Keeping pace with the manufacturing evolution

Next-generation ERP solutions from Infor help you survive today’s complex market pressures—and embrace emerging opportunities.
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Transforming manufacturing

Innovation is transforming manufacturing. Rapid technology changes mean manufacturers must be more flexible, agile, and adept at addressing global issues. Robotics, 3D printing, industrial Internets, data vaults, real-time collaboration, contextual decision making, remote connectivity, cloud deployments, smart tablets, GPS tracking, and ultra-intuitive user interfaces are just a few of the ways some forward-thinking manufacturers are staying ahead of fierce competition. This new industrial revolution brings complex pressures that require creative problem solving. Next-generation ERP technology makes answering that challenge possible.

The world of manufacturing is drastically changing, requiring next-generation software solutions to keep pace.

“Technology is a huge catalyst in terms of driving the rate of change. Technology changes the expectations of people, staff, consumers, and shareholders. It accelerates the rhythm of life and the rhythm of business and the speed at which processes run, the speed at which decisions need to be made.”

—Duncan Angove, president, Infor
The rebounding of the intelligent economy

Business pundits—from economists to bloggers—use terms like “the third industrial revolution” and the “knowledge economy” to label this transformative period. This reinvigoration of insight and innovation is particularly promising to manufacturers like you who are eager to transition into a post-recession period of growth. To make the most of the opportunities present, however, you need to be alert to changing conditions and take advantage of all the resources available to you. Strategic IT investments to upgrade, expand, or replace outdated systems are top priorities for best-in-class manufacturers who want to increase operational speed. In a recent IDC report, In pursuit of operational excellence: Accelerating business change through next generation ERP, author Pierfrancesco Manenti wrote that a majority of manufacturers surveyed about their ERP system wished that it could react faster to changing business needs. So, if greater agility is on your wish list for your ERP, you are certainly not alone.

Majority of survey respondents wished their ERP system could react faster to changing business needs.

### Manufacturers’ wish list for their ERP systems three years out

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wish</th>
<th>Rank 1</th>
<th>Rank 2</th>
<th>Rank 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>React faster to the changes the business needs</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Streamline process and achieve operational excellence</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide more detailed insights into my business</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve collaboration</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keep costs under control</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Get new products to market faster</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: IDC Manufacturing Insights 2012
Expanding ERP requirements to meet changing market conditions

Your business processes today reach far beyond your company’s walls and involve more than just creating internal budget-planning strategies. Now, they include collaborating with your customers, relying on co-manufacturers and contractors, and extending new value-added services. They also involve just-in-time relationships with your suppliers, continuous remote connectivity with your stakeholders, on-demand access to your supply chains, and engineered-to-order customizations for your clients. In order to keep up with these ever-changing market conditions, manufacturers like you need flexible technology solutions that focus on speed and the essential integration of people, processes, and performance. Speed is crucial to the total process. Not only do you need to do more with less, you must also do it faster—and smarter.

Our customers tell us Infor is transforming, strengthening, improving, and accelerating their business.
Adopting a new kind of solution to fit a global perspective

Increasing global competition and expanding supply chains create some of the greatest challenges manufacturers like you face. There are new global market pressures that you can’t afford to ignore. Competition from emerging nations influences prices. Customers can easily contact your competitors to obtain multiple quotes through the Internet and pressure you to provide more value, with faster turn-around times. International supply chains are subject to volatile conditions that affect the cost of raw goods, reliability of resources, and go-to-market strategies. A global economy also means different languages, monetary systems, trade restrictions, and customer standards. Although globalization brings logistical challenges, it also brings you opportunities. For instance, expanding into new geographic markets is one of the key ways you can experience growth and added revenue.

“The most critical issue for companies today is the need to grow. Companies just need to get bigger, get stronger, to be able to fend off competition, to be able to take advantage of markets, and grow their share in that market.”

— John Flavin, executive vice president, Infor

Video: Driving Forces in High Tech Manufacturing
Watch now >

White Paper: Five imperatives of high tech leadership.
Download now >

Customer Spotlight: Dematic. Download now >
Improving decision making to manage complexity

Focusing on the physical manufacturing process is no longer enough. Today, you also have to look at refining thought processes. You need to help personnel make smarter decisions faster. You must also be confident those decisions are accurate, strategically sound, and comply with your corporate vision. Next-generation ERP solutions provide you with contextual decision-making tools that push relevant data to you, rather than relying on you to instigate a search. This helps speed your response time and guides you to follow best practices. Dashboards and workbenches also help you access relevant data quickly and continually monitor critical numbers, your dialogues with colleagues, and real-time status updates of your operations. Automated escalation alerts also ensure fast response to your critical issues. Social media tools help your personnel collaborate with contractors, suppliers, and customers. Remote connectivity with smart phones and tablets also help your teams stay in communication and make timely decisions—no matter the time or location.

“To beat complexity, manufacturers will need to improve and speed up their decision-making capability.”

– Pierfrancesco Manenti, analyst, IDC Manufacturing
Sourcing industry-specific solutions as manufacturers specialize

Market pressures and reductions in consumer spending are forcing manufacturers like you to be creative in finding prospects for growth. Niche opportunities, emerging target markets, and product specialization are often primary routes to that growth. Unfortunately, generic ERP solutions tend to be shallow and fail to address anything more than the standard business transactions and basic manufacturing tasks. Heavy modifications of these systems are usually required to incorporate information such as industry terminology, specifications of raw materials, compliance issues, regulations, and unique configuration and design issues of a product or market. Profit-driven manufacturers like you are turning to ERP software solutions that are designed for a specific industry. Purpose-built industry solutions, such as those from Infor®, let you manage the factors that truly account for your success. With such a system, you can spend more time focusing on your customers’ needs, rather than adapting your IT solutions. Solutions that closely match your needs also mean faster implementation and a lower total cost of ownership for you.

Video: What does specialized by industry mean?  
Watch now >

Customer Spotlight: Organic Valley Family of Farms.  
Download now >
“Appreciating our very analog and very human affinity for things beautiful, Infor, the world’s third largest enterprise application software company, has a different take on what software can be. It can be beautiful. Infor is serious about this; its design studio, Hook & Loop, was purposely plopped into the heart of NYC’s very fashionable Chelsea district so its software designers are surrounded by and recruited from the designers from art, fashion, and theater.”

— John Rizzuto, research vice president, Gartner

Implementing consumer-grade, easy-to-use business applications to meet personnel expectations

Analysts call it the consumerization of IT. Your personnel come to work expecting to find tools that look and act like the websites, smart phones, and tablets they use at home. Your ERP system still has to be powerful, reliable, and able to protect critical data. You can’t sacrifice depth of functionality for the sake of ease-of-use, so you need both. Fortunately, that’s now possible. Today’s next generation ERP solutions offer consumer-grade features—intuitive interfaces, clean design, role-based personalization, dashboards, search abilities, collaboration, contextual data, and remote access—that your personnel expect. This familiarity speeds processes, increases productivity, improves implementation rates, and helps workforce retention. Your staff no longer resists or fears using the tools that will improve profitability. Instead, they embrace the new technologies you offer and engage in continuous improvement strategies using the systems available to them. The system is used with enthusiasm, rather than complaints. And, used for improving your profits.
Replacing monolithic ERPs of yesterday with easily adaptable systems

With all these changes in needs, expectations, and technologies available, the very nature of ERP solutions has to change to keep pace. To make the most of new strategies, such as collaboration through social media and deep analytics, manufacturers like you need a level of flexibility that doesn’t exist in outdated ERP solutions. The previous generation ERP systems are monolithic in nature. They don’t accommodate change easily, since they contain embedded reports, localizations, and hard-coded links that are easily broken when you try to update them. If your system wasn’t purpose-built for your industry, it is probably heavily modified to meet process flow requirements. Those modifications now make your system hard to upgrade. Fortunately, there is another option. Now, thanks to the language of the Internet—XML—you can deploy ERP solutions that use loosely coupled architecture and are easily expanded, without losing the context of the information. It’s not just data points that are important—it’s how the data points fit into a much bigger picture. Now, people, applications, machines, and data vaults can be linked in a business network that optimizes real-time communication, remote connectivity, and deep analytics.

“We deliver solutions on a more agile and fast framework. So it’s quick to implement, easy to upgrade.”

—Duncan Angove, president, Infor
Managing cloud, blended, and two-tier solutions

Flexible ERP solutions allow variable deployment options, giving manufacturers like you more opportunities to manipulate technology to meet your specific goals. Today, as you face pressures to speed implementation and control costs, it’s reassuring to know how cost effective cloud deployment can be. Blending cloud and on-premises deployment can help increase the efficiency of your expanding systems. A blended system allows you to implement and test new applications without completely shutting off the old system, which risks losing valuable data or disrupting day-to-day systems. Two-tier ERP systems offer another way you can achieve specific goals. The flexibility of today’s next-generation ERP systems means you can use an industry-specific solution for one plant, division, or operation, and still integrate with the corporate business system for financial applications, reporting, and compliance with parent-company mandates. Highly flexible ERP solutions support these efforts, allowing you to upgrade, expand, and refine processes—essential for continuous improvement.
Integrating specialized business applications with your ERP system

Flexible integration capabilities allow you to easily add highly specialized business applications to your ERP solutions. This fine-tuned functionality allows your enterprise to focus on particular pain points, manage the unique needs of your particular business model, and develop a set of competitive distinctions. You can manage internal assets, supply chain processes, performance lifecycle, and sales and operations to enhance your company’s internal systems and increase efficiencies. Your company can extend its systems to focus on particular issues with applications that manage the workforce, customer relationships, and financial analytics. If you work directly with dealers or distributors, offer after-market service, rental, or maintenance, specialized service management solutions can manage your service orders, field dispatches, and equipment rental, helping to speed service resolutions and extend the lifespan of high-value equipment.

Customer Spotlight: Elekta. Download now

In the News: Infor helps Banglacet increase knowledge flow with Infor Equipment. Read now

White Paper: Equipment service management—maximizing profit and customer value over the equipment lifecycle. Download now
Extending connectivity and productivity with integrated mobile solutions

Your key employees seldom sit at a workstation all day. Your managers may be on the shop floor, in meetings, coordinating activities, overseeing a wide variety of tasks across the plant, and, sometimes, may even be working off-site. To be as responsive and productive as possible, your remote personnel must maintain connectivity and continue to have access to critical data—anytime from anywhere. Laptops, ruggedized devices, smart phones, and tablets make it easier than ever to maintain this connectivity. But the proliferation of platforms and use of personal devices create new issues for your IT manager—who must balance access, security, speed, and functionality. Manufacturers like you who need to research the vast number of available apps and devices are finding that fully integrated systems, which seamlessly connect to your ERP solution, offer an optimal blend of convenience, reliability, and performance.

Creative problem-solving and willingness to adapt remain hallmarks of successful manufacturers. Infor helps customers continually strive for greater productivity and performance.

Video: Infor Road Warrior. Watch now >
Brochure: Infor Motion Shop Floor. Download now >
Using social tools to track and collaborate with customers, contractors, and co-workers

Access to data isn’t always enough. Addressing complex issues often requires dialogue. The ability to share information and insights in real time frequently fuels innovation. Collaboration, using integrated social media tools, sparks problem-solving and creative thinking. Your staff can share schematics, comment on design configurations, and jointly review performance data while troubleshooting engineering modifications. All your key stakeholders can participate—no matter where they’re located. Most importantly, when the social tools are integrated as part of the ERP system, the interaction is tracked, stored, and incorporated into your ongoing knowledge base where it can be stored and referenced later. When your ERP and social tools are integrated, you can audit, analyze, and act on comments made by customers in social media. You can monitor customer sentiment and respond quickly to critical issues. Plus, this valuable information can help shape demand planning and forecasting.

In the News: Tuning up the social side of customer relationships. Read now >
Customer Spotlight: Group Dekko. Download now >

Will modern technologies change the way we work in the next three years?

90% of respondents expect modern technologies will change the way we work within three years.

Employing agility to bring new products and services to market

Highly flexible systems allow your company to be proactive. Rather than reacting to customer demands and market changes, your managers can anticipate needs. They can prepare and plan strategic actions, beating your competitors to opportunities, preventing issues from escalating, and communicating with customers in a timely fashion. With solutions that allow you to quickly and easily adapt processes, expand offerings, and change workflows—without costly modifications to your ERP—you can pursue growth opportunities with confidence. Whether it’s developing a high tech product for a highly demanding market, adding high-value services, or specializing in made-to-order quality products, a flexible ERP solution allows you to focus on the details that matter most to you and your customers. As you seek new revenue sources and ways to attract new customers you’ll appreciate the ability to focus on these important differentiating assets—speed, quality, innovation, and service.

Video: Vittorio Boero, CIO, Ferrari. Watch now >
The recent economic market pressures forced many manufacturers to control costs through staff reductions. This trimming often included IT departments. If you have limited IT resources, you probably already know the frustration of maintaining cumbersome, outdated systems that have been heavily modified. You know how time-consuming and costly it can be to get the advanced reports and tools you need to be competitive. On the other hand, many profit-focused manufacturers, like you, have invested in technology transformations that allow their staffs—without highly specialized training—to do much of their own reporting and screen personalization. Ease of use, automated workflows, embedded best practices, knowledge bases, collaboration tools, and self-service capabilities are providing employees with a higher level of autonomy. This is just one of the ways that controlling complexity helps contain costs and improve profits. Increasing productivity, accommodating hybrid environments, and detailed project management are other ways next generation ERP solutions are helping manufacturers increase profitability.

Part 3: Benefits
Seizing opportunities and market advantages to surpass competitors

Highly flexible next-generation ERP solutions allow you to take your organization to the next level in performance. You can achieve more with less, optimizing people and processes across your entire organization. From motivating your workforce to be fully engaged, to automating data collection, and escalating critical alerts, your fine-tuned system allows you to focus on the key issues that lead to greater profitability. With collaboration, social, and mobile tools, deep analytics, flexible deployment options, and easily integrated business applications, you can achieve a true IT transformation for your company. In the face of increasing global competition and challenging market conditions that's what it takes to get ahead today. You need to change the way your work is done and next-generation ERP technology makes it possible—and necessary. It's a new era in manufacturing. The question is, are you ready to seize the opportunity? Fortunately, when you are ready, you can be confident there is a software company that understands your market pressures and the potential impact technology solutions can have on your success.

Infor gets it. You can count on Infor to not only offer the next generation solutions you have read about—but also to help you implement and train your staffs. Infor offers the total package: ERP solutions tailored for your industry, specialized business applications, implementation, service, and ongoing technical support. That's exactly the kind of strategic partner you need for this new era in manufacturing.

Don't just survive. Thrive.
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Ask a question: Talk to us. Call or email with a question.

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INFOPT138413-en-US-0413-1