BELLWETHER

A BLYTHECO MAGAZINE

THE FUTURE OF SOFTWARE

WELCOME TO THE FUTURE OF INVENTORY CONTROL

THE FUTURE OF CLOUD ACCOUNTING SOFTWARE

THE SMART(ER) OFFICE

2018 SOFTWARE BUYER'S GUIDE

Scanco
innovation.service.experience

The Future Of Mobility Is Here!

Mobility

Warehouse

Manufacturing

Sales

Field Service

sage 100
sage 100c

What is Mobility?

It's your connection to all things mobile with Sage 100/Sage 100c 2018. Fully manage your supply chain from order placement through manufacturing and distribution with the latest in technology from the leader in supply chain management for Sage 100. Sage Mobility now gives all Sage 100/Sage 100c users access to real-time information on any iOS or Android device with a portfolio of apps from Scanco designed specifically for the Sage 100 supply chain.

Get Started Today!

It's easy to get started with Mobility. If you are a Sage 100/100c user on 2018, just install the Sage Mobility for Barcode Module and follow the installation instructions.

Included with Sage Mobility for Barcode 2018:
- 5 user pack for Scanco Mobility App (Sage 100/100c)
- 5 user pack of Scanco Sales App (Sage 100c)

Visit www.scanco.com/mobility for more information.

BELLWETHER

A **BLYTHECO** MAGAZINE

CONTENTS

SPRING 2018

14

SOFTWARE
BUYER'S
GUIDE

SECTIONS

32

The Smart(er)
Office

28

Welcome to
the Future of
Inventory
Control

38

The Future
of Cloud
Accounting
Software

48

Tracking Business
Intelligence Software's
Ever-Changing
Sweet Spot

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BELLWETHER

A BLYTHECO MAGAZINE

Hello Readers,

We are so excited to deliver our annual software buyers guide in this issue of Bellwether Magazine. Every year we get together with our experts to review all the changes that have happened in the year, including new software releases, new product options in categories, and new integrations between products to help you run your business. Packed with information to keep you updated with industry happenings, this is our best issue yet.

I am always energized by meeting business owners and having conversations about what keeps them up at night. Our goal with each issue is to tackle some of those topics so that you can focus on running your business instead of worrying about technology changes and shifts.
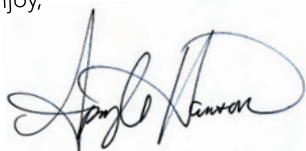
One of my more recent visits was with a company that was going through great expansion in their market while simultaneously acquiring businesses in their same field. When mergers and acquisitions happen, many businesses are thrown into rationalizing business processes and the current software they're using. This takes away from growing and running the business. With a diversion like figuring out the technology that will work across multiple businesses, it can be necessary to develop a methodology for reviewing your options.

We recently helped a manufacturer who had been on their software for over ten years weigh the features and benefits of their current solution against other solutions on the market. In situations like these, it's critical to take a non-biased look at the needs and requirements of your business, and compare them against the tools in the market, in order to ensure you're making the right choice. This is precisely what we love to help companies do. When software is evaluated fully in this non-biased light, we know from our history that the implementation will be a much smoother process.

In addition to our software buyers guide, we also have some great articles to help you plan in 2018. We've included articles on topics like controlling costs of software purchases, which can make it easier to budget and plan for software changes. You can also see our predictive article on inventory control, which will help you plan for keeping your inventory costs on budget. Confused about the Internet of Things (IOT)? We have an article to inform you on that as well.

We hope you enjoy our first issue of 2018.

Enjoy,

Apryl Hanson, Editor in Chief

Twitter: @AprylHanson | **Email:** ahanson@blytheco.com

Good news: your business is growing

Is your sales tax compliance keeping up?

simplify.avalara.com/bellwether

Avalara
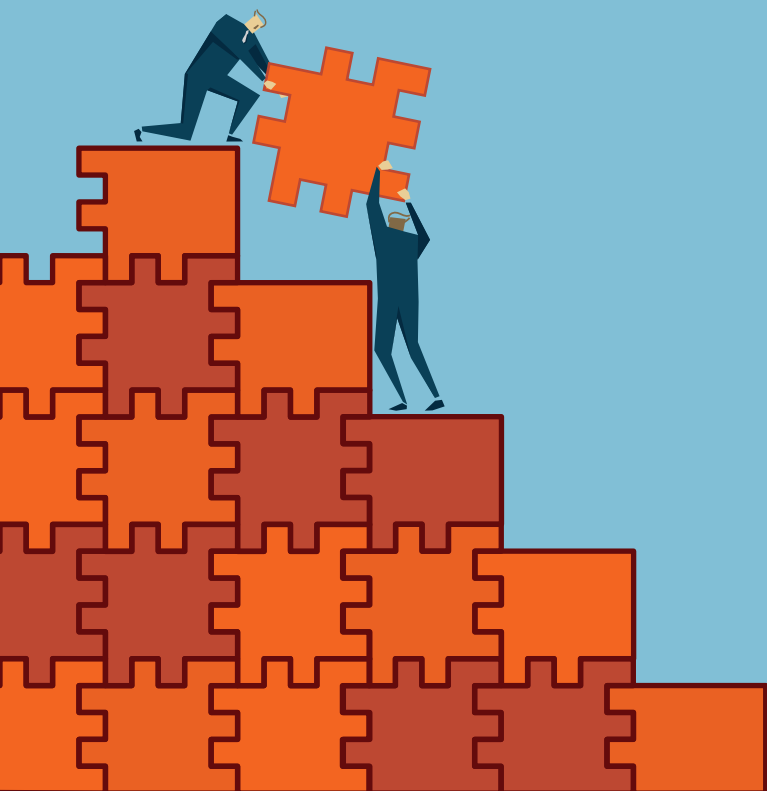
Payments Play an Important Part When Automating AP Operations

Discover the Benefits of End-to-End Accounts Payable Automation with ACOM's Paperless Pay Advantage

ACOM's total approach to AP automation streamlines the entire invoice-to-pay-to-reconcilliation cycle

An intelligent cloud platform connecting buyers and suppliers with simplified B2B payment execution

Real-time control of your cash: Manage, modify and control all of your disbursement transactions

The Paperless Pay Advantage

- Save 90% over manual AP processing
- 100% electronic payments on your first day
- Integrates with any ERP and financial system
- One payment file supports multiple payments types (ACH, Viirtual Account, EFT, Global and Check)
- Integrated supplier onboarding and mangement
- Optimized supplier discount opportunities
- Transform AP from a cost center to a profit center

THE
FUTURE OF SOFTWARE
AND HOW YOU CAN CONTROL COSTS

by Mark Grimes

In the ever-changing world of technology, it is easy to get lost in the benefits and features of each new advance and not see the increasing costs that can be associated with having the best infrastructure to run your business. The larger concern is usually the high cost of maintaining hardware; a hosted, subscription software environment often seems a cash-flow-friendly complement. But be warned: While the upfront cost may look attractive, the amount spent over the long run, as well as the impact of future costs to strategic planning, can make monthly subscriptions an extremely expensive option.

Here are some tips from our experience helping clients make software-buying decisions:

Know your costs for the next five years. Software is typically not used for a month or even a single year; the average life span for a software product is three to 10 years. Software companies would like you to think in the short term when making a purchase decision — thus the smaller, initial outlay so cost will appear less of an obstacle — but planning for the long term is where the savings lie. Depending on the provider, typical savings on the same software bought with your next five years in mind, compared to paying for it month-to-month in subscription fees, can be as much as 10 to 40 percent over the same number of years.

Control automatic cost increases. Look at your subscription license agreement and understand how much the software company can raise the subscription price year after year. Many stipulate the cost of renewing your subscription may rise as much as 10 percent each year. Purchasing for multiple years, or signing a multiyear contract, can help you avoid or mitigate this automatic cost increase.

Research and establish your full implementation costs; look for prepaid or set pricing. Too often, not having an agreed-upon budget can nickel-and-dime your solution. We see customers who initially thought a project would cost $75,000 paying twice that to get it working properly. This can be due to myriad factors, but having the right partner, exploring the best solutions up front, and knowing what you need the software to do to make your company efficient and profitable can go a long way in controlling scope — and cost — creep.

Find out what other software you'll need to supplement the core solution. You're usually not buying only the main ERP, CRM, or HRMS software, but will require additional middleware or third-party plug-ins to run the system properly. There are thousands of supplemental software programs used to help run the major platforms, and cost ranges are huge. It is extremely important to know this up front. We have seen clients duped into implementing less-expensive add-on software only to find later they actually need the more expensive option.

Know the full costs up front as much as possible. When you have this five-year plan and budget in hand, you can see the overall picture and better control your costs. So how then do you pay for all this to take advantage of the savings your plan provides and avoid cost overruns? There are various methods.

Pay cash upfront. Cash is always king when it comes to lower total costs — but understand it may reduce much-needed working capital for your day-to-day operations. (Remember: Cash flow is why the monthly software-subscription model looks so attractive initially.)

Use a line of credit. Lines of credit will usually net you the best variable rate, but don't forget that they are intended for short-term borrowing, not long-term assets like technology infrastructure components. Additionally, they may involve additional fees, payment schedules, and other requirements and parameters.

Get a fixed-term installment loan or payment agreement. Software can be financed along with professional services, maintenance, and most third-party software. Programs with low rates may let you take advantage of the prepaid discounts from software suppliers. These discounts can more-than-offset any finance charges and still give your company a substantial savings over the duration of your five-year plan. With a fixed term, you don't need to worry about rising or variable interest rates, which makes your project budget far more realistic.

Evaluating all aspects of a software purchase initially, including subscription vs. one-time-purchase models, along with all available payment options, can help you plan a project that is cost-effective now and in the future.

Keeping New Retailer Fines at Bay with
VENDOR MANAGED INVENTORY SOFTWARE

by Scott Kleinert

$75 billion.
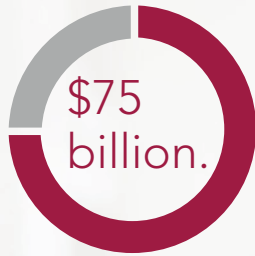
That's what major retailers such as Walmart and Kroger food stores are striving to reclaim in lost business each year due to late or incomplete shipments from their suppliers. Late shipments can cause products to be out of stock or not in a condition to be sold; losing thousands of customers on a given day, according to Ken Goldman, food analyst for J.P. Morgan.

Shifting Accountability Upstream to Suppliers

As brick-and-mortar retailers continue to face increasing competitive pressure from online retailers, accountability for on time delivery is being shifted upstream to suppliers. Starting as recently as August, Kroger now imposes a $500 fine per order for shipments made more than two days late – a window that Kroger says it will eventually narrow to just one day. Walmart's penalties are even stricter, imposing a 3% monthly fine for deliveries that aren't *exactly* on time – including shipments that arrive early and clutter backrooms with excess inventory. These fines can total over $1 million per month for some suppliers. Even more daunting is the threat of shelf space loss for repeat offenders.

A Smart Response from Major Suppliers

Recognizing the tremendous potential to create a competitive advantage with this new shift, major suppliers such as Hershey, P&G, Pinnacle Foods, and Kraft Heinz are making major investments in logistics management systems that enable greater control of delivery timing and completeness. P&G has spent billions improving its supply chain over the last few years to better prepare for changes such as this.

Some of these investments are earmarked for vendor managed inventory (VMI) software systems. VMI enables manufacturers to calculate the most appropriate fulfillment plan based on a broad set of factors such as store-level demand, manufacturing lead time, package sizes, planned promotions, service levels and more. By using multiple factors to more precisely define shipments, manufacturers have much more control of their deliveries and can better accommodate retailer demands and react to unexpected shifts such as natural disasters and economic swings.

VMI for Suppliers of All Sizes

Not every company has to spend billions improving its supply chain. In fact, suppliers of all sizes can find a solution that helps avoid incurring hefty fines for late or incomplete shipments. TrueCommerce has VMI solutions that are easy to implement and give smaller companies the same competitive advantage the world's largest suppliers enjoy.

No Better Time than the Present

Tough penalties for late or incomplete deliveries are the new normal. Suppliers that react quickly can outsmart their competitors and win under these new rules of engagement. Suppliers that are slow to respond will likely experience margin erosion because of costly fines, and potentially lose precious shelf space and market share.

About the Author

Scott Kleinert is the Director of Consumer Goods for TrueCommerce Datalliance, focused in Vendor Managed Inventory. TrueCommerce is a global provider of trading partner connectivity and integration solutions. For more information visit www.TrueCommerce.com.
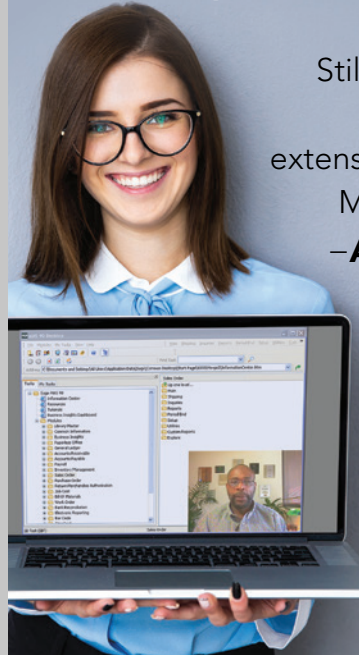
Sage HRMS

Because You Have More To Do Than Just Fill Empty Seats

- **Payroll Management and Processing**
- **Employee Benefits Management**
- **Recruiting and Onboarding**
- **Paperless HR**
- **Risk Mitigation and Compliance**
- **Talent Management**
- **Time and Attendance Management**
- **Decision Support**

2018
SOFTWARE
BUYER'S
GUIDE

Got questions about the products featured in this guide? Call us at

949-268-4371

Starting off the new year right is consistently a top priority for businesses. Understanding the challenges and needs of your organization is only a first step to guiding business transformation and growth. The next is decoding the resources required to enable success, often showing up in the form of business software.

With the tremendous number of today's available modern technology and software solutions, it is often daunting and overwhelming to consider which may be the right fit for your organization. Not only are there various software products in the market, but also numerous integrations, add-ons and customizations, all with the potential to help optimize your business.

To help advise and support you throughout this process, we are proud to release our annual **Software Buyer's Guide**.

In this 2018 edition, you'll find the most relevant new software solutions and add-ons alongside veteran brands that continue to pave the way. You'll discover key offerings you did not know existed and ideas for solving problems through the use of configurable add-ons. This guide is built as a starting point to help lead you through the necessary software considerations to help you grow your business, whether it be large or small.

Take some time to browse the guide, and for any solutions that require more information, do not hesitate to visit the links provided with each product. Have questions about the products featured in this guide? We have multiple (and free) resources available to help educate and guide you. Contact your Blytheco transformation partner at 949-268-4371.

HCM
HUMAN CAPITAL MANAGEMENT

Ascentis
Human Capital Management Software
www.blytheco.com/ascentis

Ascentis is a feature rich, fully integrated Human Capital Management software designed for the mid-market. It automates and streamlines core business processes that save time and money. Within this suite of software, you can manage major functions such as employee data and benefits, time and attendance, payroll and tax filing, applicant tracking and on boarding, talent management and ACA compliance.

Sage HRMS
Human Resources Information Management
www.blytheco.com/sage-hrms

Sage HRMS is the most complete human resource management solution for small and midsized businesses. With the ability to add on and integrate modules such as recruiting, employee self-service, analytics, and check printing capabilities, Sage HRMS helps you to maximize every dollar you invest in your employees.

Sage HRMS HR (www.blytheco.com/sage-hrms-hr) allows you to integrate and streamline your HR processes and closely monitor employee records and personnel actions, HR compliance, benefits administration, absence management, reporting (standard and custom), and data import/export actions.

Payroll (www.blytheco.com/sage-hrms-payroll) is fully integrated into Sage HRMS. It provides a comprehensive and flexible solution that includes the all the payroll functionality needed by midsized organizations to process their payroll in-house accurately and quickly every time.

HRMS
ADD-ON PRODUCTS

Cyber Recruiter
Recruitment Management
www.blytheco.com/cyber-recruiter
Works with: Sage HRMS

Improve your hiring efficiency with an end-to-end recruiting and onboarding process automation solution that scales and adjusts to your unique needs. Cyber Recruiter by Visibility Software allows you to easily create and approve job requisitions, schedule interviews, handle offers and much more.

Cyber Train
Training Management
www.blytheco.com/cyber-train
Works with: Sage HRMS

Sage HRMS Cyber Train, a Sage Endorsed Solution, empowers supervisions, instructors, and employees by making information regarding classes, courserequirements, programs, and certifications available through the web and not just through the HR department.

Employee Engagement - Custom Insights
Employee Survey
www.blytheco.com/engagement

Custom Insights is a cloud-based employee survey solution that is easy to setup and administer. Vastly different than a simple employee satisfaction survey, it goes deeper with time-tested survey questions written by psychologists. Measure your results against thousands of other companies who have answered the same questions.

Garnishment Manager
Garnishment Manager
www.blytheco.com/garnishment
Works with: Sage HRMS

Sage HRMS Garnishment Manager, a Sage Endorsed Solution, relieves the payroll staff of the tedious, time-consuming, and often error-prone tasks of calculating and prioritizing complex garnishments for child support, tax levies, student loans, and creditor liens.

HR Actions
Paperless Forms and Workflow
www.blytheco.com/hr-actions
Works with: Sage HRMS

Streamline the collection and approval of employee data using the web. Sage HRMS HR Actions lets you easily create paperless forms using any fields from Sage HRMS. Process any action for request to hire to termination and everything in between including status changes and performance appraisals.

iConnect
Applicant Onboarding
www.blytheco.com/iconnect
Works with: Sage HRMS

iConnect is intuitive and user friendly. Your new hires automatically receive the appropriate hiring package via email and can sign in securely to the iConnect Applicant Portal to complete the forms and upload any supporting documentation. You can track and monitor the status online, send reminders, and approve or request changes before the forms are finalized.

iRecruit
Applicant Recruiting
www.blytheco.com/irecruit
Works with: Sage HRMS

iRecruit is a cloud-based, powerful and flexible applicant tracking and recruiting software. Attracting and hiring top level talent has never been more efficient and cost effective.

Payroll Tax Forms and eFiling
Payroll Management
www.blytheco.com/aatrix
Works with: All Sage ERP, Sage HRMS

With Sage Payroll Tax Forms and eFiling by Aatrix, you can meet all State and Federal reporting and payment requirements right from your Sage HRMS Payroll software. It is easy to use and saves you time by eliminating the need to create reports manually. Reports are automatically completed, reviewed and edited on screen, then eFiled in minutes for processing.

Sage Active Directory Conduit
IT Data Synchronization
www.blytheco.com/active-directory
Works with: Sage HRMS

Employee data is often housed in multiple systems: an HR management system and Microsoft Active Directory Repository. Staffing changes, as well as changes to an employee's data usually requires redundant entry efforts by both HR and IT. The ADC eliminates the need for manual re-entry by automatically populating attributes from your Sage HRMS database into the Active Directory data store.

Sage Benefits Enrollment

Benefits Management

www.blytheco.com/benefits-enrollment

Works with: Sage HRMS

Sage Benefits Enrollment takes the powerful benefits management solution of Sage HRMS to the next level by enabling employees to make their own benefit elections through the Internet or intranet. Setup wizards in Sage Benefits Enrollment support multiple open enrollment projects making BE flexible to your needs. Employees and administrators alike can enjoy a host of features, such as 24/7 access to data via the internet, election comparisons, automated workflows and more.

Sage Benefits Manager

Benefits Management

www.blytheco.com/benefits-manager

Works with: Sage HRMS

Sage HRMS Benefits Manager simplifies the process of communicating with benefits carriers. It automatically reformats the data already in your Sage HRMS HR system and sends it to your carriers on your behalf. HRMS Benefits Messenger also eliminates the costly errors associated with duplicate data entry and "missed enrollments" both during annual open enrollment periods and for employee changes throughout the year.

Sage Employee Self Service

Employee and Manager Self Service

www.blytheco.com/employee-self-service

Sage ESS provides a central location for employees, managers, and administrators to view and manage important personal data and company information. Instead of the HR department wasting time fielding routine inquiries about time off, current benefits or other job details, you can empower your employees and managers to be self-sufficient. Give them access to their information any time, any place over the Internet or company intranet with ESS.

Sage HR Actions Dynamic Forms Checklist

Onboarding Forms Management

www.blytheco.com/delphia-paperless-w4

Works with: Sage HRMS

Streamline your on boarding process through a guided online checklist of forms designed to make the routine completion of required forms easy for employees. Sage HRMS HR Actions Dynamic Forms Checklist by Delphia Consulting, a Sage Endorsed Solution, lets you easily create specific forms that must be completed by each employee that will dynamically appear within Sage Employee Self Service (ESS).

Sage HRMS OrgPlus

Organizational Charting

www.blytheco.com/orgplus

Works with: Sage HRMS

With Sage HRMS OrgPlus, employees and managers have easy access to up-to-date organizational charts that give them the information they need to understand your business and plan for the future. Managers can strategize for different business scenarios and measure their impact using built-in formulas to measure headcount, salaries, or other important planning information..

Sage My Workforce Analyzer

Data Analysis tool

www.blytheco.com/workforce-analyzer

Works with: Sage HRMS

MWA helps you answer critical questions concerning the Affordable Care Act. It is a unique dashboard and analysis too that tracks and analyzes your company information so you can make informed decisions about healthcare and the requirements of the ACA. Conveniently offered as a cloud service and delivered through the Sage Source platform, My Workforce Analyzer is an affordable way to streamline your ACA decision making, meet your ACA reporting obligations, and manage costs.

Sage Payroll Services

Managed Payroll Service

www.blytheco.com/sage-payroll-full-service

Works with: Sage HRMS

Companies with more than 10 employees can enjoy the outsourced ease of Sage Payroll Full Service. You'll enjoy a full range of payroll, HR and time management solutions. Sage Payroll Full Service comes with dedicated support from a certified payroll expert including being on call for questions.   You're covered with filing and payment of your payroll taxes.

Sage Time and Attendance by Insperity

Time Import Manager

www.blytheco.com/attendance

Works with: Sage HRMS

Sage Time and Attendance is a comprehensive, state-of-the-art workforce management solution that enables you to collect, analyze, and take immediate control of your employees' attendance and labor data—online and in real time. It automates your processes by integrating seamlessly with Sage HRMS, through a secure Microsoft Windows® environment.

Sage Time and Labor Import by Delphia

Time Management

www.blytheco.com/labor-import

Works with: Sage HRMS

Sage HRMS Time and Labor Import streamlines the process of validating and importing data from almost any data source into the Sage HRMS Payroll file using an easy user interface. Importing time, data validation, code translation, and reporting are standard capabilities of Sage HRMS Time and Labor Import.

WOTC from CMS

Work Opportunity Tax Credit Processing

www.blytheco.com/wotc

Works with: Sage HRMS

Allow CMS Tax Credit Services to help your company maximize your tax credit savings. Their team searches all new federal and state legislation to optimize the employment tax credits so you save more. CMS's secure WOTC web portal provides a simple tool to collect all required forms & information. CMS's push technology notifies your administration team of events. You'll easily stay in compliance with all federal and state policies including the 28 Day Rule.

ERP
ACCOUNTING & BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

Acumatica
ERP/Accounting, CRM
www.blytheco.com/acumatica

Acumatica delivers the benefits that today's businesses require in a Modern ERP - adaptable cloud and mobile technology - with a unique all-inclusive user licensing model, enabling a complete, real-time view of your business anytime, anywhere.

NetSuite
ERP/Accounting, CRM, eCommerce
www.blytheco.com/netsuite

Run your entire business with the #1 cloud business management software suite. All your data is in one place: accounting, ERP, CRM and ecommerce in a fully integrated SaaS solution which drives your accounting, sales, service and fulfillment. Expensive and disruptive upgrades are a thing of the past and agility is the name of the game with this flexible tool which adjusts with you as the needs of your business change.

Sage 100
ERP/Accounting
www.blytheco.com/sage100

Sage 100 is a fully integrated business management solution with superior architecture that grows with your business. It offers full-featured accounting, manufacturing, and distribution functionality, with the ability to add integrated e-commerce, HRMS, and CRM solutions and more. It gives you the foundation for connecting your business to provide a better customer experience, increase revenue and the ability to make better business decisions.

Sage 500
ERP/Accounting
www.blytheco.com/sage500

Based from the ground up on Microsoft Sequel Server, Sage 500 is a complete enterprise management solution developed to help progressive companies streamline operations, and springboard to the next level. From supply chain management to innovative e-commerce solutions to the latest .NET-based applications, Sage 500 continues to deliver solutions that increase user productivity and lower overall costs.

Sage X3
ERP/Accounting
www.blytheco.com/erp-x3

Sage X3 offers big ERP capacity without all the cost and complexity. Sage X3 gives you the tools to reduce your costs, grow your revenue and win new customers. You'll be see increased productivity with a faster, simpler, and flexible enterprise resource planning solution with Sage X3.

ERP
ADD-ON PRODUCTS

ACOM
Paperless Accounts Payable and Payment Automation

www.blytheco.com/acom

Works with: Sage 100, Sage 300, Sage 500

Drastically reduce wasted time and cost of manual and paper-based processes with end-to-end AP automation designed specifically for leading ERP systems. From automation AP workflow to B2B payments, clients enjoy 80% in savings, while taking the invoice processing cycles from days to just minutes. More timely and accurate information makes a significant impact on your bottom line.

Avatax
Sales Tax Automation

www.blytheco.com/avatax

Works with: Netsuite, Sage X3, Sage 100, Sage 500, Acumatica

Avalara's Avatax is a hosted, web-service-based sales tax automation solution that automatically performs address validation, sales tax jurisdiction research and rate calculation – all on the fly within your accounting application, with no change to your existing workflow. Fully detailed reports are always at your fingertips and returns are automatically repopulated and generated.

B2BGateway
Electronic Data Interchange

www.blytheco.com/b2bgateway

Works with: NetSuite, Acumatica

Since 2000, B2BGateway has been providing easy to use fully integrated EDI solutions for NetSuite. Orders are received by B2BGateway, translated into a NetSuite format and automatically put into a NetSuite user's account. When you log on, your new orders are simply there for you to review and accept. B2BGateway can also automate your outbound transmissions to your trading partners as well.

Century Business Solutions
Credit Card Processing

www.blytheco.com/ebizcharge

Works with: Sage 100, Sage 500, Acumatica

Does your business accept credit cards? Century Business Solutions brings you an integrated solution for Sage 100 and Sage 500 business software. Our integrated solutions do not require you to change your processes or retrain staff as the look and feel of the software is identical. The eBizCharge credit card module in Sage 100 (formerly Sage MAS 90) and Sage 500 will reduce your processing costs significantly and increase profitability.

Got questions about the products featured in this guide?
Call us at **949-268-4371**

eRequester
Procurement Management

www.blytheco.com/erequester

Works with: Sage 100, Sage 500, Sage X3, Acumatica

eRequester makes procurement and expense management simple with its powerful approval workflow engine, support for multi-company, detailed reporting and deep integration for supported Sage ERP systems.

FieldAware
Field Service Management

www.blytheco.com/fieldaware

Works with: NetSuite

FieldAware's open API makes integrating field service management into your ERP system practical and profitable. Give your field technicians the ability to generate new quotes and work orders in the field. They can also easily update customer and financial data in real time, from the field… and that's just the beginning of how Field Aware can transform your business!

Ice Edge Business Solutions
3D Design & Proposal

www.blytheco.com/ice-edge

Ice Edge Business Solutions developed ICE® software, a 3D design and communication platform with product expertise that allows you to solve design and specification challenges. ICE software delivers complete graphical designs and a full bill of materials with pricing to communicate clearly, resolve conflicts and facilitate real-time decision making. ICE software is currently employed by a number of companies to sell, visualize, specify, price, manufacture and deliver product to market. Ice Edge Business Solutions increases revenue and reduces costs, while allowing greater control of business systems and a fluid flow of information across the entire enterprise.

Mapadoc
Electronic Data Interchange (EDI)

www.blytheco.com/mapadoc

Works with: All Sage ERP, Sage HRMS, Acumatica

Mapadoc is SWK Technology's easy to use to use EDI software solution that integrates seamlessly into Sage 100, Sage 500 and Sage X3. Mapadoc will help your company dramatically reduce data entry time and costs, eliminate duplicate entries, reduce mapping time by over 75%, and help you improve communication with trading partners. You can use Mapadoc as an easy turn-key EDI solution or as a highly configurable end-to-end supply chain solution.

Multi Currency
Multi Currency Add-On

www.blytheco.com/multi-currency

Works with: Sage 100

Developed by DSD Business Systems, this add-on is for international and multinational companies that transact business in multiple currencies. It provides a comprehensive solution, with flexibility and ease of use, for companies that operate in multiple currencies and need greater flexibility for their operations abroad. Five core functions are available: Currency, General Ledger, Accounts Payable, Accounts Receivable, and Bank Reconciliation.

Service Pro®

Field Service Management

www.blytheco.com/field-service-software

Works with: Sage 100, NetSuite

MSI Data is the developer of Service Pro®, the "All-in-One" Field Service Management Software solution integrated to Sage 100 ERP and NetSuite's cloud ERP. Service Pro® automates office to filed communication in the areas of work orders, dispatching, scheduling, labor time, parts/inventory, assets, warranties, maintenance contracts, tasks, inspections, photo & signature capture, service history and more.

Printboss

Print Management

www.blytheco.com/printboss

Works with: Sage ERP, Sage HRMS

PrintBoss makes your live check and DDA (or direct deposit advice) documents smarter. It adds the intelligence and extra security to the printing of critical bank and live check required data such as the MICR line, bank fractional code and live check signatures. It also allows for secure archiving and the ability to save PDF versions of any HRMS payment from printed from the PrintBoss application.

S2 Project Accounting

Add-on Module

www.blytheco.com/s2

Works with: Sage 100

Developed by NRT Business Solutions for businesses that sell to the Government, the S2 Project Accounting™ module offers a complete solution. The S2 Project Accounting™ module delivers features such as cost-collection, multi-tier project setup, unlimited pool setup, cost-allocation, reporting, automated billing and other powerful attributes so necessary for government contractors. The resulting benefits make this solution the preferred choice of mid-market government contracting firms.

Sage 100 Payroll

Add-on Module

www.blytheco.com/sage100-payroll

Works with: Sage 100

Payroll makes in-house payroll preparation easy and efficient, providing you with the ability to process at a fraction of the cost and time of a manual payroll system or outside service bureau. Payroll automatically applies earnings and deductions, calculates employee and employer payroll taxes, and prints checks and vouchers complete with year-to-dateearnings and tax information. All current federal and state tax tables are included, and updates are provided as an on-plan Business Care benefit.

Sage Managed Payroll Services

www.blytheco.com/sage-payroll-service

Works with: Sage 100 v2016+

Outsource your payroll so you can focus on your business. Whether you are looking for a full-service payroll solution or you want a better experience than you have with your current provider, Sage 100 2016 offers enhanced integration with Sage Payroll Services so you can upload general ledger account numbers and bank codes to Sage Payroll Services and easily download payroll transactions back into Transaction Journal Entry.

Sage Manufacturing Automation

Formerly JobOps

www.blytheco.com/JobOps

Works with: Sage 100

JobOps Job Management Software is an integrated job management tool for companies that build products, provide insiallation or perform services. JobOps gives users the tools needed to get accurate job cost estimates out quickly by determining part, material, labor and sub-contractor costs. JobOps also works to automate incoming order and purchasing functions within your Sage 100 system.

Sage Payment Solutions

Credit Card Processing

www.blytheco.com/sage-payment-solutions

Works with: NetSuite, Sage X3

Sage Payment Solutions offers your business more ways to accept and process payments, so you can provide your customers a superior experience. Accept payments wherever you are—your retail store, a customer's location, on the phone, on the web, or by e-store—and say hello to improved cash flow, expanded sales channels, and reduced transaction costs. Plus, you can synch all payment transaction data to your back-office accounting and ERP software with ease.

SmartClient

Excel-NetSuite Integration

www.blytheco.com/smartclient

Works with: NetSuite

The Celigo SmartClient provides a seamless integration between Microsoft Excel and NetSuite. SmartClient users can access and edit NetSuite data directly from within Excel, in real time and with a single click. Take full advantage of Excel's data manipulation functions to retrieve, update, add and delete NetSuite data from multiple record types.

TrueCommerce EDI

Electronic Data Interchange

www.blytheco.com/truecommerce

Works with: Sage 100, Sage 500, Sage X3, NetSuite

TrueCommerce EDI Solutions from HighJump is everything you need to easily and fully implement and EDI system from one source. Whenever your business grows and you acquire new customers that require EDI, you all need to do is request an affordable software plug-in that allows your current system to interact with a new customer or vendor. Simple!

Vertex SMB

Sales and Use Tax Automation Solution

www.blytheco.com/vertex-smb

Works with: Sage 100, NetSuite

With seamless integration to several ERP systems, Vertex SMB's TaxCentral handles sales tax calculations and returns in one comprehensive solution, completing the fully-automated process with a signature-ready PDF ready for filing and remittance. Benefits include access to the most recent tax rates and rules, real time reporting for more productive operations, and efficiency in producing signature-ready returns with immediate integration to your tax calculation detail.

ERP
ADD-ON PRODUCTS
DISTRIBUTION

ACS Multi Bin & Manufacturing Automation

Manufacturing Management

www.blytheco.com/acs

Works with: Sage 100, Sage 500

ACS Multi-bin and Warehouse Management provides a seamless multi-bin and warehouse management system WMS functionality integrated for Sage 100 ERP. It is flexible, easy to set up and it's design facilitates ease of use. It can also be setup for more advanced needs utilizing WMS features. It is compatible with most extended solutions, developer enhancements and business object integration.

JOScan

Barcoding + Scanning Solution

www.blytheco.com/joscan

Works with: Sage 100, JobOps

JOScan from JDB Solutions is the handheld and/or desktop barcode scanning and data collection solution designed to allow manufacturers and field service organizations to minimize costs, maximize productivity and maintain a competitive edge in today's marketplace.

Got questions about the products
featured in this guide?

Call us at **949-268-4371**

Odyssey Logistics & Technology

Transportation Management

www.blytheco.com/odyssey

WIN™ (Web Integrated Network) is the no-cost, no-fee transportation management system offering shippers savings opportunities, visibility, efficiency, and carrier choice (their incumbents, or WIN network's). A product of Odyssey Logistics & Technology, a global logistics solutions provider with a freight network of over $2 billion, WIN supports virtually all modes in North America and quickly and easily integrates with shippers' existing ERP systems. WIN also leverages the latest technologies for carrier communication including APIs or carrier web-services.

ONE Software Solution

Warehouse Management

www.blytheco.com/onesoftware

Works with: Sage 100

Three industry leaders (Scanco, ACS and JDB Solutions) joined forces to create ONE Software Solution. It is an integrated warehouse management, automation and manufacturing solutions. Streamline every aspect of your manufacturing with the latest technology. Warehouse automation on IOS, Android and Windows Mobile

RF-Smart
Barcoding Solution
www.blytheco.com/rf-smart
Works with: NetSuite

You'll be able to increase your inventory accuracy and customer satisfaction with RF-SMART's bar coding solution for NetSuite. RF-SMART is an industry leading product that meets NetSuite's highest standard for SuiteApp Solutions. Works with Advanced Bins, Bin Management, and Even No Bins. And the cherry on top: it was voted 2014 SuiteCloud Developer SuiteApp of the Year!

Sage Inventory Advisor
Inventory Management
www.blytheco.com/inventory-advisor
Works with: Sage 100, Sage 500, Sage X3

Sage Inventory Advisor is an affordable cloud solution that helps companies reduce excess inventory and working capital, while eliminating stock-outs. It slashes time spent on forecasts and ordering. It connects to Sage ERP data to deliver real-time health-checks on the inventory that makes a difference to the bottom line, reduce the time spent on forecasts, and resolve the optimal investment required to achieve target fill rates.

Scanco
Warehouse Solutions
www.blytheco.com/scanco
Works with: Sage 100, Sage 500, NetSuite, Acumatica

Scanco specializes in an extensive line of products designed to increase warehouse productivity. From basic barcode label printing to wireless inventory management, there is a solution to fit every budget and need. Users can also use iOS, Android and Windows Mobile devices with Scanco, lowering hardware costs significantly.

Process Weaver xCarrier
Shipping Management
www.blytheco.com/processweaver
Works with: Sage 100, Sage X3

ProcessWeaver shipping software offers a range of innovative multi-carrier, multi-modal & multi-platform solutions to solve complex industry logistics challenges.

SmartLinc
Shipping Management
www.blytheco.com/smartlinc
Works with: Sage 100, Sage 500, Sage X3

Count on SmartLinc to help you reduce costs while processing shipments accurately and on time. It is a flexible solution that can help you streamline shipping activities for all Parcel Carriers, Less than Truckload (LTL) shipments, Truck Load, and your company vehicles.

StarShip
Shipping Management
www.blytheco.com/starship
Works with: Sage 100, Sage 500, Acumatica

vTechnologies' StarShip is a trusted solution, and makes the entire shipping process more fluid. Plus, when combined with the pick, pack, and ship feature built into the Sales Order module, StarShip helps your company become a more competitive business and even has the potential to reduce shipping and shipping-related expenses.

SPS Commerce
Supply Chain Management
www.blytheco.com/spscommerce
Works with: All Software

100% Cloud based, SPS Commerce provides omnichannel supply chain solutions for retailers. From fulfillment (EDI) to sourcing, to analytics and beyond, SPS Commerce's suite of tools has made them a recognized global leader in retail.

WOScan
Barcode Data Collection
www.blytheco.com/joscan
Works with: Sage 100

WOScan for Work Order from JDB Solutions is a highly flexible, adaptable wireless data collection solution, ideal for manufacturers using the Sage ERP 100 Work Order module.

Got questions about the products featured in this guide?

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BUSINESS **INTELLIGENCE**
& PROCESS MANAGEMENT

Alerts & Workflow
Business Process Automation

www.blytheco.com/knowledgesync

Works with: Sage 100, Sage 500, Sage CRM, Sage HRMS

Monitor your business data, automate the production and delivery of documents and automatically trigger workflow to update applications, schedule tasks and move information between systems.

Avercast
Business Forecasting

www.blytheco.com/avercast

Works with: Sage 100, Sage 500, NetSuite

Avercast has become the supply chain planning tool of choice for many companies in both the small/midsized as well as the large business marketplace. Products include Inventory Forecasting, Demand Planning, Sales & Operations Planning, Rough Cut Capacity Planning, Salesperson Collaboration, Vendor Collaboration and Retail Store-Level Analysis.

BizNet
Business Information System

www.blytheco.com/biznet

Works with: Excel

The BizNet™ product suite is a business reporting and analytics platform that provides real-time access to your business data from Microsoft Excel®. It delivers simple, yet powerful capabilities to anyone who uses spreadsheets to gather and analyze business information. It allows users the ability to get immediate answers to questions without the usual challenges of gathering and refreshing the source data.

Budget Maestro
Budget and Forecasting

www.blytheco.com/maestro

Works with: Sage 100, Sage 300, Sage 500, MS-Dynamics

Budget Maestro® by Centage is an automated budgeting, planning, and forecasting application that integrates directly with SAGE 100, 300, and 500. Designed for small to mid-market companies, it automates many of the time-consuming and error-prone activities associated with using spreadsheets to generate budgets and forecasts. Budget Maestro features built in financial and business logic to collect and consolidate P&L data with confidence and automatically create a synchronized Balance Sheet, and Cash Flow.

DataSelf
Business Intelligence

www.blytheco.com/dataself

Works with: All Sage ERP, Sage CRM, Acumatica

DataSelf provides best-of-breed and easy-to-use analytics and business intelligence solutions for medium-sized businesses (SMB). Its solutions simplify and amplify Tableau and Microsoft BI technologies by providing thousands of reports, dishoards and KPIs plus ultra light data warehouses for ERP and CRM systems.

FAS - Fixed Assets
Fixed Assets

www.blytheco.com/sage-fixed-assets

Works with: Sage 100

Sage Fixed Assets software has undergone extraordinary changes over the past few years, resulting in a product that is easier to understand and use than ever before. Easy to install, customize, and use, Sage Fixed Assets (formerly FAS) is a comprehensive, seamlessly integrated fixed asset accounting program perfectly suited for businesses of any size.

Sage Business Intelligence
Business Intelligence

www.blytheco.com/business-intelligence

Works with: Sage 100, Sage 500, Sage X3

With powerful reporting features, many opportunities to customize the system, and integration with third party products, Sage Business Intelligence helps you gain valuable insight into your business data and operations, allowing you to make more effective decisions. You will have the tools you need to analyze your operations to better understand and manage key aspects.

Sage Enterprise Intelligence
Business Intelligence

www.blytheco.com/business-intelligence

Works with: Sage 500, Sage X3

Sage Enterprise Intelligence is an intuitive Business Intelligence solution integrated with Sage ERP solutions to help business users reduce time spent on analysis and reporting, and make faster, better-informed decisions.

TaskCentre
Business Process Management

www.blytheco.com/taskcentre

Works with: All Sage ERP, Infor CRM /SalesLogix

Imagine an all-in-one solution that offers alerting workflow, and that enables you to easily integrate your ERP with e-commerce, marketing automation, website, and CRM. Don't imagine. Learn about Orbis Software's TaskCentre.

Workplace
Spend Management & Workplace Automation

www.blytheco.com/workplace

Works with: All Sage ERP

Paramount Technologies' Workplace automates requisition, procurement, inventory management, project accounting, and time and expense transactions to make internal workflow processes more efficient, improve employee productivity, reduce time and errors and save money.

CRM

CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIP & SALES MANAGEMENT

Salesforce

CRM / Customer Relationship Management
www.blytheco.com/salesforce

Salesforce is an industry leading, cloud based client relationship management and sales tool, customizable for business of any type and size. Salesforce helps you to sell smarter and faster than your competitors by helping you make stronger connections with your clients and prospects.

Infor CRM (Saleslogix)

CRM / Customer Relationship Management
www.blytheco.com/infor-crm

Infor CRM, (formerly known as Saleslogix) is the CRM platform of choice for companies strategically focused on customer engagements. Infor CRM delivers a complete view of customer interactions across your sales, marketing, customer service, and support teams so they can collaborate effectively and respond promptly and knowledgably to sales opportunities and customer inquiries – both in the office and in the field.

Sage CRM

CRM / Customer Relationship Management
www.blytheco.com/sagecrm

Sage CRM is optimized specifically for small and medium-sized businesses. It is customizable, mobile and easy to use. Sage CRM enables improved business processes, closer management of customer relationships, increased revenues and decreased inefficiencies. Ultimately, it provides management with timely and reliable insight to guide important business decisions.

CRM
ADD-ON PRODUCTS

Conga Composer
Document Generator

www.blytheco.com/composer

Works with: Salesforce

Conga Composer © makes it easy to create and deliver sophisticated and fully customizable documents, presentations, proposals, account plans, invoices, quotes, contracts, reports and more featuring your Salesforce data. The app also allows for flexible delivery options including: automatic delivery via email; download locally; store in Salesforce, Google Drive, or SpringCM; or send for eSignature with DocuSign, EchoSign or Sertifi.

Clicktools
Customer Feedback Tool

www.blytheco.com/clicktools

Works with: Salesforce

Clicktools from CallidusCloud helps you to truly understand your customers by requesting and responding to input at key points along the entire customer journey. You can transform your customer's experience and ultimately consistently improve processes and profits.

Commercient
Data Integration

www.blytheco.com/commercient

Works with: Salesforce

Commercient SYNC is not your average data integration application. It eliminates the need for third-party toolkits for a quick and easy integration experience. Commercient SYNC is set up to synchronize your ERP and CRM data in real-time, whenever you want. You'll have real time access to your customer data.

CRM Budget Planner
Budgeting Tool

www.blytheco.com/crmbudgetplanner

Works with: Sage CRM

The CRM Budget Planner from Enbu Consulting takes all the main concepts of Budget Planning and Allocation and delivers a pragmatic and highly effective management tool which is installed on top of the Sage CRM platform. It is completely integrated into Sage CRM so that it leverages all the benefits of CRM including design of user interface, searching, reporting and document management.

CRM Contract Manager
Contract Lifecycles Tool

www.blytheco.com/crmcontractmanager

Works with: Sage CRM

Enbu Consulting's CRM Contract Manager will enable you to optimize the lifetime value of your business relationships by centralizing, standardizing and systemizing the entire contract lifecycle. No part of the process, from contract creation through expiration or renewal, will ever slip through your fingers again. Program allows you to create any number of customized documents based on your contract information.

CRM Mobile Service Signature
Remote Access, Updates & Sign-offs

www.blytheco.com/crmmobilesignature

Works with: Sage CRM

Ebu Consulting's CRM Mobile Service Signature seamlessly integrates with Sage CRM and is compatible with Android tablets and phones, plus iPhone/iPad. It enables Consultants to get approval and actual Client sign off of a Job, (with signature) while still on the Client site. The Client can see the details of the Job listing on the Consultants mobile device and sign off the job sheet, on the touchscreen, there and then.

CRM Project Manager
Project Management Software

www.blytheco.com/crmprojectmanager

Works with: Sage CRM

CRM Project Manager by Enbu Consulting takes all the main concepts of Project and Time Management and delivers a pragmatic and highly effective management tool which is installed on top of the Sage CRM platform. It is completely integrated into Sage CRM so that it leverages all the benefits of CRM including design of user interface, searching, reporting and document management.

CRM Resource Planner
Resource Planning Tool

www.blytheco.com/crmresourceplanner

Works with: Sage CRM

CRM Project Manager by Enbu Consulting takes all the main concepts of Project and Time Management and delivers a pragmatic and highly effective management tool which is installed on top of the Sage CRM platform. It is completely integrated into Sage CRM so that it leverages all the benefits of CRM including design of user interface, searching, reporting and document management.

Databridge
Data Integration

www.blytheco.com/data-bridge

Works with: Sage 100, Sage CRM

Bridge the gap between your Sage 100 ERP and Sage CRM data. Get real time, usable ERP information inside of your CRM. You'll enjoy pre-built dashboards, user friendly reporting, linked modules and comprehensive cyber security through Sage.

DataLoader.io
Data loading tool

www.blytheco.com/dataloader

Works with: Salesforce

MuleSoft's DataLoader.io is the most popular data uploading tool for Salesforce. Use it to quickly and securely import, export and delete unlimited amounts of data for your enterprise. It features intelligent data mapping, login with existing Salesforce.com credentials, reduces redundancies and direct import capabilities from Box, DropBox, FTP and SFTP.

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Dynalink
Platform Integration Tool
www.blytheco.com/dynalink
Works with: Sage 100, Infor CRM/SalesLogix

BITtelligent's Dynalink is an integration platform providing bi-direction synchronization capabilities from Infor CRM/SalesLogix to Sage ERP 100 products. You'll be able to benefit from having your information tightly woven between your platforms and generate data critical work-flows and much more. Enhancements are added to either the LAN client or your CRM Web Client to view various ERP datasets.

InaPlex
CRM Integration and Migration
www.Blytheco.com/inaplex
Works with: Infor Salesforce

InaPlex understands that CRM integration is not simply about moving data, it's also about transforming it - screening, cleaning and modifying - and ensuring data integrity at every step. It also takes the hassle and risk out of CRM migration with quick, clean and reliable transfer of client details and history.

intelli-CTi™
Computer Telephony Integration
www.blytheco.com/intelli-cti
Works with: Infor CRM, Sage CRM, Microsoft Dynamics

QGate's intelli-CTi™ allows your CRM software applications to be integrated with your phone system. This will allow you to increase your call efficiency, personalize your customer service and deepen your client relationships.

Jitterbit
Cloud Data Loader
www.blytheco.com/jitterbit
Works with: Salesforce

Jitterbit helps Salesforce users simplify their data management by allowing them to automate the import and export of data between flat files, databases, and Salesforce. Jitterbit reduces the amount of time and effort required to automate imports and exports. Designed for Salesforce administrators, this app helps relieve some of the burden on IT resources.

Riva
CRM Data Integration with Email
www.blytheco.com/riva
Works with: Salesforce

Riva syncs CRM systems directly to all Exchange, Office 365, Hosted Exchange, Gmail, Google Apps, IBM Notes and Domino, and Novell GroupWise email applications and mobile devices. Riva has the capacity to sync all types of data, from contacts, leads and persona accounts, to appointments, meetings, tasks and reminders. Centrally manage integration for hundreds or thousands of CRM users and mobile sales reps.

Rollup Helper
Data Aggregator
www.blytheco.com/rolluphelper
Works with: Salesforce

Passage Technology's Rollup Helper aggregates any Salesforce data. It allows easy access to real-time data, no matter the format. Rollup Helper will help you create data roll-ups that will provide insights you could never have before, all while saving your organization precious time.

Sage Pay for CRM
Payment Management Integration
www.blytheco.com/sagepay
Works with: Salesforce

Sage Pay is Europe's most trusted payment system and now, Enbu Consulting has created a powerful extension, allowing you to accept and process credit and debit card payments directly from your Sage CRM dashboard. You'll enjoy cost efficiencies, faster transaction processing time and enhanced data security, just to name a few benefits.

Starfish
Data Migration
www.blytheco.com/jitterbit
Works with: Salesforce

Starfish ETL is a powerhouse CRM data migration tool, but it's also so much more. Starfish ETL can move many other types of data without losing, jumbling, or duplicating it. Some of these data types include: ERP, Email, Marketing Automation, Social media, QuickBooks and SQL.

CRM
SALES MANAGEMENT

Got questions about the products featured in this guide?
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InsideView
Sales Productivity
www.blytheco.com/insideview
Works with: SalesLogix, SugarCRM

InsideView maximizes sales team productivity by delivering a one-stop shop for your prospecting needs and accelerates the sales cycle by enabling sales people to call the right prospects at the right time. It's no longer just who you know that will make business deals happen but "what you know about who you know" tightly synched with "when and where you should know it."

xkzero
Mobile Sales + Business Intelligence
www.blytheco.com/xkzero
Works with: Sage 100, Sage 500, Sage X3

Xkzero creates technologies to further the success of companies with supply chain management and distribution needs. Featured applications are Mobile Sales App for Sage 100 and Sage X3, eCommerce solutions for Sage 100, Transportation Logistics for Sage 100, Sage 500, Sage X3 and Universal Search for Sage 100.

E-COMMERCE

Fusion RMS

Retail Management System

www.blytheco.com/fusion

Works with: Sage 100, Sage 500, Sage X3

Fusion Retail Management System is a suite of applications extending the reach of your ERP to meet the operational needs of SMB Retail Market. Fusion RMS is the only infinitely scalable, fully integrated retail platform i.e. Point of Sale, Inventory / Warehouse Management, eCommerce and Accounting, which can be deployed in the cloud or locally using either a SAAS or perpetual license model.

IN-SYNCH

Website Database Integration

www.blytheco.com/insynch

Works with: Sage 100

IN-SYNCH allows you to pull sales orders from a website; the product is customizable and can be expanded to accomplish many more Sage 100 ERP integration and synchronization needs.

WebsitePipeline

eCommerce Data Integration

www.blytheco.com/websitepipeline

WebsitePipeline enables bi-directional communication between your eCommerce website and your ERP system. It allows you to keep pace with customer demands by streamline the process from online order to fulfillment. WebsitePipeline also offers eCommerce website solutions, making it a one-stop-shop for your online sales needs.

Web-Stor™

E-Commerce Integration

www.blytheco.com/web-stor

Works with: Sage 100

Web-Stor™ solutions give you everything you need to create Sage 100 optimized webpges which you can integrate with your own existing website. Use any host. Use any shopping cart or our own e-commerce environment. Your customers will experience a beautiful, mobile-optimized check-outs while you'll enjoy seamless integration with your Sage 100.

MARKETING
AUTOMATION

Act-On

Marketing Automation

www.blytheco.com/act-on

Act-On's fresh approach to marketing automation and email marketing gives you full functionality without the complexity other systems impose on you. Our streamlined user interface puts first-rate marketing tools at your fingertips, making campaigns and programs easier and faster. Integrate your CRM, webinar management and other tools too, most with one click.

Hubspot

Inbound Marketing

www.blytheco.com/hubspot

HubSpot is an inbound marketing system that helps you get found online by qualified prospects, capture more leads, and convert them into customers. It is accessible with any web browser and easily integrates with your current CRM strategy. With over 4,500 customers and growing, HubSpot is transforming online marketing for companies of all sizes.

Marketo

Marketing Automation

www.blytheco.com/marketo

Marketo is known as a leader in digital marketing software and solutions for organizations of any size. With integrations with your CRM, E-Commerce, ERP and other data sources, Marketo helps you engage with clients and prospects when and how it matters most to them so that you can build lifelong customer relationships.

Salesfusion

Marketing Automation

www.blytheco.com/salesfusion

Works with: Sage CRM, Infor CRM (SalesLogix), SugarCRM

Salesfusion is an enterprise B2B marketing automation software platform designed to support the business, technology and process needs of B2B marketers. Salesfusion specializes in integrating key marketing and lead generation processes to your installed CRM system.

WELCOME TO THE **FUTURE** OF
INVENTORY CONTROL

by Tess Boros

According to a recent report by McKinsey & Company, automation will have taken over just below 5% of global jobs by the year 2024. Since machines aren't great at creative problem solving like humans, the careers these will replace will be ones with extremely low skill functions: routine inventory control such as lifting, counting, and moving; and repetitive manufacturing tasks.

In fact, the rise of the machines has already begun in modern mega warehouses and massive manufacturing plants, but end-to-end warehouse and manufacturing automation that replaces nearly all humans with machines is costly and only the largest of enterprises can afford such an investment. The significantly smaller budgets of SMBs suggest that in 2024, a competitive level of automation will include man and machine working side by side to increase productivity.

Let's look at the "futuristic" technologies savvy manufacturers and distributors like you can focus on over the next decade, as you plan for increased inventory control in your operations.

Voice-Directed Picking

One of the biggest challenges that leaders of modern distribution companies face lies in the task of finding— and training—low cost holiday labor. The increase of eCommerce has amplified the need for 'round-the-clock' seasonal operations and has led to labor shortages during the holidays. This means that busy warehouses must now compete for short-term, low-skill workers.

The labor shortage is only expected to get worse, and in the meantime, overburdened warehouses find themselves in the unenviable position of having to spend far too much time training workers with a short shelf life. The distribution industry's conundrum is that untrained employees are likely to waste time wandering the warehouse or picking inaccurately. However, training workers to navigate and understand complex warehouse setups further narrows the holiday season's razor-thin margins.

That's why modern warehouses are increasingly turning to voice-directed picking, a hands-free solution that leverages the power of artificial intelligence to audibly guide workers through the warehouse without wander time; walk them through the steps of the pick, pack, and ship process; and prompt employees to make visual confirmations of inventory selections so they can also increase order accuracy.

These flexible systems cut down on training time for picking, receiving, transfers, and more. Yet, they increase standardized procedures and pick accuracy throughout the warehouse – and in some cases, they're more effective than machines because the visual confirmation step asks human workers to think critically about their selections to better determine if they're the right product. Fully automated warehouses that use machines from end-to-end must rely solely on barcode accuracy, and may therefore suffer huge runs of inaccurate picking due to a single faulty barcode label.

Mobile Integration for Inventory Control

Since the early 90's, cutting-edge companies like Scanco have been providing barcoding software and tools that make it easier for businesses to track goods and processes within their locations and beyond. Because barcoding is so popular, most modern manufacturing and distribution operations have used ruggedized barcode scanners in their companies for some time. You probably already use some form of barcoding in your locations.

Admittedly, barcodes aren't new technology, so though they'll play a critical role in the future's warehouses and manufacturing plants. As such, they can't be described as "the future of software." What can be described as the future is the way smart leaders use mobile scanning tools to streamline inventory control tasks.

Not only does the barcode scanning technology of the future speed cycle counting and year-end physical counting by 75% with paper-free, automated data entry that helps ensure high levels of accuracy, it also leverages those highly accurate numbers to provide you with real-time insight into warehouse and manufacturing processes from anywhere and at any time.

These cloud-based scanners and information portals work on affordable iOS and Android devices, which means their operations are intuitive and require little to no training. Additionally, the real-time insight they provide can enhance your ability to:

- Manage any process from any location effectively
- React quickly to unexpected changes and stay agile
- Assist with JIT (just in time) purchasing decisions

Artificial Intelligence

Of course, one of the largest changes we'll see in the future is the increased adoption of artificial intelligence (AI) in the workplace. While your business may currently use chatbots and relatively simple analytics programs to easily check in on the status of goods and production, the AI of the future will undoubtedly do more.

From helping you make confident decisions in all your business locations worldwide, to assisting with complex inventory control functions, the artificial intelligence of the future is poised to help your company gain instant, accurate answers to not just the 'what' of business operations, but also the 'why'.

Over the next decade, AI will help cutting-edge leaders find root causes of common business problems through:

- Space utilization analysis
- Inventory needs vs. capacities analysis
- Cost reductions on all fronts

The current generation of artificial intelligence tools is powered by what's known as "machine learning" capabilities, meaning instead of relying on humans to enter data to train the machines, the machines themselves build frameworks that help them understand the data that they automatically collect. Because we all know how error-prone manual data entry is, machine learning AI technologies typically provide more reliable data analysis with high levels of detail.

One thing to mention: although most of us see the words "artificial intelligence" and think "robots," futuristic AI that helps you analyze your business operations to create greater, smarter efficiencies is unlikely to be housed in robot form. Not only are robots just a little creepy, they're also cumbersome and they're hard to transport. Instead, tomorrow's AI (and today's!) will be housed on your mobile device as an easily reachable, anytime app that drives your business forward.

Get the Technology of Tomorrow – Today

Fortunately, it's easy to access the futuristic technologies your business needs to compete in the changing business landscape of 2018 and beyond. Today's leading independent software vendors (ISVs) are hard at work designing can't-live-without tools that integrate with the software you already know and use, such as Sage 100, Sage 500 ERP, Acumatica, and NetSuite. Ask around and you'll find that the technology you thought was far away on the horizon may be available now – and easier to afford than ever.

About the Author

Tess Boros is a Partner at ONE Software. Tess has been in the supply chain management space for over fifteen years and is the owner of the leading barcoding solution for Sage 100 and Sage 500.

Salesforce
MAKE STRONGER CONNECTIONS
& drive success across your entire company

To drive success across your entire company, it is crucial to build on the right foundation. Choose Salesforce to be your foundation and let Blytheco's team of professionals build upon it.

The Smart(er) Office

INTELLIGENT SOFTWARE IS THE NEW FRONTIER OF THE MODERN WORKPLACE

by Rob Maya

R ecent advances in technology like the smart watch and smart home devices have made life easier for many consumers, and yet, in the business world many work spaces are hesitant to even upgrade their operating systems to the latest service pack. Over time, this reluctance can lead to serious productivity losses. Read on to find a few ways that new tools and technology can give your office a much needed boost.

Alexa, Where's My Expense Report?

Smart speaker devices have already reshaped the home landscape, and now they're expanding business capabilities as well. New skills built into these devices can be used for a host of business applications, from running meetings, to checking reports, to planning out and pricing your next business trip. More skills are being added all the time, and because how easy it is to develop on their platforms, custom skills can be added to voice commands onto almost any software to make it more easily accessible and improve user adoption. Almost anything you use or sell can be adapted to use voice commands for ease of operation. The sky's the limit.

Automate Everything

When people these days think of "Intelligent Automation" tools, they typically think of automating their AP or AR processes to speed up payments. That is a good place to start, but why stop there? Intelligent Automation software can be implemented to handle a myriad of day to day tasks. One example is generating reports. No matter where you are in your organization, chances are there are several reports you need to run in order to do your job effectively. Running and reviewing these reports takes time - time that could easily be saved by having an Intelligent Automation tool run these reports for you. Top of the line tools can even be configured to scan for outliers and bring them to your attention via text or email alerts in real time so you can take corrective actions right away. The software notifications can make the difference between having a reactionary response, to implementing preventative measures ahead of any issues.

Smart devices and intelligent automation tools are two technologies that are still very much in their infancy, and yet their capabilities and potential for time savings are already quite impressive. In the years to come, these types of tools are sure to become as ubiquitous as the internet and people will wonder how they ever did business without them. No matter how big or how small your business, implementing smart devices and intelligent automation software are a surefire way to enhance your productivity.

Must-Have
SOFTWARE & TECHNOLOGY
FOR SMALL BUSINESSES

by Ruth Richter
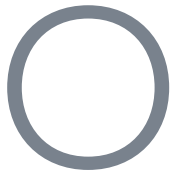
Over the past decade, we have seen more changes in the use of technology than in any previous time period. New features, new functions, and new must-have solutions are being released daily. How can a small business distinguish the must-have features that will achieve an ROI?

The deciding point is, of course, how a technology solution impacts a small business. Typically, managers look at the impact the solution has on revenues and costs. Can the software help attract more customers, increase order sizes, or enhance something in production or delivery that ultimately has a positive impact on the bottom line? Or can it save something - time, money or effort?

At one time, automation through technology was the domain of large corporations. Innovation was expensive and trickled its way down as costs decreased. Today, innovation often occurs on a small scale with new cloud-based apps and smart phone technology. Large businesses are often slower to move in this environment because of their major investments in legacy systems and training. On the other hand, smaller, agile businesses can quickly adapt to the changing marketplace.

The question is: how can small businesses move quickly to take advantage of new technologies to gain a competitive advantage without wasting money on fads?

Why Small Businesses Can, Should, and Must Pay Attention to Automation

Small businesses, even micro-businesses like someone making jewelry in her basement every night, need automation just as much as multi-national companies. They need it more, in fact.

The statistic on small business failure provided by the Small Business Administration is dismal. In two years, one-third of businesses fail. After five years, only about half survive. Brisk competition, lack of long-term capital availability, changing markets, and poor marketing all contribute to the struggles of small businesses.

Yet these struggles can be significantly lessened with the right application software. By embracing technology and finding affordable cloud-based solutions these small business owners have gained additional sales that lead to higher gross revenues.

Flags Unlimited, Inc., a small business that has been manufacturing flags and banners in Tampa, FL since 1985, has been maximizing technology in order to keep their human resources focused on their core business – making flag and banners. "Not only do we offer the latest technology in our art department and production facilities, we have successfully employed technology to drive success," says Kevin Lynch, Director of Technology.

> " Our business has expanded sales through multiple on-line marketing channels including Amazon and Walmart, as well as launching our Shopify store, Sportsflags.com, without adding additional staff by implementing a variety of software and integration tools."

6 Technologies That are Worth the Investment

Small businesses do not have the luxury of wasting millions of dollars on failed initiatives or fads. For a small company, a failed project can lead to a failed business. There are so many new technologies and apps on the marketplace today it can be hard to know which ones are worth the investment.

Here is a list of must-have technology for small businesses. These technologies and software offer true competitive advantages, cost savings and revenue enhancements.

Mobility: Whether your small company is oriented toward consumers or businesses, taking advantage of mobile technologies is critical to success. According to the Small Business & Entrepreneurship Council, mobile devices are saving small businesses $67.5 billion a year. The devices are inexpensive, many mobile apps are free, and optimizing mobile devices to capture payment and other uses is very usable and affordable.

Cloud software: The availability of business software in the cloud has lowered the entry cost required for small businesses to achieve greater functionality, security and accessibility. Using hosted software and cloud-based applications allows savvy small businesses to gain big company efficiencies and a competitive edge.

E-commerce: Consumers and businesses have begun to expect the ability to perform business on the internet. More and more, customers are using search engines to find out the companies offering the goods and services they need. However, a small business survey by Sure Payroll, published by Small Business Trends, indicates 74% of all small business have no e-commerce. This statistic points to a lack of knowledge that practically anyone can launch an e-commerce presence today. A small business can significantly increase revenues by adding e-commerce and opening their marketing and sales channels.

Integration: The need for accurate data that flows through the business is crucial. This requires the removal of human intervention with integration. Companies like Flags Unlimited leverage integrated shopping carts, marketplaces and e-commerce systems to improve communications, order information, and more. The fact that all of their systems are integrated to their Sage 100 accounting solution allows quick and accurate response to customer orders and shipment status. Communications are timely and clear allowing a great shopping experience and repeat business.

Business intelligence (BI): BI is essential to making the right strategic decisions, but because small businesses are strapped for resources and concerned about wasting time and money on useless BI tools, accessing and utilizing business data effectively is one of the last areas of focus. Bruce Harpham published an article on Cio.com entitled "9 ways you're failing at business intelligence," helps small businesses avoid being "led down the garden path" by BI consultants and vendors. The fact is, most accounting solutions offer many BI reporting options that owners overlook or click right by, not realizing that with a little training, the answers to improving customer service, increasing revenues and lowering costs are within reach.

Security: Implementing mobile applications, hosted and cloud solutions and e-commerce come with increased exposure to internet fraud and scams. Any investment in software or the above technologies should be made with built-in or added security.

No matter what industry, small businesses can enhance revenues, improve service, and save costs by investing in these readily available technologies.

ROI Consulting is the market's leading ecommerce solution and Sage 100 integration specialist, maximizing Sage 100 customer's technology investment through integration and customization since 1997. Learn about ROI's integration solutions for Sage 100 at www.roi-consulting.com or by calling Ruth Richter at 402-934-2223x1.

About the Author

Ruth Richter is the Customer Experience Director for ROI Consulting, Inc, a Sage 100 integration company.

THE **FUTURE** OF
Cloud Accounting Software

by John Orlando

We all like to see what's coming down the pike and get the answer to the question, "What will they think of next?". I'm curious about what accounting technology changes and products will be with us in the not-too-distant future.

Ted Needleman's article in Accounting Today, "Accounting software in the cloud today – and tomorrow,"goes into some depth about what that future might look like. He concluded that two things were very obvious for the future. First, accounting in the cloud is fast becoming a preferred way to go, especially in the small-to-midsized segment of the business market. Applications developed for and in the cloud are designed from the start to be user-friendly, and this is helping drive rapid growth and adoption. Second, it's more than likely that cloud accounting applications several years from now are going to be very different and far more advanced than those available today, in addition to being even easier to use.

Baby Steps

Building a better mousetrap isn't the only thing we should do when we develop or evaluate cloud accounting software. It's tempting to go that route and just take the work we do and pop it into the cloud. It's certainly a step in the right direction and it's the route some successful software companies took in the early days of cloud-based accounting (before many companies were onboard). But now, if you want to make your investment really count, your processes themselves need to change.

Ease of Adoption

The best argument for taking existing business budgeting and planning software products and putting them into the cloud was to allow both the software vendor and the end-customer to get their feet wet. That first step is often the toughest. Who could argue with being hesitant about entrusting database records to a nebulous entity that can't be seen or felt?

They might even point to the stereotypical accountant's conservative outlook as their justification for staying put, but at this point, the train's already left the station. If they are using email to conduct business, they're already entrusting their organizations to the cloud.

Evolution

I don't mean to downplay the work involved in moving records or vital software into the cloud – it IS a big deal. Accountants are entrusted with personal data, strategic planning foresight and lot of fiduciary responsibility within our companies, and we don't take that responsibility lightly. When we seek out cloud-based software and accounting services, we need to do our due diligence and make sure we're making good decisions on behalf of our companies.

The Future

Any cloud-based accounting software you consider should take advantage of the features of the medium itself. Cloud systems have their own individual strengths and weaknesses, but many excel in helping you consolidate your data into one "central source of truth."

Data warehousing – keeping the information you track, process and store in one place – gives you the opportunity to streamline your records and remove redundant fields/steps. If your payables system doesn't interface with your 1099 software, for example, you need to maintain the same vendor record in two places. Then, any necessary updates must be made in two places, so it's easy to see how information can get out of synch. Keeping that vendor record in one system eliminates that duplicate data entry and reduces the chance of data entry-related error.

Migrating or connecting to cloud-based accounting software solutions is the ideal opportunity to tick some items off your wish list too. More often than not, you'll find that getting some features you hadn't considered, will become part of your every-day environment. And you won't want to give them up for anything! Software that allows collaboration, provides a workflow and approval process, or bases itself on measures that just weren't feasible to use in Excel can make your tasks much easier while concurrently enabling improved data-driven decision making.

About the Author

John Orlando, the CFO of Centage Corporation, a technology company that develops automated, budgeting, and planning software solutions for mid-market organizations. Its flagship product, Budget Maestro® is an easy-to-use, scalable, cloud-based budgeting and forecasting solution that eliminates the time-consuming and error-prone activities associated with using spreadsheets. Learn more at www.centage.com.

IS **IOT** FOR ME?

by Jimmy Thomas

You've heard so much about the Internet of Things, the wave of the future! It promises your company increased value, increased revenue, better asset utilization, better supply chain logistics, improved employee productivity, and enhanced customer experience. It sounds too good to be true. Is it? And what exactly is the Internet of Things?

What Is IoT?

When we say the **Internet of Things** (IoT), we mean a system of interrelated objects that are uniquely identified and can transfer data over a network without assistance. IoT devices collect, send and act on data they acquire using embedded sensors, processors and communication hardware. IoT devices are becoming more prevalent in our lives. Examples include security systems, thermostats, cars, electronic appliances, household and commercial lighting, alarm clocks, speaker systems, vending machines and more.

When and How Did IoT Start?

The concept of IoT was demonstrated as early as 1982, with the creation at Carnegie Mellon University of the first Internet-connected appliance — a Coke machine able to report its inventory and indicate whether newer drinks had been in long enough to be cold.

The concept got its now-famous name in 1999, during a presentation to Proctor and Gamble by Kevin Ashton of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Ashton shared his vision in which the Internet was connected to the physical world via sensors that were everywhere and in everything. Ashton called this dream "the Internet of Things." The following year, electronics firm LG announced development of an IoT appliance that, sadly, may have become the butt of the first IoT joke: the Internet refrigerator.

How Fast Is IoT Growing?

Early IoT growth predictions were numerous and fanciful, reaching a peak in 2012 when IBM predicted 1 trillion IoT devices by 2015. For the record, research company Gartner estimated the 2017 number to be 8.4 billion devices, with 11.2 billion predicted by the end of 2018 and 20.4 billion by 2020.

What Can IoT Do for Me?

A growing number of IoT companies stand ready to help you figure that out, walking you from concept to implementation and beyond. The list includes many familiar technology leaders, with Verizon, Intel, Google, SAP, and Zebra Technologies ranked among the top 20.

One relative newcomer is the Tel Aviv-based IoT firm Seebo. Founded in 2012, Seebo provides an end-to-end platform to help companies launch smart products faster. Seebo has made such an impact on IoT that Gartner named Seebo one of its Cool Vendors of 2017. Here are just three examples of how Seebo helped companies implement IoT to solve problems and grow their business.

The Story	The Challenge	The Results
Search and rescue company **Calstar** (California Shock Trauma Air Rescue) was looking for a way to help its pilots and medical teams increase speed and improve communications when transporting patients.	Calstar wanted to bring air-to-ground dispatch in-house to improve communication between flight crews, first responders, medical teams and hospitals.	Calstar utilized an IoT platform to provide faster communication that resulted in shorter lift-off times, faster delivery of appropriate care, and enhanced operational control and safety safeguards.
Beer distributor **Del Papa Distributing** wanted to increase security around its distribution center, simplify collaboration between employees in different locations, and improve customer experience.	Del Papa needed to employ a host of new technologies, including video surveillance, communications, digital signs and physical access control.	Del Papa implemented a smart system, gaining better control and monitoring of the facilities, along with increasing shipping capacity and improving sales rep efficiency.
Boat manufacturer **Silverhook Powerboats** wanted to collect data to improve decision-making, increase safety and enhance the fan experience.	Silverhook faced technological challenges in both capturing and maintaining the large amounts of data which their goals required.	Silverhook quickly built an application connected to their racing boats. The app analyzes and delivers real-time insight to both racers and fans, improving both racer safety and the fans' racing experience.

Can IoT Solve Any Problem?

Don't think of IoT as a magic bullet, but rather as another weapon in your arsenal. IoT cannot compensate for a poorly run business. Consider the manufacturing industries who have embraced IoT (called the industrial Internet of things, or IIoT). Seebo reports that only 26 percent of IIoT initiatives succeed. Its research reveals not a failure of IoT, but a failure to carry out a sound business process. Note these top causes, grouped by their relative step in the manufacturing process.

- Definition Failure
  - Failure to capture business opportunities
  - Unclear and incomplete use cases
  - Systems are too complex to communicate

- Validation Failure
  - Not ensuring market fit and early buy-in
  - Costly mistakes
  - Prototyping of products that are not technically or financially feasible

- Delivery Failure
  - Skills or capacity gap to build IoT
  - Not aligning and syncing teams
  - Not authoring detailed and complete spec docs and not keeping them up to date

- In-Market Failure: Learn and Improve
  - Missing critical data
  - Inability to extract actionable insights
  - Inability to identify the root cause of product malfunctions

What Is Ahead?

IoT is expected to continue its steady growth, supported by these three areas.

- **Technology:** Expected improvements in artificial intelligence, machine learning, CPU power, and utilization of blockchain design (improving transaction security).

- **Community:** Companies will expand their ecosystem of industry partners, both horizontally and vertically. These larger communities will facilitate development of large-scale IoT projects, allowing companies to shift away from single-vendor IoT solutions.

- **Standards and Regulation:** Industries will continue their move toward open standards, open architectures, interoperability and regulation. Guidelines and regulations will strengthen, with government agencies working closely with the industries to create effective laws.

So, Is IoT for Me?

Whether your company is big or small, IoT has the potential to help your business and its potential grows daily. However, only you can decide if IoT is for you. Do your homework. Take stock of your business, your goals and your challenges. Then consider what IoT can do for you.

Now, about that refrigerator…

About the Author

Jimmy Thomas has been a member of the Blytheco development team since 2003. He is a software engineer with over 30 years of experience. Jimmy is also a lifelong learner with many interests. Connect with Jimmy at www.linkedin.com/in/jimmythomas26.

THINKING
OUTSIDE THE BOX
Why How We Purchase Software Has Changed

by Greg Went

Remember back in the day when software used to come in a box? I thought it had all gone by the wayside, but while shopping in a few stores over the weekend, I stumbled across some software in a box. It made me stop and consider the last time I bought any type of software off the shelf, in a store, or even online. There used to be something exciting about pulling a box off the shelf, and reading all about the new and exciting features and how it was going to change my life. Admittedly I miss that feeling, but then I thought to myself, 'do you remember how frustrated you used to get because you could not actually try it out first?' Or, 'how did you feel when you installed the software and found out they just released a new version two weeks later?' Now I remember why purchasing by the box has taken a back seat to the new normal of software buying.

The purchasing of software has changed, and it will continue to change as we approach each new decade. While I admittedly fought these changes initially, I have come to see the tangible reasons for the software developers' shift in the way they sell and deliver their products. For example, I am a huge Adobe fan and use most of their products. When they decided to go with a subscription-only model a few years back I was less than enthused. What? I would not be able to 'own' my beloved Photoshop or InDesign any longer? I had to pay rent? I don't get to put a box on my bookshelf? This will never work!! Well, I went along with it (like I had a choice) and I have to say, I now love it. I didn't see why there needed to be a change at the time, but I do now. I don't think I am going out on a limb when I say that, one day soon, all software will begin to follow the subscription model. Why? Because it is a win-win for both developer and user in the end.

Let's take a quick look at both models to help illustrate:

ONE-TIME PURCHASE MODEL

The theory here is, pay a large one-time up-front cost (also called 'front-end') and receive updates and patches when needed. The idea is that you are paying for the updates and patches on the 'front-end' until a major 'New Version' comes out chock-full of new code that will need to be repurchased. Some developers charge a Maintenance & Service fee between upgrades to help offset development costs between versions. This is not a win-win, but more of a 'win/lose – win/lose.'

Developer: Wins by selling new product and getting a large chunk of money on the front-end, but then loses over time because they must chase the curve of developing towards a new 'bells and whistles' release to attract new customers, instead of fine-tuning and tweaking the last release for current customers. Loses by experiencing potential income loss during development portions of the curve.

Customer: Initially wins by getting an excellent product, but loses over time because the product is not getting the 'fine-tuning' it deserves and needs, and winds up paying for the next major release of a non-fine-tuned product. Often the software becomes disjointed and bloated over time due to the 'bells and whistles.' Potential loss by having to pay for product updates or Maintenance & Service fees.

SUBSCRIPTION MODEL

The basic idea here is to evenly spread out the costs of development with the income stream over time. There are no new major version releases in this scenario, only real-time updates and patches. This fits the cloud perfectly as updates and patches happen on the cloud server side, not the customer side.

Developer: Although the developer does not receive a large sale up front to help with initial development costs, they do win by receiving a balanced residual income on a monthly or annual basis. There is no longer any need to charge for updates or upgrades, potentially upsetting the customer base. Reduction in sales spikes from new release to new release.

Customer: Wins by always having the latest and greatest version at their disposal at no extra cost. Instead of a large outlay of cash, they have the choice of month-to-month or annual payments. With month-to-month they can quit any time they wish if they are not pleased with the product. However, they can typically save money by paying annually. Customer also wins by never having to pay extra for updates, upgrades or maintenance fees.

WITH LEADING EDGE PROGRAMMING TOOLS, SOFTWARE DEVELOPMENT HAS SPED UP CONSIDERABLY IN THE RECENT YEARS.

The days of waiting one to two years between major releases has all but vanished, and real-time is at the door, knocking. It no longer makes sense for developers to sit on new code for a major release because it would be ancient by today's standards. And this is what I love about Adobe's subscription model: you always have the latest and greatest version, and at no extra 'surprise!' cost. They let me know when there is an update out, I tell it to update (or I could set it to update automatically, although I have not let go of that control yet!) and I seamlessly have the best version. This is not the only reason for my affection with the new model. It has also allowed Adobe to include all their products in one bundle, and with one monthly, affordable fee. I now get to experiment and enjoy all the high-end applications that I would have never been able to before, due to the front-end cost of each individual product.

Whether moving to the cloud or not, mainstream software developers going to a subscription, pay-as-you-go model is inevitable. Aside from the cloud players already there, all other big names have either made the switch or are considering it: Adobe, Microsoft, and Sage Software just to name a few. Also in the mix will be most of your mobile apps. Apple recently paved the way on its App Store, allowing developers to move to a monthly or annual subscription model instead of a one-time charge. To subscription' or not to subscription' is a plight that many developers are having to battle out in their boardrooms. It is a struggle for them due to some backlash regarding the model. This is especially true amongst longtime loyal customers who feel like they 'own' the product.

For a little nostalgia, grab all your old software boxes, dust them off and put them back up on your bookshelf. It will be a reminder of a bygone era, and hopefully not one that we look back on fondly and say, 'I wish it were that way still.'

About the Author

Greg Went is Blytheco's HCM Marketing Specialist and Project Manager. He has been on the Blytheco marketing team for over 16 years and written numerous blog and magazine articles in the ERP, CRM and HCM industries. You can connect with Greg at www.linkedin.com/in/gwent.

TRACKING BUSINESS INTELLIGENCE SOFTWARE'S EVER-CHANGING SWEET SPOT

by Joni Girardi

FINDING AND TRACKING THE BI SWEET SPOT

The future of Business Intelligence (BI) software for the medium-sized business is tricky. When you look into it, you enter a funhouse of mirrors. Where you hoped for clear direction, you see your own reflection cleverly rendered in marketing pitches instead. In the funhouse of new, shiny ideas, you need to step carefully.

That kind of experience is what comes to mind when I listen to many executives from mid-sized organizations describe their dilemma to me. They keep looking because they must stay current, but they also can't afford to fool with the bleeding edge. They need something that works out of the box and incorporates new technology as it matures. They must find the sweet spot and stay with it — even as that sweet spot shifts and moves on.

That's why the choice of business intelligence platform is crucial — and why I'm so careful with the new technology we use in DataSelf Analytics. I hope that you find guidance by hearing how we find our way through the "funhouse."

HERE'S HOW I APPROACH MY CURRENT CHOICES.

Tableau the incumbent vs. Power BI the upstart

Which is the best user interface and analysis tool for us? Five years ago, we committed to embedding Tableau. We've never regretted it. It was the best back then and it's still the best, even as a new contender has entered the frame: Power BI by Microsoft. It has a strong, growing feature set and the formidable Microsoft ecosystem behind it.

Power BI is impressive. As Microsoft likes to say, "It's five minutes to WOW!" You start working and seeing more of what this new tool can do and you can't help be impressed.

It lets you get to know it fast. Part of that ease and speed is its smooth, unique integration with other Microsoft tools. If you're already invested in Microsoft technology, this is terrific. The support community is also vast and active.

Power BI is developing fast. Every month they release several improvements. But it's still young,

Even so, Tableau beats it. Tableau's legendary flow of questions and answers feels more natural. Tableau takes fewer clicks to reach answers, which adds up over a day or week of work.

Will Power BI make up for Tableau's 10-plus year head start? No one knows. It's just wise to keep all options open.

Today's judgement: For this, we see how each product feels and we add up the respective features. Tableau is still the champ, but we offer Power BI as an option. Watch https://goo.gl/pZPRGN for a comparison of the two.

The cloud

The cloud is today's newest, hottest idea, but is it right for everyone? Who's ready to move everything to the cloud? Should you stay on premise? Or, do a hybrid of both? Right now, executives at medium-sized businesses I talk to say it's still a tough call for them.

Some medium-sized businesses have migrated to the cloud with relative ease. However, I still hear horror stories from others. A regional retail chain I know of attempted to make the leap, but realized half way there that they weren't ready.

I recommend the five-year strategy: Stick with mature technology and established vendors that have been around for at least five years as your foundation. Then experiment with the new stuff. See how the cloud works for you. If you have encouraging results, go further.

Today's judgement: Experiment with your options before you fully commit.

Data warehousing

This is one of those technologies that fell out of fashion even as its utility rose.

First, it's the best way to consolidate multiple data sources. An executive I talked to early last year told me how much smarter they would have been to have a data warehouse right from the start. Instead, they tried to run dashboards straight off their ERP, along with other sources. They spent a year, and close to six figures, trying to make it work. A data warehouse would have saved them from much of that expense and time. This capability also makes replatforming a breeze.

All-time judgement: Data warehousing is like a classic song. It's no longer in the news, but it continues to do wonders.

Do it yourself vs. off-the-shelf

Do-it-yourself BI for medium-sized business is one of those funhouse demons that never goes away.

I have a dream: Someday, medium-sized businesses give up on do-it-yourself BI. Though some organizations have what it takes to make it work, most don't. The worst projects result in wasted effort and tragically dysfunctional software. I just hate to see that happen.

Today's judgement and tomorrow's, too: When it comes to medium-size businesses, most off-the-shelf software is better than most homemade software.

Fully ad hoc reporting vs. templates users modify. Some new ideas are badly implemented. Take the start-from-scratch reporting that was the answer to IT-produced reports. Today the marketing gleefully suggests that anyone — anyone at all — can create a complete report from scratch within minutes. It's just not true. Some business users can't, but most simply won't bother.

What anyone can do, however, is pull a template down. In one minute or less, they decide to use it as-is or to tweak it. Then off they go.

Today's judgement: Make reporting easy for everyone. Stop the calls for help to IT! Stop the novice user's dependence on experienced users. Just offer an extensive out-of-the-box set of novice-user-modifiable templates.

General advice: Remember, new ideas in technology are like movie stars. All of them age, but some age poorly, and some age well. And watch your step in the funhouse.
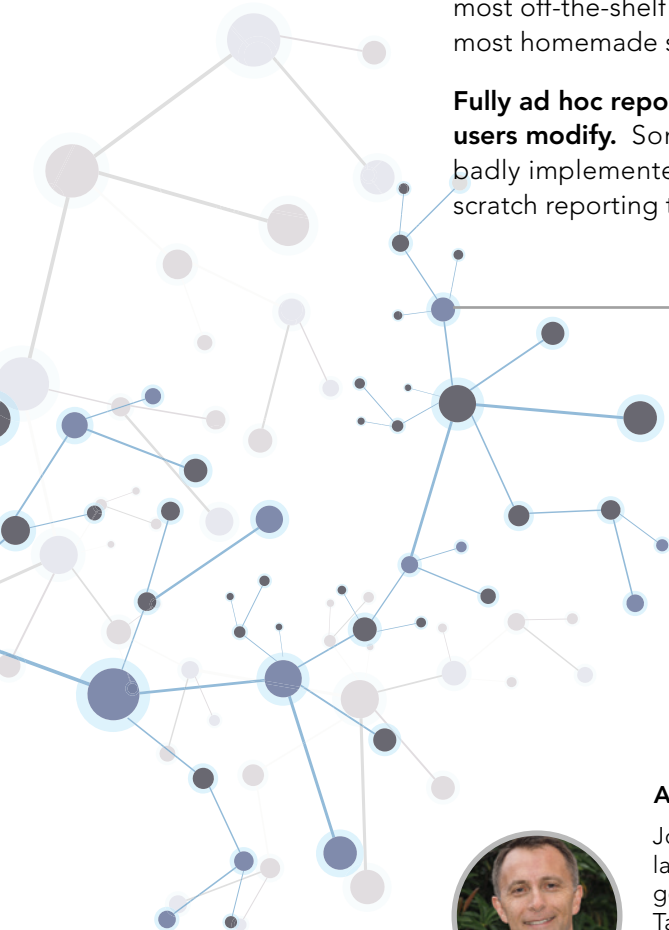
About the Author

Joni Girardi is founder and CEO of DataSelf, provider of DataSelf Analytics. He launched his venture 17 years ago to help small- and medium-sized businesses to get value from their data using data warehousing and analytics platforms such as Tableau and Power BI. When I find a prospect where my BI business offerings are a great fit, I get excited! Together, we make our BI projects successful and fun! For more than 17 years, my team has built a great deal of expertise helping SMBs with their source systems, MS SQL data warehousing, and Tableau.

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