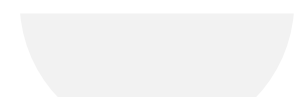
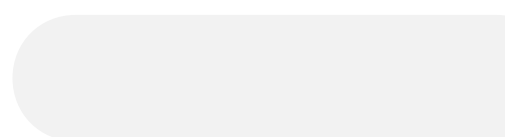
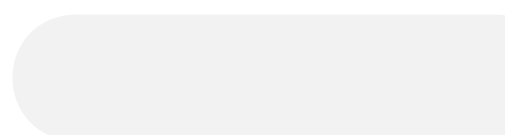
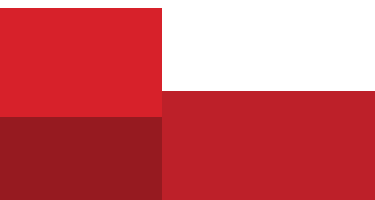




# Becoming an Intelligent Enterprise with **SAP & ECS**



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# Introduction

The Experience Economy made its way to the top of the business-customer relationship priority list in the early 2000s, and now more than ever companies are beholden to provide their clientele with a flawless, memorable experience if they aspire to gain their loyal patronage. This poses a great challenge for growing businesses given the ever-increasing nature of customer demands, all of which now must be delivered in a fraction of the time without compromising the much sought-after quality experience.

The good news? Every company – regardless of size – can leverage existing technologies to optimize their operations, eliminate roadblocks, and bridge the gap with their customers. A few years ago, this may have been considered optional but with a cut-throat market and growing digitalization, this is now essential to survive. The long game in business is not about working hard, but rather finding the smart routes to reach the next growth milestone. Today, that path unquestionably leads to becoming an Intelligent Enterprise.



**“ ERP Solutions enable operational excellence and allow the company to focus on duties that keep the business on the path to success. ”**

Though the word “enterprise” may have been associated with size at some point in the past, the premise of an intelligent system of operations and processes that help a company perform at its best applies to the entire spectrum, and is even considered to be more easily attainable for small and midsize businesses. The right Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) solution can boost performance in ways few leaders stop to consider, but as soon as you flip the switch, the first to notice the improvements will be your customers.

It’s no secret that one of the top ERP solutions in the market for small and midsize businesses (SMB) is SAP Business One, which enables operational excellence and allows the company leadership to focus on the managerial duties that keep the business firmly on the path to success. SAP Business One was designed with SMBs in mind and is constantly upgraded to offer users the latest in automation, insights, and Cloud technology – all of which are considered irreplaceable factors in the Intelligent Enterprise formula. With this in mind, let’s explore the ways in which your business can evolve, how all stakeholders will be impacted by the transition, and the ECS roadmap that makes it all possible.

# The Evolution of the Business

SMBs oftentimes “miss the exit” for their digital transformation on the highway of their growth, either because they think it’s too soon or because they don’t feel ready to invest in the innovation at that stage. There are a lot of old behaviors or benchmarks that business leaders look for because they look to follow in the footsteps of other businesses, but today’s market has unprecedented growth rates that companies just a few decades ago could have only dreamed of. Because of this, it’s time to explore the signs you should look for to know you’re ready to get on the express lane to your digital transformation, and what your business will look like as an Intelligent Enterprise:

- **Silos and bottlenecks:** lines of business are not independent islands that can operate away from each other, yet companies of all sizes continue to fall in the trap of siloed departments that delay results and hinder growth. Finance cannot remain distant from sales or marketing, human resources can’t ever be far from reach, IT is needed around the clock, and so on. Unfortunately, an SMB without an ERP faces the endless challenge of keeping departments aligned without a system that fosters communication and the reality of most areas completing tasks to their preferred style, meaning there is an inherent lack of standardization in processes, which inevitably slows down or completely stops workflows.



## Silos and bottlenecks

Manual input

Employee burnout

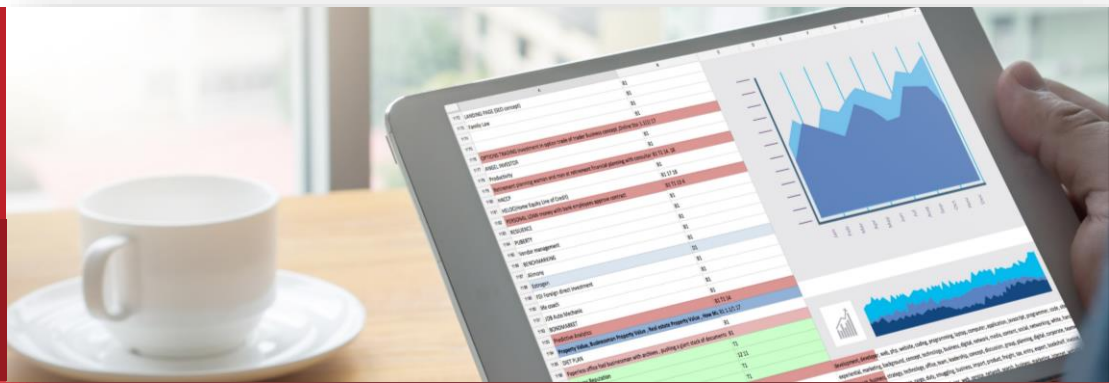
Close calls

- **Manual input:** the amount of businesses that handle millions of dollars in transactions that still run on physical paperwork, excel, or QuickBooks is absolutely astounding. There is often resistance to change, and whether because it is “how it’s always been done” or they simply don’t know the technology, it’s detrimental for three reasons: it’s time consuming, the information is quickly outdated post-input, and most importantly, it’s prone to errors.
- **Employee burnout:** small and midsize businesses often keep the same taskforce they started with through their growth trajectory, with employees and managers having to wear multiple hats in order to make things work. This ultimately leads to employees being overworked, unsatisfied, and likely to make mistakes due to the high volume of deliverables they have on their plates.
- **Close calls:** by the time businesses realize it’s time to embark on a digital transformation, they have usually had at least one customer or account interaction get dangerously close to an issue due to lack of bandwidth and the volume of activities needing oversight becoming unmanageable.

These are just some of the many reasons why we see businesses seeking out technology, usually after these or other factors have been at play for too long. Our approach in these cases has remained consistent throughout the four decades we have been helping companies transition into the next phase of their growth – a tried and true digital transformation to SAP Business One. This solution was created for SMBs, bringing together a number of modules that could cater to the needs of any company under of the 25 industries SAP directly supports, with room for customizations if need be. Once the solution is implemented and goes live, the previous red flags turn into catalysts for success and proof that the Intelligent Enterprise works:

- **Ease of collaboration:** SAP Business One is a single system that brings together all the business areas under one roof, where management can set specific permissions depending on what each area or employee needs access to. The levels of visibility take the ability of departments to collaborate to the next level and foster an environment of open communication and easy decision-making.
- **Automation:** the workflows within the system sync and can be set up to kick-off an action once an activity has been completed. For example, for a business that works with inventory and warehouse management, the system helps keep track of all the available product, performs purchase planning, and creates accounts payable invoices automatically once the purchase order or receipt is uploaded to the system. This dramatically decreases the amount of time employees have to spend adding information, creating documentation, or waiting for a prompt to come in before they can move on with their task list.

- **Freedom to perform and contribute:** with the system taking on the burden of automated tasks, employees now have more time to dedicate to those activities that require specific skillsets, and the company ultimately benefits from having employees focusing their productivity on things they can do. More on this in the stakeholders' section.
- **Insights:** instead of wondering what will come next or waiting until it's too late to evaluate your customer accounts, the SAP Business One insights can keep you two steps ahead of the needs of your customers, anticipating what they will want based on historical data, trends, and industry best practices. The change from working reactively to proactively is the change that the Intelligent Enterprise can bring to any business.





# Impact and Stakeholders

It's obvious that technology makes life easier, but few people understand the ramifications and impact to their fullest extent. Regardless of industry, sector, or size, companies all have: products and/or services, customers, employees, and vendors. Some companies may also have an executive board, investors, or in general someone to report to.

Every transaction or interaction within a company creates a ripple, sets a precedent, and has the potential to create the lasting memories that inspire customer loyalty and lead to growth. Because of this, it's imperative to be prepared and come to the table with every resource available to ensure the best possible outcome. There are three main groups that are heavily impacted by a company's decision to become an Intelligent Enterprise:



- **Customers:** every important business decision or investment is made with the customer in mind, especially in the era of the experience economy. It's important to remember, though, there are two types of customers at play:



- **External customers:** they are on the receiving end of your offering, and the ones you should aim to make happy. How does being an Intelligent Enterprise enable customer satisfaction? In short, technology makes things run smoother and faster, ensuring conflict resolution and multiple avenues for your customer to get in touch with you. For financial institutions it may mean faster customer onboarding, easy-to-navigate sites and apps, virtual assistants, process automation, etc. For a retail or distribution business it means product traceability and quality. Every industry has an experience benchmark that sets the bar for what all companies within the sector should strive to do. It's impossible for a small company to offer the quality of customer service that competes in today's economy without innovative technologies, and in this buyer's market, customers are only loyal to their wallet and the experiences it can buy them.
- **Internal customers:** not all businesses think of their employees as an internal customer, but the reality is that the people who work for a company also need to have a level of morale and satisfaction to remain a part of it. Today's talent looks for companies that can offer them opportunities to be a part of the business of the future. Why have someone on your payroll for data input when you can have a system that retrieves information faster and with less room for error? Today's employees are not excited by rule-based tasks that can be done by a system in a fraction of the time. They need challenges, flexibility, and opportunities to develop their existing skills and gain new ones. Satisfied employees are more productive and dedicated to the success of the company, and if they're made to feel like they're part of the innovation, they will be easier to train and eager to be a catalyst for the results. They are the end users of your platforms and systems, and giving your employees the opportunity to work for an Intelligent Enterprise will impact their development, dedication, and willingness to come work for you and stay long-term.



- **Vendors and suppliers:** automating operations (especially those that fall under finance and accounting) will make you a preferred buyer for suppliers, and if there is ever a shortage of materials or items, you will be at the top of their list because of your follow-through. Being able to communicate effectively within an ecosystem is crucial to the success of not just your company, but all those involved in the supply chain because when one grows, so do the others. Technology can turn any business into a well-oiled machine that can anticipate, prepare, and deliver on their promises.

- Executives, board members, and investors: the mission of the people on top of the business hierarchy is to oversee the operations as a whole. How can they do that with summaries that come from multiple departments at different times (with possible typos), and likely outdated by the time it's presented? This matters for many reasons, but it's inevitably tied to the growth and success of the company. If an executive is deciding on a new product or service offering, that decision needs to be informed and with the latest data available. If you're seeking an investment to secure funds for new ventures or technology, or if you need the board's approval to move in a certain direction, it all comes down to one thing: reports. An Intelligent Enterprise that runs on a solution like SAP Business One has access to reporting and analytics at the touch of a button, with visual dashboards and insights that can help any leader make a decision with real-time data to back them up. With access to the preferred analytics and Cloud technology of the market, the opportunities are limitless, and the success is all but guaranteed.

An Intelligent Enterprise has the potential to improve the lives of all stakeholders involved, and it is all about the simple, day-to-day activities that can revolutionize each of their roles.

# The Intelligent Enterprise Roadmap with ECS

Everything we have covered up to this point sounds like a far-fetched dream to some, but it's the reality we've been able to help a number of our customers achieve along our 40 years in business. With some of our clients being with us since we started, we have been able to solidify and refine our roadmap to innovation, ensuring customer satisfaction, growth, and success.

## **Our credentials**

Our customers have chosen us along the way for a number of reasons, including our experience with businesses of all sizes and ability to support them on a personalized level. We have a focused expertise in the areas of Inventory Management, Warehouse Management, and Field Service Management, and our team is fully trained with providing the best support as consultants who partner with our customers to ensure a positive outcome.

## Our methodology

Though we have done this for four decades, our approach is heavily centered around building a plan that fits the individual needs of each of our customers, leveraging the most modern tools and platforms available to us today. We have helped companies of all sizes and industries manage inventory challenges, integrate disparate systems, develop new channels, optimize their operations, gain visibility into the business, evaluate trading partners, and achieve insights that display a single version of the truth, which is a huge roadblock for leadership teams trying to identify areas of opportunity and create plans to solve them.

We seek to understand how a company has been running their operations in order to suggest the best path to digitization for them. With so many businesses intertwined in third-party logistics (3PL) operations and complex supply chains, our goal is to evaluate the current processes, do away with obsolete procedures, and streamline their approach towards innovation, at their pace.

## Sustainability

There has also been a recent trend in companies looking to be scalable and more sustainable in their operations, which we not only support but encourage. Our roadmaps revolve around making profitability sustainable, and sustainability profitable. By integrating systems seamlessly with as little downtime as possible, we have helped a number of our customers optimize their operations, downsize their environmental footprint, and increase their ROI (as well as their efficiencies) to allow them to invest in the areas that need it most.

## The Bottom Line

The Intelligent Enterprise model is achievable for businesses of all sizes, and SMBs are discovering the perks of digital transformation every day of their operations. An Integrated ERP system that is affordable and fosters collaboration is not just attainable, but already a reality. With SaaS adoption models, customers can now leverage the power of the Cloud to retrieve data, make changes, and optimize processes in real time.

Our team of experts at ECS is ready and eager to help transform your business into its best iteration yet, optimized for the experience economy. Find out what you can achieve with the power of leading technologies like SAP Business One and see why we have been the consistent choice for our customers along four decades. Let us help you unleash the power of your Intelligent Enterprise.



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