



Could Your Firm Benefit from an  
**Enterprise Resource  
Planning Solution?**

**Do you  
need to  
rapidly  
analyze  
raw data  
for better  
decision  
making?**





# Contents

## 01

WHAT IS AN  
ERP SYSTEM?

## 02

SHOULD MY FIRM  
CONSIDER AN ERP?

## 03

BENEFITS OF  
PURPOSE-BUILT ERPS

## 04

HOW AN ERP TACKLES  
RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

## 05

LOOKING AHEAD







# 01

## What is an ERP System?

*A tool to manage the project life cycle.*

The original Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) solutions, introduced in the 1990s, were primarily designed for and used by manufacturers.

**Today, ERP solutions have evolved and serve as a tool to manage the project life cycle for professional services firms.**

These include firms involved in IT services, architectural and engineering, design and planning, system integration, and management consulting, to name a few.

In the ERP world, these businesses are sometimes referred to as project-based firms or purpose-built. Though ERP systems have evolved over the years in terms of functionality and delivery models, the impact of purpose-built ERPs remains essentially what it has always been for ERPs in general.

**Namely, they help businesses rapidly analyze raw data from a variety of sources and turn it into actionable information for better decision making.**

For professional services firms, the most important factor in delivering a successful project is managing resources. However, many other factors can impact these firms' business as well. The purpose-built ERP also manages everything from the beginning of the sales cycle to the accounting function and relationship management.

**Each ERP is uniquely designed and configured to address each firm's specific processes and challenges.**

Based on open architecture, an ERP provides a reliable, easy to manage way to integrate separate sets of data that typically do not interact with each other. Additionally, a purpose-built ERPs cost allows it to deliver these benefits even to small and medium-sized businesses.

# 02

## Should My Firm Consider an ERP?

*Enterprise Resource Planning will have a positive impact on every aspect of your firm.*

Ideally, Enterprise Resource Planning will have a positive impact on every aspect of a firm, from business development to project tracking, forecasting and billing. When considering an ERP, a firm needs to understand how all of its current processes operate as a whole, as well as the firm's desired results.

To begin the process, answer the following questions:

*Does your firm's finance department share client, contact and project data with marketing and business development?*

*Are you currently tracking leads, creating proposals, forecasting sales and winning new business?*

*Does your timekeeping system talk with your payroll system or your billing system?*

*Is your firm's project life cycle process streamlined?*

*Do executives have real-time visibility to financial metrics?*

*Do you know if your employees are under or over utilized?*

*Do you know if you have enough backlog to sustain your firm for 6 months?*

**If you answered "NO" to any of these questions, your firm should consider an ERP.**







**Could Your Firm Benefit from an ERP Solution?**

# 03

## Benefits of Purpose-built ERPs for Professional Services Firms

*A purpose-built ERP allows an organization to quickly and painlessly transition to a new, shared environment.*

**A purpose-built ERP allows Customer Relationship Management (CRM) data to seamlessly integrate into project planning and contract management.**

Collaborative project management and tracking tools (often referred to as front office applications) can work in tandem with back office applications such as accounting, communication management and financial management. Just as importantly, an ERP provides visibility to firm leaders.

The combination of a lack of integration and disparate data sources results in redundant data entry and inconsistent or inaccurate data. When data is shared however, firms learn from historical data while reducing inefficiencies and cost. When the ERP is supported by a single fully relational database, firms are able to derive business intelligence from budgeted and actual data.

ERPs facilitate the flow of information regarding the status of every project among all of the relevant people and business processes.



## Benefits of a Well Implemented Purpose-Built ERP

	Executive-Level View of Project and Company Health
	Centralized, Accessible Information
	Increased Efficiency Through Automation of Core Business Practices
	Improved Cost Control with Integrated Time & Expense Reporting
	Shorter billing cycles, improved cash flow and increased utilization levels
	Improved Project Management and Delivery
	Greater Marketing Effectiveness
	Improved Client Relations
	Streamlined and More Effective Proposal Development

## Can the impact of these benefits be quantified?

*Absolutely!*

First, assess the time and effort required for each of your existing manual processes, then compare the results with the reduced time and effort involved using the ERP approach. The resulting savings go right to your firm's bottom line. But, as significant as those savings would be, **the real impact comes from the improved quality of the work environment, enhanced communication with clients, and most importantly, increased opportunities for success.**



# 04

## How an ERP Tackles Resource Management

*Tackle the never-ending resource forecasting challenge of managing human capital.*

To appreciate the impact of these benefits on your bottom line, consider the never-ending resource forecasting challenge of managing your human capital. This daily necessity is required to achieve firm growth and the performance expected from your employees.

As the market changes, your firm needs information readily available to make quick decisions about acquiring, training and scheduling your talent. The challenges include understanding:

- ▶ What employees are currently doing
- ▶ How to match skills with available work
- ▶ Future work predictions

11

### • How an ERP Solution Solves These Challenges •

1

#### COLLECT AND MEASURE TIME

By capturing an employee's actual time spent on a project, your firm can now measure that time against what was forecasted to determine the variance. That variance provides you with data to use when projecting future projects.

2

#### IDENTIFY THE RIGHT RESOURCES

With real-time information, firms are able to search for similar past projects and determine how much experience various individuals have working on specific types of projects. The availability of this data allows project managers to make decisions about their employees' collective skills, and develop a plan to increase or diversify the skills needed for the project.

3

#### AVAILABILITY

Project schedules require managing all types of commitments, including planned and unplanned. Developing a comprehensive plan for each employee provides accurate resource forecasting to handle future demands. This helps identify capacity excess or shortages.



# 05

## Looking Ahead

*Clearly, purpose-built ERP solutions are a technology investments worth consideration.*

Firms that embrace the efficiencies and streamlined business process that result from an ERP gain a significant advantage over their competitors. With their ability to provide visibility across the organization, ERPs can provide a variety of insights and benefits that go straight to the bottom line.

### TOUGHEST RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PROBLEMS

Common problems that can be addressed by a purpose-built ERP



**Missed project deliverables and deadlines.**



**Ineffective documentation on billable hours**



**Lack of project resource visibility**



**Assigning the wrong people to teams**



**Accounting and project management disconnect**

**More often than not, professional services firms succeed or fail based on how effectively they overcome their resource management problems.**



**Inefficient cash forecasting**



**One-off spreadsheets and workarounds**



**Under-informed decision making**



**Failure to meet financial reporting standards**



**Missed opportunities in business capture**

**Could Your Firm Benefit from an ERP Solution?**

## **Full Sail Partners Keep Your Business on Course**

Full Sail Partners specializes in client-focused technology solutions for architects and engineers, energy and environmental consultants, and professional service firms across the country. Full Sail Partners offers business consulting, technology solutions, and application hosting for Deltek Vision. Partnering with more than 1000 clients nationwide, Full Sail Partners builds long-term relationships and seeks to identify the critical resources to create a faster, more efficient, and cohesive business infrastructure.

For more on Full Sail Partners profile and background on the Full Sail Partners crew, visit us at [www.fullsailpartners.com](http://www.fullsailpartners.com).

888.552.5535  
[info@fullsailpartners.com](mailto:info@fullsailpartners.com)

