ISSUE
18
July
2019

Official
Newsletter of
ACS-Embrace

embraceTALK

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Editors Note

Welcome to our winter edition of embraceTALK. We're already halfway through 2019 and it's proving to be a year of exciting and innovative developments.

The TALK that has permeated South African businesses this year has been based around new and emerging technologies and how business can leverage them for competitive edge and profitable growth.

With the focus on agile business solutions and iERP, the question everyone is asking is, **"What will next generation ERP look like?"**

It is no surprise that in this addition we focus on and TALK about cloud ERP, Mobility, UX, IoT, 4IR, (AI), Machine Learning, Data, BI, visualisations and analytics.

Our special feature looks at how Embrace ERP leverages these emerging technologies to enable you to remain agile and embrace your competitive edge.

We take great pride in presenting a case study on how ABES Technoseal **leverages superior service and flexibility** with their Embrace ERP solution.

At ACS-Embrace it is our mission to **build lasting win-win partnerships with our clients.** Our client TALK feature bears testament to this.

Enjoy the read!

Jeanette

Next Generation ERP Trends

ERP is rapidly changing. Cloud adoption, emerging technologies and evolving digital business requirements are affecting the very definition of ERP.

Over the years, ERP software has effectively evolved to adapt to ever-changing business needs, customer demands and enterprise technology innovations. Moving forward, beyond 2020, we have identified 5 key trends that we believe will be crucial in future ERP evolutions. On their own or in combination, each has the ability to significantly transform your business models.

So the question that everyone is asking is, ***"What will the next-generation ERP look like?"***

Truth is, while ERP is changing, it is still a core business system and has the potential to drive digital transformation. ERP is so much more than an accounting or record-keeping system and has the flexibility and agility to enable you to take advantage of new trends and technology – such as Cloud Computing, Mobility, The Internet of Things (IoT), Artificial Intelligence (AI), Machine Learning Automation and Blockchain.

Next-generation ERP systems will leverage these emerging technologies in order to improve operational efficiency and boost business growth. Trends, such as evolving customer expectations and increased competition are beginning to force businesses to pursue innovation and embrace digital transformation. As a result, ERP systems will evolve into new systems of intelligence – **iERP**.

Cloud adoption, viewed as the gateway to modernisation, has reached a tipping point. According to Gartner, by 2020, at least 35 percent of new product-centric ERP deployments in large enterprises will be software as a service (SaaS), loosely integrated with on--premise manufacturing execution systems (MES).

With cloud enabling access from anywhere and **mobile** phones being entwined in people's lives, using ERP software on their mobiles will become inevitable.

User Experience (UX) will be seamless across platforms and channels and relentlessly personalised, placing a new emphasis on customers and users. We will start seeing highly dynamic ERP experiences, tailored to specific departments and even users. The on-demand culture that we live in has led to users wanting to view information the way they want, with their own formatting, styles, colours, sorting and indicators. Providing such a platform for this kind of adaptable, extensible user experience is becoming an important aspect of user adoption of the ERP UX and will have a direct impact on people, productivity and profit.

Core ERP will become **Intelligent and Extended**, where intelligence, enabled by AI, machine learning and analytics will not be an 'add-on' but instead integrated to the core of the platform. This will enable a new wave of process innovation in ERP, to support real-time responses. iERP systems will learn from exceptions and evolving business rules, empowering users to discover more actionable insights, predict and plan better for any particular outcome, and recommend next steps. These capabilities will allow you to grow and scale in your own way, and in real-time.

Data has become an extremely valuable asset and most of it is being captured through ERP software. Business Intelligence (BI) integrated into ERP systems will enable users to easily access, analyse and present that data in a way that allows the information to be used to **amplify insights** that help drive strategic decision-making and increase profits.

Imagine what your business could achieve with next generation Embrace iERP!

Did You Know?

Embrace ERP can be easily and cost-effectively deployed in the cloud.

Cloud ERP has been proven to reduce costs in many ways, as it:

- Avoids upfront costs for all computing infrastructure such as hardware and data servers
- Reduces IT support services because IT support is provided by the data centre
- Eliminates paying upfront for application software licenses in favour of a monthly fee
- Shrinks the cost of maintaining and supporting your business applications as the cloud vendor is responsible for all updates and upgrades
- Accessing the system from anywhere makes it easy for a company to expand geographically since the internet is everywhere and there is no need to implement hardware and software at remote locations
- Whether you are cloud now, cloud next, or cloud future, Embrace offers world-class cloud solutions. We empower you to choose the ERP deployment strategy that works best for your business. Your business is free to embrace innovation at your pace to achieve your growth goals and desired business outcomes

Embrace Next Generation ERP

How does Embrace ERP deliver the emerging technologies you will need for competitive advantage?

In this special feature we unpack elements of the feature roadmap for Embrace ERP and how it incorporates these exciting future trends. With some already available in the current version, the next version of Embrace ERP will cater for more and more of these new and emerging technologies.

✔ **Cloud adoption** – The current version of Embrace ERP can be deployed on-premise, in the cloud or as a hybrid (a combination of both cloud and on-premise). The full suite of modules and functionality of Embrace ERP Software is available with Embrace Cloud, which meets the needs of businesses that want the benefits of an ERP solution but do not want to, or cannot afford to, purchase and maintain hardware or manage an in-house IT department. This makes it a flexible and cost-effective option for small and medium-sized businesses (SMB's), who can now leverage enterprise-grade ERP tools at a fraction of the cost.

Embrace Cloud is a Software as a Service (SaaS) offering where ACS-Embrace is responsible for the ongoing updates, management and upkeep of your technology and tools. The system offering can be easily scaled up or down to fit your needs. It provides a consistent user experience of Embrace for end users as well as system integrators, whether on-premise, in the cloud or hybrid.

Cloud enables Embrace to be deployed into scalable environments where infrastructure can be dynamically assigned as required, e.g. Oracle Cloud, Amazon Web Services (AWS) and Microsoft Azure. These environments provide additional tools within the cloud environment for analytics, data mining, process automation and artificial intelligence and these technologies will become more integrated into our next generation version of Embrace iERP.

With the low cost of mobile devices, widespread internet availability, expansion of computing power and massive storage availability, high functioning business applications can safely and securely run remotely on computer hardware hosted remotely.

Embrace Cloud gives you more time to spend on what matters most, and that is, growing a sustainable, profitable business. When you no longer need to spend time planning and implementing software upgrades, dealing with downtime and security issues that time can now be reallocated to those areas that directly impact profitability and future business growth.

✔ **User Experience (UX) –** Users are demanding well-designed products and UX is an integral part in delivering those products, which is why **Embrace 15 introduces a completely new user interface, simplified and intuitive.** The latest version of Embrace includes dashboard based navigation, intuitive role-based interfaces, interaction optimised for both desktop and mobility users and a focus on user-centred design.

Businesses are demanding increased productivity and good enterprise UX enables employees to do more with less – and that's not just less time or money, but also less frustration for the employee.

The simple user experience eliminates complexity by offering empowering *glance and go* tools that enable users to get to where they need to get to at the exact moment when they want get there. Embrace presents a simple summary or snapshot of information, i.e. a dashboard or visualisation that provides a graphical overview or *glance* and then allows them to go or drill down to the information they need to see or act on.

Time is extremely valuable and Embrace 15 and its new UX have placed a premium on speed, efficiency, information availability and intuition. Developed using the latest technologies, including JavaFX, the new user interface is completely scalable, providing a seamless experience from desktop to mobile device, with the browser-based client available anywhere.

Amplify Insights – with Embrace Dashboards and Visualisations. View key information at a glance with real-time dashboards, customised by individual, role or department.

Monitor current financial, operational and organisational information. Highlight outliers, analyse trends and review KPIs that relate to your job. Drill down into the detail and make critical decisions based on accurate, real-time data.

All Embrace visualisations and dashboards are mobile-ready and will display on any web-enabled device.

Mobility – Mobility solutions refer to tools, systems and information that can be securely accessed by your team or customers via mobile devices, from anywhere, at any time. Over the past year we have seen companies looking more and more towards mobile solutions to help enhance their operations, and to extend that reach to their core ERP systems as they are such a critical source of business information. Mobile ERP business applications allow businesses to benefit from improved quality of service, deeper business relationships and more accurate data capture.

Featuring inherent mobile capabilities, Embrace 15 gives remote users complete control and access to applications and tools to manage the planning and execution of their roles. The mobile user interface is available on both tablets and mobile devices using underlying JavaFX web-enabling technologies. This new experience provides access to real-time business information and enables sales and field service employees to improve service delivery and customer engagement.

Simplified user interfaces, tailored to mobile use are being introduced throughout the Embrace ERP application suite, to ensure ease of use, but at the same time leveraging the full suite of underlying Embrace functionality.

Key business decisions can be made without having to wait until everyone is together or accessing your ERP system from the same place. Embrace Mobile helps build a more agile team. This focus on instant accessibility and improved collaboration helps boost productivity both inside and outside your business.

Did you know?

Cloud solutions provide enhanced security and reliability.

- Your ERP business solution is automatically upgraded by your ERP vendor more frequently ensuring that you are constantly and consistently safeguarded with the latest security patches.

- World-class global cloud infrastructure now uses the latest in artificial intelligence and machine learning to detect and remediate vulnerabilities at scale even before they are exploited.

- Physical datacentre security for world-leading cloud platform providers is so strict and technology-driven, it would be extremely costly for a single business to try to replicate that on their own premises.

- Embrace ERP supports a comprehensive, end-to-end security model. We build security into every layer of the ERP environment – from physical network interface cards, to user passwords.

- A holistic approach to security enables us to anticipate and minimize disruptions, giving you more uptime and better peace of mind.

FAQ

Q: As ACS introduces Embrace as a cloud solution, will we be forced to migrate our existing on-premise environment to the cloud?

A: Not at all, the Embrace environment is flexible and provides a variety of deployment options, continuing with on-premise installations, hosted installations, as well as providing hybrid deployments on both private and public cloud infrastructure. We have already migrated some installations from on-premise to a hosted environment, but this is entirely dependent on the customer requirements, taking into account their infrastructure and support needs. ..

Q: Will the same Embrace functionality available in the cloud also be available in our on-premise solution?

A: **Absolutely** – the full functionality of Embrace will be available in both environments. There will always be some features that will be discontinued, like faxing, as technology evolves, but the current suite of functionality in the latest Embrace release will be available in the on-premise, hosted and cloud offerings.

✔ **Extended API –** The next generation versions of Embrace provide an extensive suite of APIs to fully harness the power of microservices, IoT devices and the Fourth Industrial Revolution, to extend the reach of Robotic Process Automation (RPA) and provide an extensible ERP environment, complete with comprehensive security and access control.

Simply put, APIs are application interfaces between Embrace and 3rd party solutions that provide additional competitive edge and enhance the ability to deliver faster, improve efficiency and streamline business processes.

API's are the technical interface between systems, sometimes visual and interactive, and sometimes purely a pipeline of information. The combination of Embrace SOAP and RESTful web services, together with the business logic layer exposed by Automated Data Exchange Web services, provide the interface layer between systems.

Web Services provide an industry standard interface to Embrace's business functionality, by enabling outbound business information from Embrace to third party systems, or by executing business processes and transactions in Embrace, such as updating CRM information, processing sales orders or allowing Field Service technicians to access, update and invoice service jobs as completed.

The new API suite handles authentication, encryption and load-balancing, and provides an API explorer feature that enables third party developers to easily render interfaces to the robust underlying Embrace ERP functionality.

Providing interfaces with e-commerce platforms, sales management tools, equipment telematics, electronic POD's and online payment platforms, the availability and adoption of the API's will extend the reach of an Embrace environment to last-mile solutions that will improve business processes and improve customer experience.

Next generation Embrace extends the ERP environment beyond it's current reach, to provide our customers with access to new business tools, unlock new opportunities and help to redefine their approach to customers and service levels.

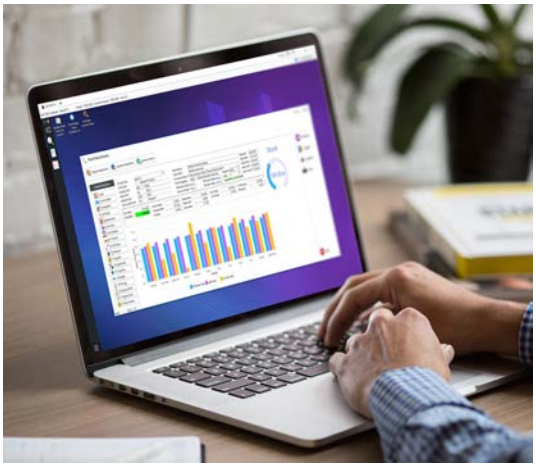
✔ **Data, Data and More Data –** Information and business insight should be the outcomes of the extremely valuable data being captured and recorded through the Embrace ERP system. Enterprises need to be able to make sense of these large volumes of data, turning it into information and making sense of that information, so as to provide real-time business insights and enhance informed decision making and operational execution.

The next generation version of Embrace provides extensive visualisations, via dashboards and enquiries, within the application suite, where business information and insights are enhanced through visualisations that bring data to life, highlighting exceptions and directing user focus. Making use of the enhanced visualisations and dashboard features of the new JavaFX based Embrace Desktop, the user interface in Embrace is evolving into a role-based dashboard interface, with immediate access to the underlying problem areas.

The user experience in Embrace 15 has been further enhanced to enable the underlying data to be more readily accessible. This has been achieved with the introduction of the embedded Embrace Data Warehouse, which provides streamlined views of the data and eliminates the complexity of extracting data from multiple tables into reports. The Embrace Data Warehouse is seamlessly populated at the same time as the Operational Data Store that is recorded during transaction processing.

The Embrace Data Warehouse provides a simplified data platform for Business Intelligence (BI) and Reporting tools, that will enable users to easily access, analyse and present that data in a way that allows the information to be used to **amplify insights** that help drive strategic decision-making.

Reinvent and reimagine the way you do business – with next generation Embrace iERP!



ABES Technoseal Leverages Superior Service and Flexibility from Embrace ERP

Embrace Delivers Quantifiable Benefits

Greater
Ability to turn data into information for decision making

Enhanced
Reliability of customer delivery

Substantially
Less time for material costing

Increased
Visibility into finished product and component details

The Company

ABES Technoseal is a market leader in importing, assembling and distributing seals, clutches and ignition systems. A division of the Hudaco Group, the company prides itself on supplying quality products at competitive prices and delivering the best possible service to their customers.

To help achieve these goals they rely on Embrace, their end-to-end ERP business solution. ***"By facilitating logistics, manufacturing, warehouse management and distribution, Embrace helps us to ensure we can deliver on our business promises,"*** states Danie Venter, Managing Director, ABES Technoseal.

ABES Technoseal's partnership with Embrace began in 2002 when the company looked to replace their two separate legacy systems with a complete, integrated system that embraces all aspects of their business. ***"Since then the company has grown and evolved. There have been inevitable changes and Embrace has been able to grow and adapt to our changing needs,"*** adds Juan Radley, Financial Director, ABES Technoseal.

The Challenge

Extensive and complex part number structure

ABES Technoseal has an extensive range of product sets. There are different types of seals (oilseals, O-rings and hydraulics), made up of different materials, and all in different dimensions. There could be at least 30 different types of a single dimension, e.g. 30mm x 40mm seals, which equates to thousands of different part numbers. There are also different clutches (passenger clutches and commercial clutches) as well as ignition systems (ignition leads and pencil coils). All these different part numbers need to be effectively catered for.

Embrace provides sophisticated cross referencing, allowing simple lookup per product by providing quick and easy access to length, width, height, description, and any other details. ***"Of all the ERP business solutions evaluated, Embrace was the best fit for ABES and the only solution that could cater for our complex part number structure,"*** sates Warren de Douallier, IT Manager. ***"This feature alone,"*** adds Radley ***"has given us a significant competitive edge!"***

Complex pricing and invoicing requirements

Price lists include price per each, contract pricing, categories on products, etc., and that's just on seals. Volume rebates are offered on clutch sales, and when there are special discounts, these are added and applied to the volume discounts. There could also be price list specials, in which case, these discounts are applied to that particular special.

Five part invoices are required per sale and each is different. The breakdown of parts and discounts are detailed on the internal copies, while the customer copy reflects only the final product and price. Embrace meets these complex requirements, ensuring accurate invoicing and increased customer satisfaction.

Sophisticated Manufacturing

There was no requirement for a full blown and complicated Manufacturing solution. ***"The Embrace Kitting solution meets all our manufacturing requirements. The simplicity of the system is a big plus,"*** states Venter.

Specific reporting requirements of the Hudaco Group

The solution needs to satisfy the reporting requirements of the ABES Technoseal management team as well as the Hudaco Group executive. ***"Embrace meets all our reporting requirements. I have one report which gives me all the detail Head Office needs. A huge plus is that we can customise our reports and download them directly into Excel in whatever format we want,"*** explains Radley.

The Solution

The integrated, end-to-end, real-time Embrace ERP business application has streamlined business processes and enabled ABES to remain highly competitive, meet increased demand and exceed customer expectations.

The company recently implemented Embrace Forecasting, which had a significant impact on the business, saving time and boosting efficiency.

"With over 40,000 line items we wouldn't manage without it," adds Jayne Kyte, Logistics Director, ABES Technoseal.

"Forecasting, with Embrace DRP, ensures our ordering is done correctly and that parts arrive in good time. We test the forecast all the time so it works really well."

ABES imports products from around the world. Each product has a different lead time, ranging anywhere from 2 weeks to 6 or 12 months, which are catered for in Embrace. Stock optimisation, visibility and tight controls have helped ensure shrinkage is minimal.

Kitting

ABES currently have 3 production facilities. When they first implemented Embrace there was just one, namely Technoseals. As the business grew, production facilities for clutches and ignition leads were added. Both were seamlessly and effortlessly brought onto Embrace. Despite the increased complexity and volumes, there was still no need to implement a complex MRP system as ***"Embrace Kitting does everything we need. It is not complicated, very easy to use and keeps the full history,"*** states Kyte.

A number of different products are built, all of which have their own BOM and each is made up of 28+ different parts. Embrace can show one overall view of what is required, and if any single part is out of stock, finds a substitute, in stock, ensuring there are no production delays and that contractual delivery dates are met. Kyte adds that ***"traceability in the system is excellent and audits are really quick and easy!"***

The Benefits

"One of the biggest benefits to us," explains Venter ***"is that Embrace is a fully integrated ERP business system. All the modules slot together, giving me access to accurate, real-time information throughout the business. This enables me to take action where necessary and make informed business decisions."***

Wealth of Knowledge

Embrace is a strategic partner with proven expertise in streamlining processes, expanding business growth and cultivating innovation.

"There is a wealth of business, industry and Embrace package knowledge that we benefit from" states Venter. Another key benefit is the fast, efficient service and support Embrace delivers. The team is always ready to address any problems.

"When we call, they're there, " adds Radley. ***It's that availability, that personal relationship that sets Embrace apart. You don't get it from other vendors, who come in, do the job and then they're gone. With Embrace, we know that they understand our business and our requirements and will always be back to assist, recommend and guide whenever needed."***

Kyte adds that another big benefit is the ease of use. ***"Embrace is not complicated at all and logical to use. We often bring temps in. It is quick and easy to train them to use the system and they are productive almost immediately."***

Real Time, End-to-End Visibility

Embrace provides full operational visibility with anytime access to accurate real-time information, such as turnover, gross profit, expenses, stock, backorders and ETA as well as sales per customer, per rep and per product line, with full drill down into the detail. Management can step in, take corrective measures and make quick decisions with confidence.

Stable and Compliant

Radley adds that Embrace is stable and compliant and works according to good accounting and business practices. ***"Embrace shows thought and industry leadership and always ensures they meet all local legislation requirements. They were one of the first vendors to address the IT14SD VAT requirements. But most importantly, Embrace adapts to the way we think!"***

Future Plans

ABES Technoseal is in the process of upgrading from version 13 to the latest version of Embrace. ***"We want to leverage the benefits of the latest technologies and additional functionality, specifically Embrace Catalogues and E-Commerce,"*** explains Venter.

He adds that the new analytics tools, dashboards and data visualisation capabilities will help the company transform to a more agile business as its management can focus more on information analysis rather than operational tasks.

As the business moves forward, Embrace will continue to play a key role in helping to further develop ABES Technoseals' business model to keep it competitive in a demanding market.

Client *TALK* - Celebrating Win-Win Partnerships!

We at ACS-Embrace believe that our close relationship with our clients enables them to remain competitive and embrace profitable growth. We are extremely proud of our client retention rate and thank you for your loyal support.

Insimbi *embrace* 15 years of continued growth and success

From left to right: Eddie Liechti and Marcel Kitay; Smiling in the background: Nadia Winde

Team *TALK*

Welcome

We take great pleasure in welcoming and introducing **Brian Mallory** who joins our Embrace Sales Team.

Brian is a former high value business to business sales trainer with certification in the world's most researched sales methodology and boasts sales records to match his qualifications.

Brian has reached and exceeded his sales targets in previous roles as well as managed large sales teams, designed and implemented weighted KPIs and has even launched his own cloud SaaS company.

With his head firmly in the clouds, Brian is well travelled having toured 34 countries. He is married to his beautiful wife Angela and has two young boys, James and Bradley, who are in primary school.

Brian loves business process improvement through technology, information and the correct measurements and is looking forward to being of service to companies wanting to break through to the next level.

FAQ

Q: Will future versions of Embrace only be run in the cloud on a subscription basis?

A: Not at all, whilst Embrace will be available in the cloud on a subscription basis, the traditional offerings remain available. Embrace becomes a scalable, future-proof offering that together with our Outsource Support Centre can provide a complete managed environment on a subscription basis.

Q: What is the difference between on-premise, hosted and cloud?

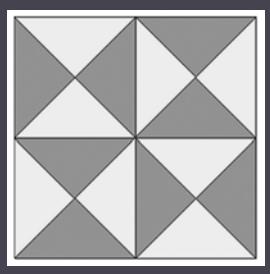
A: On-premise installations are environments where clients have Embrace installed on their own servers. These servers could be Virtual Servers but the hardware is either on site at the client's premises or in a client-controlled data centre.

Hosted deployments refer to Embrace being deployed into data centre environments where the infrastructure is managed by a Service Provider. The Embrace environment can be managed by the clients themselves, or for those clients looking to outsource their entire Embrace environment and support function, by the ACS Outsource Support Centre.

Cloud deployments refer to Embrace being deployed into scalable environments where infrastructure can be dynamically assigned as required, e.g. Oracle Cloud, AWS and Azure. These environments provide additional tools for Analytics, Data Mining, Process Automation and Artificial Intelligence. These technologies will become more integrated into the Embrace offering in future versions.

Editor's Brain Teaser

Q: How many triangles are in the image below:



You need to look beyond the obvious triangles for this one.

A: There are 44 triangles.

Last Word

"The first rule of any technology used in a business is that automation applied to an efficient operation will magnify the efficiency.

The second is that automation applied to an inefficient operation will magnify the inefficiency."

Bill Gates

Co-founder of Microsoft

embraceTALK

Executive editor:
Jeanette Teles

Design and layout:
Daniel Gloyne

Social Responsibility *TALK*

Team Embrace have been really busy at **Ikhwezilokusa Home and School** (a home for the profoundly disabled) over the past year. We have undertaken some massive projects that have made a significant difference to the daily lives of the residents, staff and students at the Home and School.

One of our biggest projects was the painting of all the classrooms – inside and out — with beautiful murals painted onto all the outside walls. "***The Ikhwezilokusa School has had a massive upgrade and ACS-Embrace you can be proud of what you have achieved here!"*** - Dennis Ryder, MP.

The reopening of the "new look" school was quite an event and attended by a number of dignitaries, including Member of Parliament, Dennis Ryder, who gave an emotional speech and cut the ribbon.

The home was in urgent need of a large industrial speed queen washing machine. The team arranged for the purchase, delivery and professional installation of the machine, which has gone a long way to easing their daily burden of washing heavy blankets, linen and clothing.

In fact, their requirements were too many to mention, but the team assisted wherever possible, purchasing a new stove, new urns, crockery, cutlery, liquidisers, filing cabinets, trays, balls, toys, puzzles, educational equipment and so much more.

Lillian Dyarvane, founder and director of the school, thanked ACS-Embrace***, "I have no words****," she exclaimed.* ***"You truly do embrace the spirit of Madiba!"***

ACS House
370 Rivonia Boulevard
Rivonia
Tel: 011 275-2000
Fax: 011 275-2233
E-mail: talk@embrace.co.za
Website: www.embrace.co.za