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# 7 ERP

SELECTION AND IMPLEMENTATION  
TIPS TO LIVE BY

## ERP SELECTION AND IMPLEMENTATION TIPS FROM PEOPLE WHO HAVE BEEN THERE, DONE THAT.

Experience is said to be the best teacher — and at Plex, we happen to know a lot of folks who have taken on the challenge of ERP selection & implementation and have succeeded. We'd like to share a few nuggets of hard-earned wisdom. They're universally applicable and valuable, no matter what ERP system you choose.

- 1 Select the right system
- 2 Don't cling to the past
- 3 Adopt best practices
- 4 Don't forget support
- 5 Assemble a strong cross-functional team
- 6 Embrace the Cloud
- 7 Manage change



## TIP #1 SELECT THE RIGHT SYSTEM FOR YOUR COMPANY AND YOUR USERS

Features and functions are important, to the extent that they must be appropriate for your situation and your needs — current and foreseeable future needs. So the first bit of selection advice is this: **find an ERP system that supports your specific needs.** That may sound obvious and it should be, but you'd be surprised how many selection teams pick a solution with missing functionality — either they simply don't notice or they plan to add it on after the fact.



### PLEX CLEARLY SPOKE THE LANGUAGE AND UNDERSTOOD THE ISSUES OF A COMPANY THAT WORKS IN THE AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY.

We have to meet a lot of requirements for our automotive clients, and we knew the Plex Manufacturing Cloud® would make it easier to track compliance.

*Bob Ziolkowski  
Argent International*



### WE NEEDED TO DO THIS RIGHT.

We went through two iterations on a system that would help us with inventory—and they were expensive—so we didn't want to go down that road again and not be happy with it in two years. Plex kept rising to the top because it is 100% cloud-based and it fit our needs as a food and beverage manufacturer.

*Tim Hausbeck  
Hausbeck Pickles and Peppers*



## TIP #2 DON'T CLING TO THE PAST

People have an innate resistance to change, at least partly due to fear of the unknown. They will naturally want a new system to look and work just like the old one. **You're not spending time and effort implementing a new system to get the same results you are getting with your old system.**

One way to overcome the natural instinct to cling to the familiar is to **help your users develop a vision of the future** — how the new system will make them more productive, more effective, and make their work lives less stressful.

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**I SPEND ABOUT 30 PERCENT OF MY TIME DRIVING CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENTS FOR US IN PLEX, BUT THOSE ARE ALL VALUE-ADDED ACTIVITIES—AND I'VE ELIMINATED ALL THE DATA ENTRY I USED TO DO.**

*Scott Hankamp  
A&K Finishing*

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**PLEX HAS PLAYED A HUGE ROLE IN HELPING US TO CONSOLIDATE AND TRANSFORM THE PERFORMANCE OF OUR BUSINESS, MAKING US A SUPER-EFFICIENT MANUFACTURER ACROSS OUR PRODUCT RANGE.**

*Paul Wright  
Accuride*





## TIP #3 ADOPT BEST PRACTICES

There are likely some special things about the way you do business that are part of your competitive edge and those, of course, must be retained. Fortunately, ERP developers have built a tremendous amount of flexibility into their systems.

The challenge for the implementation team is to recognize the differences that truly add value, compared to the ones that are simply artifacts or obsolete practices that are of no value.

Most teams will engage in an implementation planning process similar to value stream mapping to document current practices, future desired procedures and the steps necessary to make the transition.



**THIS TESTING PHASE ACTUALLY GAVE US SOME UNEXPECTED BENEFITS. IT ALLOWED US TO TEAR UP OUR OLD PROCESSES, GET RID OF OLD HABITS AND START OVER.**

*Jim Scatena  
FloraCraft*



**A BIG IMPROVEMENT THAT I SEE WITH PLEX IS THE FACT THAT WE CAN DO LIVE SCHEDULING. ...WE COULDN'T DO THAT BEFORE.**

*John Brayshaw  
Wisco Industries*



## TIP #4 DON'T FORGET SUPPORT

If you are transitioning from an on-premise system to cloud/SaaS, the vast majority of support and maintenance tasks will be outsourced to the system provider, allowing you to redeploy IT resources to direct user support.



**WORKING WITH THE PLEX GLOBAL SERVICES AND SUPPORT (GSS) TEAM FOR OUR IMPLEMENTATIONS WAS ONE OF THE KEYS TO OUR SUCCESS.**

*Jeff Pomeroy  
Motus Integrated Technologies*



**WE ONLY HAVE TWO IT FOLKS AT FLORACRAFT SO NOT HAVING TO MANAGE ADDITIONAL SERVERS AND SOFTWARE IS A REAL BONUS FOR US, AS IS THE MINIMAL OVERHEAD REQUIRED TO UPGRADE VERSIONS OR MANAGE ERP LICENSING.**

*Jim Scatena  
FloraCraft*



## TIP #5 ASSEMBLE A STRONG CROSS-FUNCTIONAL TEAM

You'll want your best people on the system implementation team. And they will undoubtedly be the ones who have a history of being able to get things done. Since computing and software are central to an ERP project, your IT team will certainly be involved as vital contributors to the selection and implementation effort.

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**OUR MANAGEMENT TEAMS WERE PART OF THE PROCESS. THEY MADE IT A PRIORITY, AND THEY WANTED TO GET IT DONE**—which is critical for the success of this type of endeavor. And we couldn't have done it without a Plex lead person to walk us through, step-by-step, and the project plan was very efficient for us.

*Virginia Palinsky  
Hausbeck Pickles & Peppers*

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**HAVING (THE EXECUTIVE TEAM) REALLY DIGGING IN DEEP HAS PUSHED THE SYSTEM.** I've even seen our new president in the system saying, 'Here's how we're going to do expense reports this way.' It's not just this initiative that *IT* wants but that the whole company wants.

*Randy Edler  
Gill Industries*





## TIP #6 EMBRACE THE CLOUD

A cloud-based ERP offers the functionality, customization, technology and ease-of-use that manufacturers need for success. The scalability of cloud ERP cannot be ignored. As your company needs change, system expansion is at most a phone call away — no waiting for new hardware to be delivered and installed; no disruption or down time for changes to be implemented; no capital costs — and is often automatic and invisible.



**WITH THE CLOUD MODEL, IT HAS ALLOWED US TO ACCESS INFORMATION FROM ANYWHERE, ANYTIME. WE ARE NO LONGER CHASING DATA FROM ONE SOURCE TO ANOTHER. IT IS NOW READILY AVAILABLE TO HELP US MAKE INFORMED AND PROACTIVE DECISIONS.**

*Arvel Wooten  
Hatch Stamping*



**THERE ARE THOUSANDS OF LITTLE ‘SWITCHES’ INSIDE THE PROGRAM I CAN TWEAK TO MAKE SURE IT’S OPERATING OPTIMALLY FOR OUR NEEDS.**

*Aaron Bacon  
Aaron Thomas Co.*



**THE SINGLE BIGGEST IMPROVEMENT IN MOVING TO THE CLOUD IS RELIABILITY.**

*Mike O’Malley  
Wisco Industries*





## TIP #7 MANAGE CHANGE

Successful implementation of a new system is dependent on effective change management to overcome resistance and enlist enthusiastic support across the enterprise.

Build a sense of ownership by getting users involved early in the process. If they are part of the selection and planning process, they will feel responsible for its success. Provide education and training to eliminate the “unknown” that underlies resistance to change.

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**BECAUSE THE SYSTEM IS SO INTUITIVE, ON-THE-FLOOR TRAINING WAS QUICK AND HIGHLY EFFECTIVE. THE IMPLEMENTATION DIDN'T DISRUPT OUR BUSINESS, AND EMPLOYEES IN ALL DEPARTMENTS ARE NOW ABLE TO ACCESS AND USE INFORMATION TO PERFORM THEIR JOBS EFFECTIVELY.**

*Jeff Aznavorian  
Clips & Clamps Industries*

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**WE IMPLEMENTED 80 TO 90 SETTING CHANGES IN ONE DAY. I WOULD SAY PLEX IS A STRONG ERP SYSTEM TO BE ABLE TO DO THAT WHILE NOT TOPPLING THE HOUSE OF CARDS OVER.**

*Randy Edler  
Gill Industries*

## FINAL THOUGHTS



### **LEARN FROM THE MISTAKES OF OTHERS.**

You can't live long enough to make them all yourself.

*Eleanor Roosevelt*

Most people and organizations will only go through an ERP system selection and implementation once every ten to fifteen years, so few if any team members will have first-hand experience to lean on. It is important, therefore, to gather advice and information from software suppliers and their experienced implementation support staff, outside consultants and implementers.



**WE HOPE THAT THE LESSONS OUTLINED IN THIS E-BOOK HELP YOU ON YOUR ERP JOURNEY.**

**PERHAPS YOUR PATH WILL LEAD TO A “BEYOND ERP” SOLUTION FOR MODERN  
MANUFACTURERS TO THE PLEX MANUFACTURING CLOUD®.**

**MEET THE CUSTOMERS:**

Scott Hankamp, A&K Finishing  
Paul Wright, Accuride  
Bob Ziolkowski, Argent International  
Jim Scatena, FloraCraft  
Randy Edler, Gill Industries  
Arvel Wooten, Hatch Stamping  
Tim Hausbeck, Hausbeck Pickles and Peppers  
Jeff Pomeroy, Motus Integrated Technologies  
John Brayshaw and Mike O'Malley, Wisco Industries

