INTEGRATION WHITE PAPER

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EAM: Island or ocean?
How an integrated asset management system benefits the global enterprise

By Paul R. Neerhof

Introduction

Every corner of your enterprise depends on the assets that keep it running, from the back offices to the storeroom to the shop floor and in the field. Thus, there is a widespread and pervasive need for timely asset information. Some areas require small rivulets of essential knowledge, while others are swimming in virtual oceans of data.

When asset management systems are paper-based or electronic but separate from other enterprise information systems, knowledge suffers. When interface programs connect asset management and enterprise business systems, risks and costs are incurred. The best way to assure seamless, real-time integration and global access to information is to implement a single-solution, pre-integrated ERP/EAM platform. The EAM solutions that ERP vendors offer have

matured over the years and become increasingly functionally rich and competitive with best-of-breed EAM solutions. The most sophisticated have hundreds of integration points between the ERP and EAM built in.

Integration Business Drivers

An EAM system should not be an island. Every business needs a single source of truth about its assets, because the need for this knowledge is intricately interwoven throughout the enterprise:

- The C-level expects sustained and reliable operational performance
- Operations requires optimum asset uptime
- Maintenance planners need to know what service to schedule and when
- The storeroom must keep the essential parts on hand
- Purchasing has to know when and how much inventory to procure
- Accounting seeks to capitalize the assets and forecast expenses
- HR needs to provide an adequate skilled labor pool
- Legal and compliance teams must verify that regulations and standards are followed
- Engineering needs to validate its designs and know when new capital projects are due
- IT needs to keep the supporting systems current and secure

Not only should the core ERP/EAM relationship be seamlessly intertwined, but a properly integrated EAM system will communicate with essential peripheral solutions, such as mobility, GIS/GPS, equipment condition monitoring, energy monitoring, meter data management, reporting and analytics, or project management.

Having multiple, disconnected asset systems and data sources results in duplicate and potentially conflicting functions and slow access to information, yielding poor decisions and excessive costs.

In contrast, EAM integration with other enterprise systems allows:

- Timely, complete, actionable asset information
- Full asset lifecycle visibility
- Centralized spare parts and equipment management
- Automated and reliability-centered work processes
- Consistent regulatory compliance and record keeping
- Consolidated asset accounting with improved financial controls
- IT cost and labor savings

Integration Strategies

With integrated ERP/EAM solutions, the applications are designed to work together under a common data model, with all integration points maintained by a common vendor. When implemented, the only interfaces that may be required are for the peripheral solutions. To ease that process, open-standards-based integration services are typically provided.

Both ERP/EAM and best-of-breed EAM vendors generally supply standard, open application interfaces, or APIs, to simplify the integration process. Public APIs and Cloud APIs extend the capabilities, features and data of the software while avoiding the need for expensive, custom integration programs. APIs are common in service oriented architectures (SOA).

Most internal IT organizations understand their company's existing, legacy systems but lack the core competency to implement and integrate newer maintenance, production, financial and peripheral systems. Partnering with a systems integrator who has the necessary tools and depth of experience ensures a smoother transition.

Choose a systems integrator who specializes in delivering maintenance operational improvement through successful EAM implementations. The integrator's implementation methodology should have all the tools, technologies and strategies needed to successfully and cost-effectively establish lines of communication between the EAM and various software and technology solutions, even when APIs are not available.

Smooth Sailing

With a fully-integrated EAM solution, asset information flows globally, cleanly, and in near real time to stakeholders across the enterprise. It facilitates operational effectiveness, allows intra- and inter-departmental collaboration, and provides the knowledge to make educated, timely decisions. Pre-integrated ERP/EAM solutions go a step further by maximizing your IT investment and reducing ongoing system maintenance and upgrade costs. Close the loop and choose a systems integration partner to help you navigate the project, maximize its value, and steer you to project success.

Paul Neerhof is President of Global PTM, a subsidiary of VIZIYA Corporation. Global PTM delivers maintenance operational improvement (MOI) solutions centered on Oracle eAM implementations to Fortune 1000 and governmental organizations. Prior to joining Global PTM in 2003, Neerhof held positions as Worldwide Vice President of Sales/Marketing and Vice President of Strategic Alliances with Datastream Systems, Inc. He also spent three years as Vice President of Sales and co-owner of TLC Corp, and 14 years at Brady Corp. in various sales and management roles. Neerhof earned B.B.A degrees in Marketing and Management from the University of Wisconsin, Madison, and attended Marquette University for post-graduate work. Contact Paul Neerhof at paul.neerhof@globalptm.com or 864-884-6368.