

Awards Special: SAP - Get the full picture

Many small and medium enterprises (SMEs) today have great plans for business growth but are saddled with constraints to grow profitably. While business owners or managers may have invested in IT, a lack of control over their business operations and sales process makes it difficult to get the timely and accurate information to make critical decisions.

To support new growth and profitability and to prepare for the future, SMEs need an affordable, powerful business solution that makes it easy for everyone in the organisation to get the decision-support information they need – in real-time.

Instead of silos of financial, inventory, sales management and customer tracking applications, these companies are looking for an integrated yet easy-to-use and affordable solution designed to provide the visibility and control. That solution must also not involve high financial or manpower investment. SAP Business One is an answer to this salient call by SMEs. SAP has customised SAP Business One for quick implementation – within weeks and minimal learning curve – which means lower investments for training. Along with its affordability and easy implementation, this makes the solutions value-

proposition very compelling to SMEs.

“This is the reason why SAP Business One has emerged as the ideal starting point solution for SMEs, from 10 to several hundred employees, who are ready to reap the benefits of integrated business software,” said Eric MacDonald, managing director of SAP in Singapore and Malaysia.

The wide acceptance of SAP Business One has made it the winner in the enterprise resource planning (ERP) category of the Computerworld Awards.



Up-to-the-minute information

SAP Business One is an integrated, affordable business management solution designed specifically for SMEs. It allows business owners to have a single system that integrates and automates their core operations, including sales, finance, purchasing, inventory, and manufacturing, providing an accurate, up-to-the-minute picture of their business.

With 7,000 customers, 1,000 partners worldwide and 37 country versions, SAP Business One is helping companies improve business-process efficiency, enabling growth and seamlessly link with their headquarters or business partners using mySAP ERP solutions.

Offering seamless integration with -Microsoft Excel and Microsoft Outlook for ease of use and increased productivity, SAP Business One provides users with advanced reporting, access to critical data and the ability to manage and make decisions in real time. Integrated customer relationship management (CRM) and business management features ensure seamless interaction and full managerial control across sales, service and all other areas of the business.

It also delivers innovative features, including a five-step MRP Wizard that automates material requirements planning, and a Drag & Relate tool that lets users link different pieces of information with a single mouse click.

According to MacDonald, SAP Business One solution is a critical element of SAP's strategy to provide SMEs in Asia Pacific with affordable and integrated business management tools for running their businesses better.

SAP Business One covers all the core operations necessary to run a business, including accounting and banking, customer relationship management, vendor management, material resource planning, purchasing and selling, and reporting and analysis, yet it is still simple to use and easy to implement. It is ideal for those companies that require less complex functionality from their IT solutions.

Better than before

Enhancements in the new version of SAP Business One make the solution even easier to use and implement. A more customisable and intuitive interface allows users to filter information and access the data they need to run their business. Tool tips have been added for better navigation while other improvements make it easier to work with attachments and facilitate access to online help.

The solution's new implementation tool, Copy Express, allows SAP partners to easily copy custom reports, queries, user settings and other configurations from one installation to another. These

configurations can then be easily deployed at customer sites, reducing set-up time and deployment errors.

With SAP Business One, small enterprises have an entry point to engage in global trade with the facility enjoyed by larger enterprises. To address increasing globalisation and countries where multiple languages are spoken, the solution's new multi-language support of trade documents (such as invoices, quotes and purchase orders) allows users to speak to their business partners in their own tongue by assigning a specific language to each customer or vendor when trade documents are printed or displayed.

This multi-lingual capability is supported by a new embedded user dictionary that allows translation of items, remarks and documents. Additionally, the new version includes numerous enhancements to address local and regional requirements, such as tax declaration and sales reports for European Union countries and other individual markets.

Education is important

Educating SME customers on the need for such a solution – as well as the potential advantages is the most significant challenge for SAP and the key lies in first educating SAP's partners on the benefits that they can offer to SMEs.

SAP has designed the SAP Business One Solution Partner Programme, a two-tier certification process to ensure quality among potential partners.

The solution is sold exclusively through qualified SAP channel partners, who are selected based on their expertise in local markets in managing mission-critical business processes and ability to help customers develop successful, long-term IT strategies.

"SAP channel partners provide customers with committed support and expertise, fully backed by the resources of SAP," said MacDonald.

Deploying SAP Business One has helped provide SMEs across the region with more accurate and timely information to drive business growth.

The sole distributor of Daewoo's consumer electronics products in Southeast Asia, DE Electronics Distribution has positioned itself to develop into one of Daewoo's largest distributors internationally by implementing an ERP system that will support its plans for growth.

An integrated view

"We chose SAP Business One as it is powerful and efficient, providing an integrated view of the business operations. It is not only a perfect fit but is easy to use, giving us the scalability that we need," said Sebastian Chia, managing director of DE Electronics Distribution.

Another delighted customer is Batu Kawan Berhad, Kuala Lumpur Kepong Berhad (KLKB) in Malaysia.

"To cope with the increase and performance efficiencies, IT processes must grow in tandem. We studied many systems from various vendors and we found SAP Business One to be the closest fit which does not cost us an arm and a leg. From our initial study we could see the advantage of SAP Business One in that the system could be up in a very short implementation time frame," said Albert Koay Chuan Kim, general manager (Group IT).

"The system has most of what we needed and customisation is almost negligible. All these can be summed up in one phrase 'Low cost of ownership and huge savings'. The user friendliness and drill down functionalities in SAP Business One is just perfect for the end-users with very little training requirement," he said.

SMEs are an integral part of the economy in every country across the Asia Pacific. In this region, more than anywhere else in the world, SMEs have emerged as the engine that is driving forward economic growth. "SAP, together with our partners, is delivering powerful solutions that enable this engine to run smoothly," said MacDonald.