

INTELLIGENT MANUFACTURING SYSTEMS

Global Research and Business
Innovation Program

Enterprise Resource Planning



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Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP)

How to Use This Guidebook

Each ERP Guidebook is created with the business growth needs of small and medium manufacturers in mind. By utilizing the information in this guidebook, you are taking the first steps to creating a competitive advantage for your company by innovating in the face of disruptive technologies.

This guidebook follows a logical flow to guide you as you learn more about ERP (see Fig. 1). Review the sections as they apply to your individual opportunities and resources, either in the order they're presented or jump around to fit your immediate needs.

Figure 1: ERP Guidebook Information Flow



This is your toolkit for plugging into the ERP innovation network.

Together, all of our guidebooks work to uplift manufacturers through increasing digital readiness; working together to accelerate the understanding and investment in emerging technologies; and foster a culture of innovation in the manufacturing industry. We encourage you to also review the other guidebooks in this series.

Who can I contact at IMS?

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Enterprise Resource Planning

ERP Platforms at a Glance

What are “ERP platforms?”

ERP platforms are usually referred to as a category of business-management software – typically a suite of integrated applications – that an organization can use to collect, store, manage and interpret data from these many business activities. ERP provides an integrated and continuously updated view of core business processes using common databases maintained by a database management system. According to Wikipedia, ERP systems track business resources – cash, raw materials, production capacity – and the status of business commitments: orders, purchase orders, and payroll.¹

Why do ERP platforms matter?

Manufacturers can be more visible and accessible to new customers, partners and geographies by utilizing ERP platforms. Building connections and communications through online methods is critical to competing in a global economy where access to potential manufacturing partners is seemingly unlimited and business information travels fast. The definition of “business as usual” has evolved as “going digital” is now table stakes for manufacturer survival.

What are the biggest ERP opportunity areas?

We have identified three key opportunity areas in ERP platforms for manufacturers:

- Opportunity #1:** Speed and responsiveness of customer and supplier material flows
- Opportunity #2:** Communications both within the firm and with its external environment
- Opportunity #3:** Improved productivity of both capital and labor for the firm

More information can be found in the Identify Opportunities section on page 7.

What are the business benefits of utilizing ERP platforms?

ERP platforms have been proven to be more cost-effective means of:

- Having a unified source of manufacturing data
- Providing both improved external and internal communications
- Improved productivity of operations

Customers who feel connected to their manufacturer throughout the purchase and delivery process are also more likely to purchase, recommend and refer you to their peers. Learn more below about key performance indicators you can expect to improve on by turning to the Metrics for Success section in Build the Business Case and Begin Implementation on page 9.

Where can I find help to get started?

There are partners who can assist you with full ERP strategies or specific implementations of tactical solutions on business functions that you’ve prioritized. There are also many free online resources, as well as educational courses offered by state universities and colleges. Go to Find Help on page 15 for a full list of resources to help jump-start your use of ERP solutions to grow your business.

¹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Enterprise_resource_planning



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