

Wholesale & distribution

Building a competitive edge
with SAP Business One



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Building a competitive edge with SAP Business One

In today's dynamic business landscape, competition is fierce. Building and maintaining a competitive edge is critical, yet doing so can be a challenge.

For wholesale and distribution businesses, for example, standing out from the crowd cannot be achieved by developing a new product or coming up with an award-winning design. Wholesale and distribution are process-driven operations – competitive edge depends on the smoothest possible running of those processes.

To run a competitive wholesale and distribution business, you need to:

...Get the right product...

...at the right price...

...to the right customer...

...at the right time..



More specifically, this means:

- Inventory. Managing your warehouse inventory smoothly, ensuring that you always have the correct levels of stock in place to respond to (expected) customer demands.
- Financials. Running a slick finance operation, including an efficient supply chain, so that you can pass on the best possible pricing to your customers. Providing special offers and discounts to particularly loyal customers.
- Customer care. Building long-term and loyal customer relationships wherever possible, with outstanding service levels.
- Logistics. Managing the logistics of delivery and distribution efficiently.

Leveraging digital technology can be truly transformative, particularly for smaller organisations which are able to access levels of automation and intelligence that would have been out of reach for all but the largest organisations mere decades ago.

And the digital technology that can touch all of these areas?
Enterprise resource planning (ERP) software.

Let's explore how ERP software, and in particular SAP Business One, the software we recommend to our customers, can impact these key areas of wholesale and distribution.



Inventory management

Management of warehouse data. Optimisation of stock location and picking processes. Procuring stock in line with expected customer buying patterns. ERP software such as SAP Business One achieves all of these, ultimately ensuring that inventory management is cost-effective, process-efficient and supports business growth.

Accurate monitoring of stock levels is crucial for ensuring that products can be delivered on time, and delivers rescheduled at short notice if customers require it. It is also crucial for the other end of the supply chain – procurement and vendor management. When stock levels are accurately measured, incoming orders and production orders can be made at the optimum time, and the best contracts can be arranged with suppliers.

ERP software also enables managers to simulate planned adjustments to stock levels, testing out how these will impact on customers and suppliers.





Financials

SAP Business One features a function called the Relationship Map, which offers a diagrammatic visualisation of all the documents relating to a particular transaction. It also enables users to view all the documents linked to a particular purchase order.

This consolidation and visualisation of related financial information offers managers real-time visibility into the financial performance of the business, and allows trends to be analysed and forecast very quickly.

Predefined accounts templates in line with the specific legal requirements of all the countries in which a wholesale and distribution business operates are another must. With multiple global currencies and financial reporting standards for accounts payable and receivable built in, ERP systems deliver a robust and scalable foundation for international growth and consolidation.

Customer care

Customer care is one way in which wholesale and distribution businesses can really seek to stand head and shoulders above the competition, and all depends on a combination of efficiency and engagement.

SAP Business One enables wholesalers and distributors to take a genuinely proactive approach to customer engagement, by storing all the data related to each customer in the same place. This means that from first contact to aftersales support, all of the relevant information is available at all times. Customer service staff can respond to queries quicker, and customers, can even check their own order statuses.

Discounts and one-off promotions can also help wholesalers and distributors to develop long-term relationships, and ERP software enables multiple discount rules to be managed smoothly for vendors and customers.





Logistics

Overseeing and managing vendor data is crucial for building good vendor relationships and ultimately ensuring the smooth flow of goods into a wholesale and distribution businesses. Meanwhile, overseeing and managing customer data is crucial for ensuring the smooth flow of goods out of the business.

SAP Business One supports all these flows. It facilitates the quick and easy creation of purchase orders, which are then checked against a predefined price list, with discounts automatically applied for the appropriate buyers, and shipping, billing and tax information dropped in seamlessly. It also offers dynamic monitoring; users can check goods' item number, description, purchasing and packaging units.

Business intelligence = competitive edge

Ultimately, ERP systems like SAP Business One capture and process information from across wholesale and distribution businesses, presenting it in consolidated and easy-to-use reports and performing advanced analytics where necessary. Over 50 built-in dashboards and KPIs, and a series of pre-built data sets for analytics, are provided as standard, and detailed reports are delivered from a single centralised source of information.

This information is the key to unlocking true business value and a competitive edge for wholesalers and distributors. It enables innovation to come not from new product development or design, but from truly frictionless relationships with customers and vendors alike, from inventory management that learns from the past and makes predictions for the future.



Choosing the right ERP software for your business

Understanding the myriad ways in which ERP software can enhance wholesale and distribution businesses is one thing – choosing precisely the right ERP solution for your business is another.

Key issues to bear in mind include:



Integration. ERP software is at its most powerful when it can integrate smoothly with other technology within your business, such as your Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system.



Installation. A rapid and straightforward installation process, whether you have one or multiple locations, keeps costs manageable and helps you to benefit from a faster return on investment.



Scalability. An ERP platform which is only suitable for the size of your business today, not the scale at which you hope to grow it in the future, will rapidly become a brake on your business.



Flexibility. Choice around pricing structures, and whether you deploy your ERP system on-premise or in the cloud, helps you to tailor your ERP software to the precise needs of your business.



Clarity. ERP software is only as useful as the information it generates is easy to harness. Look for real-time KPI dashboards and up-to-the-minute analytical insights, and check how much visibility and control is available on mobile devices too.

Tens of thousands of companies have chosen SAP Business One for its ability to deliver all of the above benefits. It is fully integrated with the Microsoft Office suit and its open architecture facilitates smooth integration with other third-party solutions. It is designed to be up and running very quickly, with one install across multiple locations, and avoids the need for regular costly upgrades and customisations. It can scale with your business, from fewer than 10 to over 500 employees, and it is available both in the cloud or on-premise across many platforms. With its real-time KPI dashboards and analytical insights powered by SAP HANA, it offers dynamic insight into vital information from across all corners of your business.



To explore how SAP Business One could help your wholesale or distribution business create and maintain a genuine competitive edge, get in touch with APH today.

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