Why Do We Need ERP and Business Process Automation?

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Why Do We Need ERP and Business Process Automation?
Somewhere along the line we started talking about "Serious Businesses". I can remember clearly the day we decided to write this on our website and brochures, we were trying to reach out to those companies that were ready to take the next step. Let's face it, we are all "Serious" business people so this comment was not meant to slight anyone or the way business is conducted, it was meant to make people stop and assess their choices and decisions they are making in everyday business. There comes a time when the business starts to be larger than the people who started it and requires multiple people working together, sometimes in multiple locations, multiple time zones, and it just begins to press us to seriously consider how to make our lives easier and to be able to grow our business with more profits. So having said that I would like to make a case for a few of the reasons why we need   **ERP and Business Process Automation**.

Each of the Reasons is worthy of a Blog all by themselves, but I will try to be brief with this write-up. The reasons are, in no particular order of priority:

1.   Better Communications with Colleagues and Clients

2.   More Efficiency = More Profits

3.   Organization + Standards = More Profits

4.   Your Company's Databases become your Data Warehouse and your ultimate value

5.   **ERP leverages your existing resources**

6.   Every successful company has a "**secret sauce**"

Better communications with colleagues and clients

When we are growing and changing at the rate of successful small and mid-sized companies, we often forget to stop and communicate with our customers and colleagues. Having a single system that our company and clients use each day and all day is a good way for us to keep up and get caught up in a hurry. When a company installs their ERP system it should also include their customers who are everything to the business. The minute the client feels neglected, ignored they will start to look elsewhere for their products and services. Make sure your ERP system has features that lets you collaborate with your clients just like they are part of the team. ERP systems enable you, empower you, and give you access to your company databases and data warehouse. Make sure the system works for you and your partners and clients. Not only should your   **ERP** system give you the means to communicate with your customer list, it should also give you the means to professionally manage those communications.

More Efficiency = More Profits

Small Business people are often under the gun and too busy to consider how they can streamline their activities, much less automate their processes. But the fact is proven by 100% of Big Business, if you automate what you do on a routine basis, you will prosper by freeing yourself up to focus on other urgent matters. If you are filling out a form, then handing it to the next person in the workflow for them to type into a spreadsheet or system, and possibly the information gets typed in four or five more times, you can immediately cut your company's workload down by using an **ERP** system. A properly configured ERP system captures each of your business entries into a single company database or Data Warehouse as it is called by some computer pros. So it stands to reason that less work to capture this data and automated processes like invoicing, materials lists, work orders, purchase orders, and more can be created without increasing your resources (employees, assets, and services). This in turn reduces direct costs and enables your resources to focus on more profitable activities.

Organization + Standards = More Profits

To have all the company data in a single database or warehouse is powerful. The entire company may now speak with a one voice and one perspective of all aspects of the business. Small to Mid-Sized Businesses that wish to grow their businesses need to have a standard way of doing business and need to have these standards reinforced regularly. Your customers will appreciate it when they have a support or maintenance issue and your customer care people all have the same information on the address and/or person who is on the other end of the phone. We also appreciate that all contracts and communications with the person on the other end of the phone is just a mouse click away. More customer satisfaction is one of the guaranteed road to prosperity.

Your Company's Databases become your Data Warehouse and your ultimate value

Most SMB's can count at least ten spreadsheets, databases, and other files and documents that "hold the company together". When the company is incubating and business partners figure out how to work together, this is all part of the startup process. There comes a time when these files and tools become so valuable it is important to back them up, version them, ensure that everyone has the same file, and after a while we look to simplify this process so it doesn't frustrate all of us. It is at that time that an ERP system can help by putting all these spreadsheets, documents, databases, and other files into a single place and ultimately a single database. When the   **ERP** system is hooked up you will start to use the database for customer sales, communications, support, warranty management, accounting, Project Management, and basically everything that is a process within your regular workday. Quite simply the company data and recorded information becomes your key to your next level of success.

ERP leverages your existing resources
As a company grows the natural reaction is to hire enough people to cover the business and do the work and to make sure the people have a place to work and the necessary tools to do their work. An installed and functioning **ERP** system instantly reduces the amount of work required to reach the company objectives and profit goals. As stated earlier, by providing a system that is single entry, multiple use you have cut out a lot of rework. Sometimes reducing the workflow by 80%. So far be

it for me to say that ERP is a way to cut workforce, I don't believe in that type of business philosophy, I believe those same people that you trusted, hired, and worked with are more useful doing higher profit activities in place of their old repetitive tasks. One of our customers lost two of his key staff during the busiest time of his entire year......and never missed a beat! It is a good story and it is a true story.

Every successful company has a "secret sauce"

Every Big Business in 2007 has an ERP system of some sort or another. They have standardized their way of doing business and preserved the processes that make them money and preserved their corporate culture by automating these processes. Many of the big guys have proprietary systems that automate what they do; it is like the bottling of their "secret sauce" and making it available to their trusted inner circle of employees and partners. This automation is quite simply expensive as it takes a development team many hours to program all the processes and to make sure that these processes all work together so there is a single company database. Only the big guys could afford these systems, until now. Along came Business Process Management, the internet, low cost data and application hosting, Rapid Development Programming, and other circumstances that all contributed to affordable   ERP for SMB's. It has become faster to create a system that captures your "secret sauce" and also gives you the general tools that should be available to 100% of businesses.

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