Profitable Growth in Action
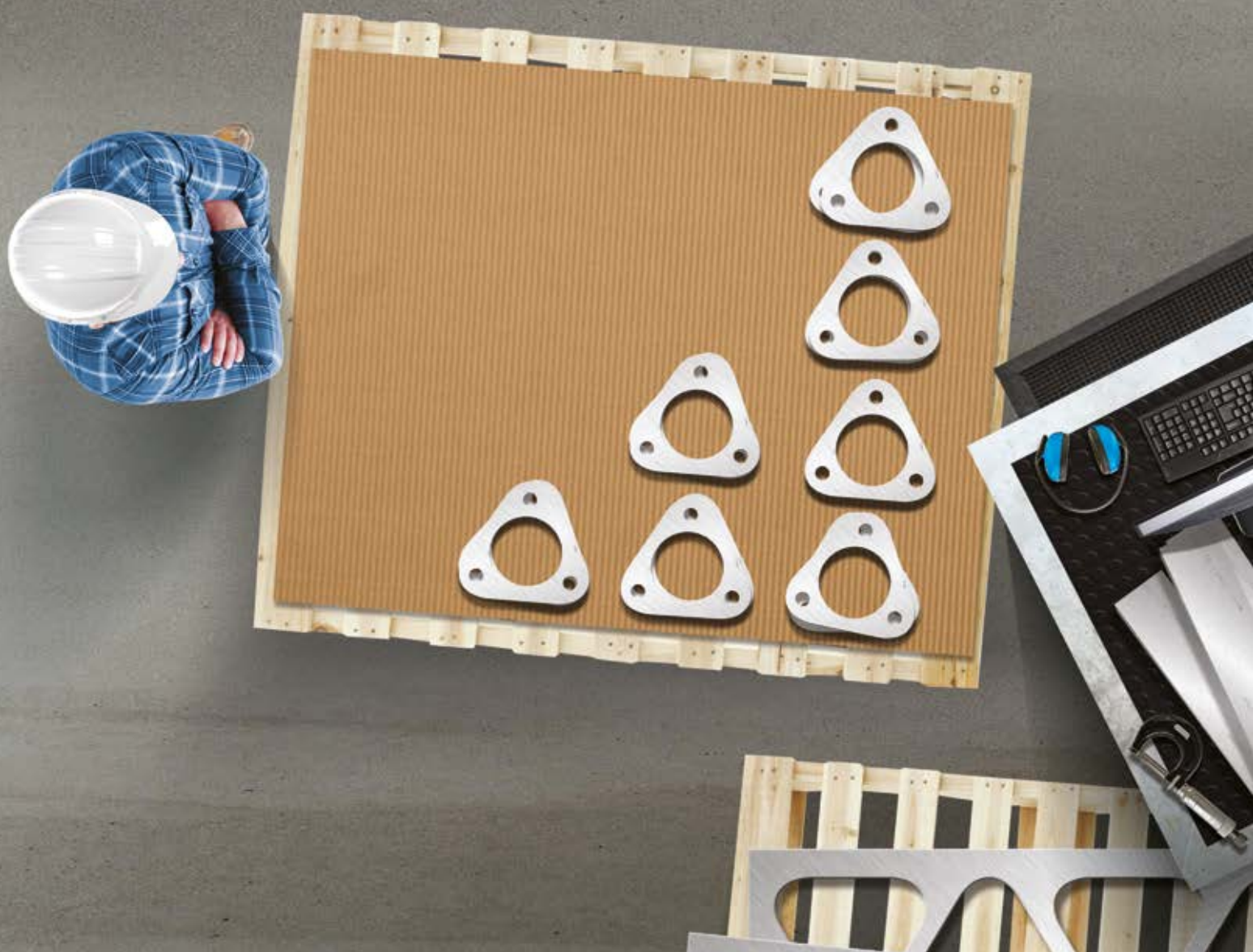
Seven manufacturers reveal the secrets of their success

EPICOR.

Manufacturers Worldwide Gear Up for Growth

Growth is definitely on the agenda for manufacturers. This came through loud and clear in a survey recently undertaken on behalf of Epicor Software Corporation (Epicor) by MORAR*. Our report on the research, *A Manufacturer's Guide to Growing Profitably,* identifies five key factors that growing manufacturers cited as essential to their success, and five risks that manufacturers believe could threaten growth for the unprepared business.

In this eBook we've compiled seven stories from manufacturers around the world, illustrating how the Epicor® enterprise resource planning (ERP) solution is helping them leverage these success factors and grow effectively—without falling prey to the risks of growth.

Read on to discover how businesses like yours are:

▶ Taking advantage of good planning, agility, the right technology, and the skills of their people to maximize growth opportunities

▶ Managing the increasing complexity that comes with growth, navigating the challenges of unplanned growth, increasing managerial insight, and overcoming other operational pressures

If your business also has ambitious growth plans, visit our growth resource center to find out how we can help.

Contents

Good Planning

It's no surprise that good planning is the top success factor for the manufacturers in our survey. But growth itself can make it harder for decision-makers to remain accurately informed—unless you're ready to tackle this challenge.

Success Factor

Good Planning

60%

Risk Factor

Senior executives in the business may not be fully prepared for the challenges of managing a larger, more diverse business

50%

"Epicor has provided us with a platform that's been able to grow with us and not get in our way… We can react internally, make changes, and move on very quickly…Cradle to grave, we can handle everything from finance to purchasing to engineering to job management to shipping."

Rob Bucek, Production Control Manager, D&S Manufacturing

D&S Manufacturing

Since implementing a solution to deliver the insight for better planning, Wisconsin-based D&S Manufacturing has seen improvements in almost every performance metric— financial and operational.

In 2008, a lack of data-driven insight represented D&S Manufacturing's biggest challenge to growth. But that all changed when the company started working with Epicor ERP.

Having grown steadily since its start as a small welding and repair shop, D&S knew it needed to embrace the latest in technology to grow further, as Rob Bucek, production control manager at D&S, explains: "We had limited access to data and no ability to mold to our evolving business processes."

Now, the company can bring together information from different departments and operations to make better business decisions. And if a customer proposes a large project, D&S can perform a what-if analysis overnight to determine which work centers are available, how long they'll take, and what level of staffing is needed, among other details.

Growth plans in place

"It's been incredibly helpful for strategic and tactical planning, whether we're looking at labor or equipment procurement," says Bucek. "We have the ability to look at forecasted sales and translate that into discrete demand on the shop floor. That helps us not only balance production and scheduling to improve on-time delivery, but also to make sure the proper resources and growth plans are in place. We weren't able to do that prior to Epicor® ERP."

Finance teams have also seen the benefits—it now takes one or two days to close the month out, instead of six to eight weeks.

In fact, almost every performance metric has improved. And D&S has grown into a full-service job shop, employing 170 staff in a 150,000 square-foot facility, serving heavy-equipment OEMs across a variety of sectors.

Agile Manufacturing

Even the best-laid plans won't anticipate everything. The manufacturers in our survey recognize that to control and harness growth within highly competitive, fast-moving markets, they need the means to be flexible and responsive to change.

Success Factor

Agility and response to market demands

42%

Risk Factor

Unplanned business growth may lead to unexpected consequences which would have a negative impact on the business

50%

> "Epicor ERP is synonymous with management and operation control with real-time information access."
>
> Julio Flores, Sheet Metal Plant Manager, Manesa

Manufacturas Estampadas (Manesa)

From Chihuahua, Mexico, Manufacturas Estampadas (Manesa) uses an insight-led approach to respond quickly to customer needs, outshining its competitors in the process.

Metal parts manufacturer Manesa had enjoyed steady growth over 40 years, thanks to its in-house, bespoke ERP solution and a German training program. But when the company wanted to take the organization to the next level, it needed to find a solution that would improve both customer service and market performance.

Manesa decided to roll out Epicor ERP to manage the entire business operation—from buying raw materials to shipping in line with customer expectations. Thanks to online and real-time access to complete information, the company can see for itself just how much its operation has been streamlined—particularly in product engineering departments—and delays in production have decreased.

Better decision-making, delighted customers

"Before Epicor, we did not have the means to easily access information, and tracking data took a lot of time," says Julio Flores, Manesa's sheet metal plant manager. "Now… we have access in a simple and fast way to the information generated by every department; we are aware of our production capacity and that is helping us improve our decision-making process."

Information relating to every task in production, inventory control, purchasing—and more—is automatically registered with Epicor ERP. Flores highlights engineering management as a stand-out Epicor ERP functionality that easily integrates with Manesa's processes. As a result, Manesa has both raw materials and final products available on time, and customers are delighted with its world-class service.

Flores concludes: "We do recommend it because it is a friendly solution, easy to use, and able to serve the main needs of any organization."

> "We looked for a system that could support our company's growth in the long run. I believe that Epicor ERP is the solution for our company for the next 10 years."
>
> Aswin Kanchanachayphoom, Executive Director, Mahajak Industry

Mahajak Industry

Thai manufacturer Mahajak Industry leveraged real-time data to anticipate demand and mitigate risk as it moved into a new, high-margin sector for its nuts and bolts.

When Mahajak Industry decided to move into a new sector, the company soon realized that the best way to deal with fast-evolving customer requirements was through enhanced information management and data visibility. Epicor ERP was the best fit.

The implementation of the system encouraged Mahajak Industry to take a second look at how it did business, realizing that over time it had developed practices that were not ideal. The Epicor support team helped the company to focus on the important elements of its business to improve its workflows, and user-training was supplied via a local Epicor-authorized partner in Thailand.

"The implementation process did not take a long time because we prepared ourselves well in advance," says Mahajak Industry's executive director, Aswin Kanchanachayphoom.

Responsiveness means competitiveness

With real-time data at its fingertips, Mahajak Industry can now foresee problems and prevent them from occurring—essential as the company goes through a period of change and growth. The company feels that it can now respond quickly to customer demands, market changes, and 24/7 business pressures, enabling it to compete more effectively and deliver a better customer experience.

And because Epicor ERP is user-friendly, staff rely less on the IT department to obtain data for better and faster decision-making.

Aswin Kanchanachayphoom concludes: "My goal is to create an environment where employees take action quickly and effectively. …Given that our company is still small, we needed a system that requires minimal IT support. Epicor ERP allows business users to manage, filter, or sort information easily."

The Right Technology

Businesses can be taken by surprise if their people or processes can't scale or adapt to the complexities that come with growth. The right tools in the right hands can make all the difference, as our survey respondents know full well.

Success Factor

Right technology in place

40%

Risk Factor

We might take on large/complex projects that we lack the skillset and technology to deliver effectively, and damage our brand reputation

52%

> "With Epicor, [and their partner Macroscoop,] we have the technology in place to realize our growth ambitions and double our turnover within three years."
>
> Annemarie Van Aerts, Deputy Director, BKB Precision

BKB Precision

BKB Precision had set itself some serious growth targets, and knew that achieving them called for the right balance of skills and technology at its Netherlands headquarters.

BKB Precision's employees had the right skills for its precision plastic machining business, but were held back by legacy technology. This was an issue, with the company determined to double turnover within three years and to grow its international markets—even while customers were demanding shorter product life cycles, smaller products, more transparency and greater collaboration.

The company's existing ERP solution had reached its limits, and its interfaces for integration with third parties were slow. BKB Precision needed a solution that could support supply-chain integration with customers and partners, and act as a business accelerator within a more demanding manufacturing environment.

Smooth operators

The Epicor ERP platform now sits at the heart of the organization, with bookkeeping, purchasing, sales, planning, production, customer management, and link-ups with partners working simultaneously.

"Time-consuming data entry and error-prone retyping is becoming a thing of the past," says Annemarie Van Aerts, BKB's deputy director.

"We're even working on the user-friendliness in the factory by adding tablets to the terminals. This will make the factory and our systems even more easy to use for staff, and increase our productivity; not to mention the benefits of collaborating with our partners via the technology."

Van Aerts feels that Epicor ERP gives BKB Precision a lead position in the market.

"It's absolutely wonderful," she says, also confirming that the migration process for this mission-critical system ran virtually flawlessly.

Smart Working

You do a great job. Customers want more. But meeting greater demand puts pressure on staff. Productivity, efficiency, quality all start to slip—and customers are no longer happy, or you can make the skills of your people count and gear them up for growth.

Success Factor

Staff with the right skills

38%

Risk Factor

Business growth may put excessive pressure on operations, damaging quality and customer satisfaction

53%

> "[This was] the simplest migration process I have been a part of. … I can now walk around the plant with my tablet PC, schedule machine run times with a few taps of my fingers, and give back an hour to supervisors who can concentrate on other important issues."
>
> Anthony Gercar, Plant Accountant, Enpress

Enpress

Based in Ohio, USA, Enpress knows it's not enough to hire the right people. The company wanted to give its employees the tools to collaborate and make smarter decisions—to improve operational efficiency and handle the pressures of growth.

A manufacturer of water treatment solutions, Enpress identified the need to make smarter decisions to improve operational efficiency, and felt that the key to this was to improve internal and external communication and collaboration—all the way from the front office to the production line.

As soon as Epicor ERP went in, colleagues were able to collaborate better by having instant access to data. Enpress took it one stage further by installing two large LED displays to allow employees to exchange messages dynamically on project status. The messages are organized in groups such as accounting, maintenance, manufacturing, and shipping, allowing users to read and respond to messages that are relevant to their specific focus areas.

Harnessing skills to grow

"We are embracing communication with Epicor Social Enterprise," says Anthony Gercar, Enpress plant accountant. "The second- and third-shift teams love it because they know their messages will be reviewed quickly. It's like having our own type of Twitter."

Increased mobility has allowed the company to save time on tasks, many of which can now be completed on a tablet. Epicor ERP even acted as a catalyst for Enpress to expand its operations, launching a brand-new company to support a new water treatment product.

"Enpress is in a fast-paced industry that is constantly changing. Epicor ERP 10 allows us to create reports to analyze historical information about products and product groups. This also helps us predict the direction the business is going in so we can make critical decisions in real time," concludes Gercar.

> "Epicor has lowered our maintenance overheads, made us more efficient, and helped us make significant strides forward as a business. There are only a couple of people in the company that don't use it every day, and one of them is the cleaner!"
>
> Stephen Cuthbert, Operations Director, Webtec

Webtec

UK-based Webtec almost doubled in size after it implemented Epicor ERP—with headcount remaining virtually unchanged. Almost everyone in the company uses it, with real-time data and task-appropriate dashboards making their expertise count.

A manufacturer of hydraulic equipment and controls, Webtec has always been a tech-driven company, and was one of the UK's first manufacturers to implement an ERP solution, back in the 1980s. As the company grew (today it sells to 50 countries), its internal IT team developed new features or integrated third-party solutions to meet the need for new functionality.

By 2006 it had become apparent that this approach was no longer appropriate. Maintenance and support dominated the IT team's time, and further growth was stalled.

"We had a number of disparate and unconnected systems that made it nearly impossible for departments to share information," says Stephen Cuthbert, operations director for Webtec. "It had become clear that we needed a new system that could properly support the complexities of our business and improve our operational efficiency end to end, from quote to cash."

Making talent count

Since implementing Epicor ERP, Webtec has seen improvements in operational efficiency, particularly its ability to respond to new opportunities. Improved visibility through real-time data has allowed the company to build a stronger cash position by reducing stock levels and increasing on-time delivery performance. End-of-month accounts are now available on the first day of the next month, instead of two weeks in.

Webtec needed a system that supported multiple currencies, sites, and languages, which staff could configure without outside support. It also wanted rich business intelligence that would allow teams to quickly build dashboards and reports. Epicor delivered.

"We have greatly increased our efficiency and our staff are more focused on the tasks that count," concludes Cuthbert. "Epicor ticked all the boxes for us."

Are You Ready to Grow?

82% of the manufacturers we surveyed agree that an effective and integrated IT infrastructure is essential for business performance.

The business experiences captured in these pages show why this is the case. We've seen that the right ERP system can help you root out operational inefficiencies that may threaten growth. It will give you the insight and the tools to plan effectively for growth and make the right decisions to grow profitably. When the unexpected happens—as it inevitably will—you'll be better placed to respond successfully. Your people will have the breathing space to flourish with the business, rather than cracking under the pressure of growth—making it easier for you to attract and retain top talent. And of course, your customers will be the ultimate beneficiaries.

The manufacturers whose stories we've told are not the only ones benefiting in these ways from Epicor ERP. You can find others on our website.

And in our growth resource center you'll find the survey report, *A Manufacturer's Guide to Growing Profitably*, as well as other materials to help you take a critical look at your IT and assess if it's fit for growth.

Partner value proposition

Contact us today ✉ sales@e2btek.com   🌐 www.e2btek.com/erp