

5 Profitable Steps That Green Your Supply Chain

Want to trim your organization's greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions? Perhaps you're simply interested in cutting fuel use to boost your bottom line. Either way, good supply chain practices make smart business sense. And enterprise resource planning (ERP) software can help you accomplish your goals – whether your mission is to go green or keep the green flowing to your bottom line.

ERP software is the technology of choice for millions of organizations interested in streamlining their processes for better efficiency and profitability. Along the way, companies are realizing that ERP features can help accomplish green goals like reducing CO2 emissions and landfill waste.

Good ERP distribution solutions are naturally “green” because they are designed to streamline business processes beginning on the supplier floor and ending with order delivery to the customer. In between those two points, some of the best ERP solutions help distributors burn less fuel, and the dollars that go with it.

Some ERP solutions offer sophisticated shipping and containerization features that allow distributors to combine purchase orders for more efficient cargo planning. Other functions include warehousing tools to help employees use less landfill-clogging packing materials, and fewer boxes, to ship orders. Still more features contained in retailer compliance modules help streamline data sharing, including advanced ship notices (ASNs), through electronic data interchange (EDI), and warehouse processes through wireless devices and radio frequency identification (RFID), to improve business accuracy while reducing the need for traditional paper documents.

And then there is sales. Consumers are increasing their demand for green products, and retailers are beginning to follow the trend. Deciding to take a position ahead of the curve, rather than playing catch-up, could lead to higher sales and higher profits.

Ready to learn more? Follow these five steps to sustainable ERP success and create your own green legacy:

1. Use DRP to reduce fuel costs and CO2 emissions

More efficient fuel strategies start with excellent forecasting and planning tools that allow distributors to optimize purchase orders for full-container shipments. Without flexible vessel management tools, distributors pay a high price for shipping partial container loads. Better demand planning that incorporates real-time visibility into point of sale (POS) data saves fuel too. That's because flexible organizations can react faster to changing demand and plan better for the optimal shipment of goods. The more nimble your supply chain and the more integrated and sophisticated your DRP, the less likely you'll be hit with rush orders and costly air freight charges. Other fuel-saving strategies begin with smart route management solutions for the optimal delivery of goods to retail trading partners. ERP solutions that can build more efficient route schedules experience better fuel economy as well as driver efficiency.

2. Follow the paper trail to green success

Reducing your organization's reliance on paper is good for the environment. Paper-centric organizations are also less efficient, more prone to errors and have slower decision-making cycles. Good ERP software minimizes traditional paper trails and drives better cross-functional visibility for improved decision making at all organizational levels. ERP solutions can eliminate the need for paper reports, sales orders, purchase orders, picking slips, invoices, shipping and confirmation notices, and other business documents. Paperless business is less expensive, more efficient and gives everyone the ability to access all the information they need with a click of a mouse.

3. Tap green warehouse features to reduce packing waste and improve worker productivity

Some ERP solutions allow workers to combine orders during a pre-cartonization process that helps employees build a better box – literally. Dynamic ERP software analyzes product dimensions against available carton sizes, then instructs employees on the most efficient packing method. Pre-cartonization takes the guess work out of the pick-and-pack function to improve employee efficiency, reduce the amount of landfill-clogging materials that end as waste, cut down on the number of cartons used and reduce shipping costs.

4. Use ERP to reduce retailer chargebacks and your carbon footprint

Retailer compliance issues are painful enough on employees and your bottom line. But chargebacks leave a legacy of another kind – a bigger carbon footprint due to product returns and re-ships and a red footprint on your P&L. The right ERP solution can help you manage complex retail compliance issues. When you use ERP to automate compliance processes, you minimize unnecessary returns, while enabling the capture, validation, dispute and recovery of chargebacks to reduce the drain on your bottom line. Adding Wireless Warehouse EDI and RFID to your ERP system gives you a completely automated, paper-free process that improves accuracy, productivity and the bottom line.

5. Use ERP to improve reporting features, drive intelligence and reduce paper waste

ERP software allows distributors to integrate data throughout the enterprise, producing detailed reports for better business intelligence and decision making. The best ERP solutions give distributors user-friendly tools and deep database mining capabilities to produce, store and retrieve business information when and how they need it. Reliable reporting functions also eliminate the need to print paper reports and palletize and store reams of hardcopy outputs, further reducing costs and minimizing paper waste.

In short, successful ERP implementation is good for the environment, good for business and good for the bottom line. Greening the supply chain through ERP can optimize your efficiencies, position your business for future growth and save you money

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About the Author

About the Author Founded in 1984, and with offices in North America and China, [Apprise Software](#) is a leading provider of enterprise-wide ERP software and solutions for mid-sized consumer goods distributors. Leveraging the latest technologies – such as Microsoft® .NET, wireless warehouse solutions, and RFID – along with industry best practices, Apprise Software provides consumer goods distributors with global solutions that meet their unique business requirements while delivering reduced costs, improved efficiencies, enhanced revenues and profitability, and a quick return on investment. For more information about Apprise Software, Inc. please visit www.Apprise.com. Apprise Software, Inc. 3101 Emrick Boulevard Bethlehem, PA 18020 1-610-991-3900 articles@apprise.com www.apprise.com © 2008 Apprise Software, Inc. All rights reserved. This Article is Copyright protected. Republishing and syndication of this article is granted only with the due credit and permission, as mentioned, retained in the republished article. Permission to reprint or republish does not waive any copyright. The text, hyperlinks embedded in the article, and headers should remain unaltered. This article must not be used in unsolicited mail.