softer side of digital transformation still requires a

deep pool of talent to assist customers through the changes ahead. He said: "Yes, automation will reduce in particular some of the technology aspects of ERP projects. For example, automated provision of environments using cloud technologies, automated testing and evergreen applications mean that long upgrades will hopefully be a thing of the past. However, from a functional and operations perspective, changes represented by a new ERP are wide ranging in the business. Core consulting skills, both to support clients through change and to best consult on how the technology is to be implemented, will remain a core skill set. The operations side of any ERP implementation requires a lot of attention and effort; at the end of the day you are replacing the heart of your business and with technology change also comes business change both two processes and operations. The role of the SI has never been more important. For any redundancy in technology skill sets also comes opportunity for SIs to focus on innovative solutions for its clients and to focus on further value add."

Fox from KPMG concluded by saying: "Reskilling, redeployment and reinvention are all part of what is needed for large SIs to adapt and survive. That said this is nothing new in the industry, it's what the most successful organisations have been doing for 40 years."

Does this shift towards an outcome-based delivery model built on a deeper trust-led partnership favour the large SIs or does it provide an opportunity for niche consultancies to carve out a place in the digital transformation market?

It's no surprise that smaller more agile consultancies

are often at the cutting edge of emerging technologies. While the large SIs have the credibility and financial clout to take on the biggest projects, it is often the smaller niche consultancies that have the silver bullet to solve the most demanding problems. Smaller consultancies do not have the headcount pressures of larger organisations and they were often born to solve a specific problem so their offering is tightly defined, and their structure is as lean as can be.

But do these niche consultancies pose a threat to the large SIs or is there a space in the market for everyone?

McBurnie from PwC believes that there is space for both types of partner and cites niche consultancies as playing a key role in the overall mix required for successful digital transformation. He said: "The niche consultancies have specialist skills - the traditional SIs need to look beyond the system to add value in integration, data and change management so that ERP solutions deliver sustainable change. At PwC, we no longer consider ourselves to be an SI, but as a Business Integrator (BI). This means we can often work alongside niche consultancies to help them de-





liver specialist solutions whilst focussing on enabling the business and on transformation."

And Thomas from HCL agrees, saying: "The increase of niche payers is without doubt a challenge for large SIs - but frankly, the market is big enough for all styles of consulting organisation to operate. The market is focussed more on smaller implementations as organisations develop their solutions post the heavy lifting of global roll outs of the past few years. This is

providing great opportunities for niche consultancies and is great to see as good innovation is brought in by these players. Equally though, large SIs have global presence and even with smaller projects, the likelihood is that they will be deployed on a global scale. Therefore, it is entirely plausible that the market provides space for both niche organisations and global SIs to exist. Equally, we at HCL have often partnered with niche players where we see an obvious benefit for a client. I think organisations who liberate the best from the SI/niche partnership get the best of both worlds, and from my experience has certainly meant we can provide symbiotic services rather than seeing niche as 'competition."

"THEY ARE **FACING MANY** OF THE SAME **CHALLENGES** THAT THEIR **CUSTOMERS** ARE, BUT AS LONG AS SOME OF THEIR **EFFORT IS SPENT** PRACTICING WHAT THEY PREACH' THEY WILL CONTINUE TO PROSPER"



demands that true SaaS ERP place upon them through things like evergreening, will naturally fall by the way side or will be eaten up by the bigger healthier SIs, or will fail completely."

So, who are the least fit and, does casualty mean total failure or is there a less severe type of failure facing those who don't adapt quick enough? I think it's certain to say that none of the big consulting firms are facing a squeeze - they are facing many of the same

challenges that their customers are, but as long as some of their effort is spent 'practicing what they preach' they will continue to prosper. Consolidation at the upper end of the market would be near impossible as many of the global SIs have their tax, audit and advisory businesses behind them which makes mergers impractical. And I think the opportunity at the niche end of the market will also remain strong - niche being organisations that employ fewer than 250 people and have carved out a happy place in the market with a very clearly defined proposition. The big challenge will be for the few organisations that have grown rapidly but not yet reached the dizzying heights of the global consultancies. It will be increasingly difficult for those mid-market players to support their headcount without feeding from the top

table or having the agility and problem-specific tech that the niche players offer. Will they fail or will they



be acquired? I suspect a bit of both.

s the ERP gravy train over? Yes, as we once knew it, but that doesn't mean it's doom and gloom for those who have the agility, foresight and expertise to remain competitive, and above all, be trusted in this rapidly changing world of digital transformation.

Thomas from HCL, said: "To cut to the chase, if people in consulting organisations can provide value-add outcomes then the basics of capitalism remain. Given the uptake of S/4HANA implementations for the coming years I see demand for the skills outstripping supply, so I would assume the market will be buoyant. However, I do strongly think that the gravy train pulled into the sidings some years ago. Being continually on the front foot of technology, while helping large complex businesses differentiate in a cost effective manner is no 'easy ride', to reference the meaning of the term."

McBurnie from PwC summed up with: "The gravy train is over and the journey to the cloud has commenced...we have entered the next digital revolution. We should be excited at the opportunity that this gives us to help our clients transform their businesses."

Is the ERP gravy train over?

I started this editorial by suggesting that the role of the SI was dead and that the ERP implementation landscape had permanently changed. Whilst the nature of what an SI does has irreversibly shifted, it should not be overlooked that the ERP market as a whole is still growing at a rapid click. Depending on which set of figures you use, the global market will grow to something in the region of \$75bn by 2025 with a CAGR of about 10 percent. It's clear there is no slow down in demand for ERP services, in fact quite the opposite. More money is being spent on enterprise software, environments, licences and consulting services than ever and you only have to walk into one of the big consulting firm's offices to realise that no-one is expecting a downturn in revenues.

So, who are the likely casualties from the digital revolution, if any? Will we see consolidation amongst the global consultancies, and will the niche players continue to be able to make headway at the cutting edge of technology integration?

Fox from KPMG, said: "As the business applications market continues to shift shape and adapt to new paradigms we will naturally see the least fit organisations fail. Those SIs and ERP implementation houses that do not respond to client demands for more rapid implementations that are outcome focussed, and the

INTERVIEW

HAS THE FACE OF CONSULTING Changed Forever?

BY PAUL ESHERWOOD



In my former life as editor of a corporate finance magazine I was no stranger to the offices of the big five (as it was then). They were often dark, uninspiring, misogynistic places where partners sat at oak desks wearing double-breasted jackets; the 'minions' worked in partitioned rows to keep the tax people from talking to the audit team, and the scant few women wore pencil skirts and took notes or made tea. It's a very different story today.

It's hard to imagine a greater revolution in culture between those days and the environment that PwC staff work in today. I spent the day at their flagship London office, More London, which looks and feels like a cross between a Soho coffee shop and a technology start-up. The average age of the people I saw must have been in their mid to late 20s; everyone was dressed casually and everywhere I looked there were pods of

people sat together discussing, holding, playing with, and testing bits of technology. I am taken on a tour of PwC's Frontier space where customers, tech vendors and staff get together to discuss problems and find solutions. There are no divisions between the teams; there could be a tax partner working with a retailer supported by an AI expert, while someone with a VR headset demonstrates the solution in action.

Frontier is PwC's hub for emerging technologies. It's where the smartest PwC people work with customers and partners, such as Google and Salesforce, to bring together ideas and collaborate. PwC combines business, experience, and technology to address the needs of its clients and claims to be the only organisation that can provide a genuine 360 view when it comes to solving the most complex of business problems.

I sat down with Madeleine Thomson, UK and EMEA head of technology consulting and alliances, to discuss what was driving PwC's purpose, how the company had reinvented itself and why the relationship with its technology partners had changed.

PE: Mads, I knew PwC of old. It looks like a very different organisation today but why has PwC reinvented itself so radically?

MT: There's a philosophy here that's changed. We are now in the business of transformation and we have to be relevant in today's boardroom - that goes much further than just focusing on the CIO or CFO. We've been very thoughtful about how we integrate our technology services with our business advisory capabilities. When we see a client we ask what their business problem is. We try to



We've been very thoughtful about how we integrate our technology services with our business advisory capabilities

77

understand it from a strategy point of view first and then work through what kind of experience they want, and then think about the technology we need to deliver that outcome. PwC is the only organisation across EMEA with the breadth of experience and resources to address the most complex of problems; we have people who understand tax regimes which is really important when you are looking at supply chain issues. We have people who understand the risk and regulatory situation across all domains. We have people who understand identity management issues, and we have the world's best cyber practice. When

you bolt technology on to that we can present the right choice to our clients having looked at the problem through many different lenses.

PE: How does PwC differentiate itself from the other global partners? What can PwC bring to the table that others can't?

MT: We are known for delivering results even where others have deemed it impossible. We combine strategy, technology and management consulting expertise (including risk), drawing on our network to deliver tangible, measurable, human-centred change.

It's this unique combination of ca-

pabilities which sets us apart in the market. We're not just a strategy house where the answer to every problem is a new strategy. We're not simply a technology player where the answer to every problem is digital. And we're not only management consultants where the answer is always process reinvention.

We have created a philosophy, 'BXT', to drive transformation performance in a way that sparks innovation and meets business objectives. BXT combines business, experience and technology, to break down silos and unite fragmented viewpoints to get everyone to focus on a single purpose and

INTERVIEW

solution, something that isn't possible when viewed through only one lens.

PE: What are the main drivers for

digital transformation and how is PwC working with its customers to ensure they take advantage of new technologies and methodologies? MT: Disruption is one of the main drivers. Organisations and society are facing bigger, more complex problems than ever before. They need to adapt to a world of increasing asymmetry, digital disruption, demographic pressures, populism and declining trust. We're operating in a more disruptive market, with fast paced tech advances, more demanding customers driving

innovation and disruptive thinking. Changing market demands are increasing the pace at which organisaWe now have the critical mass to go after some of the largest and most complex transformation programmes out there. We're building a reputation for delivering transformational results and that means results for the customer. We are becoming known for our ability to take on any problem, frame it and solve it. We've got great people – clever, talented and experienced. We have broad expertise and diverse perspectives.

Our technological capability allows us to reimagine what's possible. We do this by accessing an extensive range of technologies to support us in delivering complex transformation programmes. These can include cloud, data and analytics, artificial intelligence and robotic process automation.

With cloud it is no longer about selling the most software and then a partner implementing it. Customers want more and cloud means both parties have to provide better and more consistent service levels. It is all about simplification and standardisation which means we are all in a service economy and that means working together or missing out.

We work much closer with our technology vendors such as Oracle, Salesforce, SAP and Workday, bringing them into the client conversations earlier and going in as one team wherever possible. We use our business ex-







It is all about simplification and standardisation which means we are all in a service economy and that means working together or missing out.

tions seek large scale, results-driven transformation. There is a need for integrated solutions backed by the right technology as clients look for broader support across their business.

These issues require businesses to transform what they do and how they do it. Transformation means delivering a set of tangible outcomes, and whilst technology is the enabler for transformation, it is not just about new systems.

PE: How has the relationship between PwC and the technology vendors changed, and what is driving those changes? How and why does digital transformation require a more collaborative partnership? MT: Yes the relationship has changed and it is still changing. It is not about one-off deals but about long-term partnerships where both PwC and the vendors can offer ongoing relationships and services to customers.

perience and technology perspectives to reframe problems and identify solutions that can be missed if viewed through a single company lens.

Our distinct problem solving approach is twofold; First, we work with the client to understand their problem – and this may not be the one they bring to us. Secondly, we reframe the problem and design an approach that addresses the needs of customers, employees and stakeholders.

Either or both of these stages can involve the technology vendor. We then work with the client to co-create the solution. This builds a shared understanding, promotes a sense of ownership and encourages a determination to implement. We use prototyping to test potential solutions, allowing us to 'fail fast', obtain user feedback and test a number of possibilities simultaneously.

This approach validates what works and what doesn't, helping to make the next steps clear. Our methodology means that any solution we recommend is much more likely to be successful and make a real difference because it responds to the issues faced by all the people who will be affected by it.

We are investing in a range of industries for example retail, consumer, financial services, construction, oil and gas; where our strategic industry knowledge allows organisations to adopt more market standard technology to solve business problems. We are growing our teams and appointing new directors and partners and recruiting experienced delivery teams to service the demand.

We have invested in developing

accelerators including Maverick and FTIS that support key industry challenges such as IFRS17 and Open Banking, and we will continue to build model systems for specific industries and work together solutions is to configure the business to the standard software compared to on-premise, where traditional SIs have made a good living in configuring the software to the business.

We feel we are the right partner because we understand the business processes and future challenges. Being strategy-led, using the right technology in the right place and taking a human-centred approach to transformation leads to fast, successful



This builds a shared understanding, promotes a sense of ownership and encourages a determination to implement.

77

PE: How has PwC invested in its partnerships with technology vendors to ensure it is able to meet the demands of its customers?

MT: PwC has strengthened its commitment to alliances and invested heavily in building a professional team to manage the alliance relationships with our key strategic partners. In the last 12 months alone we have appointed senior and experienced directors to each of our key strategic alliances.

with technology vendors to provide best practice industry solutions.

PE: How closely does PwC work with the technology vendors to ensure that it is aligned with the vendor narrative, and what has PwC done to ensure that its consultants and customer facing team have the skills required to deliver technology-enabled change?

MT: The best way to implement SaaS

adoption. Customer-centric change management is the key to success, not the technology.

We have invested heavily in building our technology teams and upskilling them, enabling them to gain the right certifications to achieve the various vendor and cloud accreditations. We feel it is mandatory that their technology skills match their consultancy and transformation experience. \blacksquare

I was there at the start

Certus pioneered the blueprint for government transformation - now Accenture picks up the baton

ark Sweeny has been at the centre of the cloud applications revolution since before anyone had even heard of SaaS. His company, Certus Solutions, was a trailblazer for Oracle Fusion and implemented many of the first to market projects - particularly in central government. Last year, Accenture bought Certus as it looked to strengthen its cloud delivery capabilities and capitalise on Certus' reputation as the go-to partner for Oracle's cloud applications. I sat down with Sweeny to discuss the Certus story and get his views on how cloud has changed the SI and consulting model over the last ten years.

If you've worked in the Oracle sector in the last two decades you've almost certainly worked with Mark Sweeny. One of the best known characters in the biz apps ecosystem, Sweeny's down to earth persona coupled with a deep understanding of IT project management and Oracle technologies helped steer Certus to the front of the queue for any public sector organisation considering Oracle Cloud.

Sweeny started his career straight from school when he joined **Lloyds Bank** as a data processing clerk. He described his daily tasks as some of the most mundane work he has ever done but said the experience was a great foundation for his future entrepreneurial ambitions. "I spent my days printing out people's bank statements, there really wasn't much else to it. But, I was exposed to an environment with

IT systems and it gave me my first understanding of how they worked. My dad was an IT director and always wanted me to get into that. I had ambitions of playing the drums in a band but as soon as I found IT, I knew that's what I wanted to do. I did realise my ambition of drumming though - the band I started at Lloyds, called 'One Night,' actually went on to play gigs for seven years."

After leaving Lloyds, and firmly putting his music career on hold, Sweeny moved into systems programming and databases while studying at night school for his business degree. Sweeny made two efforts to launch his own business before Certus, and although neither businesses flourished, he admits that learning to lose was an invaluable lesson that helped him succeed with Certus. He said: "My first business was a bit of a disaster. Everything that could go wrong did and Business School really hadn't prepared me for that. My second company was a software development business and although it was a great idea we simply ran





out of money. Both experiences have been invaluable though and taught me a lot about what to do, and what not to do, when I launched Certus."

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The Certus years

Sweeny says that Certus came together in a perfect storm of being in the right place at the right time coupled with great contacts and all the lessons learned from his previous business ventures. He cites the rise of mobile apps amongst consumers and the growth rates of cloud-native companies like **Salesforce** and **Face-book** as two of the biggest indicators



that cloud is where the enterprise apps sector was heading and although Oracle was yet to release its cloud proposition, Sweeny was confident that when it did, it would be a gamechanger.

"Historically, only the biggest of enterprises could access the kind of technology that cloud was promising and I knew that despite coming late to the party Oracle would build a suite of products for the cloud that would be untouchable. Larry (Ellison, Oracle executive chairman) was investing a lot of money in developing the Fusion applications and so we bet big on red and went all in with our business model to focus on that."

Certus was still in its infancy and back in November 2011 the Oracle product was quite immature - it had barely half of the functionality of its on-premise counterpart - and cloud was such a new business model that uptake was slow. However, Sweeny says he pushed all his money and resources into building out a capability and a set of proprietary toolsets designed specifically for Oracle Fusion as he was confident that the product would catch up and that the big SIs would eventually realise they had to get into this space too, setting up an acquisition plan from the start.

"Oracle was investing heavily in the cloud and I put my faith in the product and bet that the likes of Accenture would come into this space eventually. We were the pioneers of Oracle Fusion and although we only really had half a product, and it took us two years to learn how to make it work, we were in at the beginning and that gave us a great advantage. I wanted to build a business around the new Oracle technologies but knew I needed something else to generate real value. We developed engage.gov in 2015 as the arguments for cloud were so compelling for central government. We positioned Certus from the start so that we would be attractive to the big SIs. In fact, Accenture who we eventually sold to, was one of the first companies we delivered training to for Oracle Fusion."

The public sector opportunity

Certus made its name in public services. It was the first name on the list for all but the very biggest Oracle im-

plementations and took the lead on projects like Office for National Statistics (ONS), HM Treasury, and more recently, The Crown Prosecution Service (CPS).

"A lot of these projects were ground breaking and we were able to implement many of the solutions in rapid time. The Treasury and ONS took just ten months and we

completed the CPS project in about six. Most people think of the public sector as being slow but it's incredibly dynamic and fast paced. Our own engage.gov platform was crucial to that and I look back on all of those projects with an enormous sense of pride."

However, it was the Home Office project that was the jewel in the crown and the collaboration between Certus and Accenture was the beginning of a much closer relationship. Accenture acquired Certus in April 2018 with Sweeny joining the Accenture senior management team as managing director. At the time, Zahra Bahrololoumi, head of Accenture Technology for UK & Ireland, said: "This acquisition brings a team with highly respected Oracle Cloud expertise and extends the capabilities of our market leading Oracle practice. By joining together we can add scale to provide excellent solutions to our joint clients and expand Certus Solutions into more areas of the Oracle eco-system."

Sweeny wouldn't be drawn on the value of the sale but judging by his collection of Aston Martins I think it's safe to say that he's done quite well out of the deal. That said, so have Accenture which continues to develop the engage. gov platform and now position it as their go to market solution for the UK.

Sweeny was in at the start and built a great business on the back of the first cloud revolution. It will be interesting to see if he, and others like him, will build equally dynamic businesses to tackle the changing role of system integration and accelerate the next phase of emerging technologies.





Next

ERP IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Universities are traditional organisations with mosaic cultures. Few if any sectors can benefit from digital transformation as much as HE but programmes can be complex and many run into problems. We review all transformation programmes from the last year to see what lessons can be learned.

FINANCE SYSTEMS AND DIGITAL FINANCE

Digital transformation has revolutionised the finance function with greater insights into financial performance, quicker and more accurate reporting, and improved planning and budgeting. We review the leading SaaS financials suites and examine some of the best examples of true digital finance transformation.

THE **FUTURE OF WORK**

Enterprises that are recognising the opportunities of adopting more remote workers are saving on office space, overheads, and attracting greater expertise. But it doesn't work for every department. This feature looks at how companies are providing access to the right tools to help a diverse and remote workforce get the job done, empower their performance, and encourage and input to the organisation as a whole.

HYPERSCALERS AND CLOUD PLATFORMS REVIEW

What is a hyperscaler and how do you choose between the cloud platform options? Are they all the same and can the biggest cloud providers really develop some differentiation? As the hybrid cloud model picks up pace how should CIOs architect their cloud platforms to minimise risk and drive maximum value?

WOMEN LEADERS IN ERP

The rise and rise of the female agenda. Has the push for equality created as many problems as it has solved, or are the uncomfortable conversations a necessary part of creating greater long term balance? We talk to men and women who are at the centre of the equality movement and ask how far have we really come?

INVOICING AND PAYMENTS

Predictive accounting adds another layer of intelligence to the ERP system. It can help to identify and test out smarter growth strategies, research and analyse future business partners (and the ones it might be best to stay away from), and add valuable information to business plan revisions to help to satisfy the bank and your investors both existing and potential.

issue

LIVING IN THE CLOUD - BEYOND GO-LIVE

The journey to the cloud is one thing but what do you do when you get there? So much effort is focussed on getting to the cloud that very few enterprises plan sufficiently for life beyond go-live. How do enterprises maintain the momentum that cloud demands and do business leaders have the energy and appetite for a constant state of flux?

SECURITY IN ERP PLATFORMS

Evolving ERP systems are a lacework of everything necessary to run a modern enterprise. How can businesses ensure the security of data, safeguard against human error, and protect against malicious intent as intricate systems that encourage self-service and open system technologies?

TECHNOLOGY IN SPORT

Sport has embraced technology with individuals, teams, organisations and global events leveraging enterprise apps to improve performance, create experience, and power sporting showcases. We look at the best uses of technology in Sport and how it adds to the experience.

APIS AND MICROSERVICES

Detailed look at how to build an API strategy and successful microservices architecture across your enterprise applications platform. Review of leading developers plus case studies from the most innovative used cases.

DATA WAREHOUSE REVIEW

Data warehousing as a service offers customers the ability to ramp up and down on demand and handle any scale of data. With such a choice of data warehousing options how should CIOs choose their warehouse partner?

CHANGE MANAGEMENT

Change management has always played a role in ERP projects but often that amounted to nothing more than throwing a user manual at employees so they could learn the new system. That won't work with digital transformation and change management is 'the' cornerstone of successful digital programmes.







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AT THE HEART OF YOUR BUSINESS

Enabling your people and your processes for optimum profit

igital HR and human capital management (HCM) applications are playing an increasingly major role in the whole ERP story. On the traditional HR side, more automation and self-service personnel tasks can take care of requests for time off, expense submissions, performance review information, regulatory adherence and much more. The result of freeing up this administration enables the reapportioning of human energy to work alongside business growth executives on HCM initiatives.

Digitalised HR clears the way for more engaged, analytical and demonstrably profitable HCM

With growing appreciation for the usefulness of artificial intelligence and machine learning in managing human resources, businesses are realising potentially untapped profit from personnel - both existing and those to be recruited in the future. The research firm, Gartner neatly packages HCM as workforce acquisition, workforce management, and workforce optimisation. It has also plotted a roadmap which estimates that by 2025 half of mid-market and large enterprises worldwide will have invested in a cloud-deployed HCM suite for administrative HR and talent management. Closer to home, UK analysis in **Deloitte's Human Capital Trends 2019** report defines an HR cloud system as



a 'launch-pad' rather than a 'destination'. That study indicates that, while cloud systems have come a long way toward integrating the messy back office of HR, other requirements are still necessary to support innovation, raise employee productivity and reduce cost. It also suggests that organisations need to rethink their HR technology strategy sooner rather than later, consider cloud as a foundation, and explore new platforms as well as automation and AI-based tools to complement their core systems.

Organisations with agile HR are more likely to outpace the competition

According to Mark Judd - vice president of product strategy EMEA at **Workday** - an opportune time to start planning to boost efficiencies for managing your people resources is in the early stages of a wider business transformation. "An HR overhaul should be an integral part of the business' strategic roadmap for creating a digital workplace. After all, in the age of digital disruption, organisations that have an agile HR function far outpace their competition."

t's worth noting that due to the many parts of HR, thankfully not all of it has to be tackled at once. However, Vincent Belliveau, chief executive EMEA at Cornerstone OnDemand said that to really deliver strategic value an organisation should focus on the transformational aspects of HR first and foremost, which in most cases means delaying the transfer of transactional systems to the cloud. Transactional HR, like payroll and time management systems, are important and need to work but it's not these systems that transform a culture and drive business value. Transformational HR systems, such as learning, recruitment, performance management and analytics, are the crucial elements that create impactful people strategy and move the needle when it comes to an organisation's success.

HR digital transformation is more than transporting existing processes onto a new system

HR systems must become more engaging, more personalised, and more data-driven

Judd also told us that a successful transformation requires a thoughtful examination of a company's current state and potential future state. When looking to the future state of the organisation HCM requires an agile mindset that is led by HR but involves the entire organisation in continuous experimentation, he told us. He went on to highlight some of the key ingredients for success as a willingness to implement organisational change, alignment between HR and IT, and a strategic roadmap for creating a digital workplace.

"This is because HR digital transformation isn't simply a question of redesigning processes. Organisations must address evolving work environments, flexible working arrangements, a volatile regulatory landscape, and tightening labour markets," he said.

"The misstep many organisations make when deploying new technologies is to copy existing processes in the new system, rather than commit to complete HR transformation. There's no room for complacency in today's fast-paced business climate. To continue the upward curve for growth in the industry companies need to innovate using modern cloud services to transform their business, become more agile, and keep delivering fantastic customer experiences."

How to engage people with new ways of working

The user experience is of equal importance when seeking more functional and streamlined HR processes. Getting frustrated with a clunky or unfamiliar interface or system can have pervasive negative effects on an employee's psychological and physical well-being. Lauren Bidwell, Ph.D., HCM research scientist at SAP SuccessFactors said that self-service should save employees and managers time and energy, but that this is not always the case. In fact, she said, self-service solutions can cause significant

frustration and wasted time if they are designed with cost-savings rather than a user's needs in mind.

Last summer SuccessFactors conducted a 'Manager Self-Service Experience Survey' and found that one third of the respondents reported that using their company's on-premise self-service functions left them feeling 'ineffective', 'irritated', or 'frustrated'. Further, almost half of the participants (43 percent) reported wondering if self-service tasks could be done with less effort if things were organised differently.

Reverse mentoring for faster engagement

Change can be tricky to embrace, especially when the benefits of a better system seem elusive until tried. To help engage staff with new systems, Jon Wrennall - the CTO at Advanced - offered the positive benefit impact when multiple generations of employees work alongside each other. Encompassing the traditionalists (born before 1945) through to the





latest Generation Z (born after 1995), Wrennall explained that an effective way of kick-starting inter-generational working is by reverse mentoring. This is where the traditional image of the mentor is turned on its head so that senior or older members of the workforce are coached by the Millennials and Generation Zs.

he concept is in action at manufacturing company Neatcrown Corwen, a family-owned business in North Wales employing local people often spanning three generations. The company hired 24 year-old Dewi Prandle as a planning and procurement manager to spearhead the implementation of Advanced's cloud-based ERP system, Business Cloud Essentials. With a natural aptitude for the 'software mindset' that is often associated with Generation Zs, Prandle is helping his colleagues across the organisation to adapt, adopt, and make the most of the new system.

"Forward-thinking businesses are responding positively to this opportunity to help drive innovations around areas such as digital technology. This is where HR can work hand-in-hand with IT to introduce new initiatives to engage employees with new technology from HR through to ERP for example," said Wrennall.

THE BATTLE FOR SUPREMACY

How do the big three HCM vendors measure up and what should CHROs consider when selecting their technology partner for their digital HR journey?

Holger Mueller is a VP and principal analyst at Constellation Research which is a technology research and advisory firm based in Silicon Valley. They deliver strategic guidance to companies seeking to transform their businesses through the early adoption of disruptive technology. Their analysts draw on their experience as practitioners to deliver pragmatic advice to CXOs leading digital transformation within their organizations.

here are upwards of two dozen HCM vendors but the market is dominated by three big names; Oracle, SAP and Workday. While Kronos, Ceridian, Cornerstone OnDemand and Inforto mention just a few of the challengers - all have products that are fit for purpose, the three big enterprise apps vendors account for more than half of all the UK HCM suite sales.

Holger Meuller, our new contributing editor for enterprise apps and a VP at Constellation Research, sets out the merits of the respective big players in his analysis below.

VENDORS & OFFERINGS

ORACLE HCM CLOUD

Of the vendors in this review, Oracle's offering is the most mature. With DNA starting in the early 2000s and with Fusion Applications, Oracle HCM Cloud is the advanced family member in the Oracle Cloud Suite. With an early start comes adoption, and Oracle has the most organically grown cloud customers compared with the other two large enterprise vendors (SAP and Workday). The Oracle HCM team also has by far the largest development team across the vendors. This allows Oracle to put out differentiating products on a yearly basis. Examples of this include: Work Life solutions, including Wellness and Volunteering; and HR Helpdesk, which the company delivered a few years ago - an area unmatched by the competition as an offering built in-house. For a long time Oracle HCM was troubled by the disconnect between great functional capabilities and subpar user experience. The company successfully addressed the dischord in 2018, and customers' concerns and issues in this area have largely subsided. The biggest functional push by Oracle has been

the recent release of its new recruiting capability. Over a long period, and in secret, Oracle built its organic and best practices - enabling recruiting solutions beyond the functional scope of Taleo (for instance, with its Candidate Relationship Management). This has been a good move by Oracle and closes the gap that it had from a platform perspective inside of talent management. Now, all of Oracle's HCM solutions are built on one platform, data model and user experience. Customers appreciate a seamless HCM automation portfolio, and Oracle has now delivered on this. Finally, Oracle is working with early adopters on a purely voice-driven HCM user experience. Constellation has seen demos of impressive capabilities, accuracy, performance and benefits for employees.

arlier this year at the **Oracle Modern Business** Experience conference, the company unveiled a new mobile version that dynamically renders on both Android and iOS devices, giving customers a seamless mobile user experience. At the same time, Oracle has innovated in its talent management portfolio, improving onboarding and performance management capabilities in 2018. Moreover, Oracle has been focussing on AI/ML around its Adaptive Intelligence Apps, with its first applications shipped in 2018; we anticipate more to come in 2019. Oracle has a substantial opportunity regarding data capabilities for its customers given the global adoption of its suite.

Finally, Oracle has made substantial progress in the CaaS area, helping enterprises stay out of compliance trouble. The Oracle Cloud Suite (not only

in HCM) flags potential compliance issues proactively for auditor visits and review, during normal operations of the system, based on a rules-based approach. Customers appreciate any help to manage compliance more efficiently and holistically, and this is a key step.

CXO TAKEAWAY

Oracle has helped enterprises with their HCM automation needs for more than a decade. As the rest of the Oracle Cloud Suite has emerged and matured, the synergy capabilities for Oracle HCM have increased. With its suite, Oracle addressed the UX issues that have deterred users from using its functional capabilities. After an impressive effort in the CaaS area, Oracle will now be addressing its payroll strategy and road map. While Oracle provides the most complete, integrated suite compared with the other ERP vendors in this review it must overcome the reputational challenges it faces in the enterprise from an overall vendor perspective. And unfortunately, people leaders are not the most courageous executives in the boardroom when they have to recommend a vendor and their colleagues have some reservations.

This is unfortunate because enterprises could miss out on one of the market's most mature and complete HCM suites. Recently, Oracle addressed these challenges with a new positioning, a new marketing initiative, and a more gentle sales approach.

SAP SUCCESSFACTORS

The HCM capabilities of SAP's venerable R/3 product can be found in almost all large enterprises around

the globe. What has worked and still works for SAP is its localisation capabilities based on the Smalltalk-like Infotype framework, combined with a lightweight, process oriented payroll engine. While the architecture has some imitators, SAP's payroll capabilities for over 50 countries remain unmatched and unchallenged. With the acquisition of SuccessFactors, SAP has closed relevant holes in its talent management portfolio; SuccessFactors clearly gives SAP a leadership position in the core talent management capability of performance management. To protect its global HR core and localisation lead with a cloud based offering, SAP has predominantly focussed on bringing its new HR core system, Employee Central, scope equal to the old R/3. This process has largely concluded, and SAP customers are moving to HR core and talent management in the cloud with SAP. The looming issue is what to do with payroll, which for now is not cloud based. SAP and SAP partners have a managed offering for customers that want to close on-premises SAP HR installations. With the SuccessFactors DNA of being the widely accepted leader in performance management, SAP has not been shy about reinventing the capability with continuous performance management. And showing its reach, SAP SuccessFactors has introduced apprentice management functionality, a European business practice that is now automated.

n spring 2018, at its Sapphire user conference, SAP unveiled a substantial change in the value proposition of its automation portfolio: No longer were 'cloudnative' divisions like SuccessFactors to run on the best technology for cloud operation; rather, they were to quickly harmonise on the SAP stack

All of Oracle's HCM solutions are built on one platform, data model and user experience

95

POWER TO THE PEOPLE

(SAP HANA, SAP Cloud Platform, Leonardo capabilities such as machine learning and SAP Analytics). As with any vendor focused on platform work, there are fewer advancements in functionality. For SuccessFactors, this means that a new mobile offering has been its major functionality push reaching customers in the last 18 months. Besides that, SAP has provided new capabilities in onboarding, some new candidate relationship management functionality and plans to use SAP's assistant, SAP Co-Pilot, for HCM use cases. SAP SuccessFactors has also addressed quality issues, user group requests and other minor functional enhancements. This will pay off for SAP customers in the not-so-distant future, when all SAP cloud assets and S/4HANA run on the same technology stack. From cloud migration to operational efficiencies, faster and consistent insights to end-to-end automation, enterprises should benefit substantially from SAP's platform efforts.

CXO TAKEAWAY

Platforms age and strategies change. What matters is that vendors use the massive investments into re-engineering for new attractive platforms and deliver that effort successfully. SAP is doing that and is well on the way with its effort. For customers, it matters that the lights are kept on" for the existing platform, maintenance happens and smaller new capabilities are added, which SAP is doing well. Traditionally, it also has done well at providing customers with potential migration time frames, although it is not clear if the current effort undertaken by SuccessFactors warrants or needs a migration if customers are already operating in the cloud. The major innovation of 2018/2019—new mobile apps—certainly delivers value for customers. Now all eyes are on what SuccessFactors will provide on the functional side for 2019, which has not been unveiled yet.

WORKDAY HCM

Workday has managed to reach the market leader position across the vendors after long being seen as a thought leader. Workday deserves thanks from the other vendors in the market for pushing and popularising the cloud as a delivery platform for HCM software. Workday offers its products as a complete cloud-based suite. It has built out an HCM suite encompassing the key areas of HR core, talent management and payroll (with in-house capabilities for four countries and partners for more).

ost recently, Workday has pushed hard to close the insights to action loop with the acquisition of Adap-

tive Insights. Adaptive Insights has the right capabilities to make this desired functionality real; now it's up to Workday to deliver. Another key recent deliverable by Workday is the availability of its Skills Cloud, allowing enterprise to see, match and evaluate position-based skills.

Lastly, Workday has made substantial progress on its PaaS capabilities, which are key for enterprises to integrate and extend Workday with the rest of their automation portfolios. Behind the scenes, Workday is busy moving from an in-house to a public cloud model to deliver its applications, with Amazon AWS being the currently pre-

ferred IaaS platform. Customers in the Quebec area will be the first to operate on AWS.

Going forward, Workday will have to work to maintain its thought leadership position, especially when it comes to new technologies such as voice as the new UX, AI and blockchain. This year is key for Workday to articulate this vision going forward. Overall, people leaders are comfortable with Workday; the company has become the 'safe' selection decision when picking a vendor.

CXO TAKEAWAY

Workday has done everything right to become the thought leader in HCM. But it can't rest on its laurels and needs to keep pushing. Cloud and modern architectures have become table stakes across the industry. Finalising decade-old concepts as 'insights to action' is worthy of praise but don't add to thought leadership. And this position has helped Workday to charge considerable premiums over the competition because it is regarded as the 'safe' choice from both a reputation and a best practices perspective. Moreover, Workday has tended to partner for the 'hard' pieces of automation in HCM, notably payroll (with ADP) and workforce management (with Kronos). While the integration is state of the art for payroll with ADP, the concern is that integration may break and enterprises could face compliance and continuity issues. Workday may have to rethink its strategy in this area, building out more payroll and workforce management capabilities in-house. But overall, Workday scores with the vital CxO comfort factor, a position envied by every vendor in this report.

Workday is busy moving from an in-house to a public cloud model to deliver its applications



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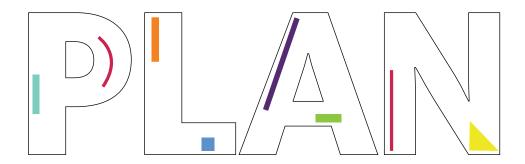






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FOR PEOPLE FIRST, NOT SYSTEMS

Plan for a positive employee experience - then plan for the technology

mpowerment should be at the heart of a strong employee engagement plan. This is the belief of Helen Armstrong, CEO at independent HR and payroll consultancy Silver Cloud HR. "HR technology is the most powerful when it enhances an employee's experience throughout their entire life-cycle of a relationship with an organisation. But it must be embedded into the employee value proposition to take full effect." She adds that the HR directors who have already embraced the basics of self-service are experiencing renewed empowerment to drive collaboration and productivity.

"It should be people first, not systems," said Vincent Belliveau, chief executive at cloud-based learning and HCM software company Cornerstone OnDemand. Reinforcing that any HR digital transformation should start with the people it serves, Belliveau went on to say: "HR directors and company

leadership must offer a strong employee experience so that they drive self-development and have the right people with the right skills and the right jobs at the right time. Therefore, a pragmatic approach would be to start with the right system that offers a great employee experience across recruiting, performance and learning. This brings value to the organisation, faster." He also offered that a talent-driven approach to core HR and HCM unlike the traditional rip-and-replace - accelerates digital transfor-

mation to bring key benefits of higher impact, lower risk, simplified change management, and a reduction in costand time-to-value.



VINCENT BELLIVEAU CORNERSTONE ONDEMAND

HR directors who have already embraced the basics of self-service are experiencing renewed empowerment to drive collaboration and productivity



PETER HARTE

"Half of the UK's organisations are ineffective at creating a positive working environment"

Employee Engagement linked to Productivity

Despite these sentiments, movement seems to be dragging. Half of the UK's organisations are ineffective at creating a positive working environment, with only a fifth of UK employees being satisfied with workplace technology, and more than two thirds (69 percent) reporting that there is no incentive to learn new skills. These findings come from **Deloitte**'s Human Capital Trends 2019 report which tracks the trends shaping the agenda for HR and business leaders. The top UK HCM 10 trends cited for this year were led by employee experience and leadership & learning.

Many of the people involved in the study (84 percent) felt that employee engagement and productivity are indeed linked but 68 percent said that

their organisation does not measure this correlation. Only 18 percent believed that their company's leadership programmes are effective at developing people to meet evolving business and economic challenges; and 24 percent believe that how a business is run, as well as organisational structures, get in the way of

leaders managing teams effectively. Worryingly, 69 percent reported that they felt they had no incentive to learn new skills, yet 87 percent stated that learning is important in driving employee engagement.

n a statement about the figures, Will Gosling, partner and human capital lead at Deloitte UK said that: "Business leaders need to act now in order to reskill their workforces to future-proof their business. Artificial intelligence is not new, but the pace of change is and businesses risk leaving swathes of society behind. Faced with longer careers and a multi-generational workforce, employers need to continually train and equip workers with new skills in order to attract, retain and develop."

Automated HR tools can also create a happier, and therefore more productive, workplace. For example, insights that help managers to understand individual team members more deeply enables them to tailor their approach and communication styles – prompting a more motivated and engaged workforce.

eter Harte, vice president EMEA at Kronos a provider of workforce management and human capital management cloud offerings - said that if leveraged in the right way emerging technology such as artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML) can be instrumental in improving both an organisation's bottom line and the engagement of its employees. A study carried out by The Workforce Institute around this topic found that, of the UK employees involved, 92 percent recognised that AI can make their working lives easier. While 68 percent said that they would be in favour of embracing AI if it helped to balance workloads or increase fairness in subjective decisions, almost two thirds (62 percent) said that their employers had yet to share any details or plans regarding the introduction of such technology. The good news is that about the same number of respondents (63 percent) would be comfortable with AI initiatives if their employer was more open about how it will affect their roles.

Higher from within

workday.com/truepartner

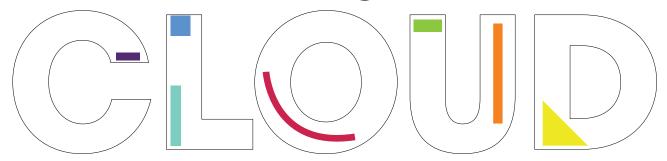
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TEN YEARS IN THE



BY PAUL ESHERWOOD

racle holds an enviable position in the enterprise apps space. Its HCM platform is the most mature and the most functionally rich of all the suites. It has been selling cloud-based HR products for nearly a decade and has more money and resources devoted to R&D than any of its nearest rivals. Originally launched in October 2011 through the Fusion range of applications, Oracle has supplemented the original 100 or so modules with the acquisition of Taleo and broken new ground with its compliance capabilities. Improvements to its mobile integration and user experience have recently, and significantly, boosted its appeal to tech-savvy enterprises and pushed Oracle to the front of the queue for any CHRO considering moving to the cloud.

I sat down with Yazad Dalal, head of strategy for HCM Cloud Applications to ask what is driving digital HR and what sets Oracle apart from the rest of the competition?

PE What is driving the need for digital HR? And why should companies who have invested heavily in on-premise HCM platforms move their applications and infrastructure to the cloud?

"Moving HCM applications to the cloud gives businesses the agility they need to adapt their people strategy to business objectives" We're living in a world where the need to innovate is key to a company's survival. Companies need to move quickly to adapt to market shift, customer demands and changes in employee needs. Key to this is delivering an employee experience that is modern and moves at the current pace of innovation. Moving HCM applications to the cloud gives businesses the agility they need to adapt their people strategy to business objectives to ensure that they keep evolving and growing as an organisation. It allows them to focus their resources on mission critical innovations that will keep delighting their employees and their customers, rather than on managing people processes that eat into employee's time.

PE A lot of enterprises are battle weary having upgraded legacy systems many times over - and a lot of them have the scars to prove it. How is HCM Cloud a different proposition?

The beauty of the cloud is that it takes away the pain of constant upgrading. Moving to the cloud is the last upgrade they would ever do because cloud systems automatically iterate as new updates are made available, which means that customers don't have to spend time, effort and money ensuring that they have the latest and greatest software. This means that customers can focus on growing their business rather than on maintaining software.

PE What is Oracle doing to accelerate the move to cloud, and what would you say to CIOs who are reluctant to embrace another big IT project?

YD Oracle is helping our customers understand

"To spell out the benefits of cloud adoption you need to work with the whole organisation"

what the cloud can actually do for their business by making them more efficient and productive - creating positive business outcomes. We no longer think in terms of big IT projects that launch every five years. With Oracle Cloud it's your last big project because we simply deliver innovation through four updates per year.

PE How does Oracle spell out the benefits of cloud adoption to dispel this myth that digital HR is just another IT project?

YD The cloud is not just something for the IT department to act on. Every member of the board needs to work together to understand what the outcomes are from a move to the cloud and the part their department plays in this. If it's about increasing employee engagement, we need to be sitting down with the CHRO and CIO together to really understand what the cloud platform needs to look like to meet this objective. If it's about increasing customer experience the CMO needs to be involved, as does the CFO so they can understand how the improved experience will impact the bottom line. Essentially to spell out the benefits of cloud adoption you need to work with the whole organisation, not just a specific silo, and this is something Oracle believes in. We are laser focussed on ensuring that our customers - in whatever guise they come in - are able to understand how the cloud is helping their business, across people processes and all business functions.

PE What benefits, aside from the more obvious SaaS advantages, does Oracle HCM Cloud offer its customers?

Beyond AI and voice based digital assistants, one of the main benefits is our ability to connect and interact with other systems. Our HCM cloud works seamlessly with our ERP cloud, as an example. This allows customers to break down the silos between different parts of their business and gain an holistic view of their organisation. Through APIs, we can also engage and interact with our customers' homegrown systems, or any third-party system that is important to their business. Having that complete view of the organisation allows our customers to better plan for success, grow their business, and drive innovation.

PE Why should enterprises choose Oracle HCM Cloud over other platforms?

YD Oracle has been in the cloud for well over a decade, and this experience puts us in a unique position to help our customers. We've been building our entire cloud – not just the HCM element – for years.

Our analysts and customers agree that Oracle HCM Cloud is the global leader in vision and innovation. Our customers tell us that they choose Oracle because they believe in our vision of the future of work because our product development team is deeply committed to innovation built on AI, voice and natural language. For the HR department this makes administrative processes leaner and puts relevant information at employees' fingertips. It also frees HR teams up to focus on the strategic initiatives like employee engagement and wellness.



POWER TO THE PEOPLE

LEVERAGE THE



OF **PEOPLE ANALYTICS**

Behind every company strategy is the people needed to execute it; and behind the people executing the strategy - growth, innovation, customer retention - is HR.

BY CAITLIN BIGSBY



To step into the role of the strategic adviser, HR professionals need to start embracing and expanding their use of the decision-making tools of the business, such as data and analytics. Traditionally HR decision-making has followed one of two approaches: reliance on policy or intuitive based decisions.

Policies and compliance issues will always be a factor in people management, and leadership will always need HR to help them navigate the complex and changing nature of government regulations. However, continuing to rely on intuition to inform all other people-related initiatives, no matter how much experience backs it up, keeps HR from being the strategic advisor that the business needs.

Speak the Language of Business

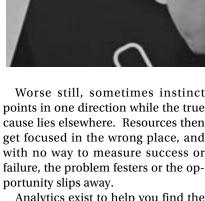
Even the best ideas in the world need some sort of data to back it up. No matter the years of experience or personal interactions with the people who will be impacted, without data to support an idea, or the option to measure the results you're promising, you will not get the buy-in you need. This is because you are not speaking the language of business.

In every other area of business, ideas and initiatives go nowhere unless they're supported by data that highlights the need and the impact. If no data exists, pilot projects may be launched to gather data, but data will always need to be available to help tell the story of the initiative to the decision makers.

Until HR follows suit, you will not be able to affect the kind of change in people management that the business needs to reach their goals because the business won't have the confidence in your ideas to fully throw their support behind them.

Hidden Insight

When HR leaders solely leverage their experience and observation, they may zero in on the problem or opportunity in front of them. However, many more insights will remain out of sight.



Analytics exist to help you find the answers in your data that direct and redirect your inquiries. It helps you confirm whether your gut was correct, or discover what you missed, and follow the trail to the real problem. With people analytics in particular, you're able to focus your attention on the areas of the workforce that will have the biggest impact on the rest of the business.

Analytics in Action: Make a Thousand Better Decisions

People analytics, also known as talent analytics or HR analytics, refers to the method of analytics that can help managers and executives make decisions about their employees or workforce. It surfaces the hidden insights that HR needs to speak the language of the business. Here's an example from a Visier customer of how analytics makes a difference in the hands of HR advisors:

Kerry, an HR Business partner at a regional hospital, was directed to reduce the nursing staff due to an overall decline in the region's population.



"Without data to support an idea you will not get the buy-in you need"

Because of a union agreement, recently hired nurses were the ones being targeted in the reduction strategy.

However, Kerry believed that this wasn't the right long-term decision for the hospital because of the nurses who would be impacted, the negative press it would garner, and because she felt sure these new nurses would soon be needed by the business.

Kerry turned to her people analytics solution to explore her hunch and what she found was this:

- Her region had a large number of nurses entering retirement age and she would very likely be faced with a nurse shortage in a couple of years if she proceeded with the layoff.
- They had worked hard to hire the new nurses, spending more per hire than in other regions. This implied that when the future shortage hit, she would again have to spend a lot of money to rehire people she currently had on staff, if they were even willing (or in the area) to return.
- Senior nurses earned more than junior nurses.

With her intuition backed up and informed by analytic insight, Kerry next created a proposal for an alternate plan: offer early retirement packages to those nurses nearing retirement.

Her proposal spoke the language of the business because she could tell the story with data, including facts such as:

- The percentage of nurses nearing retirement.
- The staff shortage they would have when those nurses retired if they proceeded with the layoff.
- The combined salary of the nurses nearing retirement as compared to the combined salary of the junior nurses who would be let go.
- The cost of offering early retirement versus the cost of a layoff, for an organisational savings of £120,000.

With a single better decision, this organisation more than covered the cost of their people analytics investment, but it's not about one big decision - it's about a thousand decisions made better.

If the cost of losing one good person is over £30k, then one HRBP who manages to redirect some of the people at risk of exit saves a good amount of money, but additionally stems the loss of their career potential and tribal knowledge. Amplify that to dozens of HRBPs taking small, informed actions results in hundreds of people staying and saving thousands, even millions, of pounds and producing untold future potential.

Arming HR

Organisations have been leveraging business intelligence (BI) and analytics for decades; it's become an expected part of doing business. Unfortunately, HR was often left out of these BI initiatives in part because the department wasn't seen as a fundamental aspect of the business and because people data is incredibly complex and voluminous.

The people who typically lead BI for the business simply don't have the knowledge of people management and data needed to create the analytic solutions that HR can leverage.

The great news for the strategic HR leader is there are now people analytics solutions dedicated to enabling you to get the insight out of people data and use them to make better decisions. The best solutions will let you arm every HRBP with insight so that they can advise the business day to day while HR leadership can set the strategy with the executives.

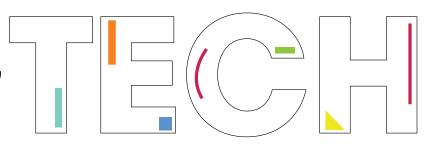
Imagine knowing who's at risk of leaving. Imagine being able to see which managers or departments have a disproportionate share of high-risk employees. Imagine being armed with the complete insight into an employee's engagement, compensation, manager, and job history before having a conversation and crafting an intervention. The opportunities to make better, more informed people decisions are endless.

It's time for strategic HR and for a thousand better people decisions. It's time for people analytics. ■

Caitlin Bigsby is the product marketing director at Visier

POWER TO THE PEOPLE

SHOPPING FOR HR



OUR ADVICE? Think strategically about exactly what to buy:

Decide what you're shopping for The first thing is to be clear on your business strategy, your requirements and what functionality you really need and want, and what will give you the best business return. Is it recruitment, learning or simply good HR core administration or payroll or all of the above?

2 Do your homework Technical due diligence combined with client references should be your next step. There are lots of online forums.

3 Check the fit The third step is to 'feel it'. There must be a strong cultural fit between your tech partner and your organisation. You need to choose a product that inspires employees and reinforces your brand and its values. It should feel simple and easy to engage with. In a nutshell, your employees need to like it! Or, ideally, love it.

It's also important to consider who to buy from:

The big players The market is expanding faster than ever before. Giant enterprise providers (such as Workday, SuccessFactors, Oracle and Infor) can scale down to 1500 employee businesses, offering countless options to suit all sorts of needs and circumstances as they arise. But offerings from these vendors tend to carry a higher price tag, with a more complex implementation route.

2 Tailored providers There's an emerging group of functionally-specific providers who are rapidly morphing into multifunctional global

players. These are the likes of Cornerstone (learning) and Ceridian (payroll). As you'd expect, they all bring deep knowledge of their original functionality, but are quickly moving to deliver a more comprehensive suite of HR services.

Multifunctional platforms Multifunctional product platforms, mirroring Workday with their single code approach, have developed in specific sectors, making great names for themselves. Growing fast and attracting fans and investment, they're also expanding out from their home industries to compete like-for-like with the big players. This group includes brands like SAGE People (tech and professional services), Elementsuite (hospitality) and Infor (manufacturing).

4 The disruptors Finally, there are the new entrants. Market disrupters, such as Neeyamo (a 100 percent employee-owned organisation), Ramco (an enterprise software in HCM and global payroll) and Web HR (a social all-in-one system), are all on a mission to make a name for themselves in the market.

WORRIED? Don't be. Implementing a new HR platform has never been easier. There is now enough choice out there for you to be able to pick a platform that is tailored specifically for your company's needs.

A few thoughts to consider if you are thinking of changing platform ...

Make sure you are clear on your requirements from the beginning, so you don't run into problems down the line. Remember –these are the days of SaaS products. Be confident with your choice and commit for the long run. This will enable you to grow with your

partner and build up a good working relationship. If you do decide to sign a three-year deal make sure it has a minimal notice period. This will put your mind at ease and give you wiggle room if or when it is needed.

Don't forget you are also buying into continual change. This means the need for strong post go-live capabilities and engrained change and adoption capabilities.

Aaron Alburey is the founder and CEO at Lace Partners. They are an independent HR consultancy with a deep understanding of the HCM marketplace. Alburey regularly lectures on the topic of HR change and is an active member in the Guild of HR. In recent years, as well as working on projects to embed systemic change in HR, finance and sales teams, he has become a regular speaker on his main passion; technology adoption and behavioural change.





At Symatrix we have a culture of partnership that embraces continuous service improvement. We provide an all-encompassing managed service solution to Oracle HCM and ERP Cloud and EBS users.

Our service amalgamates a number of separate elements; application support – technical, functional and environmental, release and quarterly update management, delivery of change through change requests, Testing as a Service, Reporting as a Service, training provision and Portfolio Project Management which seamlessly co-ordinates the entire service.

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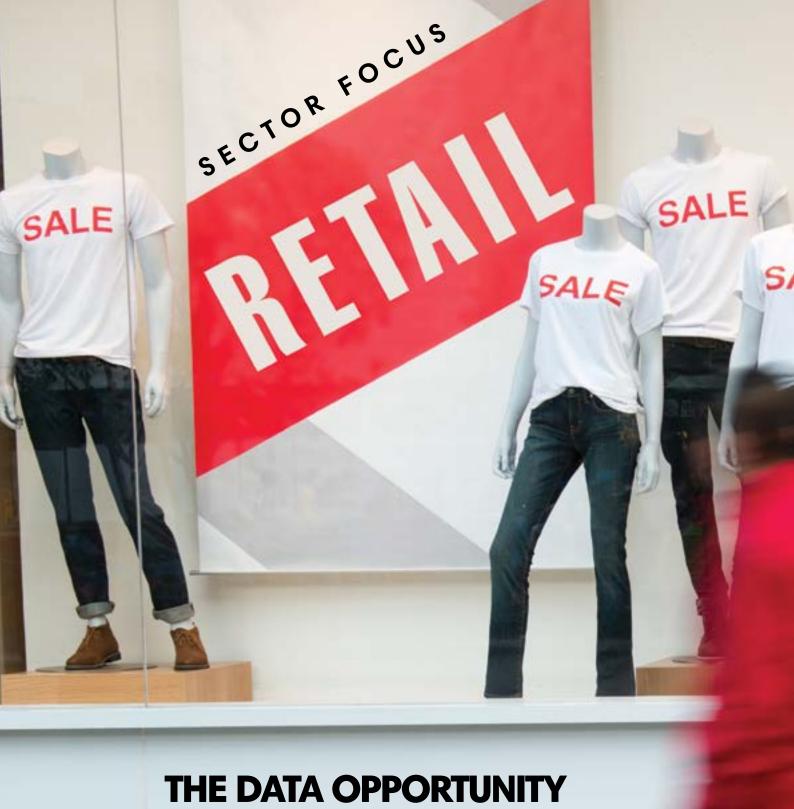


Cloud Excellence Implementer EMEA-UK & Ireland HCM Human Resources (Core HR)



HCM Payroll





THE DATA OPPORTUNITY FOR A MORE ROUNDED RETAIL REVIVAL

How smart retailers are switching to better ERP to retain market share, be a champion for savvy customers, and keep stocks rolling



THE RETAIL SECTOR IS
ONE OF THE TOP FIVE
FORECASTED GROWTH
MARGIN INDUSTRIES
FOR ENTERPRISE
APPLICATIONS
WORLDWIDE. IN THIS
SECTION HELEN
PEATFIELD LOOKS AT
THE ROLE OF ERP FOR
COMPETITIVENESS
BOTH ONLINE AND ON
THE HIGH STREET.

ver seen a quiet **Apple** store?
Neither have we. The company's smart omnichannel approach has kept customers engaged, serviced, loyal, and physically present in actual shops. People can book online and execute in-store for a repair, a course, customer service, an upgrade or buy another item from the brand's range.

Amazon is also making its way into the physical world with plans to open more than 3,000 Amazon Go 'sans cashier' stores in the US by 2021. Customers will be able to order and pay for their goods from a pre-installed mobile app and collect in-store. In a move driven purely by online sales the company also launched 'Amazon 4 Star' in New York, USA where all of the products in-store have a 4 star plus rating generated from online customer reviews. Each product has a digital tag showing the standard price and the price for Premium members.

Both of these company examples require a joined-up digital strategy to work and that strategy needs a strong core platform, adequate data management and automation to push and pull information from supply, inventory, sales, delivery and back again.

The online shopping movement has given customers a voice like never before. It has delivered a powerfully savvy (fickle) approach to aid decision making right into their hands on devices 24/7 to find the best bargains backed by other customer's reviews. However, just one glitch in any part of the buying experience and the sale is likely lost. Further, "people are coming into stores and comparing prices and availability on their mobiles. They can look at a jacket in John Lewis and see if they can get it £10 cheaper and delivered the same day by Amazon Prime or another retailer," said Mark Armstrong, global vice president and general manager EMEA at Rimini Street.



CAPITALISING DATA TO CATCH A CUSTOMER

Exploring engagement options to pre-empt a customer's wishes needs the right data in the right context at the right time. While the technology is there some retailers are a little slow on the uptake. Armstrong summed it up by saying: "One of the things we're finding is a huge amount of what we call innovation paralysis, where companies are not moving at the pace that they should to sustain themselves in the marketplace."

This applies very much to physical bricks and mortar stores. **Debenhams**, **House of Fraser**, and **Toys 'R Us** are just some of the retail giants that have



"I don't think the high street is dead. I think that the retailers that aren't evolving and innovating are."

NetSuite ERP + CRM

Single Commerce Platform for Omnichannel Retailing Seamless, Unified Shopping Experience



Enhanced Customer Experience



High engagement and conversion from any channel



Single view of each customer across all channels



Inventory, supplier and order management



Real-time BI insights



Comprehensive view of your financials



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fallen into difficulties but is the rise of online retail the only contributing factor? Shane Finlay, chief value advisor for retail at **UKI SAP** doesn't think so. "I don't think the high street is dead. I think that the retailers that aren't evolving and innovating are," he said in conversation with **ERP Today**.

utlets that have managed to harness online and offline data are finding that physical shopping locations play a profitable part of the overall brand experience. The right platform gathering the right data can help inform smarter, faster business decisions, facilitate

Shopping remains a tangible experience. People still want to see, touch and try products. There is, therefore, an opportunity for online data to drive in-store footfall. Getting people into stores enables more data collection points. The information gathered can then be analysed by advanced ERP tactics, to understand highquality feedback from customers, and passed directly to the appropriate business and supply chain functions. One example of this in action comes from **Decathlon Lab** in Singapore. The store enables customers to try out thousands of products at a physical location that has been designed as a family experience. That family ex-

POTENTIAL PITFALLS TO MEETING DEMAND

Inventory in an ERP system needs to be intrinsically connected to trend calculations, supply chain management and warehousing. And this is where organisations do not always align the digital strategy to the business strategy. Being able to provide the customer with the product they want, when they want it - or at least being able to tell them when they can have it - can make or break a successful experience. If a retailer does not have this visibility, if its in-store staff or online shop cannot give the customer the most convenient route to purchase, they run the risk of losing to a competitor.

> t can actually be a worse scenario online because once the sale of an item has completed, opportunities for the newly preferred retailer (of the moment anyway)

Online opportunities have created a more 'up close and personal' shopping experience than ever before

greater customer satisfaction and loyalty, and maximise impulse purchases.

THE "I WANT IT AND I WANT IT NOW" CULTURE GETS PERSONAL

Customers today are looking for an increasingly personalised shopping experience no matter which channel they are using. In fact, according to Accenture's Personalisation Pulse Check 2018, 91 percent of consumers surveyed were more likely to shop with brands who recognise them by name, remember their preferences and provide them with relevant offers and recommendations. The drive for data seems to be supported by consumers as well; 83 percent said that they are willing to share data to enable a more personalised experience. The problem facing most retailers, however, is not whether they have enough customer data - it's how to successfully integrate all these data points to create a great customer experience both online and offline. A further challenge is then to use data meaningfully to deliver a compelling omnichannel experience that solidifies a brand, drives revenue and increases margins.

perience may well (smartly) encourage longer in-store presence leading to extended data collection regarding product feedback and customer preferences.

upermarkets are also developing the in-store customer experience in that some are offering up data as shoppers shop. Apps and handheld scanners that mimic the Amazon ploy of 'you might also like...' help to steer customers through the aisles based on their dietary preferences, recommending products and listing the ingredients of items sitting on the shelves. However, online shopping can be a bit more unreliable than picking up a product at an actual store. When something is advertised to buy, to sell it, the retailer has to fulfil the sale.



Organisations do not always align the digital strategy to the business strategy

kick in: the 'new' customer is logged, the marketing engine fires up, other relevant products appear in emails and from cookie-generated promos, leaving the original retailer effectively 'ghosted'. As Finlay put it: "You click on the TV (promotion) that you saw on Facebook and it takes you through to the online retailer only to find it out of stock. That's a failure. Retailers must embrace a multi-cloud, multimarketplace, multi-services and an all-data mindset."

avid Atherton, NoBlue's
Oracle Netsuite adviser,
shares a similar sentiment stating that cloudbased ERP is the true
solution to inventory management

and customer experience. "Cloud is the silver bullet because it's an elegant way to get a global view of your inventory. For example, a centralised global view of inventory with multiple integrations; for instance, it can bring in Amazon data from multiple countries and incorporate data from multicountry sales. The challenge is to have a modern app that can cope with that."

ason Berry, vice president of EMEA at Infor Retail said: "ERP is basically the heart and lungs of the retail organisation. It covers the fundamentals very, very well, but it's also providing a kind of automation and sophistication that you weren't getting from core ERP-type platforms long ago."



BOOMI | LOW-CODE INTEGRATION HELPS RETAILER STAY AHEAD

THE WHITE COMPANY

powers its omnichannel business models with Boomi, using the integration platform to rapidly build new cloud applications while driving digital transformation.

THE CHALLENGE

MOVING TO OMNICHANNEL

During its two decades in business, The White Company has evolved from traditional mail-order sales to successfully embracing the omnichannel world of retail, including launching close to 50 retail stores. As part of that evolution, the company adopted a cloud-first strategy. To make this new era of cloud-based IT capabilities possible, integration was a must.

Historically, The White Company relied on a single business system to run the company, with point-to-point integrations where necessary. As the company moved through its digital transformation, it faced several challenges, which included:

- Managing the exchange of data from a growing portfolio of cloud applications
- Continuing to use on-premise applications connected by undocumented, ad-hoc integrations.
- Reducing integration complexity that threatened to slow business processes and degrade its exemplary customer service.



NATIVE CLOUD INTEGRATION

After assessing its options and surveying the field of vendors, they selected Boomi's low-code, native-cloud integration platform to connect its front-end and back-office operations. The retailer initially deployed 20 integrations, among them: Ecommerce - SAP Hybris; ERP - Microsoft Dynamics; Warehouse management - Manhattan Scale; Merchandise planning - Maple Lake. Flexibility, scalability and a remarkably rapid development environment were Boomi's key attractions.



FASTER, FLEXIBLE REACTIVITY

The White Company found Boomi's platform easy to use, with no programming expertise required to get started. With Boomi, The White Company has:

- Reduced integration development from months to weeks
- Increased its ability to react quickly to business demands
- Gained the flexibility to connect applications and data where and when they're needed
- Set the stage for future innovation



WHAT DOES THE MODERN VERSION OF A SUCCESSFUL IMPLEMENTATION IN RETAIL LOOK LIKE?

he right ERP approach enables customer analysis, insights to expectations and industry trends. A comprehensive view of business performance across all channels is obviously crucial; without it, retailers will continue to struggle to innovate. This could be as simple as an alert that it will be raining tomorrow, and to check inventory for umbrellas, right through to planning purchase predictions for the next big football match or sporting

But, like all transformation projects, top-level business commitment to innovation and change is integral to success. Max Way, director of retail, consumer & B2B at KPMG UK elaborated: "Cultural change, business process change, system change, that big change piece is something that businesses often underestimate. Helping people through the process is key. It's not just flicking a switch and telling people that you warned them the world was going to be different. It's about helping and guiding them through that change."

SIX RETAIL ERP SYSTEM **ESSENTIALS**

An ERP system fitted out for the individual retailer's purpose can make the difference between thriving or sickly limping along to join the liquidation pyre. But before embarking on a brand new ERP installation retailers must check actual business needs against system capabilities. Here are six top line considerations when selecting the right elements for retail ERP system with some recent examples.

Customer Engagement

Customer engagement is vital to manage to past, current, and future purchase trends to drive loyalty, optimise promotions, and maximise profits via attractive recommendations and deals. Retailers also need reliable business insight to customer demand. Given the data opportunity we have today there is a lot of room for AI to pop up with previous buying

REP FITNESS SETS NEW RECORDS WITH BRIGHTPEARL

REP FITNESS

is a B2C fitness lifestyle brand from Denver, Colorado that sells REP branded fitness equipment to home and commercial gym customers.

THE CHALLENGE WORKING OUT AGAINST THE CLOCK

Rep Fitness made the decision to change their system to address challenges with their inventory and order management - however, that is when they encountered a new problem to deal with. "We initially went with a different solution, but two weeks before we were supposed to go live, we realised it wasn't going to work for us," Alida explained. This would be stressful enough, but with two months to go until Black Friday, Rep Fitness was really under pressure.

THE SOLUTION

BEATING PERSONAL BESTS WITH AUTOMATION

Alida explains: "We went back to the drawing board and drew up a new shortlist of solution providers. Brightpearl's scalability and user-friendliness, in addition to its greater accounting and reporting functionality, made it a more all-in-one solution we could trust. So we opted for them." With seven weeks to Black Friday and a new system to set up and train on, Rep Fitness had a challenge for Brightpearl.

"We told Brightpearl we needed to go live in six weeks!", says Alida. "We said, 'these are all the things we need to be able to do on day one' and Brightpearl built our plan around what we needed so we could be operational when we needed to be."



RECORD-BREAKING FULFILMENT

Fast forward six weeks and Rep Fitness went live with Brightpearl - one week before Black Friday, as planned. "It went extremely well," Alida said, "From day one - all the functionality we needed was there. I guess it was a risky move, but it paid off and we had a very successful holiday season. Having the fantastic training and implementation that we did from Brightpearl meant that we were able to manage the holiday spike without breaking a sweat."

With a successful holiday season behind them, Rep Fitness is now seeing great gains from the system. Alida added, "we're using Brightpearl Automation to allocate and fulfil orders automatically - we're now processing them 30 percent faster! It's put our business firmly back in control while also leading to happier customers."



habits and machine learning to suggest predictions. These additions into ERP can help with more insightful inventory management facilitated by a slick supply chain. They can also go a long way to satisfy customers, lock them in a little further, maximise sales and establish loyalty (reliability).

Supply Chain and Inventory

A great ERP system will also be able to help with potential issues for the supply of stock. For example, when the data shows that sales of red coloured products rise as Valentine's Day approaches, but a retailer's usual supplier is experiencing issues with stock availability, the system may alert the business to a potential fulfilment issue so that managers can address the problem before it's too late. This gives a competitive edge when other retail-

ers might not have been equipped with this information. There's also the automation element for invoicing, logistics, warehousing and delivery (to store as well as to customers in a timely and saleable condition).

Staff

Finding enough of the right people is a never-ending challenge for almost any business, as is the management of recruitment, engagement and incentives. Notoriously, retail has a high turnover rate in terms of the human power needed at every point to ensure smooth (and maximised) operations. The Co-op, a grocery store business, has automated its recruitment process to reduce the time involved to hire new staff by using Oracle HCM and Oracle Integration. The implementation was completed in around

six months, reduced the requisition process to 30 seconds (an eighth of the four minutes it previously took) and just five clicks (down from the original 60 click process). It has raised the quality of hires which in turn has improved the in-store performance of staff; increased acceptance rates by 98 percent and decreased labour turnover by eleven percent.

Point of Sale

There is room for more data collection and analysis capabilities in the central system. AI and ML can help to sophisticate PoS (Point of Sale) with better data collection prompts and analysis for more insightful business intelligence both physically in-store as well as online via ecommerce platforms. That data, when fed back into the ERP system, can identify trends and

NOBLUE / REAL-TIME VISIBILITY FOR DIVINE CHOCOLATE

DIVINE CHOCOLATE

As consumers
become more
ethically-conscious
about where their
food comes from and
how it is produced,
Divine Chocolate
Limited, the only
100% Fairtrade cocoa
company co-owned
by 85,000 cocoa
farmers in Ghana, has
grown quickly since
it launched its first
chocolate bar in 1998.



THE CHALLENGE OPERATIONAL GROWING PAINS

Divine Chocolate's growth was partly due to merging its UK and USA businesses. This also brought new challenges to the company in regard to back-office operations and Divine Chocolate quickly realised it needed to:

- Tidy up accounting codes and have a better structured Chart of Accounts
- Report on customer Profit and Loss
- Improve management of stock to hold more information, especially regarding Fairtrade ingredients
- Achieve more control over assemblies and manufacturing costs

To achieve this, Divine Chocolate turned to NoBlue, which specialises in consultancy and business management software implementation for cloud-based Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) and Customer Relationship Management (CRM). Following an initial meeting with Graham Hall and David Atherton of NoBlue, the Divine Chocolate evaluation team realised that its long-term business goals and objectives could only be achieved through a close collaborative partnership.

THE SOLUTION NOBLUE'S SWIFT IMPLEMENTATION

NoBlue implemented Oracle NetSuite and integrated it with existing systems. Since its inception in 1998, Oracle NetSuite has established itself as the leading provider of enterprise-ready cloud business management suites of ERP, CRM, and ecommerce applications for businesses of all sizes.

SMOOTH REPORTING, FAST DECISIONS

After just five months, the implementation was live and Divine Chocolate was saving time and resources. Divine Chocolate now has real-time visibility and control over management of Financials, Subsidiaries, Manufacturing, Supply Chain, Sales Force, Marketing and CRM. It benefits from robust financial reporting which helps execute a smooth auditing process and better, faster decision-making as a result of real-time data and reporting via personalised dashboards. Productivity has also improved thanks to the anywhere, anytime access provided by NoBlue's solution, while the time for a financial close has been slashed by more than 50%.

help predict future demand so that inventory and supply chain requirements can be adjusted accordingly and complete the whole transaction satisfaction effort.

Business Overview

The UK retailer **Matalan**, striving to be an omnichannel champion, switched up its effort this year to maximise data insights and improve inventory availability as well as customer service. With planned expansions and evolving consumer demands across its omnichannel environment there was a need for a more integrated planning approach. It implemented Oracle's Retail Cloud to help map inventory assortments against consumer preferences and seasonal trends across 225 stores in the UK and another 25 in international markets. It was already

using Oracle's Marketing Cloud to support online and in-store traffic levels with data-driven insights to build campaigns and fine tune the mobile experience.

Automation and Business Intelligence

Profitability management, sales reporting, analytics and trend predictions all come into the retail ERP story too. The apparel and accessories outlet, **Banana Republic** (a **Gap** Inc. brand) sells online and across more than 600 retail locations worldwide. To help service customers better it took on Oracle's Retail Cloud Service, as part of a modern merchandising platform, to drive greater productivity through automated best practices and enable access to better business intelligence. Since integration the brand

has found that managing purchase orders and sales auditing are more efficient, effective, and system generated alerts show buyers a path to resolution for items that require attention.

hen considering the

functionality of your

business, in terms of what should and what should not be part of your ERP set up, there is a fine line between short-term change and future readiness. It's not enough to have the right tools if you cannot scale your tech with your business and the demands of tomorrow. Derek Thompson, vice president EMEA at **Dell Boomi** said: "The hybrid landscape that we're dealing with is more complex than ever so ensuring you're buying a future proof platform is critical."

WELCH'S INCREASES FUNCTIONALITY WITH RIMINI STREET PARTY SUPPORT

WELCH'S

is a subsidiary of the National Grape Cooperative, which is made up of more than 800 family farm owners who grow the famous purple Concord and Niagara grapes found in Welch's juices and jellies.



THE CHALLENGE REINVESTING IN MARKETING

As Welch's recognized changes in consumer buying habits, the company's strategy shifted to cost containment, with a plan to reinvest savings in increased marketing initiatives. "When we looked at our Oracle ERP software specifically, we were at an inflection point," says Dave Jackson, CIO for Welch's. "The support and maintenance costs were nearly 12-15 percent of our IT budget and we were at end-of-life for the versions we were running; however, there were no new features or functions in the next version that could justify the effort and cost of upgrading."

THE SOLUTION SWITCHING TO RIMINI STREET

Welch's evaluated traditional Oracle upgrade paths, Jackson says, moving some of its enterprise applications to cloud-based applications. The company found that standard options neither reduced costs nor delivered significant new business value. Consequently, Welch's chose to move support for its Oracle EBS and Oracle Database systems to Rimini Street, immediately saving 50 percent of its annual support and maintenance fees. Welch's has redeployed cost savings for distribution throughout the company to help amplify its marketing strategy. Improved service levels have also freed up IT staff time, enabling the company to create new application extensions for the business.

THE RESULTS LESS SPEND, MORE FLEXIBILITY

After moving to third-party support provided by Rimini Street, Welch's has redeployed cost savings for distribution throughout the company to help amplify its marketing strategy and delivered additional benefits:

- Reduced support and maintenance spend: Welch's is saving 50 percent of its previous annual Oracle support and maintenance costs.
- Avoided unnecessary upgrade: Welch's can now continue to run its stable and effective Oracle software, fully supported with payroll updates for multiple U.S. states, without pressure to upgrade.
- Gained strategic flexibility: With third-party support, Welch's can rely on Rimini Street to support customisations while retaining the ability to upgrade to its already licensed and archived software at any time in the future.

PRODUCT NAME	BRIGHTPEARL	EBIZFRAME ERP	FAM RETAIL
BUSINESS SIZE SUITABILITY	S,M	S,M	S,M
DEPLOYMENT	Cloud, on-premise	Cloud, on-premise	On-premise
PRICING	£££	££	££
VENDOR OVERVIEW	BRIGHTPEARL ERP has over 20 years of experience in developing ERP for the retail space. It offers bespoke omnichannel solutions for every size of business and factors in every aspect needed to operate a retail business efficiently. The company has evolved to create a comprehensive suite of merchant tools and reporting options to provide actionable business intelligence and real-time decision making.	cloud-based or on-premise ERP for retail. Designed for integration and end-to-end streamlining of a business, this could be a good option for those that feel machine learning is overkill but want a comprehensive ERP.	for fashion based retailers that need omnichannel capabilities from their ERP. The main thrust of this offering is the point of sale system that provides real-time sales and stock information across stores and e-commerce portal. To make the product more comprehensive, the developers have put in good reporting, vendor, and stock management tools to assist workflow.
CORE BENEFITS FOR RETAILERS	for the retailer that requires omnichannel capability and full supply chain management. Features include: •Sales Order Management • Inventory Management • Inventory Planning • Shipping & Fulfilment • Warehouse Management • Retail Accounting • Purchasing & Supplier Management • Workflow Automation • Comprehensive and customisable reporting • Payments • CRM • POS	comprehensive range of modules to enable a retail business to have a much better understanding of its operations, including: • Comprehensive price modules enabling pricing history and easy discounting of products and loyalty schemes. This can be implemented for selected stores • Stock management modules facilitating real-time stock management • Comprehensive reporting modules • Defined top-down management structure • Comprehensive POS system that plugs into the stock control system	to keep retail businesses up and running, such as: POS delivering real-time sales and stock information by outlet Omnichannel marketing and sales Modules designed to streamline the business and increase productivity Distribution and warehousing modules. This allows for stock to be distributed where it is needed Supply chain management modules Business intelligence reports

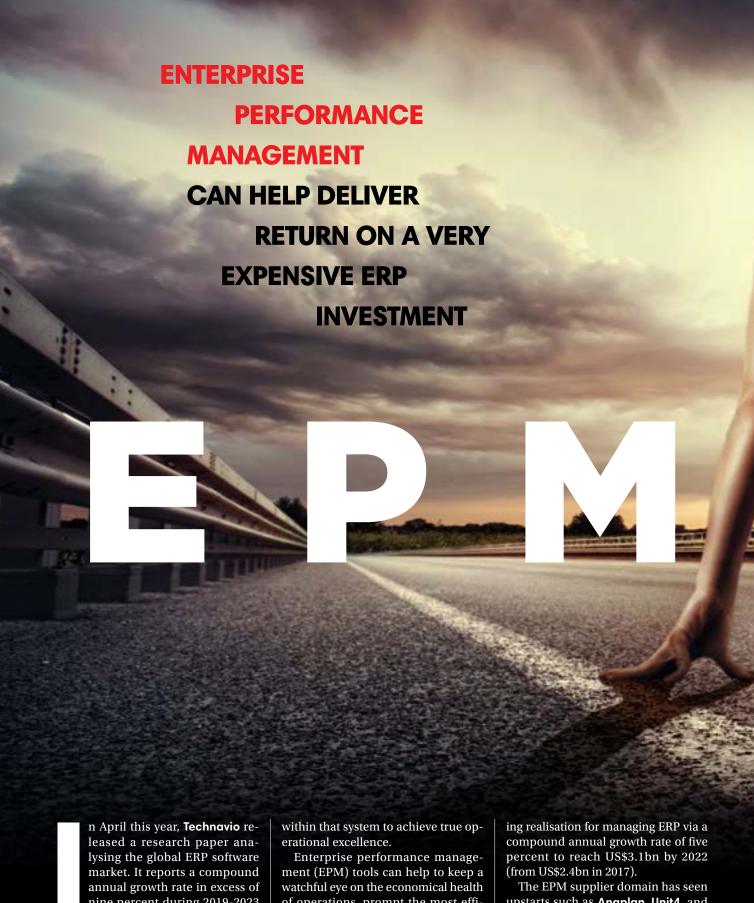
WINMAN	FUTURA RETAIL SOLUTIONS	INFOR	PRODUCT NAME
S,M	S,M	S,M,L	BUSINESS SIZE SUITABILITY
On-premise	On-premise	Cloud	DEPLOYMENT
££	££	£££	PRICING
winman offers a comprehensive ERP system with specific retail modules that will provide a smooth and secure process for customers and capture real-time data for better reporting. Winman's other modules are often featured in other retail ERP offerings and when combined make a comprehensive offering to the market.	FUTURA FOR RETAIL is a comprehensive ERP that offers everything a retailer could need except for Al and machine learning. It facilitates omnichannel sales and features you may not expect, such as RFID. Its focus is on promoting better customer experiences and making multi-channel management smoother.	INFOR put a lot of emphasis on cloud deployment and real-time insights into customer behaviour. Founded in 2002, Infor boasts omnichannel and machine learning capabilities to improve customer experience and optimise workflows. Infor's offering is complemented by integrating other options that give, for example, full visibility of the supply chain.	VENDOR OVERVIEW
Features include: • Centralised database • POS for better customer experiences and real-time data capture • Comprehensive business reporting suite • Analysis tools for faster sorting of data and insights • Supply chain and vendor management tools • Comprehensive CRM modules • Full stock visibility	FUTURA'S features include: • Customer focussed ERP facilitating gift cards, discounts, and loyalty programmes on products you select • Omnichannel capabilities and a centralised database • POS and real-time stock information • Advanced stock tracking and control in the form of RFID • Business reporting, featuring trend analysis, assortment and comprehensive data handling tools	INFOR has emphasised utilising the latest thinking in workflow management and machine learning and features: • Predictive analysis and smart data • Customer focussed modules • Customer purchase history in real-time • Optimised workflow via machine learning • Optimised fulfilment modules • Bespoke deployment • Support for assortment, planning, pricing, supply chain, and custom processes • Integration with other Infor products	CORE BENEFITS FOR RETAILERS

PRODUCT NAME	INTACT	DYNAMICS 365	NETSUITE
BUSINESS SIZE SUITABILITY	S,M,L	S,M,L	S,M,L
DEPLOYMENT	Cloud, on-premise	Cloud	Cloud, on-premise
PRICING	££	££	£££
VENDOR OVERVIEW	INTACT offers a comprehensive retail ERP to the market. It has omnichannel selling capabilities and a good selection of modules that most retailers need. The offering comes with the standard but useful range of reporting. Its CRM and process automation modules may catch the eye.	cloud-based solution that offers businesses full visibility of their retail operation. Dynamics 365 offers streamlined customisable workflows, full stock visibility across stores and warehouses, and omnichannel marketing and sales including click and collect, returns management, and order in store fulfil anywhere.	full visibility ERP that brings together every aspect of retail to create a singluar customer experience. There is a strong emphasis on unifying processes to help pinpoint specific areas of the customer experience while maintaining a big picture view.
CORE BENEFITS FOR RETAILERS	INTACT may suit a retailer that wants a robust solution that can be implemented in manageable chunks. Features include: Omnichannel selling and product price history and information Stock visibility in real-time POS functionality Business reporting including trend analysis and customisation of reports Comprehensive marketing and CRM tool Automation modules designed to perform routine tasks to increase productivity	is forward thinking and is a fusion of insights and comprehensive module management. It facilitates: • Comprehensive product management allowing stock to be delivered to multiple stores as per season and demand • Holistic view of stock in real-time • Omnichannel sales and marketing • Real-time insights to enable better decision making • Up sell capabilities governed by analytics • A unified shopping experience to the customer • Assortment modules and pricing • Strong emphasis on customer satisfaction	NETSUITE is very much a customer focussed ERP. It is designed to help enhance this experience and designs and deploys modules to this end. It features: • Real-time reporting featuring KPI scorecards, graphical representations, and trend graphs • Customisable dashboards to show information instantly • A comprehensive omnichannel POS system that updates the system in real-time. The system facilitates click and collect, returns, and order in store and fulfil anywhere • Sophisticated e-commerce modules allowing tailored promotions to individual customers • Big picture management showing where stocks are across warehouses and stores • Comprehensive supply chain management modules

ORACLE CLOUD	PINNACA	PRIMA SOLUTIONS	PRODUCT NAME
S,M,L	S,M,L	S,M	BUSINESS SIZE SUITABILITY
Cloud	On-premise	On-premise	DEPLOYMENT
£££	££	££	PRICING
comprehensive retail ERP featuring a strong emphasis on AI and machine learning 'embedded science' and omnichannel capability. The company mixes traditional retail need with its AI offering to provide more precise insights into the whole business.	founded in 2015. Despite its young age it is establishing itself as a global supplier of retail solutions. It offers a customer focussed retail ERP that has many features that the big players provide.	mid-level ERP that offers a system to integrate the entire retail operation. Prima's offering features the standard ERP offering together with omnichannel capability and full real-time visibility of stock, whether on the shelf or in the warehouse.	VENDOR OVERVIEW
oracle's focus is one of utilising the 'embedded science' combined with standard ERP functionality to deliver better results. As such it offers: • Embedded science throughout each module for improved insights • Real-time and customised reporting and Al-based predictions • Comprehensive supply chain management • Assortment planning on a local and global level • Omnichannel customer engagement capability • Customisable workflow and support	PINNACA's module approach gives retailers the full suite of ERP tools. Including: Offerings for all sizes of business POS with integrated stock management by outlet Omnichannel capabilities Comprehensive business reporting modules to allow trends analysis and insights Customer focused modules that enable price adjusting for instances such as sales and special offers Forecasting and planning modules Shipping and returns modules	PRIMA has a straightforward retail ERP modules which business may warm to if they are afraid of the more complex aspects such as Al. Such as: • E-Commerce capability to introduce online sales to a business model • Full stock visibility no matter where in the business it may be • Comprehensive dispatch module • Sales ordering and returns capability • Business reporting and trend analysis • POS capabilities • Financial integration to see revenue and profits instantly	CORE BENEFITS FOR RETAILERS

PRODUCT NAME	PRIORITY	SAGE	SANDERSON
BUSINESS SIZE SUITABILITY	S, M,	Cloud	S, M, L
DEPLOYMENT	Cloud, on-premise	Cloud, on-premise	On-premise
PRICING	££	£££	££
VENDOR OVERVIEW	PRIORITY is arguably a no thrills offering to the retail ERP market but when combined with their modules such as CRM and warehousing, it is a powerful business tool. It can facilitate widespread distribution across a chain of stores, and its lack of complexity could be appealing to some retailers.	sage has an international outlook to its offering which facilitates controlling operations overseas. The system facilitates a range of functionality including POS, real-time warehouse updates, overseas vendor management and compliance, and forecasting.	sanderson has 25 years of experience in developing retail ERPs that can deliver omnichannel experiences. Its system is built to serve all retailers facilitating features such as e-commerce and flexible fulfilment options.
CORE BENEFITS FOR RETAILERS	PRIORITY offers a suite of useful features including: • Comprehensive pricing module facilitating discounts and special offers • POS influencing stock levels in real-time • Comprehensive CRM that facilitates an easy returns process • Forecasting and reporting modules providing actionable business intelligence • Delivery scheduling module to facilitate accurate distribution across the entire retail chain	sage's retail ERP offering is backed by its world-class brand and support. Features include: • Comprehensive marketing modules featuring loyalty program management and discounts • POS and real-time sales data • Forecast product stocks and view visibility in real-time • Manage your supply chain whether it is domestic or overseas • Full visibility on stock, whether it be on the shelf or in the warehouse • Ensure compliance from overseas vendors	sanderson is serving leading brands and releases new features regularly. It facilitates the following: Omnichannel sales modules that facilitate multi fulfilment options such as click and collect. E-commerce capability to increase sales POS technology featuring real-time data capture Personalised customer experience modules Comprehensive stock and warehousing management modules In-depth business reporting and forecasting modules

SAP	APPAREL SYSTEMS	RETAIL DIRECTIONS	PRODUCT NAME
S, M, L	S,M	S,M,L	BUSINESS SIZE SUITABILITY
Cloud	On-premise	On-premise	DEPLOYMENT
£££	££	££	PRICING
sap's retail ERP offering has put a lot of detail into small things. As well as machine learning Al and omnichannel customer experiences, the merchant can categorise products by season and control prices across every sales channel. SAP is taking every aspect of the retail ERP experience and governing it utilising Al.	to the market is aimed at clothing retail chains. It allows for a central management system to oversee multiple stores and provides data visibility of sales and stock, which can be drilled down to the store level.	feature-packed ERP, and most retailers will be able to find value from it. It is customer focussed, allowing for omnichannel sales and features such as click and collect and an easy returns process.	VENDOR OVERVIEW
sap's everything in one box approach provides a comprehensive and state of the art set of features that include: • Customise customer experiences in real-time • Business intelligence into the success of marketing campaigns • Customer and multichannel data collection in real-time • Real-time customer reporting and Al prediction • Omnichannel capabilities including pricing and marketing assortments • Productivity improvements based on centralised data • Location clustering capability to utilise better targeting of products across multiple outlets	APPAREL ERP automates as much as possible to free up the time of staff and increase productivity. Features include: • Sales and stock data visibility across multiple stores which can be drilled down to the store level • Management of each store from a central location • Profitability information by line • Comprehensive business reports • Integration with other business modules to expand the capabilities of the ERP • Customisable options to make it a more effective business tool	RETAIL DIRECTIONS ERP development extends to distribution and workflow is optimised wherever possible. Features include: • Centralised database providing full business visibility • Omnichannel sales • Customer centric. The system can handle click and collect, buy online return to a store • Full customer visibility to inspire sales staff to upsell • Business intelligence and reporting in real-time • Stock and distribution modules	CORE BENEFITS FOR RETAILERS



n April this year, **Technavio** released a research paper analysing the global ERP software market. It reports a compound annual growth rate in excess of nine percent during 2019-2023 (led by North America followed by Europe, APAC, ME&A, and South America). So it's evident that businesses are getting round to tackling resource planning. However, there is a growing appreciation for the requirement to control and maximise the elements

Enterprise performance management (EPM) tools can help to keep a watchful eye on the economical health of operations, prompt the most efficient use of resources, expose deeper insights, highlight underperformance and predict future strategies across every business element. Helpfully, an analysis of worldwide EPM engagement was also published this year. That report demonstrates the escalat-

The EPM supplier domain has seen upstarts such as **Anaplan**, **Unit4**, and **Talantia Software** challenging the landscape for the last five years or so, and they're up against incumbents such as **SAP**, **IBM**, and **Oracle** to serve up a slice of the efficiency pie. This is becoming a competitive market in its own right. Joining the effort is



compliance tools that improve accuracy and reduce risk from ERP transactional data all the way through to final reports, via its Wdesk platform. The company recently opened offices in Paris and Frankfurt in readiness for an expected increase in European reporting regulations. And a cloud based provider of connected financial planning, Host Analytics recently integrated Blackline - a financial controls and automation platform - to lessen

The simple fact that EPM helps to officiate better planning and analysis is demonstrated in an independent report by **Forrester Consulting** that looked at Host Analytics' EPM offering. The research calculated that companies can realise US\$1.2m (or 393 percent RoI) over a three year term from, amongst other ways, being able to undertake initiatives that would ordinarily require about five financial planning

EPM is an insight tool for 20/20 performance vision

There is increasing pressure on organisations for faster and better decision making in the face of market and political volatility, changing customer and consumer behaviours, and increasing digitalisation. It is also inevitable that data for decision support and insights



with the questions that need answering and then working backwards to define the data sets, technology solutions and organisational capabilities required to answer these questions is an effective approach that allows organisations to build analytics capabilities quickly and move up the maturity curve," said Svilena Tzekova, partner, head of finance transformation, Corporates at KPMG UK.

"Every company and every function within a company requires some kind of planning engine and EPM is the glue

"It is inevitable that data for decision support and insights will continue to flow from a variety of external and internal sources and platforms. Emerging cloud technology looks to integrate these disparate data sources."

will continue to flow from a variety of external and internal sources and platforms. Emerging cloud technology looks to integrate these disparate data sources. A global **KPMG** study showed that 90 percent of organisations see data and analytics as a high or moderate investment priority. However, most are struggling to get the value they want and are concerned about the integrity of the data that drives enterprise decisions.

Typical challenges abound around the ability of an organisation to take an end-to-end view of performance across all of its functions, the inconsistency and sheer volume of KPIs that measure discreet functions (but seldom the overall business performance), the 'gut feel' phenomenon, the lack of capability that differentiates 'noise' from 'signal', and the difficulty of embedding new technology across a landscape of legacy applications.

Organisations that have successfully addressed the challenge started with focussing on what they really needed to measure and clearly defining the KPIs that drive actionable insight, and then capturing those KPIs in an enterprise-wide information model of the data sources, calculation methods, data transformations and KPI definitions. "We believe that starting

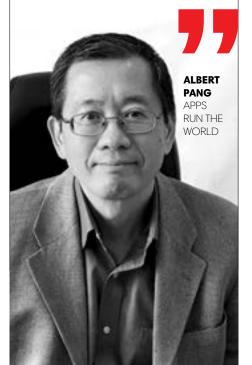
that really makes it all happen," said Albert Pang, President at Apps Run The World in discussion with ERP Today. He also revealed that when customers are asked: 'What exactly are your priorities right now?", for many, time is no longer money. Data is the new money. "So if data is the new money, then EPM could become the central bank, the central repository that enables companies to value data and how they can go about and try to measure the way they collect the data, aggregate the data and also really try to make some sense of the data that they generate. So that's an area that we believe has a lot of intrinsic value, more so than ever, and that's why we are seeing this drawn out battle becoming more ferocious, certainly escalating to the level where we're going to see some major shake up over the next few years. We've already seen Adaptive picked up by Workday and we're going to see a lot more consolidation in this space."

Pang also offered two key points that could help to drive the EPM agenda. Firstly to look at the visualisation tools used to gather a lot of EPM information and help identify the relevant and strategic data parts to disseminate appropriately. And the second is to concentrate on building EPM systems out for the masses. While many vendors

are trying to figure out how to do this it's still currently largely biased on the financial side. If EPM can be taken to a broader level, for example, to operations, to the supply chain and for human capital management then, he said, it would become a game changer.

Interestingly, the worldwide enterprise applications market forecast mentioned at the beginning of this article outlines a functions analysis that puts ERP services and operational management as the two fastest growing elements, followed by almost equal growth for ERP financial management and customer relationship management. Human capital management is next on the projection, with business intelligence and analytics still (surprisingly) relatively small in the overall picture. It will be interesting to monitor the trend of the latter two as AI and machine learning infiltrate enterprise applications. You can find more intelligence into the functional market forecast in the report (available online) which is entitled: Top 10 EPM software vendors and market forecast 2017-2022.

"Every company and every function within a company requires some kind of planning engine – and EPM is the glue that really makes it all happen"







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Shifting up to EPM for enhanced company analysis

How to diagnose the financial health of your business and keep tabs on enterprise resource planning

any companies are still monitoring performance by using disparate departmental reporting systems to extract business intelligence. This article looks at how to implement information collation and analysis to better understand the health and wealth of a business at any point in time, get a clearer idea of what's ahead, and offer insights to maximise efficiency.

If you're still chasing several departments for their (double, triple checked) figures every month, and then having to work into the night to arrive at what you hope is a true company performance analysis, it might be time to look for an enterprise performance management (EPM) system. Modern EPM tools have the capability to incorporate artificial intelligence and machine learning to deliver the information you need - both current and projected - to close the gap between enhanced analytics and actionable insights. To put it succinctly: you take powerful decisionmaking business intelligence (BI) into the boardroom.

Once upon a time rows of Excel spanning two monitors looked quite cool. But it's not the 1990s any more; companies are moving towards truly valuable and digestible intelligence on a friendly dashboard for the benefit of the entire organisation. However, finding the time to prioritise implementing an EPM application can be problematic in itself. It involves identifying what you need it to manage for you, how to incorporate vast amounts of data, finding a supplier that can make it happen, and being confident

that the investment will pay for itself sooner rather than later. That's a daunting responsibility, but dithering about doing it can hinder the success potential of a business.

The companies already busy with digitalising and automating for advanced analytics are becoming more agile. Being more agile means responding faster to KPIs (key performance indicators that bring internal financial alerts for profit and loss to your attention). Being more agile means managing cross-boarder operations more profitably. Being more agile enables supremacy over the companies that are still working with lagging knowledge in terms of a true performance picture.

From manual to more accurate and automated financials

Being able to respond quickly to changing demand, fluctuating currency conversions and cross-border regulations, as well as local staffing and customer retention initiatives can all have an instant impact on the health and wealth of a business. With deeper insight, connected EPM applications can alert you to underperforming areas, potential risks, and highlight success factors to nurture.

For years companies have wrestled to harmonise data to get a true birdseye view of how the business is per-

Delivering absolute truths to identify more profitable action



forming. A common result is a mesh of isolated applications connected to a bunch of servers. These days the risks and resources associated with this approach - such as on-site downtime, human error, power outages, cooling and rented space costs - are becoming a drain on the budget as well as the IT department. Jo Sutton, the operations director at cloud finance ERP systems provider, Xledger said: "To get your technology hosted entirely within the cloud is a massive advantage. Being able to access your data through the cloud is by far the most cost efficient and flexible way of working. With every step that you move away from true cloud you're adding an extra layer of complexity and cost."

The location of your EPM system matters in the long run

EPM in the cloud not only gets rid of

excess servers, it also eliminates the need to manage software licenses, platform upgrades, and testing for additional interoperability when new applications are added. A cloud based EPM platform is delivered in a fully operational state and individual functions (marketing, finance, purchasing, HR, logistics etc) can customise interconnected departmental performance tools, all on the same system that scales as necessary.

While an on-premise approach can work it often takes a lot of manual manipulation of data and won't always evolve with the business needs without frequent updates. In terms of setting up and maintaining the EPM system responsible for overseeing company activity, Robbie Burnell, VP at new UK project management tech company **Precursive** advises unifying the effort. He told us that a client once estimated a time cost of £1m to input the multiple passwords for each system in place. "Third party offerings will not only continue to build on their system but also they tend to track industry requirements that can often go under the radar for individual organisations."

"The initial challenge is the cost of moving that infrastructure to the

ROBBIE BURNELL / PRECURSIVE

cloud," said Sutton. "While you're in the process of moving, you're spending on both an on-premise system and cloud software. What we say to clients is that they need to be realistic about the benefits of the cloud during this time. Until you've made the switch, and you're able to turn off your onpremise hardware, you won't see the full effect of the savings you're making long-term. Not only this but moving to the cloud comes with the added benefit of a built-in support system. You no longer have the risk of being responsible for your system if anything goes wrong. You don't have to manage this in-house because your provider can do this for you."

Identifying requirements and vendors

There are plenty of EPM suppliers who will happily vie for your business. But which of them will be the best intelligence enabler for your particular business? Once you have worked out what you need, and how that might change in the future, you can start inviting suppliers that have experience in your sector to show you their wares. If your business is retail, utilities, transport, manufacturing then ask them for evidence from their implementations in

EPM offers a higher insight viewpoint to find and fix inefficient processes

those industries. Mark Bauer, senior vice president of product management at **Host Analytics** offered some other key considerations when reviewing EPM vendors, including: Will the system give everyone across the business the confidence to know they're working with consistent, accurate insights? How will it encourage collaboration and a focus on business goals? How disruptive will the deployment process be and how long will will it take?

When it comes to the last point it's a relief to know that EPM takes a fraction of the time to implement in com-



parison to the ERP system it's in place to manage. As a guideline, Bauer suggests that an EPM set up might take an average of 8-12 weeks; and Xledger's Sutton advises clients with turnover of up to £5m to expect between three to eight months to put in a new system. Obviously the timescale will vary in accordance with individual company requirements and migration elements; and there's also the agility and experience of an EPM 'porting' partner to factor in.

In the case of **Hyde Housing** - one of the largest UK providers of social housing in London - Oracle cloud EPM and BI partner, The Qubix Group migrated an on-premise Hyperion Planning system over to Oracle Planning and Budgeting Cloud in just three weeks. Hyde Housing's business needs had outgrown the old system which was also nearing the end of its support term. The transition - which incorporated improved integration characteristics and the removal of unnecessary hierarchies and excessive data - was completed with user manuals and training for the financial fingertips destined to be using the redesigned system.

Some of the resulting benefits included improving the data upload frequency to an automated method every 30 minutes rather than the previous setting of two hours; and the duration of the task dropped to just five minutes when it took more than an hour to complete previously. The number of reports generated for business intelligence reduced by 25 percent (from 40 to 10) and delivered more accurate information.



In this section, ERP Today's feature editor, Helen Peatfield investigates the challenges arising from burgeoning aspects of modern supply chain, and how a fully competent ERP system can help to protect against failure.



(anything)

Wider and more complex supply chains come with multiple points of failure

s enterprises diversify, shift business models and jostle for market share, supply chain management (SCM) is under increasing pressure to advance the fulfilment process. Tasks such as trimming time, minimising errors, adhering to compliance, security measures and quality assurance - often across borders - can be better managed with the right ERP system in place. Here are a few of the ways that artificial intelligence (AI), machine learning (ML) and even blockchain can help to deliver on time, on budget, safely, and aid being environmentally and ethically conscious en route.

"Consumers today are demanding seamless experiences and instant gratification, meaning supply chains are getting more complex and the margin for error is razor-thin. In order to attract and retain customers the entire supply chain network - from sourcing to delivery - needs access to vital information, real-time data analytics, and collaboration tools," said Hala Zeine, president of digital supply chain and manufacturing at SAP, in conversation with ERP Today.

She also talked about market disruptors changing the way that consumers behave and what they expect: "Ecommerce giants such as **Amazon** have played a huge role in creating this demand driven society, promising customers fast delivery and a seamless experience from start to finish. This has reshaped consumer expectations and forced other organisations to be resilient and rethink how to remain competitive."

What does 'advanced' SCM mean?

Many things, actually, and the onus is heavy and relentless. Just one chink in



Faster delivery with minimal friction for the buyer is the new benchmark.

HALA ZEINE SAP

the chain will hinder the rest of the process, impact the organisation's bottom line and have the potential to swiftly damage reputations. In the quest to deliver fast with minimal disruption, business leaders are looking to tighten up operations from front to back.

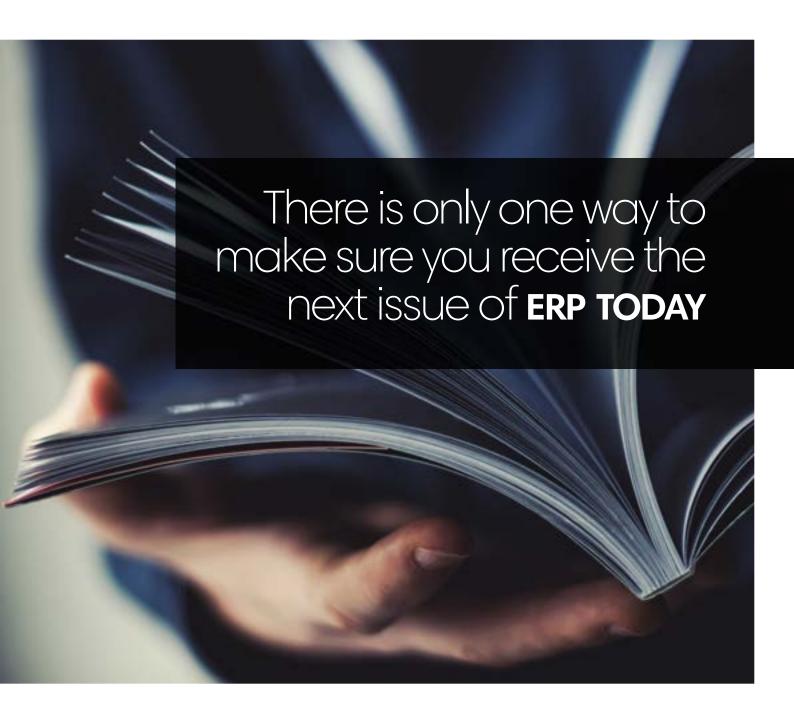
Leveraging technologies such as IoT (Internet of Things), machine learning, and blockchain can help to move from reactive to prescriptive operations. But getting to grips with the advances in SCM requires both deep examination of the technologies and of your own processes and desired outcomes. Bryan Nella, content

and thought leadership for the supply chain at **Infor** described the difference between supply chains of old and the modern SCM challenge. He said "the pure complexity of production is no longer linear. Between carriers, 3PLs (third party logistics) and suppliers, it's now more of a network."

A non-linear supply chain requires a non-linear approach. Gathering and analysing data across vast international networks is a challenge in itself. Turning that data into predictive insights and being able to react is an even bigger one. Nella went on to explain that legacy systems can't manage the huge volumes of data that such complex supply networks generate and consume. This means less visibility and less control. He described what business leaders want and need from modern supply chain applications. "Everything comes back to UX (user experience). They want to see their supply chain in motion. To drill down on a map vs looking at a spreadsheet."

his takes the notion of visibility from the figurative to the literal. Physically seeing what's moving and what isn't helps businesses make better decisions faster. If some of those decisions can be automated then all the better. So what does it take to get from a traditional supply chain management model to faster, more efficient and dynamic operation? Experts posit that a mix of new and emerging tech is the answer.

Robotics, blockchain, machine learning and advanced analytics are all tipped to bring financial, optimisation and accountability gains to aid greater supply chain visibility and control. But each technology is at a different level of maturity and adoption, and some is still being met with a



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healthy dose of scepticism. In a report published late last year by research firm, **Gartner** entitled 'Predicts 2019: Future of Supply Chain Operations,' it is forecast that 'by 2023 at least 50 percent of large global companies will be using AI, advanced analytics and IoT in supply chain operations.' Given the hype and supposed speed of more intelligent technology adoption, one cannot help wonder what the other half of the 'large global companies' will be doing to stay competitive via their supply chain set ups.

Technology combinations for advanced supply chain management

While AI and ML are not quite ready to make all the supply chain quandaries disappear, the former is becoming more sophisticated and widespread for modern enterprise planning and operations. For the latter, SAP's Zeine described how ML is enabling faster, smarter supply chain management today: "Machine learning technology adds another layer of insight, helping organisations turn massive amounts of data into actionable insights. Leveraging sophisticated algorithms and machine learning technology allows organisations to 'learn' from, and make sense of, the information that's being collected at every point in the supply chain. Having the ability to continuously monitor data and make precise, intelligent predictions has a profound impact on organisations' ability to understand their customers and succeed in a competitive sales environment."

Automation has further benefits. By allowing RPA (robotic process automation) and ML to take over the mundane aspects of supply chain processes and decision-making, humans can focus more energy on the bigger ideas, judgements and creative aspects of running a business. "Supply chain

management can at times require both repetitive and interpretive work. What's great about machine learning is that it can do both the front office tasks and the back office tasks, managing the repetitive busy work that goes into supply chain management as well as helping with the predictive and subjective operations," said Zeine. "One of SAP's main goals is to ensure all supply chains are prescriptive in nature rather than reactive – an area where machine learning provides immense value. It allows organisations to access, analyse

Tap the breaks and make sure they are not adopting blockchain for the sake of blockchain

BRYAN NELLA INFOR



and find patterns in big data in a way that is beyond any human capabilities, meaning supply chain managers can get one step ahead of consumers' evolving expectations."

Blockchain fatigued before proper take off

Nella at Infor advised that although blockchain is making people aware that automation is important, there still hasn't been a great number of use cases. His advice was that businesses should "tap the breaks" and make sure they are not adopting blockchain for the sake of blockchain. He isn't alone on this. The same Gartner paper that predicted a significant upswing in advanced SCM technologies also predicts that 'by 2023, 90 percent of blockchain-based supply chain initiatives will suffer blockchain fatigue for lack of strong use cases.'

Zeine dived deeper into the benefits of leveraging blockchain technology in the supply chain strategy: "Blockchain can be a means to simplify and accelerate the digitisation of the enterprise by data sharing in a trustful way. Unlike other technology applications, blockchain creates a tamper-proof supply chain history, which can be shared and seen by each participant. This allows all parties involved in the chain to share information, without requiring a central administrator, eliminating risks associated with centralised control." It's not just the logistics phase of a product's life cycle that can be tracked by blockchain. "Finally, blockchain technology has the potential to streamline supply chains even further, providing an impenetrable record of the movement of goods across their entire life cycle. While adoption is still low, we expect to see more use cases involving improved transparency, more precise traceability, enhanced performance, and secure transactions."

ric Cotteret, manager of **Logistics Reply** spoke about the companies within the Reply Group that are testing blockchain. "The main benefits of blockchain are the guarantee of authenticity across a supply chain and the automation of contracting for example." He also spoke about new directives placing extra governance on pharmaceuticals. This is clearly a strong use case example that elevates blockchain from its beginnings - as a purely finance-driven idea - to one with a higher cause: ensuring that consumers don't receive counterfeit or contaminated medicine, and the ability to trace data associated with items from origin to point of sale.

Another recent example was last month's (June 2019) announcement about an FDA (United States Food and Drug Administration) selected partnership comprising KPMG, IBM, Walmart, and Merck to support the US Drug Supply Chain Security Act. The objective is to address requirements to identify, track and trace prescription medicines and vaccines distributed in the US; as well as help to determine product integrity and storage temperatures of stock, amongst other stipulations. Being such a (deservedly) regulated space, the pharmaceutical industry is well positioned to join the charge for alternative uses for an irrefutable and immutable data ledger approach.

Cotteret believes that blockchain will have purpose beyond such heavily controlled industries. With counterfeit goods finding their way into the market in droves, that brands and retailers which can prove to be selling the real deal could benefit from the level of traceability offered by blockchain. And with the rise of the ethical consumer, how long will it before we want



Blockchain will have purpose beyond such heavily controlled industries

ERIC COTTERET LOGISTICS REPLY

to know exactly who stitched our garments and how sustainably they were produced? Logistics Reply is currently working with an Italian fashion retailer that wants to give information and guarantees about the authenticity of its goods. "We are working with them on creating a visibility portal that could include some elements of blockchain," Cotteret told us.

Safety first with IoT alerts

Not only can blockchain reduce the risk of human error and malicious intent but, if used in conjunction with IoT, it can also help to safeguard businesses and their customers. For example, transporting goods such as medicines or food and beverages requires higher

tiers of governance. "When logistics companies use blockchain in tandem with IoT, they are poised to gain unprecedented traceability into their supply chain, allowing them to identify and mitigate potential setbacks before they become costly," said Zeine.

n combination, blockchain and IoT can help avoid issues before they arise within an ERP system. Blockchain's tamper-proof data catalogue of an item's provenance can flag issues as they happen; and IoT sensors can avert expensive issues before they arise. Zeine explained, "IoT can provide a wealth of information into the movement and 'health' of goods along the supply chain, eliminating unnecessary waste and costly setbacks. For example, IoT sensors on refrigerators transporting perishable items would alert supply chain operators if temperatures in containers hit potentially hazardous levels, allowing for adjustments to be made before products are spoiled."

Some of the heavily regulated industries have already implemented some of the helpful technologies discussed here, paving the way for smaller operatives to take up the tech trend earlier on and grow with a more insightful approach. The supply chain plays a huge part in profitability, not just in terms of streamlining processes and broadening borders, but increasingly as ethical and environmentally savvy customers are demanding impactful preferences. Advance supply chain management processes could be applied to any industry but, as with any transformation or investment, businesses need to pinpoint where and how it will deliver value. The race to fulfil is complicated, intricate, speckled with potential hazards - and very much on.





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S/4HANA



End of life for SAP ECC

It is not unusual for software vendors to build their platforms with a finite lifespan. How else are they going to get you to buy more stuff? But, endof-life is not just a sales tool. Retiring old versions of software allows vendors and customers alike to reap the rewards of innovation at a stroke.

The two largest enterprise apps vendors both announced that they would be bringing the curtain down on their installed applications (or at least the support of those applications); Oracle announced the end of Premier Support for its on-prem applications only to retract that position and commit to a deadline of 2030 (provided that customers upgrade to the latest release of E-Business Suite). SAP made a similar move in October 2014 by declaring that it would effectively retire ECC in 2025 and leave any laggard customers with an unsupported solution. SAP is adamant that it won't follow suit and shift the deadline. This poses an interesting, and somewhat uncomfortable, decision for many SAP customers.

Are SAP customers being forced to upgrade or migrate to S/4 against their wishes? Is this a case of a global tech vendor flexing its muscles and putting

the squeeze on its customers? And, can a business case be made for this imposed roadmap?

The simple answers are No, No and Yes. SAP introduced S/4HANA back in 2015 - a full ten years ahead of the deadline to move - so the latest iteration of its ERP platform is not being foisted on customers, nor are the timelines unrealistic. Of course, SAP wants to sell licences - that's what it is in business to do - but the economics of S/4HANA over the next ten or 15 years will win out over the costs of maintaining and upgrading legacy applications and infrastructure. And, as far as the business case is concerned, customers should be asking themselves if they can afford not to migrate to S/4 rather than considering the costs of doing so.

ori Sangastiano, UK head of SAP at **Capgemini** also believes that SAP customers have had plenty of time to prepare for the move to S/4. But, despite the benefits of such a move, the 2025 deadline is still the thing that most customers are talking about. She said: "All previous versions of SAP have had a fixed lifespan. It's business as usual for software vendors

LORI SANGASTIANO

CAPGEMINI

Let's be honest, a lot of companies are considering the move

because of the 2025 deadline

to develop their products and expect their customers to move forward. SAP has given its customers enough notice and their conversion tools are getting better and better. We should all be familiar with the increased focus on upgrades with SaaS products; SAP has also embraced this approach (1610, 1709 etc). The move timeline has been signalled for a while now, but not everyone appears to believe them. Perhaps that's because the why, what and how to move is just not understood well enough by customers.

"There are lots of drivers for moving to S/4HANA such as regulatory change, competitive threats, new business models, ageing systems, user experience, drive to real-time, efficiency, and standardisation, the list could go on. But let's be honest, a lot of companies are considering the move because of the 2025 deadline and are trying to figure out what benefits they are going to get by doing so. It's our job to help companies to identify benefits and the best approach to move forward. In some cases, this will be a full transformation; in others, it will be a migration that can be done quickly, followed by a roadmap of iterative change that can be implemented over time at the right pace."

Demystifying the migration options

SAP has never been easy to implement and many of its customers are battle weary after years of customising, patching, upgrading and maintaining a



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complex solution that did not integrate very well with other systems. It is little wonder that many customers don't have the appetite for another big systems project, especially one that they are being told they 'must' undertake. But once you get beyond the slightly blunt message that sounds a bit like 'evolve (buy more) or die', there are some very compelling reasons to look at S/4; not just as a new technology stack but as the path to business transformation and the route to evergreen applications, agility, reduced TCO, and digital enablement.

However, despite the many reasons to embrace SAP's latest offering the uptake for S/4 has been disappointingly slow. IBM has completed more S/4 projects than any other partner globally, and they have done just 100. The number of SAP's top 500 customers that are live with a full flavour S/4HANA solution is close to zero. So why has adoption of S/4 been so slow and what is SAP and the partner ecosystem doing to drive its customers towards the benefit of their latest technology?

As Sangastiano points out, the merits of S/4 can get lost in the uncertainty of how to reach them and SAP's partners have been quick to invest in solutions that are designed to ease the pain of moving to S/4.

BEN McGRAIL SNP

Too much focus on the 2025 sunset date has exacerbated lack of adoption



en McGrail, managing director of SNP, said: "Some of the reasons behind the delayed adoption of S/4HANA by major companies are obvious. Inertia, economic uncertainty, cost and competing priorities make it an easy option to do nothing. However, there is also compelling anecdotal evidence that the limitations of the binary migration options - technical upgrade (Brownfield) or complete reimplementation (Greenfield) - and too much focus on the 2025 sunset date, have exacerbated lack of adoption.

"The downside of the Brownfield option is that it offers very little more than a technical upgrade. So, while there might be some interest from IT in upgrading to the latest database technology and software release, there is very little business value. There is no option to position a technical upgrade as part of a much wider and more compelling programme of business change unless you are willing to sign up to multiple go-lives with all the resulting business interruption. And even from a technical perspective, it is limited: there is significant complexity in upgrading a heavily customised ECC system to S/4 and the need for days and perhaps weeks of system downtime at cutover for larger ECC estates. And while Greenfield of-





 st At HCL, our relationship beyond the contract ethos means we focus on our customers rather than our brand, so it's likely you don't know we have been driving benefits-led SAP business transformation for the last 20 years. Our 9000 consultants are currently delivering innovative projects both large and small, from implementing S/4HANA globally for the world's premier broadcasting company, to delivering SAP Cloud Platform and C/4HANA innovation proof of concepts for many customers.

With a reputation for flexibility, partnership and delivery excellence, HCL's global SAP Practice has been hidden in plain sight. While you may not have heard of HCL, you've certainly benefitted from our customers' success.

44 COUNTRIES



S/4HANA

fers companies an obvious opportunity to design a new system fit for the intelligent enterprise, we are seeing that the majority of multinational, diverse businesses who have invested heavily in their SAP estate are proving to be highly reluctant to rip it all up, throw away years of spend on systems and data, and embark on a long, costly, complex re-implementation.

"At SNP, with our proprietary SAP transformation software, we are able to stand up replica copies of SAP systems, work with customers and partners to apply selective and targeted change to those systems, and then repopulate those systems with a complete or selective set of a company's business data. This ability to decouple systems from data has allowed us to develop a far smarter and quicker way of delivering the transition to S/4HANA - which we call Bluefield - that allows customers to deliver business as well as technological transformation. Our customers are now able to realise the benefits of both Greenfield (using the move to S/4HANA as an opportunity to deliver business change and IT innovation in a single business go-live) and Brownfield (retaining and leveraging all that prior investment in solutions and data) while cutting consulting effort and project timelines by half. After a year of collaboration and preparation, IBM launched its Rapid Move for SAP S/4HANA offering in May 2019, which at its core contains SNP's transformation software and Bluefield approach to help their customers accelerate the reinvention of business processes and the integration of new technology."

SNP isn't alone in developing tools to accelerate the journey to S/4. Most of the leading consultancies have introduced methodologies underpinned by rapid deployment technology to soften the bumps and make the S/4 journey more palatable.

IBM has not only invested in the partnership with SNP to deliver Rapid Move, it has also invested in accelerators to help customers assess their journey to S/4HANA; and the 'Rapid Discovery' Phase Zero offering enables them to quickly chart the roadmap



MARK DUDGEON

IBN

This is generating a lot of interest with the large organisations that have invested heavily in SAP

along with the business case for moving to S/4HANA. This is based through a set of analysis tools and a series of diagnostics and tailored workshops.

ark Dudgeon, CTO, global business services at IBM, said: "We identify the end-to-end impact of a move to S/4HANA, including the potential effects on data, custom code, interfaces and level 4 business processes as well as data, testing and

training impact. This can help companies anticipate obstacles and reduce delay in the move to SAP S/4HANA, as well as pinpoint the ways that the current version of SAP may not be serving business needs and ensure that the correct solution and adoption approach is selected up front to avoid regret costs. We have completed almost 300 'Rapid Discovery' assessments. IBM Rapid Move for SAP S/4HANA is a hybrid approach that addresses many of the gaps that some organisations find with the traditional Greenfield and Brownfield adoption approaches.

"This is generating a lot of interest with the large organisations that have invested heavily in SAP over the years and want to move to S/4HANA faster, leveraging a large part of their existing investment in SAP, while getting immediate transformational benefits in key process areas," he said.

Deloitte has also developed services specifically designed to ameliorate the transition to S/4. Built around the concept of keeping the core 'clean', these services are able to cut time to implement and offer customers a way of innovating without having to dive head first into a full scale technical upgrade or re-implementation.

amie McCall, director of consulting at Deloitte, said: "Deloitte has heavily invested in two platforms: our DLeaPS implementation accelerators and preconfigured solutions, and the Deloitte Reimagine Platform for external enhancements. To support these platforms, we have redeveloped our 'enterprise value delivery' methodology. This approach gives us out-of-the-box, 'day one' systems and processes with industry-specific engagements - ready to demo - to support design workshops and to keep the core clean, helping to speed up the main implementation. Reimagine Platform solutions can be integrated with both SAP ECC and SAP S/4HANA, as they are based on SAP Cloud Platform - which is a great place to start and get some quick wins before embarking on the full ERP journey. We are also seeing more clients ask us how they can use tools such as these to realise early benefits."

Sangastiano cites Capgemini's Multi-pillar SAP Architecture as one tool that they use to accelerate the transition to S/4 and believes that bringing the product to life for customers is helping them see the broader picture. She said: "Using our advisory service offering we are helping clients unlock the value and benefit in moving to S/4, answering the how, what and why questions resulting in a business case and roadmap. Our approach includes unique and innovative ways of engaging with the business to build momentum and create excitement. We bring the future to life through tailored demonstrator systems, with the firm belief that 'seeing is believing'.

"Our approach to deliver the roadmap varies by client and is shaped by their drivers for making the move. This will either include a technical migration which we can complete in as fast as 22 weeks to a full greenfield, bluefield or brownfield transformation. We look at how you can "shrink the core" and use our multi-pillar SAP architecture (MPSA) approach to enable complexity to be seamlessly built outside the core."

SAP has come out in support of these new rapid assessment and deployment techniques realising that a narrow choice of S/4 migration options is not providing the flexibility required for the majority of their largest global customers. At SAP SE board level, Michael Kleinemeier, who leads SAP's global digital business services organisation, commented on the IBM/ SNP innovation, saying that it gives "customers a major head start on their digital transformation projects and the ability to realise value from their deployments with even greater speed and agility". And I am sure that equally endorsing comments could be found to support the efforts by other partners who have clearly recognised the shortcomings of the traditional and intended route to market and quickly designed solutions, toolsets and methodologies to drive adoption.

JAMIE McCALL DELOITTE

To support these platforms, we have redeveloped

our 'enterprise value delivery' methodology



The business case for S/4HANA

The business case for implementing S/4 has far more to do with broader digital transformation than it does the need to be off ECC by 2025. Tech savvy CIOs and CFOs will be considering S/4 as part of their efforts to modernise processes, accelerate innovation and improve experience for customers and employees. S/4, just like all other cloud-based ERP suites, is not another IT project and those who see it as such are likely missing the bigger picture.

McGrail from SNP agrees, and said: "To try to build a business case around the need to be off ECC by 2025, hemmed in by the constraints of brownfield or with the prohibitive cost and timelines of greenfield, has perhaps unsurprisingly turned out to be difficult. The false choice of greenfield versus brownfield is also impeding strategic thinking; it is completely the wrong place to start. A far better question for IT leaders to ask is whether their business will be able to continue to grow and thrive and respond rapidly to the market opportunity and technological innovation that will present itself between now until 2025 without fundamentally transforming their systems. And if part of the solution is to transition away from fragmented and overly complex ECC systems to a consolidated, simplified S/4HANA digital core, then there needs to be smarter, quicker and more flexible ways of delivering that transition as part of a much broader programme of strategic business transformation."

udgeon also agrees and cites the need for partners to clearly demonstrate the broader benefits of S/4 over and above what their current ECC platform is delivering. He said: "Organisations who have invested in a mature SAP ECC solution - which is pretty much addressing current business requirements at acceptable TCO - require partners to provide a compelling business case for the move to S/4HANA that addresses line of business benefits rather than simply an IT business case based on end of life."

And Sangastiano goes further by saying that the business case for S/4 opens customers up to the possibility of utilising emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence and machine learning. She said: It's not just about being off ECC by 2025 but a question of identifying the value in the roadmap across the SAP platform, not just a like-for-like migration. Migration to S/4HANA can instead be the catalyst to address wider platform topics such as automation, the

S/4HANA

use of intelligent technologies such as AI and ML for process efficiency and predictive analytics, a different MI strategy and unpicking years of complexity, data replication and disparate tooling. It's about having the right approach and resources to work with the business, to listen, to challenge, to propose ideas and to develop an iterative roadmap underpinned by business benefits. A key point here is that it must be done with the business, it doesn't work if it's done by IT on its own."

Does 2025 create a resources issue?

The adoption rate trend looks very much like it will spike as 2025 looms nearer with some early adopters taking the plunge and most holding station, waiting to work out if, when and how they should move to S/4. There are currently 2,800 companies globally that are running S/4 with a further 7900 who have procured the solution and are at varying stages of implementation. That leaves approximately 40,000 other SAP customers running ECC that will need to migrate to S/4 over the next six years. That's 128 each week and the eco-system does not have the manpower to support that. The issue is compounded further by the fact that adoption will likely accelerate as the deadline draws nearer meaning that the 40,000 golives required to meet SAP's timeline will not be spread evenly over time and will land with a 'big bang'. If you are considering S/4 there are even more compelling reasons to start that journey now. With a squeeze on resources it is obvious that the best and most capable S/4 consultants will be deployed early and if you leave your decision too late you may have little choice in who delivers the project, or no choice at all.

Dudgeon also believes that lack of resources could impact SAP's plan to have all its customers off ECC by 2025 but says that the partner network is addressing that issue.

He said: "The risk of trained S/4HANA resource shortage does look like a potential scenario where uptake

has been slower than expected. The momentum for S/4HANA adoption is there, but the adoption trend looks a bit like a hockey stick with a large increase towards the end. The SAP partner network will have to look at more agile adoption approaches with accelerators and automation to support these volumes."

But Sangastiano is more optimistic and thinks that the issue will be solved in one of several ways and partially mitigated by the fact that not all of SAP's customers will choose S/4. She said: "First of all I don't think all of SAP's customers will migrate to S/4. Some customers will move away from SAP, some may choose to have an unsupported version, and some will choose to go with another third party provider for SAP maintenance. Having said that, I do expect many customers to make the decision to go down the S/4 journey and this will put strain on the SAP partner network. The size of the strain will depend on how many customers choose to migrate versus transform. We have industrialised and customised tooling to drive efficient migrations to S/4 and have references where we've done this in 22 weeks, so it doesn't need to be a long and expensive programme. After the migration, a company can then decide how and what to transform and do it at their own pace. I recommend that companies choose their SI partners sooner rather than later as highly skilled SAP resources will be the first ones busy on projects."

CXO takeaway from the S/4 conundrum

I would urge business leaders to consider digital transformation rather than focus on S/4. The real questions are what do you need to do in your business to remain competitive over the next ten years and what systems and processes do you need to deliver on that? It is very likely that you are already considering all of these options but the time to act is now. It may appear that change is happening rapidly, but this is the slowest rate of change we are ever going to experience, and the longer you

wait the wider the gap will be between those who have adopted digital technology and those who haven't.

No one likes a gun being put to their head, but viewing SAP's 2025 deadline as an ultimatum is probably a little unfair on the vendor, even if it does still rankle with some customers who have invested heavily in ECC and have a solution that works for their business as it is today. In fact, SAP didn't really announce a termination point for ECC, they just announced an extension to the existing support framework up to that date. However, it does still feel like a deadline although it is very likely that customers will be extended some courtesy by the vendor provided that they are heading in the right direction.

he resourcing issue is a genuine threat to projects that hold out to the very last minute but the SAP partner network is deep. The heavy-hitters are already addressing the potential shortfall of headcount so it's unlikely that any of them will turn you away if you ask them to implement S/4 and offer up a couple of million pounds in fees.

Innovative approaches to upgrading and re-implementation mean that projects can be accelerated with minimal impact on BAU activities and can be phased into your organisation so that small chunks of effort can have a big impact on your business.

Start now, even if it is just with a readiness assessment and engage with an SAP partner that has the skills, experience, knowledge and depth of resource pool to transition your business to the Intelligent Enterprise.

McGrail from SNP summed up with: "Transformation companies like SNP, major consulting partners and SAP are all working together to develop ways to help customers drive business transformation through S/4HANA. Speaking to industry analysts and market watchers, the consensus is that we are only at the start of a major wave of S/4HANA that is going to transform not only our customers but also the consulting industry itself."

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FEATURE

BRA

Not just about customers

Practically every element of a business can profit from scrutiny

I&A can enable a Midas touch in terms of squeezing every drop of efficiency and profitability out of customer intelligence and CRM, ERP, and the better management of existing and future workforces. Sometimes the challenge is working out which area, problem or question to direct it to.

At its core, business intelligence is about transforming raw data into meaningful metrics that can provide a much needed edge in today's fiercely competitive business environment.

One of the most visible benefits of BI software integrated in to an ERP system is the benefit of real-time business information to aid short and long term decision making. However, BlackLine's vice president of EMEA, Andy Bottrill notes that while many enterprises prioritise this approach for customer-centric applications they can fail to realise the potential it unlocks for back-office functions such as finance.

"With the right systems in place, finance and accounting teams can provide unprecedented value to the larger business. Rising transactional volumes, growing regulatory complexity and headcount constraints often mean that accountants are

ANDY BOTTRILL
BLACKLINE

NO ERP
SYSTEM
CAN DO
IT ALL

overcommitted to 'closing the books' when they also need to be delivering real-time financial intelligence. Embedding automation and BI software into day-to-day activities within the finance department, however, frees up time and resources for higher-value strategic tasks including major ERP upgrade initiatives," said Bottrill.

"Enterprise resource planning (ERP) systems can be an indispensable tool, helping you to plan, budget, predict, and report on an organisation's results. However, no ERP system can do it all. That's why the best vendor software is designed to help plug functionality gaps and complement customers' ERP," he said.

Data is only one element of the final equation

When choosing a BI&A system it is important to identify what you need and want the system to do for your business. "Today, data is accumulated from a wide variety of sources, and it's becoming increasingly difficult to manage this growing wealth of information—let alone use it. With decision-making so pivotal to driving business growth, this information overload represents a worrying development. Achieving full visibility of operations across a business, therefore, is key to maximising decision-making capabilities. While no one person can have direct visibility of everything that is going on in a company, business intelligence technologies-including ERP systems and manufacturing execution software (MES) - should be used to provide these insights," said Andy Coussins, senior vice president and head of sales at Epicor Software, a company that focusses on business intelligence, reporting and analytics particularly for the manufacturing and distribution sectors.

He also advised creating a central collection and access point for business data is a crucial element. went on to say that "solutions like ERP and MES also make it possible to integrate data across the entire product life cycle and give everyone - from cLevel executives to those working on the manufacturing floor - access to actionable, information and insights in real-time. Having a

filtered view of all this detail will enable decisions to be based on relevant, accurate and reliable data."

Forecasting, fraud, and football

"When we talk about BI and analytics what we are really talking about is how companies make use of their data," said Debbie Green, vice president of applications at Oracle UK. "Over the last few years companies have been

IT'S BECOMING **INCREASINGLY DIFFICULT** TO MANAGE THIS GROWING WEALTH OF INFORMATION

managing ever greater amounts of data, and now when I sit down with customers the conversation is how they make the most of this data rather than how they simply manage it. BI and analytics is key in doing this as it helps them make sense of the huge swathes of data and turn it into meaningful insights that help them to make informed and intelligent decisions about the future of their organisation.

"If we look at the CFO function as

an example, by integrating BI and analytics into their finance function it allows them to easily understand fiscal forecasts, expenditure or gaps in their supply chain. By having this information at their fingertips the CFO can focus on the strategy to resolve a problem, or drive further

ANDY COUSSINS **FPICOR**

operational streamlining, rather than having to make sense of the numbers as this has been done automatically," she said.

Logically, BI&A can only work with the data that it has to calculate from. Some of that data can derive from outdated strategies reaching back for decades so it is wise to doublecheck evidential outcomes against data sources, collection, filing histories and timestamping. Thankfully, as machine learning encroaches further into data handling and analysis more current system recommendations are being generated.

Of course historic information can hold enormous value for moving forwards. The NHSBSA (National Health Business Services Authority) provides critical central services to NHS organisations, NHS contractors, patients and the public. The organisation identified clear first objectives: to better understand the patient journey, find out how customers intereact with NHSBSA, and identify errors and misuse of services. Through an initiative called DALL (Data Analytics Learning Laboratory) NHSBSA was able to access insight which has helped to create some £581 million in savings that can be reinvested in to patient care.

The results of the initial data analysis, aided by an end-to-end suite of Oracle services, uncovered around £100m in potential savings in just the first few months. It also highlighted over-claims from organisations such as pharmacists and dental practices, and instances of resource wastage including the over prescribing of medication. Not only has the system been able to collect and make sense of vast amounts of historic data from several different sources, the evidence of deeper operational insight has prompted a more data centric mindset across the organisation.



FEATURE

The importance of People Analytics

t is becoming normal to use BI&A (business intelligence and analytics) to pinpoint successful areas of a business -as well as identify instances of underperformance accompanied by remedial recommendations. However, untapped creativity in what BI&A systems can do for a business are coming to light. Here we have look at some of the more personable aspects being enabled by BI&A - with the sole aim of greater profit.



In many cases, still, the measurement of people is being run through archaic systems sitting in silos. It is difficult to deploy or analyse dormant intelligence, and this is a scenario that leaves many companies scrabbling to find the right information for operational metrics - including insights to the people power and people skills already employed. Sticking to manual processes and static spreadsheetbased data collection produces a deluge of individual operational plans, an unfathomable amount of potted data, and the need for continuous recalculation. The result is often inaccurate, quickly outdated and slows down decision-making across the organisation.

"The fast-pace of today's modern business is prompting more and more organisations to look into solutions that offer real-time data intelligence that is continuously up-to-date and visible throughout the organisation

Machine learning algorithms which evolve to detect anomalous business data and flag it to the user for feedback can 'learn' and improve in accuracy.

ROBERT DOUGAS
ADAPTIVE INSIGHTS



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> HELEN ARMSTRONG SILVER CLOUD

for all sorts of analysis," said Robert Douglas, Europe planning director at **Adaptive Insights**. "This calls for enterprise-wide software-as-a-service delivery models that allow planners to ask deep, complex strategy questions and see results modelled in real-time through the use of machine learning and automation."

Predictive workforce analytics for the future

elen Armstrong, MD at Silver Cloud HR told us that: "Historically, issues with data integrity have held HR teams back from fully exploring the value of people analytics. But vendors and organisations are moving away from simply provid-

ing intelligence through analytics to delivering data-driven actions. What we're seeing is a step away from HR analytics to more powerful workforce analytics where businesses are afforded much greater foresight. CIPHR (SaaS HR system), for example, talks about the importance of the 'nudge theory. Say you wanted to know which employees in a sales team were more likely to leave, predictive analytics could provide you with this information. Better still, it could be used to direct (or nudge) line managers to take a specific course of action based on the intelligence provided. These actions have a direct and measurable impact on return on investment. So, we should expect a greater focus on innovation with regards to collating and leveraging additional data sets to drive the growth of new and more sophisticated analytic outcomes."

redictive technology is also useful when it comes to evaluating an employees performance, even before their first day, according to Nick Shaw, MD of 10x Psychology which provides modern assessment tools and predictive analytics for the employee lifcycle. He explained that "by tapping into important data insights, employers can assess a candidate's motivators and predict how long an employee will likely stay with the business and their likelihood of promotion. Through these real time, data-driven insights, HR leaders will be fully aware of what motivates each employee and will consequently be able to better support their staff before issues arise."

Intelligence from employee performance gets even more interesting when BI&A is used to predict future performance outcomes - of both profit and teamwork - as early on as at the pitch or big stage of a new project. Using apps such as **Precursive** - resource management app and start-up in the **Salesforce** ecosystem - can compute which project types will work out better for an organisation and which skills

will be required to get ahead of talent gaps and recruitment. It can also help with diverting future diversity issues. There is much evidence that a diverse team is a more profitable one. Tim Ringo, vice president EMEA at SAP Success Factors gave us the example that once a system knows about your team it might - if it was relevant - pop up and say: 'Hello. Did you know that the ratio on your female employees is off. Do you want to fix that?' You can



then push a button and be offered 'intelligent' system-generated recommendations.

eter Harte, vice president EMEA at **Kronos** offered another example where practical artificial intelligence is being used by organisations to help minimise the stress and friction of shift-swapping. A system that already knows which relevant employee's schedules can accommodate the shift can check if that person's preferences and skill set are a match for the slot in question. It can then make intelligent suggestions, based on who picked up similar shifts at similar timeslots in the past, and

Through these real time, data-driven insights, HR leaders will be fully aware of what motivates each employee

> NICK SHAW 10X PSYCHOLOGY

approve the change on the backend with no managerial intervention required.

According to research late last year from the CIPD (Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development) and Workday, the UK has fallen behind other regions regarding the use of available data relating to people. Results from a comprehensive study* found that six out of ten professionals in the UK (57 percent) reported that while they have access to people data only 17 percent of them use this data on a daily basis, the lowest of all the regions in the survey**. About a third (35 percent) of the UK respondents reported strong people analytics culture compared to more than half (54 percent) of those asked in SE Asia. So, it

is clear that there is work to be done regarding the take up of advanced analytics relating to the UK workforce. However, many enterprises are still struggling – and that's before any Brexit activity. I do not even want to turn the page on that yet; not until we know what Britain will look like in terms of rehashing workforces, trade deals, visas, regulations, supply chains, any diversity impact, imports, exports... and even then maybe not.

^{*} CIPD / Workday survey: 3,852 business professionals from the UK and Ireland, US, Middle East and North Africa (MENA), and South-East Asia.

^{**} Comparison stats: Compared to four in 10 US respondents (41%) and five in 10 SE-Asia and MENA respondents (54% and 50%)

BI&Analytics IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR

How deeper insights can help local government amid Britain's austerity measures

BY TONY SUMMERS

ocal government bureaus are under increasing pressure to deliver much needed regional support systems in an efficient and cost-effective manner. The fulfilment challenge is for public sector managers to determine and balance priorities amid ever changing financial, legislative and political influences.

The use of business intelligence (BI) and analytics helps to extract data from enterprise resource planning (ERP) and line of business systems (LOB). LOB systems characterise local government and encompass services such as: social care, highways, education and learning, revenue, benefits, and housing. Locked inside these systems is key data that directorates and pubic sector managers need in order to make more informed decisions relating to the financial and people aspects of their ERP.

Although the operating environment in local government may vary from private sector industries, leaders and managers in both of these kinds of organisations need access to quality business information to drive effective delivery of services. Interestingly, public sector success rates for BI implementations can be higher than equivalent endeavours in the private sector. This may be due to the ingrained public sector practices of strongly controlled annual budgeting and plan-



ning, and a culture of effective scheduling of project timelines and resources.

Historically, public sector organisa-

Public sector organisations often looked to third-party reporting tools to extract data from their multisystems

tions often looked to thirdparty reporting tools to extract data from their multisystems or to build complex data warehouses to combine data from these many LOB sources. The development of more sophisticated BI analytical products - that now come with the latest ERP offerings - are starting to provide a sensible alternative to these approaches, reducing the need for separate solutions or the substantial maintenance often required for data warehouses.

Running local government on business intelligence

With big data, AI and IoT trending it is more important, now than ever before, that a single version of the truth feeds integrated public sector systems with the right information to produce appropriate outputs that will inform and drive core business decisions. Thankfully, BI applications are getting easier to navigate. However, the design and data structures that sit behind a userinterface determine the user experience, precision, quality and reliability of the data itself. End-user self-service, customisable dashboards and reporting integration are key for translating raw data into meaningful business intelligence, insights and trend analysis.

New-generation ERP systems with embedded BI are making operational reporting simpler, presenting users with the tools and capabilities to create their own analysis directly from the transactional system in real-time, thereby removing some of the reliance upon IT professionals. Giving users access to the live transactional data, that doesn't require a data warehouse or an ETL (extract, transform, load) routine enables a much more efficient and reliable reporting process. It is also important to understand that increased ease of reporting does not mean that governance and control is no longer necessary. Some of this control can be provided by the ERP environment in terms of data security and user access which flow from the corresponding controls around transactional activity.

In-application dashboards are being increasingly used to 'push' real-time information to system users, reducing the burden on dedicated distribution activities for operational information. The analysis and reports being produced in-application also means that any resulting actions can be accessed immediately and with context-driven precision. Further, higher volumes of data, as well as differently structured or unstructured data, increase the need for sensible analysis and this is where robotic process automation (RPA) and artificial intelligence (AI) are set to become more important in strategic BI activities. These technologies can be used to automate repetitive data preparation tasks, and algorithmbased machine learning capabilities can find the best analysis of the newly prepared data - identifying the less obvious trends, removing outliers, and minimising errors.

Implementing change at a local level

The level of business engagement and stakeholder management needed to

implement a cross-functional reporting capability is not to be underestimated and this can be a project within itself. A prevailing factor for any implementation of a new system is user adoption and the behavioural changes required to elicit new ways of working. A successful implementation, with best user adoption, will depend on a good understanding and effective prioritisation of critical business needs. This can be difficult in a local government environment where a wide range

of very different business activities coexist; it is not always possible to compare priorities between one directorate and the next. However, if management can identify the key drivers and outcomes for the BI system this can help to steer success factors towards areas that will achieve the greatest impact. Starting with areas of the organisation that will benefit the most will encourage take-up, tell a good story, and lay

This can be difficult in a local government environment where a wide range of very different business activities co-exist

the foundations for future phases of roll-out.

Today's sophisticated BI systems are often 'functionally-rich' with the power to absorb, analyse and visualise data. However, if people cannot get to grips with the navigation, features, look and feel of a new BI system within a relatively short time there is a risk that they will revert back to familiar methods (such as spreadsheets) that come with the possible, but untrue, perception that lesser rigour, governance and control is entailed.

In an austere environment of financial pressures and continued public scrutiny, the cost for any new IT method or system needs to be justified. The councils looking to inspire confidence, and can demonstrate the promise of more efficient results from streamlined data for better decision making, will do themselves a great favour when it comes to asking for a budget to implement BI and analytics.

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New alliances, deeper channel and potential IPO set to launch Infor into the big league of enterprise applications as event focusses on maximising potential.







nspire was Infor's European showcase which took place in Amsterdam. Attended by more than 1,000 partners and customers, the event was hosted under the strapline 'achieve your human potential' and was opened by Cormac Watters, EVP for Europe. Watters used his Irish-charm to quickly win over the audience and set the stage perfectly for CEO Charles Phillips.

Soma Somasundaram took to the stage after Phillips to talk about many

of the key technology updates and innovations that had been integrated into the Infor portfolio over the last 12 months. Coleman AI, the rebranding of GT Nexus and Infor Rhythm being three of the notable topics. Rhythm, an integrated eCommerce cloud platform was launched back in 2013 but has largely remained under the radar. However, new functionality and sector specific flavours for retail, public sector, healthcare and hospitality should help to improve adoption. The platform promises 'a

complete package in the cloud by combining world-class design with a comprehensive engagement platform.

After lunch, Watters was back on stage to talk about the five pillars of Infor's strategy for the European business. They were; customers, ecosystem, professionalism, growth and employees. Significant emphasis was placed on the eco-system as Infor has set its sights on pinching some of the business historically in the wheelhouse of Oracle and SAP. Infor's plan is simple enough – increase its













visibility with the global SIs and boost its channel sales network with new partners. Watters noted that just 12 months ago Infor had only one global alliance partner, whereas now it had eight. The likes of IBM, Deloitte and Accenture are now taking a keen interest in the Infor offering and it's not so unlikely that they may start to nibble away at the lower end of a market they have so far been unable to penetrate, save for the likes of Travis Perkins and BAE Systems.

Our final session of the day was a

press briefing with the three global leaders; Phillips, Somasundaram and CFO, Kevin Samuelson. It was the first time we had heard from Samuelson and his take on the potential IPO I discuss with Phillips in the previous issue of ERP Today was interesting to hear. The message was largely joined up with everything that we had heard before and the timescale for any announcement was still '12-24 months'.

The event itself was very well

organised by the Infor marketing team and Phillips made a point of thanking and congratulating them at the end of his closing remarks – a particularly nice gesture on the day.

It will be very interesting to see how Infor progresses over the coming year. Despite the coyness on the IPO, I wouldn't be surprised to hear an announcement before the end of the year and with the new alliances being forged with global integrators they are certainly on the crest of a wave – watch out Oracle and SAP!





UNIT 4 CONNECT

AMSTERDAM







nit4's annual conference, Connect Ambassadors, was also hosted in Amsterdam and it was Mike Ettling's first opportunity to make his mark after joining as the new CEO. It was effectively Ettling's first day in the job and he took no time to get on stage and set out his agenda of adding some sizzle to the Unit4 steak.

There were several key announcements at the conference concerning product, pricing and strategy. The headline news on pricing was that Unit4 would introduce fixed pricing for customers that wanted to move to its cloud platform. There are three categories of pricing, based loosely on the size of the organisation, with the entry level migration costs being set at just €15,000, rising to €35,000 for medium sized businesses, and growing to €75,000 for enterprise customers. A timeframe for migration was also included in the detail with Unit4 promising to deliver in 20 day, 40 days and 75 days respectively.

Fixed price implementations are a risky business for ERP vendors

as no two customers will be the same and the complexity will vary significantly. Although no real meat was put on the bones of the new pricing plan, we strongly suspect that these figures and timelines will only work for existing Unit4 customers with vanilla solutions that are prepared to accept a minimally viable product in the cloud as a starting point. Migrating any enterprise to the cloud for €75k, and in 75 days, sounds very ambitious – but the idea itself is valid as consumers of digital transformation









increasingly demand an outcome based delivery model. It will be interesting to see how many of these deals Unit4 can deliver on over the next 12 months.

On the product front, the main news concerned Wanda, Unit4's AI powered chatbot, which provides a UI for most elements of their ERP system and delivers text interactions through Slack, Messenger, Teams, and other interfaces. The demos of the product were impressive as Ettling extolled the virtues of "smarter

software for customers" that would deliver a completely new user experience for those people down in the weeds and utilising the system on a daily basis. It was also announced that Wanda would now be included as part of the People Platform offering at no extra cost (before now it had been a chargeable service) and the news was received positively by the room of delegates and customers. My personal view is that text or chat based assistants such as Wanda still have a long way to go before

they really gain traction; I tried to use Wanda several times and it only really worked 50 percent of the time. There are localisation issues so language barriers will hold back adoption, and as we all know as consumers – if we try a tech or app and it doesn't deliver a seamless experience, we are very quick to cast it aside. Wanda, and others like it, will be the future of UI for ERPs but until its 100 percent accurate and can deliver a faultless experience it is unlikely to gain widespread adoption.

IR35 is coming to the private sector

Is your recruitment agency preparing you for the IR35 changes?

BY MARK THOMAS

he phrase 'IR35' or 'Off-Payroll Working' as it is now being referred to will strike a chord, maybe a chill, in the heart of many readers.

For years HMRC (Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs) has tried, with limited success, to tax contractors broadly at the same rates as permanent employees but with none of the perks such as security, career development, holiday pay, sick pay, and pensions. This legislation is called IR35.

Until April 2017 the legal responsibility to determine whether someone was inside or outside of IR35 sat with the contractors and, of course, they also accepted the liability of their decision.

In April 2017, HMRC addressed 'supposed' non-compliance in the public sector by introducing a new set of reforms applicable to contractors operating via private service companies (PSCs) whether hired directly or via a third party (the fee payer).

Private Sector IR35

As suspected by many, HMRC moved quickly (and quietly) to start the process of rolling this legislation as 'proposed new rules' into the private sector with a target date of April 2020.

These 'proposed new rules' have now been through a final consultation with the draft legislation published on the 11th July 2019 and as we suspected, with little material change from the legislation that



has already been implemented in the public sector, save some minor clarifications.

What this means for private sector organisations that use contractors, and SIs who use contractors for private

sector customers, is that you need to have a two phase approach: covering the correct determination of the IR35 status of your current contractor; and determining the IR35 status of your new contractor roles before you hire into them.

To see the whole picture and make the right determination for your business, it is important to understand the implications associated with your determinations. For example, if you determine your contractors are inside IR35 then you must be prepared to overcome challenges like the retention of the contractors that you already have, attracting new skills, and increased costs.

It is widely accepted that a contractor who has previously determined themselves as outside IR35 will be unlikely to continue on the same project on an inside IR35 basis without renegotiating their rate to compensate for their increased tax liability, if they decide to stay at all.

Our 'IR35 Contractor Calculator' shows that, given some assumptions, the cost of a typical £400 per day contractor will increase by roughly 21 percent.

Conversely, if you determine your contractor is outside IR35 then you will be required to provide to the 'fee payer' (who accepts the liability), evidence of how you would handle a substitution request, how you manage 'control' of contractors, and how you remedy unacceptable work.

Your recruitment agency partner should be working with you to prepare you for this forthcoming legislation through workshops to gauge your current knowledge levels regarding IR35, highlight what the changes are, and identify which framework your organisation wants to operate within.

Be under no illusion there is new legislation coming. With the emphasis on decision making and associated liabilities, you need to be working in partnership with your recruitment agency and ensure that they have the skills, knowledge, and methodology to navigate you through this new and challenging legislative environment.

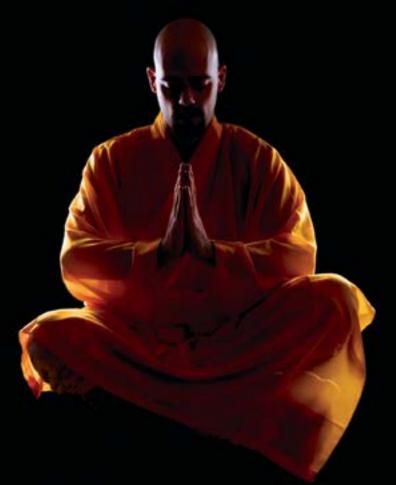
Director at Oracle Contractors

They are

unlikely to continue on the same project inside IR35 without re-negotiating their rate



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