



ERP EXPERTS

BUSINESS GUIDE

# What Your Spreadsheets Can't Do

## The Hidden Costs of Relying on Spreadsheets for ERP Insights

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## The Hidden Costs of Relying on Spreadsheets for ERP Insights

Spreadsheets have long served as the backbone for financial and operational reporting, scenario modeling, and data tracking. Yet, as ERP data requirements expand and business environments grow more complex, spreadsheets reveal their limitations, introducing hidden costs that can impact productivity, accuracy, and decision-making. Here are four critical areas where spreadsheets fall short as an ERP intelligence tool—and how an advanced ERP solution can transform these challenges into advantages.

### Clear Business Visibility

In today's data-driven world, business decisions require comprehensive, real-time visibility across all operations. Yet, relying on spreadsheets often restricts this visibility, creating data silos and inconsistencies between departments. When sales, finance, and inventory management each maintain separate spreadsheets, these disparate data sources lead to fragmented reporting, misaligned processes, and decision-making based on outdated or incomplete information.

### ERP Enhances Visibility

An ERP system provides centralised, real-time dashboards and reports that draw from data across all departments. With automated data integration, ERP eliminates inconsistencies and creates a single, consistent view that everyone in the business can trust.

- ◊ **Real-Time Dashboards:** ERP systems offer at-a-glance dashboards that update in real time, providing a unified view of KPIs across departments.
- ◊ **Interactive Capabilities:** Unlike spreadsheets, ERP dashboards are interactive, allowing users to explore both summary-level and detailed transaction data with just a few clicks.

◊ **Cross-Departmental Alignment:** Real-time insights foster alignment between teams, optimising processes, increasing productivity, and ensuring that everyone works from the same data.

With ERP, companies move from outdated, manual reporting processes to a system that offers one reliable source of truth, empowering confident and efficient decision-making.

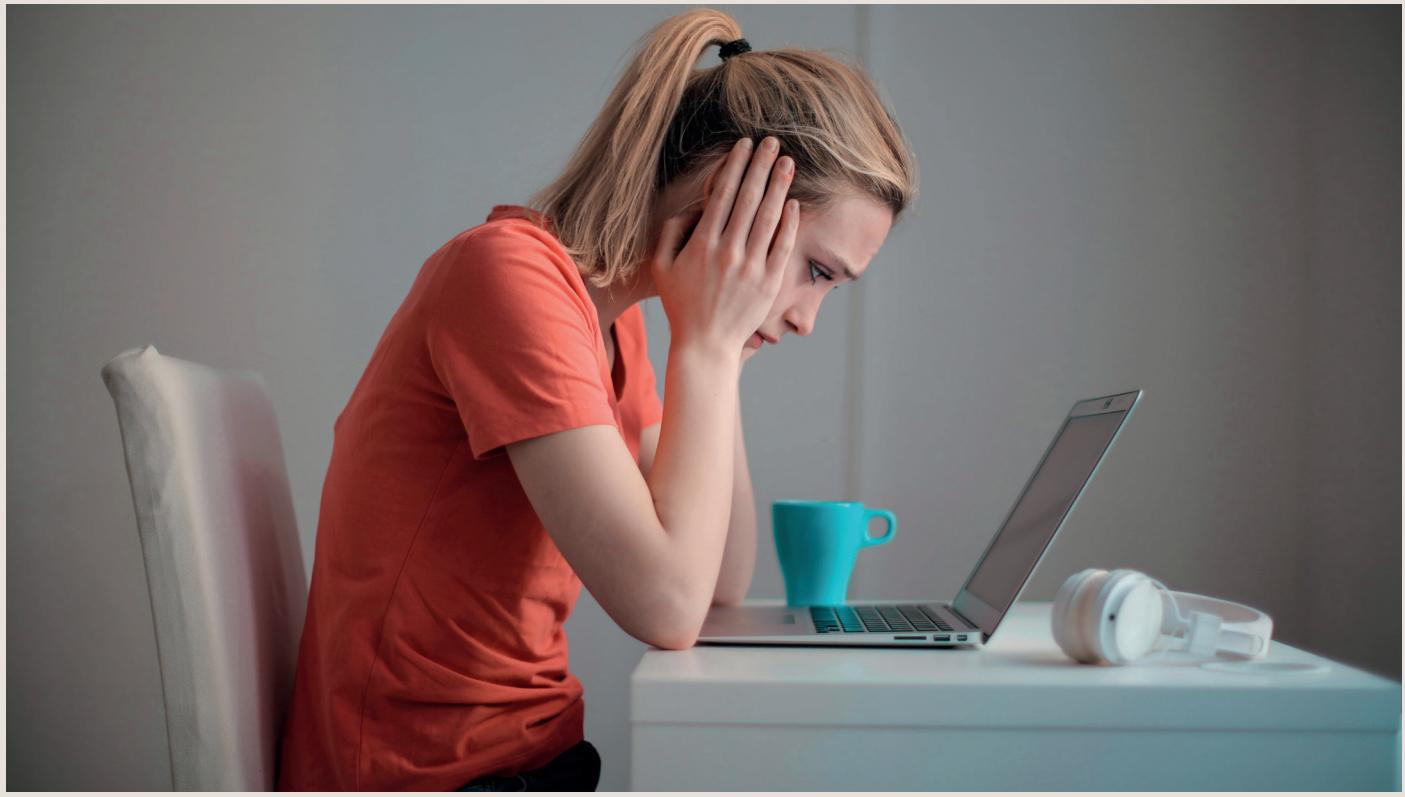
### High Data Utilisation

Data is one of the most valuable assets a business has, yet relying solely on spreadsheets means that this asset is often underutilised. Managing data with spreadsheets requires extensive manual effort—joining, cleaning, and consolidating data for reporting—that slows down decision-making and opens the door to costly errors. Large data volumes especially strain spreadsheets, as they lack the capacity to store, manage, and query complex data sets efficiently.

### ERP Maximises Data Utilisation:

An ERP system handles large-scale data effortlessly, making it easier to harness data's full potential. With seamless integration across systems, ERP can automate data refreshes, eliminating the need for repeated manual data handling and reducing the likelihood of errors.

- ◊ **Automated Data Integration:** ERP systems connect to all major data sources, pulling data automatically and ensuring that information is accurate and up to date.



◊ **Efficient Handling of Large Datasets:** ERP solutions are built to manage high data volumes and complex queries without slowing down. This makes critical information readily available for analysis.

◊ **Enhanced Data Governance:** With ERP, data validation and authorisation processes are built in, preventing common spreadsheet issues like version conflicts, unauthorised access, and accidental errors.

Through improved data utilisation, businesses can leverage insights more effectively, making data-driven decisions that enhance productivity and align with long-term goals.

### Realising ROI from Data Investments

Investments in data and analytics are on the rise, as companies understand the competitive edge that informed insights can offer. However, spreadsheets limit the potential of these investments, constraining complex analytics and real-time collaboration. When data handling consumes valuable employee hours, there's less time to extract actionable insights, reducing the overall ROI from data initiatives.

### ERP Maximises Data ROI

ERP systems empower businesses to realise the full value of data investments by streamlining data handling, improving accessibility, and supporting more collaborative, timely decision-making.

◊ **Improved Data Accessibility:** ERP provides data accessibility for all authorised users, enabling seamless collaboration and reducing duplicate reporting efforts.

◊ **Unified Customer Insights:** ERP solutions consolidate data across customer touchpoints, offering insights into behaviours and preferences. This enables personalised interactions and builds customer loyalty.

◊ **Operational Agility:** ERP's real-time capabilities allow businesses to quickly assess market trends, manage stock levels, and respond to shifts in customer demand. This agility is essential for staying competitive in dynamic markets.

With ERP, businesses maximise ROI by focusing on high-value activities that drive growth and foster innovation, rather than repetitive data management tasks.

## Gaining a Competitive Edge with AI

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is transforming how businesses analyse data, make decisions, and stay competitive. While spreadsheets can support basic analyses, they cannot match the speed, scale, and accuracy required to leverage AI effectively. Spreadsheets lack connectivity and the built-in capabilities needed for predictive insights, missing out on opportunities to anticipate market changes and optimise resource allocation.

## AI-Powered ERP Systems Drive Competitive Advantage

ERP systems integrated with AI offer advanced data processing, helping companies make proactive, data-driven decisions faster and with greater accuracy. AI-driven automation and machine learning streamline complex processes, freeing up teams to focus on strategic priorities.

- ◊ **Automated Data Collection and Analysis:** AI-powered ERP systems automate data entry, validation, and consolidation, saving time and reducing errors.
- ◊ **Enhanced Forecasting Capabilities:** AI enables more accurate forecasts by analysing historical and real-time data, allowing businesses to anticipate cash flow needs, customer demand, and inventory requirements.
- ◊ **Predictive Insights:** With ERP, companies gain predictive insights that enable them to adjust strategies quickly in response to market shifts, keeping them ahead of competitors. By leveraging AI within an ERP framework, businesses unlock greater data potential, supporting efficiency and agility and driving sustained competitive advantage.

## There's a Better Way

A comprehensive ERP system provides a single source of truth for business data, accessible anytime, anywhere. Moving data to an ERP system ensures that reporting is streamlined, data quality is improved, and insights are instantly available to support faster, smarter decisions. Cloud-based ERP solutions also offer the advantage of self-service analytics, empowering users to customise dashboards, build real-time reports, and make data-driven choices without extensive IT support.

## The Benefits of Cloud ERP and Self-Service Analytics:

- ◊ **Real-Time Accessibility:** With cloud ERP, data is accessible from anywhere, allowing remote teams to stay informed and make timely decisions.
- ◊ **Configurable Dashboards and Reports:** ERP solutions support customisable dashboards and real-time reporting with drag-and-drop functionality, reducing complexity and simplifying decision-making.
- ◊ **Predictive Analytics:** Predictive tools within ERP simplify trend forecasting, helping businesses plan strategically for future growth.

ERP Experts can help your organisation move beyond the limitations of spreadsheets to a scalable, intelligent ERP solution that supports sustainable growth, streamlined processes, and actionable insights.



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