

WHITE PAPER

Will Your Legacy ERP
System Define Your Legacy?
Making the Switch Can Help Secure
Your Business and Your Reputation

By definition, a legacy system is an outdated software application that relies on old technology to manage current business requirements. If you don't pull the plug in time, your business could be on its way down a dangerous spiral of lost opportunities and profits. While your current system may have brought your business into the modern age years ago, more likely than not, your legacy software isn't helping you reap the rewards that can be found through leading technology available today.

So how do you know if your legacy software is at risk of damaging your business and your legacy? Conduct a software audit to see if your system includes the critical features, functionality and tools that modern supply chains use to drive optimal efficiency and profits.

Consumer Goods Functionality: deploying best practices to manage end-to-end business processes

Your ERP system should be able to manage your entire supply chain from point of origin to final destination. That means reaching as far back as your own manufacturing plants or third-party suppliers, and reaching forward to your retail partner DCs or other shipping locations. In between, your ERP application should be able to do some heavy lifting in the areas of **overseas shipping** and **container building, warehouse and inventory management, logistics, sales, finance, compliance** and more.

But what really counts are the features and tools that help you manage processes within those areas of your business. Can your legacy system calculate your **true landed costs** at the product level? Leading-edge ERP applications take into account container fees, broker fees, customs charges and other costs, then distribute them across POs to help you assess landed costs by: product, cost ratio, weight ratio, cube ratio or unit ratio. And getting to the detail level of your true costs can help you understand your **real profitability** later.

Speaking of profitability, does your legacy system include a **profitability scorecard** to help you understand your real margins after calculating all your below-the-line costs? Leading-edge software can help you understand profitability by customer, supplier or product, by taking into consideration cost outliers such as rush freight, damage write-offs, invoice deductions, special deals, duty, royalties, commissions and other costs. Knowing how individual suppliers, products and trading partners measure up against each other can provide valuable intelligence that can be used to identify problems and opportunities in the supply chain, and in business relationships. Leading-edge software will give you the **profitability intelligence** you need in a few simple clicks, and eliminate the need for multiple spreadsheets and manual number crunching.

Unlike legacy systems, leading-edge software lets you work from the desktop, laptop, or on-the-go through **mobile applications** accessible on your iPad, iPhone or other mobile device. In fact, leading-edge **business intelligence (BI)** tools will even give you an at-a-glance snapshot of your key performance indicators. Leading-edge software should offer a rich graphical experience with a colourful, easy-to-understand executive dashboard. Being able to access your business data wherever you go helps you gain deeper business insights that can help you make better business decisions. Look for tools that also give you

associative intelligence so you can see data connections, and mine relational data, on sales and operational performance issues. **Social collaboration tools** let you share screenshots, insights, and decision notes with other stakeholders, for faster decision making.

Your manufacturing and distribution business is evolving at a rapid pace. Changing market conditions leave your business in a constant state of flux. That's why you need leading-edge software that enables you to **create workflows and alerts** on every process within your organisation. Workflows within your ERP system can help ensure process consistency. They can also work as a powerful training tool for new workers, as well as those temporarily assigned to cover roles for absent teammates. Without a doubt, workflows can help speed processes while minimising the possibility of errors. Leading-edge software will also include powerful alert tools to help your users stay abreast of changing conditions including product approvals, quality assurance concerns, revised shipping dates, and all manner of activities important to your business.

Integration: complete visibility and information sharing

Chances are, your legacy software relies on a number of bolt-on applications to manage the activities of your business. Bolt-ons sound like a good idea until you consider the added time and cost your IT team faces to manage, maintain and upgrade separate applications. Then there's the visibility issue—or lack thereof. Leading-edge software covers the end-to-end needs of your business while providing all your users, no matter where they're located, with **complete visibility** into your business data. For consumer goods companies **importing from Asia**, that visibility may be on the plant floor or in container loads and shipping vessels earmarked for transit. Leading-edge software will give you insight into your products whether they're on the water, in customs, in the yard, or en route to the warehouse. Leading-edge software will also provide visibility into every other aspect of your business.

Integration provides other benefits too. Leading-edge software that is fully integrated will give you a more accurate picture of your **margin numbers**. That's because financial software that is fully integrated throughout your business takes into account all your **cost drivers** from manufacturing processes through order delivery. An integrated system that captures and tracks all this data can serve as a powerful tool to better understand and correct recurring procedural errors that are costing your organisation money. Tracking your profit trends over time and comparing those results on measures such as **write-offs**, **markdowns** and **defectives**, can drive the necessary process improvement changes your consumer goods company needs to boost its bottom line.

Power: secure system performance

Does your legacy software provide the **scalability** your company needs in the face of business growth? Leading-edge software built on **n-tier architecture** will grow with you to ensure your software investment scales along with your business needs.

How about personalising the application to fit the culture of your organisation? Industry-specific software should contain tremendous out-of-the-box functionality to perform the unique requirements of your industry. But leading-edge software goes a step further by enabling you to extend the application when business rules or proprietary concerns dictate a more personalised software experience. Leading-edge software should give you easy-to-use **personalisation tools** to help you perform basic customisations such as renaming fields, changing tab orders, and disabling and hiding fields to match your business preferences, all while eliminating programming time and costs.

Leading-edge software will also give you **fast IO and processing power** to quickly deliver data to users when they need it, and eliminate wait time. If your legacy system isn't designed to scale up and back down (in the cloud, or in a virtual machine environment) by **reducing bandwidth, consumption and latency**, then you're missing out. Leading-edge software runs on high performance app servers so that overall **system speed** won't be limited by hardware and bandwidth constraints.

Does your legacy system take advantage of modern **Windows Presentation Foundation (WPF)** technology? Leading-edge software taps into the flexibility of WPF forms and components to enable your organisation to rapidly evolve the user interface (UI) to take advantage of the latest UI trends and your changing business needs.

Current Technologies: robust tools for the warehouse, financials, and more

How far does your legacy system go to automate your business? Leading-edge software includes time- and money-saving tools, like **wireless warehouse**, that let you take advantage of wireless gun technology proven to **reduce errors and invoice deductions** in the warehouse.

How about **inventory matrix** features? Leading-edge technology can automate your warehouse while tracking goods by location, bin, zone, and other methods. Your team will appreciate inventory and cost history functionality that enables you to perform **cycle counting** in between your annual physical inventory periods. When discrepancies occur, leading-edge software can make the necessary automatic adjustments to keep your numbers in line. **Inventory valuation** features should include powerful auditing and reconciliation tools to provide the detailed numbers you need, to give you confidence in your general ledger.

Leading-edge technology can also bring the power of user portals to bear on your consumer goods supply chain. Leading-edge software should include **supplier portals** to help you see critical metrics from your third-party manufacturing partners. It should also include **customer portals** to make it easy for your remote sales force and customers to place orders, obtain current pricing and inventory levels, get shipping and status information, gain access to invoice and payment history, among other activities.

Does your legacy software give you the option to **run your business in the cloud**? Leading-edge technology will give you **more implementation options** to meet your current and evolving business needs, including moving your **on-premise software** to the cloud, or back again, based on your preferences.

Modern GUI: intuitive navigation for users

Is your legacy system relying on old green screen technology? Leading-edge software offers a modern graphical user interface (GUI) that is easy-to-learn and use. Leading-edge software gives your users a familiar look-and-feel for more **intuitive navigation**. Colourful **dashboards** display graphical objects that illustrate the **key performance indicators (KPIs)** most important to your users and your business.

Leading-edge software will give you the ability to customise fields, screens, and graphs, as well as create hotkeys to ensure a familiar user experience and faster uptime for new users.

Leading-Edge Software: other features and benefits

- Look for leading-edge software that includes **compliance tools** to help you manage retailer requirements such as **EDI, RFID, labelling, shipping** and other mandates.
- Your leading-edge software should include **invoice deduction management tools** that help you minimise the incidence of invoice deductions through better compliance, and allow you to dispute, resolve and recover invoice deductions when they do occur.
- Look for leading-edge software that is based on a **.NET** framework to optimise interoperability, language independence, faster deployment, improved security, portability and more.
- Your ERP software partner should be a **consumer goods software expert** with direct experience in your particular industry. Choosing the right partner ensures you'll be able to get up and running quickly for a **fast return on investment**. Your ERP partner should also be an expert on **industry best practices**.

Ready to Learn More?

Want to learn more about the benefits of leading-edge versus legacy software? Contact one of our product specialists at +61 03 8844 5567, via email at marketing-australia@apprise.com, or by visiting our website at www.apprise.com.au.

Apprise® ERP in the Cloud

Apprise offers on-premise, multi-tenant and private cloud options for global consumer goods companies. Our partnership with Microsoft Azure gives our customers the reliable, secure and scalable solutions they need to launch their business in the cloud. Partnering with Microsoft Azure gives consumer goods companies lower latency and higher throughput. Together, we offer easy-to-deploy, affordable-to-license, subscription-based alternatives to traditional on-premise solutions.

About Apprise

Founded in 1984, with offices in North America, China, Australia, Czech Republic, and the Netherlands, Apprise is a leading provider of integrated ERP and SCM software and services for consumer goods distributors and manufacturers. Leveraging the latest technologies — such as Microsoft® .NET, wireless warehouse solutions, RFID, cloud and iPad applications — along with industry best practices, our solutions deliver reduced costs, improved efficiencies, enhanced revenues and profitability, and a quick return on investment.

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