

MANUFACTURE

GREATER OPERATIONAL EFFICIENCY

Find out how >

Use information from a simpler business management solution to make faster, smarter decisions

One of the top challenges facing today's manufacturers is the need to run leaner while managing growth. It can be done—with the right business management solution and strategic approach.

As manufacturing companies grow, they face more complex operations and decisions, take on more competitors, and incur increased costs. A growing company has more moving parts. That makes it increasingly difficult to control costs, maintain efficiencies, improve customer service, and react quickly to business change. To combat these pressures, manufacturers need to make quick, informed decisions. And that requires easy access to timely, relevant information.

Of course, your information requirements introduce another fundamental challenge: How to manage the volume and complexity of data. If your disparate, custom systems or legacy ERP system can't effectively help you organize, share, find, interpret, and use your data, then your company can end up drowning in it.

This guide takes a look at why business management solutions have evolved well beyond the capabilities of slow, complex, rigid ERP systems and examines how leading manufacturers are using these forward-looking solutions to address their biggest challenges.



Business management solutions can strengthen your competitive edge

With advanced, integrated features such as mobility, analytics, dashboards, and alerts, today's feature-rich business management solutions such as those offered by Sage are simpler, more flexible, and easier to use. Employees can access information from anywhere, anytime and then share it with everyone. Decisions can be made on the fly and tasks can be made at the point of contact. And when data is accessible and in a sharable central repository, it becomes easier to analyze.

Research¹ indicates that the majority of leading manufacturers are turning to these type of business management solutions to manage their operations. More important: Those that don't upgrade their legacy systems are in danger of falling behind the competition.

Modern solutions provide forward-looking manufacturers with the functionality they need to better handle their biggest challenges, which include:

Managing growth expectations

47%

Eliminating delays in decision-making from lack of timely information

38%

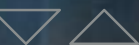
Lowering costs

31%

Overcoming the inability to quickly and cost effectively react to change

20%

Another key statistic not to be overlooked: Leading manufacturers achieved a 12% improvement in operating margins as a result of their business management solution.

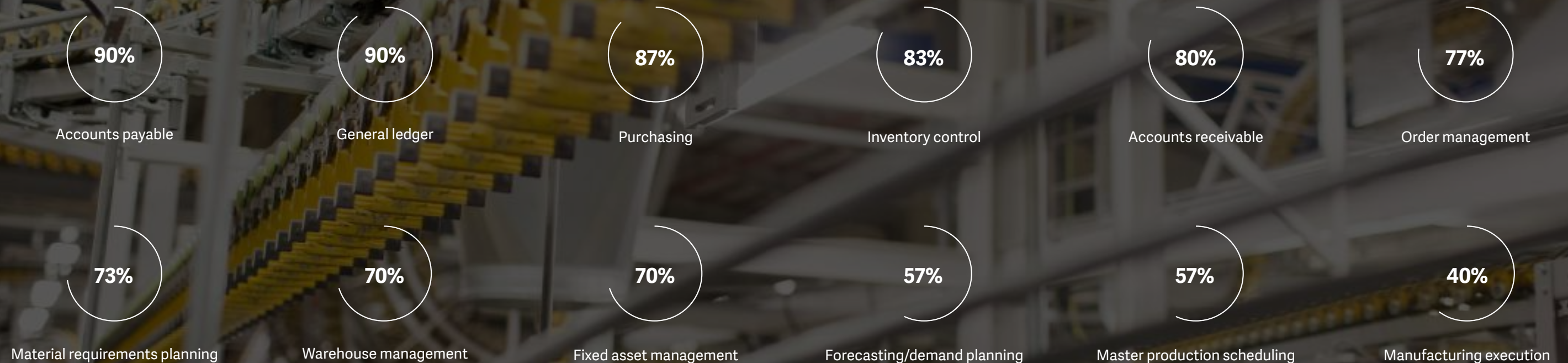


Not all solutions are created equal

Even though today's leading manufacturers incorporate business management solutions, that doesn't necessarily mean all of them are reaping the benefits. The key to maximizing your ROI is to ensure you have adoption across the entire company. To do that, you need to make sure your solution can be customized and deployed according to your specific business requirements.

The modules contained in a solution determine how customized the solution can be. A minimum set should include General Ledger, Accounts Payable, Accounts Receivable, Purchase Orders, Sales Orders, and a strong Inventory Control module. Others are more manufacturing-specific, such as Bills of Material, Material Requirement Planning, Manufacturing Resource Planning, and Component Allocation. Because all manufacturing companies are unique, it's important to select the modules that meet your specific needs.

These are the modules most implemented by leading manufacturers²:



Not all solutions are created equal (continued)

Ease of use is just as important as implementation. You can facilitate that by looking for features with a consumer-like user experience and social, mobile, and analytics functionality. Those kinds of features will help employees across all departments of your company find information easier and make decisions faster. Leading manufacturers are more likely to have solutions that contain capabilities that facilitate usability³ such as:

An easy to use and integrated solution for faster decisions

Decision-makers can drill down from summary data to transactions

71%

Users have access to online training/help/support portal

48%

Reports can be accessed in a self-serve capacity

53%

Employees can collaborate in real time across departments and divisions

43%

Solution can be quickly modified to react to business change

53%

Users have access to pre-configured dashboards and role-based homepages

39%

Users have access to context-sensitive help and training

50%

Marketing, sales, and operations have an integrated view of all customer information

29%

Productivity and more—with the right solution

Imagine what you can do with the ability to collect and assimilate data in real time and convert it into actionable insights. Reduce shipment times. Improve delivery rates. Reduce inventory levels. Improve forecast accuracy. Manufacturers who fully leverage the power of a business management solution such as Sage X3 see significant operational improvements, and there's no reason you can't be one of them.

They also benefit from improved collaboration and information sharing across manufacturing, engineering, and sales. Everyone in the organization can look at the same information at the same time, a reality that paid off for Frédéric Devine, IT director at Gyma Laboratories:

"Sage X3 streamlines relationships between scheduling, purchasing and stocks, helping us to create and optimize almost 12,000 production orders per year at our two sites."

And John Babcock, CFO at Satellite Industries Inc., credited their Sage solution with modernizing the company's technology infrastructure and applications to achieve greater efficiencies and higher productivity:

"I can sit here at my desk in Minnesota and quote a customer in Germany and send off that quote in German with the amounts in euros. Even better, I can perform the same task, just as effectively, from my iPad at the coffee shop."



Here's how to start

Business management is an essential component of growth for today's manufacturers. With a simpler and more flexible solution that supports best practices and provides your employees with the information they need, you can keep your operations in check and make better decisions. Consider these five tips to help you get started:

- 1 Define your needs. Consult with users from across your organization to understand and prioritize your business needs. After you've done that, you can look at the capabilities you need to solve those problems. Make sure everyone has input, including IT, sales, manufacturing, finance, and engineering.
- 2 Access is everything, so look for a solution that embraces mobile technology. Whether they're behind a desk, in the field, or on the production line, your employees need to the ability to make decisions on the fly or perform tasks at the point of contact.
- 3 Ensure analytics are embedded into your business management solution so employees have the ability to leverage insights that would otherwise be hidden. That leads to smarter decisions, which is a major goal of a technology strategy focused on growth.
- 4 Commit to employee training so users are comfortable and know how to get the most out of their tools. By taking full advantage of all available functionality, you'll achieve a radical improvement in your business. In some cases, training materials may be embedded directly into your solution.
- 5 Consider deploying business management in the cloud. Cloud solutions offer low total cost of ownership, lower up-front costs, and reduced cost and effort of upgrades. Plus, they're designed to get you up and running fast.





Proven outcomes for manufacturers

Sage helps manufacturers of all sizes manage their business faster, simpler, and more flexibly. We've helped companies like yours:

- Increase sales with products that meet or exceed the high standards of customers and adapt to compliance requirements.
- Reduce costs by accelerating responses to inquiries and requests with accurate product costing and pricing.
- Eliminate waste by gaining real-time control over work-order details and deeper insights into production costs.
- Increase profits through more efficient processes, such as improved traceability across customer care, warranty, and service orders.

The right solution can help you manage your entire manufacturing operation faster and more effectively—from procurement and scheduling to shop floor, inventory, sales, and financials. For 35 years, Sage has been helping companies like yours manufacture an advantage out of a growing mountain of information.

About the Answer Company

[The Answer Company](http://www.theanswerco.com/) is a leading supplier of business management software and technology consulting services. Since 1995, it has been helping businesses answer the difficult questions with regards to investments in technology and information systems. Working from offices across Canada, they serve national & international clients with a wide range of ERP solutions and numerous complimentary solutions that are powerful & flexible, and backed by industry expertise. The Answer Company's goal is to make businesses more successful at what they do and gain confidence to make profitable moves in their respective industries.

For more info, visit: www.theanswerco.com/
To speak to one of our experts, contact:
info@theanswerco.com
1-866-670-6686

Head Office
502-233 Nelson's Crescent
New Westminster, BC V3L 0E4

Offices also in Calgary, Winnipeg, Edmonton and Toronto

¹Creating a modern, effective manufacturing environment with ERP," Aberdeen Group, October, 2014
²Grow your manufacturing operations by selecting easy-to-use ERP," Aberdeen Group, April, 2016
³Grow your manufacturing operations by selecting easy-to-use ERP," Aberdeen Group, April, 2016