

Anglia Business Solutions

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NEW ERP GENERATION MAKES HUGE STRIDES FORWARD

During the last five years, a new generation of advanced enterprise resource planning (ERP) systems have changed the landscape in which these systems operate. In the past, companies either used individual applications for the disparate parts of their operations or worked in a functionality strait jacket dictated by the software authors. In the case of individual applications, these created the dreaded islands of data. Rigid processes dictated by legacy applications on the other hand imposed constraints that managers found counterproductive.

The new generation of ERP systems bears very little resemblance to either of these scenarios. The new solutions have become more than just a suite of applications to automate core transactional processing. ERP is now becoming a key tool for managers as they struggle to deal with increasing complexity and change. While “resource planning” has to be part of the capability that such systems have to handle, it is no longer the most important part.

A modern ERP system provides an integrated view of the operations within an organisation. However, the solution has to be fully integrated with the financial management aspects of the business. Today’s financial teams frequently have to deal with multinational, multi-company operations, increased regulation, multi-currency transactions, fraud, financial audits and variations in tax laws. These tend to make the job of financial risk management and reporting more complex.

A fully integrated modern ERP system will reach into all areas of an organisation’s operations. Such systems also play a key role in reducing risk as the relationship between risk and information is immutable.

However, all of this is irrelevant if the systems are too complex to use. In the past, users tended to avoid ERP applications because of their over-formalised arcane user interfaces. New ERP systems have tackled these issues head on. They now provide context sensitive help, easy navigation, search from anywhere and role-based interfaces to ease the transition to a more structured operating environment.

The business impact of leveraging the power of such solutions can have a transformational impact on the organisation. The operational transparency provided can help to reduce unproductive costs, make better use of resources and increase profitability while improving customer service. This enables the business to compete more effectively in its selected markets using real time information as a powerful commercial aid. As the fresh produce sector continues to grow and consolidate, having a modern, successfully deployed ERP system operating within the business will be a key differentiator in an increasingly competitive global market. ■

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