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# Does Your ERP Solution Speak Your Language?

## Table of contents

- 1 Positive ROI yardstick
- 1 Accurate time registration
- 2 Business intelligence
- 2 Deltek expertise
- 2 Change is the driving force
- 3 External change requires internal buy-in
- 3 ERP as it should be

If your ERP solution could speak, what would you want it to say? Hugo Dorph, EVP and General Manager, Deltek, suggests you would probably want it to speak your own language and give you expert advice on how to improve your business processes.

Many ERP vendors develop a modular standard product to target companies in a wide variety of industries. To provide ideal support for a company's work procedures, however, an ERP vendor must possess in-depth knowledge of those work procedures. In other words, the ERP vendor must think business before software. All business processes must be fully integrated in the solution, seamlessly supporting an agile organisation to eliminate redundancy of work and unnecessary administration.

For more than 20 years, Deltek has had its eyes firmly trained on project-focused organisations. Rather than creating acceptable value to a widely dispersed set of client industries, Deltek decided to create superior value to a select few.

## Positive ROI yardstick

Investing in an ERP solution is a major decision for any organisation. The investment often ties up a significant amount of cash due to its company-wide nature. Additionally, a lot of time and effort is inevitably invested in the transition to the new solution.

Businesses are managed very differently across different industries. Hence, it is crucial that the solution is tailored to a particular way of doing business.

As with any other investment, the purpose of investing in an ERP solution is to attain a positive return. Research indicates that Deltek's enterprise solution Deltek Maconomy industry focus is an important parameter in terms of how quickly a business can expect a positive return on its investment as shown in the fact box.

## Accurate time registration

Time registration is a thorny problem in almost every project-focused organisation. It can be difficult to persuade all employees to complete

## Client ROI on Deltek's enterprise solution Maconomy

- 95% of clients achieved a positive ROI on their Deltek Maconomy investment within 24 months
- (SAP: 47%, PeopleSoft: 84%)
- 65% reported higher productivity and reduced administrative staff thanks to Deltek Maconomy
- Time savings of 15-40% were reported by employees who spent most time working with the ERP solution
- 65% of clients achieved a greater resource utilisation, resulting in a higher number of hours invoiced

Source: Nucleus Research (2007)

their time sheets accurately and on time, particularly in organisations where specialists often have assignments away from the office. But incomplete or missing time registration can have dire consequences for the organisation. (see figure below).

Many employees find it difficult to access the time sheets, locate the right project and find the right project code on which to register their time. Time registration is viewed by many as pure bureaucracy and some employees may not feel it adds value.

### Typical time registration challenges

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Time sheets are not completed on time	Late invoicing
Time sheets are only completed 1-2 times a month	Inaccurate invoices
Time sheets are not approved	Inconsistencies in the longer term

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The reality is that time registration is the very foundation for correct and timely invoicing, accurate estimation and solid planning – and thus everything from cash flow generation to profitability, efficiency, customer satisfaction and work/life balance. It is hard to undervalue those.

### Business intelligence

Accurate time registration also enables business reporting and analyses – also known as Business Intelligence (BI). BI helps project-focused organisations identify unprofitable activities and track business trends that may indicate what strategy the organisation should pursue. It allows for fact-based decision-making. Since accurate time registration provides the very foundation for BI, it is vital that all employees register their time regularly.

### Deltek expertise

Deltek has specialised in ERP solutions for project-focused organisations. Its greatest challenge is to eliminate administrative waste that diverts attention from the only billable asset: their competent employees.

An investment in an ERP solution can be either growth-driven or profitability-driven. Businesses typically invest in an ERP solution

when they foresee significant growth (proactive investment) or when rapid growth has created a need to streamline and professionalise workflows (reactive investment).

### Change is the driving force

“The only constant is change,” concluded Greek philosopher Heraclitus of Ephesus. That was 2,500 years ago, underlining the fact that change is something we will always have to deal with. This is particularly relevant for project-focused organisations that derive their income from the competence of their employees. This competence must be fully aligned with all the latest trends in the market to ensure that the offered services are not based on yesterday’s facts.

Lead-footed internal administration can pose a serious threat to a project-focused organisation. Organisations plagued with heavy administrative processes often choke innovation and creativity, where their leaner competitors excel.

To adapt a business to market requirements, it is absolutely critical that its leaders are on top of internal processes. Selecting the right ERP solution for a business is a significant factor in keeping up with constantly changing market conditions and client requirements.

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**External change requires internal buy-in**

To strengthen innovation and creativity, the right internal structure must be in place. When the internal structure is provided by a scalable, flexible and customised ERP solution that supports all of a business's processes, its employees are empowered to spend more time on adding value and less on administration.

Employees must feel that they create value for the organisation when they use the ERP solution. Therefore it is vital that the top executives endorse the solution and allocate adequate resources for proper training in its use. This gives the organisation access to updated data that conveys a detailed picture of the underlying business trends which might otherwise be hidden.

**ERP as it should be**

If a business is project-focused, it is much better equipped to meet rapidly changing market requirements using an ERP solution designed specifically to address its particular challenges. Easing the administrative burden on employees allows employees to be more productive. Collecting accurate real-time data enables management to gauge the health of the business and uncover business trends, and means important strategic decisions can be based on facts.

When a fully customised and scalable ERP solution works as intended, all business processes are so smoothly integrated in the solution so that the user hardly notices the software. It should fit the organisation well enough to enable employees to focus on the tasks at hand, not on the software they use to manage them.

In short, your ERP solution should speak your language.

**Deltek (Nasdaq: PROJ)** is the leading global provider of enterprise software and information solutions for professional services firms, government contractors, and government agencies. For decades, we have delivered actionable insight that empowers our customers to unlock their business potential. Over 14,000 organizations and 1.8 million users in 80+ countries around the world rely on Deltek to research and identify opportunities, win new business, optimize resources, streamline operations, and deliver more profitable projects.

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