

Can You Serve Your Customers the Way You Want?

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It wasn't long ago that manufacturers who could consistently provide a quality product on time could go straight to the head of the class. Today, customers consider quality and on-time delivery as basic requirements just to be considered. If you can't deliver what they want, when they want it and how they want it, you'll fall behind more nimble and flexible manufacturers who can respond to rapidly changing customer needs in a timely and cost effective manner.

SERVING CUSTOMERS THE WAY YOU WANT (AND THE WAY THEY NEED) STARTS AND ENDS WITH HAVING A MODERN ERP SYSTEM. IF YOUR ERP CAN'T PROVIDE IN-THE-MOMENT SHOP FLOOR DATA THAT LETS YOU RESPOND TO JOB CHANGES IN REAL TIME, YOU'LL CONSTANTLY BE CHASING COMPETITORS WHO CAN.

An ERP system needs to do more than help you lean operations and simplify your manufacturing; it should also enable you to keep up with new technologies, innovative processes and other changes within your industry or specific manufacturing niche. Most importantly, it should offer robust customization features that enable you to tweak the software to fit the way you do business and how you add value to your customers.

Why You Need Customizable ERP

Today's sophisticated ERP systems provide a powerful array of features and functionalities right out of the box, but no two manufacturers are exactly the same. You probably have processes and ways of working that you prefer to do a certain way. An ERP system that forces you to do things their way can be frustrating and annoying because it limits you, slows you, and can even cause you to lose jobs and/or customers. Your ERP system should drive you forward, not hold you back.

IN TERMS OF CUSTOMIZATION, A GOOD ERP SYSTEM LETS YOU:

- Make changes to screens and programs without requiring technical expertise, expensive programming, or changing the underlying code
- Create your own custom applications, works flows, and reports
- Easily download and install custom applications written by other system users
- Customize reporting and schedule processing with specialized applications
- Create custom **dashboards**
- Automate processes and strings of tasks
- Customize label processing

For complex customization projects, a good ERP vendor will have a team of experienced consultants who can work with you to design the specifications for the new program/application and make sure it gets coded correctly. This ability to go above and beyond the standard features of your basic ERP system offers a powerful tool for growing your business and serving customers the way you want.

“Our ERP system has many options to customize the software,” says **Karen Loretto, Director of Software Applications for Buffalo Filter**, which manufactures smoke evacuation equipment for surgical procedures. “We’ve downloaded dozens of applications from their online ‘app store’ to customize screens, simplify processes, and create reports that format information to suit our needs. Whether we do our own customizations or have the vendor write new programming for us, we can adjust the software do just about anything we need.”

Dedicated Service and Support = Your Success

Serving customers the way you want becomes easier when you have an ERP system that can do these 5 things:

1 STAYS UP TO DATE.

Today's manufacturing world doesn't stand still, and neither should your ERP. At a minimum, your ERP provider should provide an updated version of the software regularly. New versions should be simple to download and launch, without disrupting your workflow, and they should be provided free of cost. In between new version releases, the vendor should also provide regular updates and enhancements to existing capabilities as well as new features and programs to keep your business at the forefront of ERP technology.

Few elements of an ERP system are more important than constant updates to keep it current. If you're looking for your first ERP system or considering switching vendors, pay close attention to how much the company invests in R&D and how much of that R&D effort is spent on the product you use. Are your maintenance dollars going to grow the ERP system or a different product like point of sale?

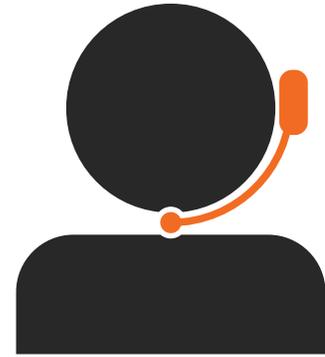


YOUR ERP PROVIDER SHOULD PROVIDE AN UPDATED VERSION OF THE SOFTWARE REGULARLY.

2 PROVIDES GREAT TECH SUPPORT.

Your ERP system manages all your critical business functions and the support you receive is an area where your partner truly needs to shine. When you've got a problem with your ERP, you can't afford to put up with slow and indifferent technical support. Your vendor should:

- Be on call 24/7/365, ready to help you at a moment's notice
- Be quick to respond
- Have different levels of help/support (FAQs, online solutions to common issues, phone support)
- Have well-trained tech reps who know the product inside and out and have excellent problem-solving skills
- Be quick to expedite urgent problems that can't get solved at the first level
- Have a team of experienced consultants to provide onsite problem-solving and support at your facility



YOUR ERP SYSTEM SHOULD HAVE WELL-TRAINED TECH REPS WHO KNOW THE PRODUCT INSIDE AND OUT AND HAVE EXCELLENT PROBLEM-SOLVING SKILLS

“Our ERP partner, Global Shop Solutions, provides outstanding service and technical support,” says **Creed Monarch IT Manager Pat Meunier**. “They’re quick to respond when we run into a problem, and they’re constantly updating and improving the software. This gives us a powerful tool for managing our resources more effectively and improving our ability to respond to changing customer demands.”

As a partner in the success of your business, your ERP vendor should be genuinely interested in helping you. If they don't respond in a timely manner or seem indifferent to your problems, it's time to find a new partner.

3 PROVIDES ONGOING TRAINING.

ERP software is complex – just like manufacturing can be. In addition to the initial pre-implementation training, your ERP vendor should have a comprehensive program of ongoing training to keep you at the forefront of the industry and allow your business to run faster and leaner. The best training programs offer many different formats, including:

- An extensive library of training documents
- A searchable video library
- Live and archived webinars
- On-campus training sessions at the vendor's facility
- Specialized classes presented at your facility

4 SEAMLESSLY INTEGRATES WITH THIRD-PARTY SOFTWARE APPLICATIONS.

One of the biggest advances in ERP over the past decade has been the increasing ability to integrate with the third-party software you need to run your business. The ability to seamlessly work with nesting, sales, EDI, CAD/CAM and other types of software eliminates the need to rewrite all your systems and makes the vital interchange of data between you and your customers faster and more accurate.

5 HAS A HISTORY OF STABLE OWNERSHIP.

When a manufacturing business changes hands, the priorities, strategies and vision for that company inevitably change as well. ERP software companies are no different. The leaders change. The plans for software development change. Tech support changes. Employees often leave, so you end up talking to someone new every time you call in. New ownership may decide to cut the R&D budget, resulting in fewer upgrades and enhancements. A stable ERP company – one that doesn't change ownership every three to five years – provides a stability of product quality and service that's hard to put a price on.



You're Not Alone

At Global Shop Solutions, we take pride in our commitment to constantly improve our software and having one of the highest rated tech support teams in the industry. But we prefer to let our customers do the talking.

“Customer service is a huge positive with Global Shop Solutions,” says **Andy Mayfield, Head of IT for Loadmaster Derrick**, a long-time customer of Global Shop Solutions. “When I call in with an issue, I’m quickly on the phone or WebExing with a support person, and we hammer things out until we get it right. Global Shop Solutions doesn’t just sell you a system and then leave you to fend for yourself. They provide the support, system upgrades and guidance to help your company grow.”

With Global Shop Solutions, you get more than just an ERP vendor – you get a friend and a partner in the success of your business. No matter what challenges you face, we’ll be here when you need us. That’s a promise.

If you’re ready to start serving your customers the way you want, call us today at 800.364.5958, or [set up an appointment online](#).



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Chris Pinaire is the Director of Consulting and Implementation at Global Shop Solutions, where he has been a part of more than 250 ERP software implementations. His team has more than 200 implementations active at any given time. When Chris is not helping customers simplify their operations to become more efficient, he enjoys running and spending time with his family.