



How to Grow With an ERP: A Guide for Mid-Sized Companies



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How to Grow With an ERP: A Guide for Mid-Sized Companies

89% of all companies have already adopted a digital-first business strategy or plan to do so soon.¹

Digital transformation investments are expected to top **\$6.8 trillion globally by 2023.**²

Although tech spend is forecasted to drop by **1.5% in 2021**, CIOs will accelerate their spend on cloud solutions.³

Business isn't only evolving—it's accelerating. And it's doing so at a faster rate than ever before. To keep up, leaders are working hard to find better ways to use data, collaborate, track their finances, follow through with reporting, and take care of their teams. Digital transformation enables it all.

Yet, to take advantage of digital transformation within your business, you must first establish a strong digital core. Enterprise resource planning (ERP) is a powerful software tool used to manage and integrate your critical functions, including your finances, supply chain, operations, reporting, manufacturing, and beyond.

Implementing an ERP system is the first step in becoming an intelligent enterprise that successfully combines tech with business processes. As a result, you can streamline those processes, create new revenue streams, improve the customer experience, and grow your business.

A recent study⁴ found that 92% of businesses that implement ERP consider the move a success. And 49% of businesses⁵ say their implementation improved all of their business processes.

It's time to harness the power of ERP to fuel your digital transformation and move your business forward.

Sources: ¹IDG | ²IDC | ³Forrester | ⁴Panorama | ⁵Panorama

Do You Need an ERP System?

The answer depends greatly on your business plan, long-term strategy, and future outlook. For those in the mid-market, an ERP system can be beneficial. After all, as you grow, so does the amount of data you'll need to gather, store, and process.

Lost spreadsheets, lack of transparency across departments, and limited task automation will hinder your growth. To make the best business decisions and stay competitive, an ERP solution should be part of your digital strategy, regardless of your business size, type, or industry.support.

Key Challenges that an ERP Can Solve

1 Difficulty Consolidating Information Across Multiple Systems

One of the top three reasons businesses implement an ERP is to consolidate disparate apps and systems.⁶ Many teams spend hours consolidating and cross-checking data from multiple department databases and software systems, leading to reduced productivity and a drained bottom line.

An ERP system is a single source of truth, providing real-time data and information you and your team can trust, resulting in increased efficiency and resources well-spent.

2 Difficulty Gathering Useful Data & Reports

Nearly every business process generates data. And most of that data is critical in steering your business. Yet, extracting meaningful insights from your data is impossible when there are missing reports, multiple databases, and numerous spreadsheets.

ERP systems provide useful business intelligence tools for gathering insights whenever and wherever you need them. It empowers you to make the best decisions for your business, from finances to marketing.

3 Lack of Automation for Manual Processes

According to McKinsey, half of the activities employees are paid to do could be automated, amounting to \$15 trillion in wages.⁷ Manual processes such as data entry and order processing are stealing time from more meaningful work.

ERP makes it possible for you to automate the manual processes that slow your various teams down, from operations to sales. This will not only increase productivity but will also reduce the number of wasted resources within your business.

4 Inaccurate Inventory Management

Inventory is often a double-edged sword. Too much inventory can result in oversupply, which can lead to lost profits. Too little inventory will prevent you from serving your customers and can tie up your supply chain.

ERP provides critical inventory tracking tools to ensure you know how much product you have in real-time. This enables you to make better business decisions and scale up or down depending on demand.

5 Plans for Growth

The above challenges can inhibit your ability to grow your business, despite your best efforts. If you have plans to continue to grow your enterprise, you'll require a simplified management tool.

Sources:⁶TEC | ⁷McKinsey



Mid-Market ERP Success Stories

It's a common myth that only large conglomerates need a system as robust as an ERP. This couldn't be further from the truth. Over the years, VistaVu has witnessed numerous successes in mid-market businesses from a wide range of industries.

- **Magnet-Schultz, Inc.**, a solenoid manufacturer, used SAP Business ByDesign to consolidate their siloed processes, improve product traceability, and enhance accuracy and efficiency in their stockroom and warehouse.⁸
- **SEF Energy**, an industrial field services company, used SAP Business ByDesign and FieldVu to consolidate and automate their field services, create revenue and billing efficiencies, and increase workplace safety.⁹
- **Reliance Communications**, a national distributor of wireless devices, used SAP Business One and Resolv to reduce order errors to less than 0.3% and improve their shipping processes. In the first month after implementation, Reliance shipped more than 1.5 million smartphones.¹⁰
- **Schoolhouse**, a lighting and lifestyle goods manufacturer, used SAP Business ByDesign and Boomi to improve their customer experience and reduce manual data entry for their customer support teams.¹¹

Further proof is in the numbers. For example, one mid-sized medical device producer used SAP Business ByDesign to enable traceability to reduce inventory and improve financial management and reporting. The results? A 288% ROI, payback within 5 months, and an average annual benefit of \$839,867.¹²

Sources: ⁸VistaVu Solutions | ⁹VistaVu Solutions | ¹⁰VistaVu Solutions
¹¹VistaVu Solutions | ¹²VistaVu Solutions



How to Select the Right ERP System for Your Business

There are many ERP options available on the market today. Yet, they're not all created equal. Selecting the wrong solution has its consequences, including losing your initial investment and thousands of dollars in revenue. The ERP selection process will take time. After all, there are many considerations to evaluate:



Business goals: This is perhaps the most important consideration in this list. Outline your ERP goals first to ensure the solution delivers the functionality you need. For example, what business issues are you trying to solve? Which manual processes do you need to automate? The solution you choose should fit into your long-term plans.



Cost: It's no secret that implementing an ERP solution will save you resources in the long run. For now, however, you must consider your budget constraints when compared to the costs of implementation and software licensing, as well as training and ongoing support.



Time to implement: Implementing an ERP solution takes time. Yet, each ERP system is different in the length of time it takes for project completion. Consider your timeline and expectations. For example, do you need implementation in four weeks? Six weeks? Determine your time constraints before selecting a solution.



Executive member and team support: Do your stakeholders and team members support your decision to choose a specific solution? You'll want to get team buy-in to ensure the ERP fits their needs without adding tedious work. We recommend selecting one primary contact who can be the project's champion throughout the process.



Reporting needs: The right ERP solution will prevent you from waiting on IT or using third-party tools to create reports. It will also prevent manual data wrangling processes that result in errors. Make sure the ERP solution you choose has built-in reporting capabilities, so you can easily run data analysis and share results.



Time to ROI: How long will it take for you to recoup your investment in the ERP solution? A great solution will have a quick payback and a high ROI.



Top SAP ERP Solutions for Mid-Market Companies

SAP supports companies worldwide with their ERP solutions. As an SAP Gold partner, we've seen firsthand the advantages of choosing SAP to support mid-market businesses. SAP offers flexibility, industry-leading technology, 24/7 support, and more through two distinct ERP products: Business One and Business ByDesign.



Business One was designed for smaller businesses and subsidiaries who need an affordable yet customizable ERP solution. With on-premise or cloud deployment, integrated business intelligence, and fast implementation, it's everything you need to take advantage of ERP.

SAP has a track record of assisting more than 250,000 small and medium-sized enterprises across 27 industries to meet their business goals.¹³

Features & Benefits

SMBs have access to the tools they need to manage their entire company through Business One. Some of the best features and benefits for SMBs include:

- **Financial management:** Business One comes standard with tools to help you with accounting, controlling, banking, and financial reporting. These tools enable you to see an overview of the health of your business at any time.
- **Sales and customer management:** You can visualize your entire sales process from lead to final sale with SAP's sales, marketing, customer, and service management tools. As a result, you can quickly pivot to meet the demands of your customers.
- **Business intelligence:** Visualize the success of your business, see the progress you're making toward reaching your goals and make quick decisions with business intelligence reports and analytics.
- **Mobility:** As an overloaded business owner, you need to be able to manage your business from anywhere. The Business One mobile apps enable you to do just that.

SAP Business One also features industry-specific solutions, depending on the needs of your unique business. Whether you're in manufacturing, retail, or consumer products, there's a solution for you.

Sources: ¹³SAP



SAP[®] Business ByDesign[™]

Business ByDesign is built for mid-market companies that are experiencing rapid growth. It is a true SaaS multi-tenant ERP solution that provides a scalable way to integrate every process within your business (supply chain, marketing, sales, service, manufacturing, logistics, HR, compliance, etc.).

Plus, it provides robust analytic capabilities, greater transparency, and better control over all operations, so you can immediately identify and respond to issues and opportunities.

SAP Business ByDesign is proven to increase back-office productivity by 75%.¹⁴

Features & Benefits

Business ByDesign is a complete end-to-end solution for effectively managing your SMB. While Business One focuses on the critical functions needed for business, ByDesign provides every core function you need to scale, including:

- **Finance management:** Business ByDesign gives you a full overview of your financial condition and helps you streamline your accounting processes. With these tools, you can effectively manage the finances for each unit of your business from one place.
- **CRM:** The customer relationship management (CRM) tools enable you to manage the marketing, sales, and services processes that are the foundation of your business. As a result, you can improve the customer experience, build your customer base, and scale your business.
- **HRM:** The most important asset you have in your business is your people. From enabling a smooth onboarding process to facilitating fast payroll processing, Business ByDesign gives you the tools necessary for expert human resource management (HRM).
- **Project management:** You can manage all of your projects, large and small, via the platform to ensure nothing falls through the cracks.

SAP Business ByDesign also offers tools for procurement and supply chain management, as well as industry-specific tools to fit your specific needs.

Sources: ¹⁴SAP

Navigating ERP Implementation

“What if the implementation fails?”

It's one of the most common concerns we hear from business leaders considering an ERP. And for good reason. The potential pitfalls of ERP projects are well shared among analyst business reports. Timelines can run long, budgets are often overrun, go-lives can fail...the list goes on.

One of the best ways to avoid these pitfalls is to have a plan in place before starting your implementation. Through years of research and experience, we've perfected a timeline that over 250 businesses have now used for successful ERP go-lives. And it's the exact process we'll follow for your launch.

The Ideal Implementation Timeline

1 Create an ERP Project Team

VistaVu Solutions will lead the charge during your ERP implementation. We simply need support from your internal ERP project team.

This team should include members from all levels of your business, from the C-Suite to employees who will be working inside the system day in and out. It's also critical to select an internal project manager that can facilitate resources and ensure subject matter experts are available in:

- Sales
- Purchasing
- Supply Chain
- Manufacturing
- Quality Control
- Accounting
- Finances

The project team will be tasked with ensuring the implementation goes as planned and that the ERP works correctly after launch. They'll also be responsible for setting implementation goals and deciding on key ERP functionality.

2 Develop an Implementation Plan

At VistaVu Solutions, we work with you to prepare a Project Methodology to set the phases for the project, as well as checks and balances to keep things moving forward. We also prepare an Implementation Methodology that dictates the work that is done.

Each part of the process features stage gates that require sign-off before moving forward. These gates include:

- Scope
- CRP
- Testing
- Deploy



3 Activate Data Migration

One of the most critical steps in implementation is transferring the data from your legacy system to your new ERP system. We complete this step by:

- Analyzing and mapping your data to find redundancies before migration
- Deciding which data to migrate to your new system and which to leave behind

Using a migration tool provided by your ERP to migrate your data or importing the data manually

4 Train Your Team

With your data migration complete, we take the time to thoroughly train your team. Employees should know how to use the ERP properly to prevent productivity loss and frustration.

Your team should be trained based on their roles, so they understand how the ERP helps them fulfill their unique responsibilities. It's also best to provide ongoing training and refreshers to ensure new updates are utilized to their full potential and changes in your process are fully communicated.

VistaVu Solutions provides many training options during the implementation process, including hands-on training blended with user acceptance testing and classroom training by role. SAP also offers many free training courses to take advantage of.

5 Go-Live

Finally, the moment you've been working so hard to reach. Congratulations! At this step, you will have your data migrated, staff trained, and system tested for process accuracy.

6 Evaluate Your Success

Your "go-live" moment isn't the end of your implementation. Now is the time to evaluate the success of your implementation to discover what's working and what isn't, so you can make changes accordingly. You should also analyze the customer-facing benefits of the implementation and report your success to stakeholders.

It's also critical to consider the continuous improvements you must make to ensure you maximize your investment.

Tips for Ongoing ERP Management

SEF Energy, a leading oil and gas company, took its ERP implementation to the next level through ongoing management. After their ERP implementation in 2018, the company worked with VistaVu Solutions to further enhance its ERP capabilities.

SEF Energy improved its data collection through IoT and AI, giving them insights they didn't previously have access to. As a result, SEF Energy is now the #1 company in their space, even after the worst downturn in the industry's history.¹⁵

ERP implementation doesn't stop after you go live. You must properly leverage your ERP system and continue to use it for innovation and business growth. How?

1 Designate a Department (or Team) to Manage Your ERP

After implementation, it's normal for the initial project team to dissolve back into their daily roles. Yet, you'll still want a department or team responsible for managing your ERP and related tasks.

For many businesses, this responsibility falls on the finance team. After all, this team is often the heaviest user of the ERP system, as they're constantly running reports and entering transactions. However, we recommend ensuring your team includes senior management from various departments that understand how your business operates.

Your ERP management team will need to take user feedback, implement changes, and assist with troubleshooting. They'll also need to train new hires on using the system correctly during onboarding.

2 Leverage Ongoing Updates & Improvements

The ongoing success of your ERP system depends on how well it continues to fit inside your workflow and planning processes. You must allocate resources for ongoing updates and improvements to ensure your system continues to meet your needs.

If you go Cloud, updates are automatic. It's critical to work with a partner that helps you understand how to leverage these updates and system improvements. System updates and improvements are critical to scaling your ERP. They're also important for ensuring your system is user-friendly, secure, efficient, and follows current industry best practices. Remember, tech evolves fast—make sure your ERP follows suit.

3 Obtain Additional Training & Support

It's unrealistic to expect the implementation team members to train your entire workforce on the new ERP. You must do what's necessary to provide additional training sessions after going live. Work with an ERP implementation partner that provides in-depth training and support to ensure the switch is efficient and with minor frustrations.

Sources: ¹⁵VistaVu Solutions



Conclusion

ERP: The Core of Your Digital Transformation

It's impossible to become an intelligent enterprise without implementing an ERP solution. As a catalyst of digital transformation, an ERP solution can help you manage your business processes to remain competitive, better serve your customers, and grow.

VistaVu Solutions: Your Partner in ERP Implementation

At VistaVu Solutions, our mission is to help your business run like a well-oiled machine. And as an SAP Gold partner, we've helped over 250 customers transform their businesses through ERP implementation.

“

We wanted to automate as much as possible. Implementing ERP and VistaVu's industry add-on allowed us to get there and do that. It's extremely efficient. It's given us a lot of scalability and quicker turn-arounds.”



Alan White, Vice President of Information Technology, SEF Energy



Solutions **vistavu**

Talented & Experienced Implementation Team

Our team of talented consultants brings years of industry experience to the table. Plus, our implementation team provides a smooth and faster implementation, often less than 12 weeks. You can trust us to provide strategic guidance that ensures your ERP solution helps you reach your business goals.

We are industry experts in various industries, including field services, wholesale distribution, manufacturing, aerospace, and life sciences. This means you'll have access to proven pre-built solutions, processes, and add-ons.

Ongoing Support

We don't help you implement your solution and then walk away. We're here to support you through your entire transformation and beyond. From assisting you in adding innovation to your digital core to providing IoT, AI, and predictive maintenance services, we're your one-stop-shop for technology solutions that boost your business.

Solid Customer Experience

We want nothing more than to see you succeed. That's why we offer programs such as self-serve resources, weekly Q&A sessions, and more to help you grow and evolve.

Get Started on Your Digital Transformation Today With VistaVu

VistaVu Solutions is here to support you through your digital transformation journey. To learn more about VistaVu or to discover recent success stories, visit us at

vistavusolutions.com