

The SEEBURGER Solution Series For Manufacturing

Why Aren't You "Digital Ready"?



The SEEBURGER Solution Series

As a professional working in a manufacturing company, you are no doubt well aware of the constant drumbeat about "Digital Transformation." We talk to a lot of folks just like you every day, and we're confident that you have projects going on right now that fit in that category.

That's why we were wondering about a [recent study](#) of manufacturing companies by consulting

giant McKinsey, where they assert that "digital" was a senior leadership priority for only 53% of the respondents.

What we have found working with our worldwide customer base is that, no matter whether companies have a comprehensive digital strategy in place or not, the same tactical issues that are core to Digital Transformation need to be addressed:

Integration: Traditional legacy systems and emerging requirements for people, devices, and new processes are not integrated

Speed: Projects don't ever seem to get done FAST enough

Consistency of data: there's no 'single source of truth'

Insight: Data is not available to drive insight-driven management

If you're feeling the pain of any or all of these issues, you're not alone.

This study also points out the disconnect between typical company leadership and both line managers and IT staff, because less than 30% of respondents said they had a strategy for "Digital" that would make them more competitive.

The challenge for people in your role is that regardless of whether a strategy is in place or not, you still have to actually get things DONE. It is our belief that, by suggesting organizations come up with a "comprehensive digital strategy", these types of studies end up actually creating "Paralysis by Analysis".

And, honestly, the concept of "not doing anything until we have a comprehensive digital strategy" is contrary to the core benefits that digital transformation espouses, such as nimbleness and speed. Isn't it better to be able to respond quickly to changes in your competitive environment, rather than waiting until you have perfected the strategy? The likelihood that

aspects of your digital strategy could be outdated by the time you've completed it is high. In the world we are in now, the goalposts keep getting moved.

In this paper, our goal is to shed some light on the four issues above, and hopefully provide you with some insight into how you can best approach them today. We believe that there are ways to set yourself up for digital success without having to figure everything out ahead of time.

We are not suggesting that digital strategy is not important. We are saying that the four issues noted above need to be resolved no matter what strategy is deployed. We believe you can set yourself up for digital success by addressing the four issues above, that are critical by themselves.

If you feel like you are "trying to drive while looking at the rear-view mirror", read on.

Lack of Integration

Integrating disparate systems together is to some extent old news. The challenge of course is that, while it's not sexy, integration of existing systems is still one of the largest impediments to Digital Transformation success. And the traditional integration demands such as EDI have been supplemented by several new wrinkles: APIs as a method of integration, and the need for real-time or near-real-time data to support requirement.

API Connections: In many ways, the emergence of API connectivity and standards has made connecting systems easier. APIs have allowed end-users to become more involved by making it easier for them

to make the connections without programming. Unfortunately, this is not a panacea, because this means that the publishers of the APIs have to work harder to make it easier for them. For intercompany integration, for many years EDI ruled – a standard choreographed dance between companies to support the workflow. Now, your partners want to snap into your published API set to support their real-time data needs.

To support both the traditional connections like EDI, as well as emerging requirements like API integration and managed file transfer requires a comprehensive integration platform.

Speed of Implementation

Real-time Data: One of the more important aspects of Digital Transformation is the EXPECTATION that data will be available for real-time or near-real-time consumption. The companies that have led the way on this, such as Amazon, are winning these battles, and frankly, creating the digital business models of the future in the process.

In the manufacturing world, a standard example of this is real-time inventory reporting for eCommerce purposes – a prospective customer wants to know

how many widgets you have on hand (that you can send overnight). Many systems that were initially built for batch processing and perpetual inventory are totally incompatible with this requirement.

It is important that your tools allow you to integrate new applications quickly. This is why Integration Platform as a Service (iPaaS) has become a new watchword in the industry. This approach allows organizations to quickly 'snap in' to a Cloud-based solution, and provides adaptability and nimbleness.

"Single Source of Truth"

Does everyone at every level in your organization have the capability see the same granular data, and trust that it is aggregated properly?

It is very common that different levels see different data. It only takes a few levels of 'fudging' the data to cause a significant ripple effect across an organization.

This is one area where the integration platform you are deploying becomes critical. One size does not fit all in terms of the data presented – end-users look for a different level of detail than line managers for example – but faith that you are all using the same data is imperative.

This is where dashboards come into play. Their key advantage is to provide instant contextual information to help stakeholders from business departments or IT. Visuals help to easily capture the most important information, without being overwhelmed by the need to interpret mounds of raw data. Role-based drill-down capability assists in getting to detailed information in case of deeper and further interest.

Regardless of role, however, everyone in the organization is looking at the same data.

Insight-Driven Management

Ultimately, when systems are integrated properly, a nimble environment is created, and the data is trusted across all levels of the organization. Only then data can become information, and be utilized to drive timely decision-making.

Innovation is not always driven by the ideas that you have ahead of time – sometimes it comes from having an accurate and detailed view of what

is really happening in your organization. Digital success requires data that is both consistent and visible, delivered quickly enough to enable agile and responsive management. We believe that by focusing on the 4 areas above, you will go a long way in supporting your company's digital journey.

The SEEBURGER Solution

SEEBURGER is a German integration software company with over 10,000 customers worldwide, and has been addressing business integration and data asset security issues for over 30 years.

Our core product is called the Business Integration Suite (BIS), and supports EDI/B2B, API, and MFT using a single code base. Unlike most of our competitors, our software wasn't cobbled together by acquiring other software companies – it was purpose-built from the ground up to solve the first 3 issues discussed above. This then provides the trusted framework for the 4th issue – insight leading to innovation with Business Intelligence solutions. BIS provides the same set of tools for all users, from the shop floor to the C-suite, which minimizes the training effort required.

The SEEBURGER BIS also provides for a flexible implementation approach – it can be implemented as an on-premise solution, a fully cloud-based solution, or in a hybrid model.

For more information, please contact your SEEBURGER rep.