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7 ways to know you are selecting the right ERP software for your apparel company

Is your company growing faster than your tools and capabilities allow? If you are struggling to complete large, complex tasks – or even your daily ones. It may be time to consider adding an enterprise resource planning (ERP) solution, or upgrading your current one.

SAP Gold Partner

Is your ERP software keeping up?

If you are straining to support your business needs, it may be time to consider the ERP solution you are using. The growing capabilities gap between older ERP designs and current, scalable solutions pose a problem that growing companies cannot ignore.

Legacy ERP clients become stuck with a vendor, with no clear product roadmap or deployment strategy to handle changing business needs and company growth. An older system implemented using a one-size fits all approach won't help you remain competitive in an ever-changing marketplace, and the only way to make tweaks to the system would involve significant and expensive programing.

What do you need to know?

The omnichannel consumer is on the rise, and dealing with the changing face of retail poses many challenges for CEO's of apparel and footwear organizations. In order to keep up with the fast pace of the industry you need to collaborate closely with your supply chain, and listen to your customers.

Choosing the right ERP system could be a big competitive advantage to your organization, and in these guidelines we look at some simple suggestions to help you find an ERP system that's the right fit for your business landscape.

Here are seven important factors to consider when looking for an apparel ERP solution.

No.1

Does the ERP system you're considering "speak" your language?

Choosing the right software vendor and implementation partner is imperative to getting the right ERP solution to fit your business. A vendor which has extensive experience working within your industry or segment, as well as the ability to understand your business and the depth of knowledge to ask the right questions could be the difference between a successful and a failed implementation. The right partner should advise how best to configure the system to support your business processes, and recommend industry best practices where appropriate.

The **right partner** will want to **understand you** and **your needs.**

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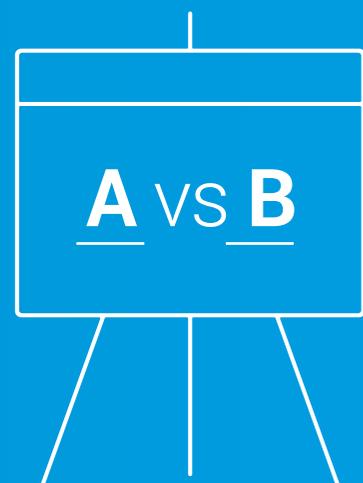
No.2

Does the ERP system support evolving business models?

Consumer demand for greater variety and immediate availability is increasing each day; if the right products aren't in the store at the right time, you lose customers and sales. as your industry landscape evolves, so should your business model. With trends constantly changing, it's often necessary to mark down merchandise in order to minimize old inventory – squeezing your margins tighter.

Approaching the demand for greater variety by building out your business model to meet omnichannel needs allows you to meet the customer with an experience that they are looking for, negating the need to use discounts to shift inventory. An ERP system that fits your business allows you the flexibility to support changing consumer demand and evolving business models. A flexible, scalable ERP system should be able to handle everything from process-based textile manufacturing and discrete cut and sew operations to multi-channel sales.
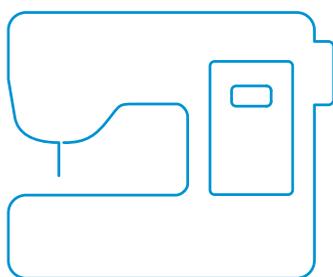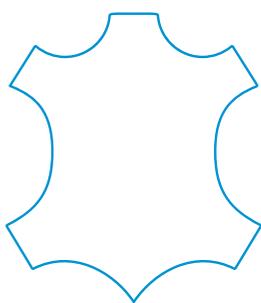
No.3

Will the vendor's implementation methodology get you up and running quickly?

Implementation of an IT solution requires a clear methodology which lays out project phases, milestones and roles and responsibilities. Research from Panorama Consulting Solutions estimates that the average ERP implementation time for all industries is 19.1 months, with manufacturing industries having a slightly shorter implementation at 18.5 months. On average, manufacturers spend over $1.5 million more on implementation due to the complex nature of their organizations.

As such, it is important to choose a vendor who can reduce or eliminate the internal challenges and complexity of implementing an ERP solution, so you can put the functions of your new ERP system to use without detailed customization.

Choose a **vendor** that **eliminates** the **challenges.**

No.4

Does the ERP system offer preconfigured solutions?

New ERP systems can be costly, and the ability to deliver a variety of outputs out-of-the-box will allow you to get up and running quickly. A solution which has been pre-configured for you based on specific industry needs will deliver benefits as standard, giving you pre-built content ready to create a business solution.

To enable you to make the right decision based on your business drivers, it's important to look for differentiators amongst the various ERP offerings. Factors you should consider include functionality, business fit, integration with current systems and deployment options.

WELCOME

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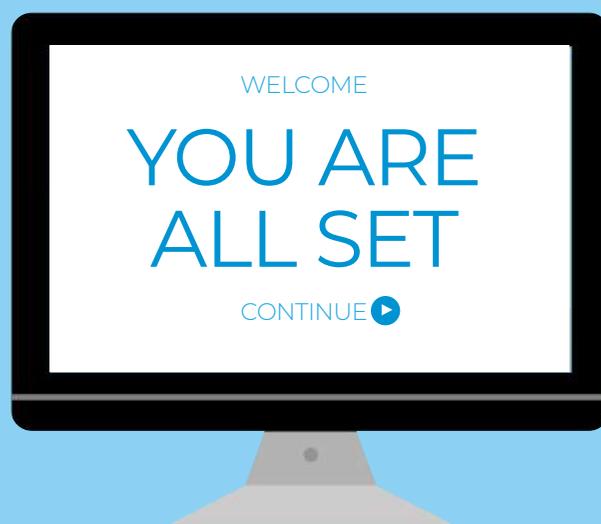
No.5

What is the total cost of ownership (TCO) of your ERP system?

When referring to total cost of ownership of IT solutions across organizations, you need to make sure you include hardware and software acquisition, management and support, training, opportunity cost of downtime and productivity losses. TCO is more than just lowering the buy-in price; it's about looking at ways to reduce time and cost for implementation, training, support and upgrades. You need to be aware of the benefits and costs that a new ERP system will incur over time, to make sure you don't sign up for a system you may regret later.

Look for **ways** to
reduce time and **cost.**

No.6

Does the ERP vendor offer a network services and support?

When selecting a vendor for your ERP project, it is important to consider whether they offer both local and global support, a well documented implementation methodology and out-of-the-box industry specific solutions. Whether you have operations locally, or plan to expand internationally, it is important to have someone on the ground that knows your ERP system inside out, understands local issues, and can provide support in your time zone. Ultimately, the success of your solution is down to how you deploy and use it.

No.7

Customer references – does your vendor have industry specific ones?

Make sure that the vendors you are evaluating have delivered software projects successfully to companies of a similar size, business model or with a similar set of requirements. Once you've completed your customer referencing, you should have the confidence to select a vendor for your ERP system implementation.

By finding out what existing customers say about your vendor, you can be satisfied with their ability to deliver on time and within budget. Doing some research online and on social media will also allow you to get an idea of how a vendor approaches customer service.
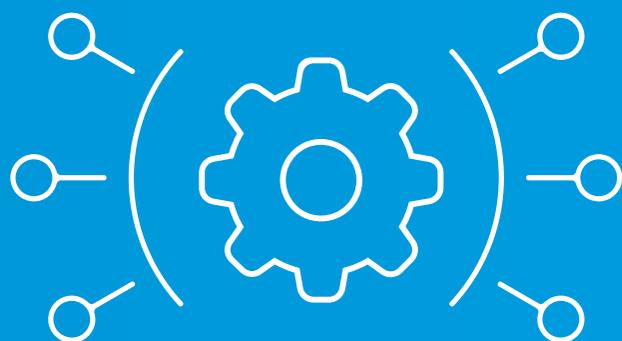
Find out what they **say.**
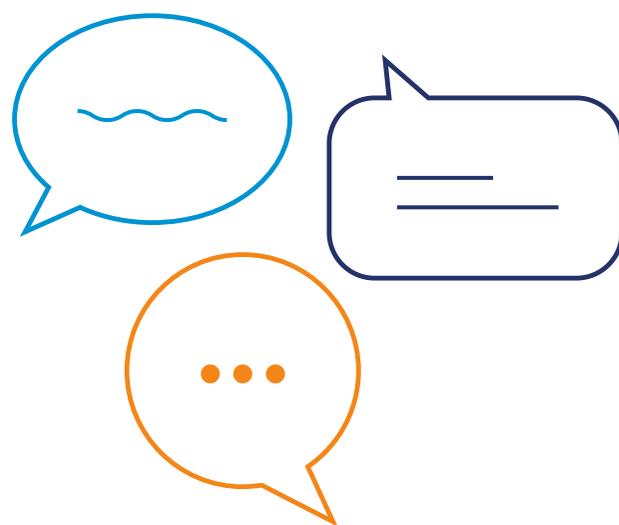
Now you're ready, what's next?

Investment in an ERP system is long-term. The average industry age for an ERP system is between 7-20 years old, so in order to future-proof your investment, you need to select a flexible, scalable, industry standard solution from a partner that has industry specific software. Choosing a system that delivers value with a low total cost of ownership which is deployed by experts on the latest technology allows you to mitigate your risk and ensure your investment is secure.

Get **future proof.**

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