Guide to Wholesale Distribution Software

infor

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Wholesale Distribution Outlook
Your world is changing

Over the last few years, much has happened in the historically conservative wholesale distribution industry. Distributors are realizing that what drove their success in the past is not necessarily going to drive their success going forward. The industry has gone global, has become more competitive than ever, and has grown increasingly sophisticated. The rise of social collaboration, the explosion of mobile devices, and other technological trends are reshaping the industry as we know it. A new generation of vendors and customers now expect to work the way they live, with access to information from any place at any time.

As customer behaviors and needs change, distributors must have the flexibility to adjust their business practices in order to meet those changes. The next generation of distributors is quickly embracing innovative technologies to optimize daily operations and hone their competitive edge. And it's not just about offering the lowest prices. Instead, it's about finding ways to add layers of service to differentiate your business in order to build customer loyalty.

To stay competitive, adopting new technologies to modernize or transform your business should be on top of your agenda. According to an **IDC Best Practices Guide**, the three main technology initiatives expected to help distribution businesses over the next three to five years are: web/ecommerce, mobile devices, and cloud.[1]

Top concerns for wholesale distributors

Understanding customer needs

With tight operating margins and the ever-present push for profitability, distributors have always had to be tuned in to their customers' needs. Expectations are changing, just as the market becomes more competitive. Manufacturers are moving into the wholesale distribution space. Online retailers are looking for any opportunity to grab market share. For distributors, the ability to match customer intelligence with their own unique market differentiators is becoming an increasingly important factor for success.

Modernizing your business

In today's marketplace, technology simply can't be an afterthought. It must be a part of a company's overall strategy because it now plays a role in nearly every aspect of a business. To be optimistic about improving your margins and revenue opportunity, you must combine new services and offerings with capital investments in technology.

Getting on the ecommerce bandwagon

B2B online sales will reach $6.7 trillion by 2020, according to a report by Frost & Sullivan. It's no surprise then that ecommerce was the top choice among respondents of a **recent MDM survey** when asked which platforms they are considering for investment. Customers want to be able to get information when, where, and how they want it.

Managing a changing workforce

A new generation of employees is already making its way into your business, gaining influence with each passing day. This generational shift translates into a massive transformation in the expectations employees bring to work—from the technologies they use, to the strategies it will take to keep them in their jobs.

To help distributors choose the right software in a rapidly changing market, this guide will explore a number of key technologies that are essential to any successful distribution operation:

Enterprise Resource Planning	Customer Experience	Strategic Solutions	Mobility Solutions	Cloud Solutions	BI and Analytics

We'll discuss the market trends increasing the need for adoption of each technology, provide a "shopper's checklist" of essential features and functions, and share success stories from real-life industry leaders. This guide will also outline how industry-specific software and cloud-based platforms from Infor® are helping global companies thrive.

Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP)

Distributors have relied on ERP systems as their technology backbone for at least 25 years now. That's a lot of history, a lot of ingrained commitment to a particular ERP system, and a lot of "we've always done it this way" thinking. Times change, and the technology landscape for wholesale distributors now extends well beyond traditional core systems.

Newer technologies, like social collaboration and cloud computing, are also fast becoming business imperatives. Within the new generation of ERP software for distributors, the customer conversations have become the currency of business activity. Customers (and employees) expect the same immediacy, experience and functionality from your distribution ERP system that they get on their personal devices.

Many distributors may think they are lagging in technology, but they're eager to catch up. A survey on digital strategy in Distribution by MDM and Infor shows that an overwhelming majority of respondents (86.3%) said they would consider implementing software-as-a-service (SaaS)—or the cloud—in their businesses.[2]

Distributors that can evolve along with the technology will be able to protect their business, gain market share, and find it easier to engage with the buyer of the future.

Resources for ERP

Learn more about the trends driving ERP adoption and specific strategies for addressing common challenges in the wholesale distribution industry.
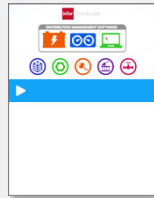
Analyst report

Mint Jutras—The hidden cost of ERP customization

What happens when your CIO is ready for retirement? Are you prepared? Enterprise software expert Cindy Jutras explores the perils of IT staff retirement and costly ERP customizations, as well as upgrade options.
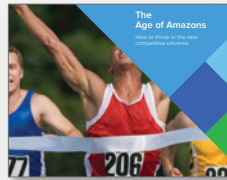
Read the report ›

Video

What does the next generation of distribution software look like?

Infor Distribution is specifically designed to help distributors of all types run an efficient end-to-end operation on premise or in the cloud. Unlike traditional solutions, Infor Distribution lets you work the way you live.

Watch the video ›

eBook

The Age of Amazons: How to thrive in the new competitive universe

It's happening today. It's all around you. Understanding the Age of Amazons is the first essential step in preparing for it. And ERP software should be one of the cornerstones of your effort to do something about it.

Read the eBook ›

Analyst report

Mint Jutras—Can ERP help bridge the generational divide?

The connectivity, collaboration capabilities, and added visibility of newer ERP solutions hold the key to bridging the generational and skill gaps.

Read the report ›

Analyst report

Aberdeen Group— The value of upgrading ERP: maintaining modern technology

This report explores the necessity of social, mobile, and analytics: "Organizations that do not upgrade their ERP solutions may miss out on new technology that could significantly improve their business."

Read the report ›

ERP shopper's checklist

Your company's ERP system is the heart of your business, and decisions to upgrade or replace this key business technology should not be undertaken lightly. Recent research shows, however, that more and more companies are deciding that the time has finally come. According to Allied Market Research, the global market for ERP software is expected to exceed $14 billion by 2020, with cloud-based models showing the highest growth. Their report on the ERP software market states: "Customers today prefer cloud ERP software over on-premise ERP deployment, as it enables their workforce to access information for critical business decisions anytime and anywhere."[3]

Distributors that can evolve along with technology will find it easier to engage with the buyer of the future.

If you're in the market for a new ERP system, look for a solution that offers:

☑ **Ease of use**—Your ERP system has to match the way you do business and put information from all the systems that run your business at the fingertips of your users. This information must be presented in a way that makes sense to users without requiring them to have hours upon hours of training. It also shouldn't force them to toggle between disparate screens, repeatedly log in and out of multiple systems, and waste time digging through data.

☑ **Integration**—To keep data flowing smoothly and ensure adherence to tight schedules, your ERP system must seamlessly integrate with any specialized applications you rely on, and be able to do so across business units and geographic locations.

☑ **Industry-ready functionality**—A tire manufacturer has little in common with a wholesale distributor. And their sales, production, supply, and accounting requirements couldn't be more different. Your ERP provider should have vertical-specific software bundles that eliminate the need for costly, time-consuming customizations. Your business moves too fast to wait for custom development.

☑ **Flexibility**—The right cloud computing solution is available 24x7x365, no matter where your employees are located or what devices they're using. Because of their scale and expertise, cloud computing providers such as Amazon® Web Services can achieve system up-time levels and security and disaster recovery measures that cannot be matched.

Distribution ERP customer stories

Infor Distribution solutions are designed to address the specific challenges of your industry. Below are some of our many success stories.

With Infor Distribution SX.e, E. Sam Jones can manage orders from invoice through production and delivery and ship them anywhere in the US within the same day.

For more customer success stories,
visit our Distribution customers page ›

Western Water Works boosts revenue by $32M with Infor Distribution SX.e.

This major distributor of pipe valves and fittings to the waterworks industry boosted revenue, increased inventory turns, and streamlined its collections process.

Read the customer profile ›

PLG Group streamlines its business processes with Infor M3

Pierre Le Goff (PLG) Group consisted of 12 companies that were using seven different proprietary management systems. Find out how deploying Infor M3 helped the organizations establish an identity, momentum, and common processes across all of its companies.

Read the customer profile ›

Wilcon Builder's Depot supports annual growth of over 15% with Infor M3

Learn how this construction supplier increased inventory reporting accuracy, reduced dead-stock, and profitably scaled the business at high growth rates with Infor M3.

Read the customer innovation study ›

Get to know
Infor Distribution ERP

Built specifically for the needs of the evolving distribution industry, Infor Distribution ERP systems integrate relevant new technologies with unmatched flexibility to help you to better serve customers, boost profitability, and sell to the next generation. Backed by decades of industry expertise and continually enhanced with the latest innovations, it's designed to help distributors modernize, innovate, drive competitive differentiation, and grow.

Watch the demo: Infor CloudSuite Distribution

Infor Distribution SX.e helps all types of distributors increase productivity and adapt quickly to an evolving market. Providing broad visibility across your entire organization, this powerful solution delivers unparalleled control in managing thousands of transactions, suppliers, and customers, while simultaneously tracking millions of inventory items.

Learn more ›

Infor M3 for Distribution is a multisite, multi-company, multicurrency, and multi-language solution that lets you optimize every facet of your operation—from inventory and warehouse management to financials, multichannel sales orders, purchasing, and more. You'll have the tools you need to accelerate your pace of business and profitability as you manage transactions with unparalleled visibility across departments, allowing for better and faster decision-making.

Learn more ›

**Visit Infor Distribution to see our complete list of solutions ›**

Customer Experience (CX)

Do your customers get the same great experience with your brand whether they interact with you through phone, web, email, Twitter®, or another channel?

Keeping customers happy throughout their journey with your company can increase overall customer satisfaction by 20% and revenue by up to 15%, while lowering customer service costs by as much as 20%. And by 2020, customer experience is expected overtake price and product as the key brand differentiator.[4]

Companies must think beyond traditional campaigns with start and stop dates, and instead map the entire customer journey—that fluid and often-complex web of customer interactions.

Strategically anticipating touch points along the customer journey and ensuring a consistent experience is key to supporting long-term customer relationships. By developing an omni-channel marketing strategy and employing technology that helps you efficiently stay on top of it all, you can deliver great, consistent experiences to your customers—any time, any place, and through any service channel. A robust software suite that encompasses the full customer experience—and includes solutions such as **customer relationship management** (CRM), **configure price quote** (CPQ), **contract lifecycle management** (CLM), and **eCommerce**—can equip your company for success. Read on to learn more.
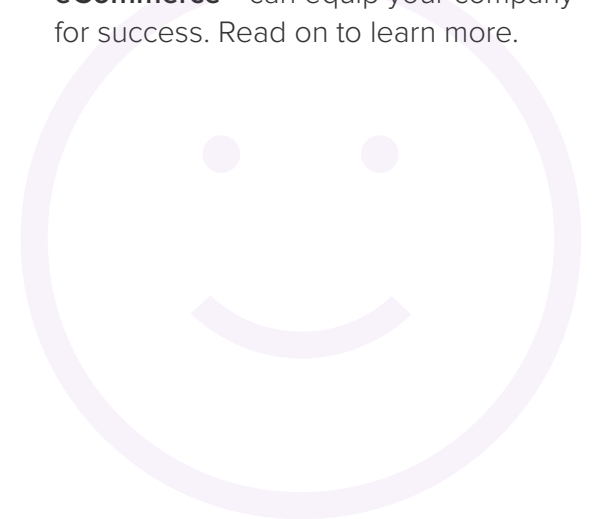
Resources for CX

Learn more about the trends driving CRM, CPQ, CLM, and eCommerce adoption and specific strategies for addressing common challenges in the wholesale distribution industry.

Infographic

Drive engagement, increase satisfaction, and improve profitability

In today's world, your customers have more ways to research and buy than ever before. If you want to attract and keep them, you need to create a satisfying, consistent customer experience across all your channels. This infographic can show you how.

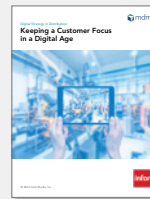**View the infographic ›**

Industry perspectives
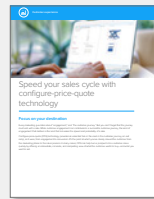
Speed your sales cycle with configure price quote (CPQ) technology

You mustn't forget that the journey must end with a sale. Learn how CPQ technology provides an essential fork in the road in the customer journey, an exit ramp, as it were, from engagement to conversion.

Read the perspectives ›

Industry report

MDM survey report: Keeping a customer focus in a digital age

As customers embrace more digital means of doing business, distributors are challenged to come up with new ways to engage with them. According to the results from the MDM-Infor survey on digital strategy in distribution, improving the overall customer experience was the primary goal for technology investment.

Read the report ›

White paper

The reinvention of B2B e-commerce: The changing face of online sales

The advent of omni-channel buying—the process of using a wide range of devices to research and purchase goods—has changed the dynamics of customer relationships and sparked a tidal wave of new strategies for engaging this new breed of ultra-informed buyer.

Read the white paper ›

Infographic

Why CRM is critical for value-selling

Learn how you can add value to the customer relationship and deliver great customer experiences, rather than just fill orders.

Read the Infographic ›

CX shopper's checklist

Building a positive customer experience is becoming a critical path to differentiation for distributors. A customer experience suite should help you integrate customer data across the enterprise, accelerate customer engagement, and drive profitability. Key applications within customer experience include: customer relationship management (CRM), configure price quote (CPQ), contract lifecycle management (CLM), and eCommerce.

Learn more about Infor Customer Experience Suite solutions ›

CRM—Look for a CRM solution that delivers a complete view of customer interactions across your sales, marketing, customer service, and support teams. In addition, look for a CRM solution that provides:

☑ **Superior mobile and tablet support**—Your workforce is mobile, and your CRM solution should be, too. Look for a solution that delivers purpose-built applications for the mobile workforce, to give you a strong competitive advantage.

☑ **Intelligent, intuitive interactions**—To drive revenue and deliver an exceptional customer experience, you need a solution that can build rich customer profiles and provide best practice automation across sales, marketing, and service.

☑ **Ultimate flexibility**—Choose a CRM solution that can be deployed in the cloud, on-premise, or in a hybrid application, with convenient access to popular email programs to promote adoption and consistent usage.

CPQ—A CPQ solution focuses on accelerating product configuration, pricing, and quoting. Look for one that delivers:

☑ **An intuitive, customizable user experience**—You'll want to provide your sales team and customers with a dynamically rendered user experience that presents the right product view and pricing, based on role, language, location, and viewing device.

☑ **A powerful configuration engine**—With a powerful configuration engine, you can instantly process rules and constraints in product models to enable guided selection of only compatible features, options, and dimensions.

☑ **An image-based design studio**—With a graphical user interface, you can create a visual presentation of a complex product model, with point-and-click access to details of every rule and constraint.

eCommerce—To compete effectively, your company should deploy an eCommerce solution that helps make all online customer engagements a true business advantage. Look for a solution that:

☑ **Enriches customer interactions on any device**—Build loyalty by delivering exceptional and personalized user experiences that engage customers more richly and help improve conversion rates.

☑ **Scales your market impact**—Expand your reach and grow your brand by taking advantage of omni-channel sales and distribution opportunities.

☑ **Simplifies integration**—Integrate seamlessly to your ERP system across any device to get instant inventory availability information, up-to-date order and invoice statuses, support for commercial pricing terms, etc.

Customer experience success stories

Infor's Customer Experience (CX) solutions are designed to address the specific challenges of your industry.

Here are a few of our many success stories:

Learn how Huttig uses Infor CPQ to increase customer satisfaction and production processes for 27 locations.

Kyana Packaging & Industrial Supply benefits from a single repository of customer data

Find out how Infor CRM has helped Kyana Packaging & Industrial Supply maximize every interaction with their customers across the entire customer lifecycle.

Watch the video ›

For more customer success stories, visit Infor Customer Experience Suite ›

Get to know Infor CX

Overcome the challenges of doing business globally by attaining a 360° view of your customers with the Infor Customer Experience Suite. You'll be able to easily keep track of all customer transactions and meet unique customer requirements in a profitable way. And you can integrate and share data across departments to support your organization's workflow.

Visit Infor CX to see our complete list of solutions ›

Infor CRM is an award-winning CRM solution that delivers a complete view of customer interactions across your sales, marketing, customer service, and support teams, so they can collaborate effectively and respond promptly and knowledgably to sales opportunities and customer inquiries—both in the office and in the field.

Learn more ›

Infor Contract Lifecycle Management (CLM) helps improve the creation, negotiation, execution, and management of contracts throughout their development. With Infor CLM, you can define and manage attributes to help ensure corporate compliance, while also tracking changes from version to version. In addition, the analytics-pricing engine in Infor CLM allows you to automate pricing, costing, and margin calculations to ensure accuracy and visibility.

Learn more ›

Infor Configure Price Quote captures knowledge about your customizable products once and then shares it with dealers and your sales force—on any device—to make selection and configuration intuitive and error-free. This image-driven, easy-to-use solution delivers fast and accurate quoting and helps guarantee one vision from order to delivery, while cutting costs and boosting profits.

Learn more ›

Infor eCommerce provides your customers and partners with up-to-date product information, specifications, cost, alternate product availability, and order tracking—all through a self-service, Internet-based entry point. It gives you more direct interfacing time with customers, which can help the productivity and profitability levels of your sales force.

Learn more ›

Strategic solutions

Distributors are looking to differentiate themselves by extending the services they offer and by optimizing their customer interactions. Strategic solutions that support and optimize customer interactions help distributors to set themselves apart and secure customer loyalty.

What's interesting is that "service" now means so much more that what we typically think of good customer service. It may be eliminating an onerous task for your customer, anticipating their needs, managing a process for them from beginning to end, or streamlining your interactions with them. That service may be something that is delivered directly to the customer, or in some cases by enabling the distributor's customer to serve their customers more effectively.

"As wholesale distributors look for new ways to differentiate themselves in the market, some are discovering that investing in an integrated supply model can be a creative and profitable way to re-engineer their customer relationships," said Simon Ellis, Program VP, IDC Manufacturing Insights.[5]

Shopper's checklist for strategic solutions

Wholesale distributors need strategic solutions that support their ability to improve the level of service they provide their customers. This can include offering integrated supply models to anticipate and fulfill demand, better project management to keep costs down, streamlining order processing to improve the customer experience, and optimizing prices to improve customer loyalty.

An integrated supply model can be a creative and profitable way to re-engineer customer relationships.

To optimize every interaction you have with your customers you should look for strategic solutions that provide:

☑ **Simplified integration**—To keep data flowing smoothly and ensure adherence to tight schedules, your strategic solutions should integrate seamlessly with your ERP system, and be able to do so across business units and geographic locations.

☑ **Data-driven prices for your customers**— Generate data-driven prices and increase your margins with science-based recommendations. This means using customer clustering to determine what price a customer deserves to pay based upon their historical buying patterns, profitability, loyalty, and cost-to-serve, while accounting for their geographic region. And it means using product-grouping analysis to give you the insights you need into top, mid, and low-revenue products.

☑ **Responsive design**—With a flexible and responsive user interface, your employees can complete their tasks in multiple ways on desktop screens as well as on tablets and other mobile devices—ensuring that they can work in the ways that best complement their own habits.

☑ **Intuitive bidding tools**—Managing numerous bids within a project—which may include several deadlines, different locations, many documents, and even multiple bidders—is a very complex process, especially when you factor in the inevitable revisions that take place before you even win a bid. To keep track of all these changing variables, you need a solution that's designed specifically for distributors who manage multiple bids for professional trades and gives you the information you need when you need it to ensure that you meet every deadline.

Get to know Infor's strategic solutions

Infor's strategic solutions help create a strong relationship between you and your customers by fundamentally changing the nature of that relationship. Wholesale distributors are the best at managing the supply and demand of inventory. Through an integrated supply model, your customers can benefit from your expertise in this area, while simultaneously eliminating a task that distracts them from their goals.

Learn more about Infor solutions for distributors ›

With **Infor Storeroom** you can manage your customers' indirect material and machine supplies by monitoring the warehouse space they have set up for a toolcrib, industrial vending machines, maintenance repairs, and operations inventory.

Learn more ›

Infor Sales Hub is an agile client solution with an intuitive and beautiful user experience for efficient order entry. By combining powerful search features with an order entry process that streamlines everything from finding the right product to processing shipping details and payments, Infor Sales Hub allows sales representatives to quickly serve more customers—without the need for extensive training.

Learn more ›

With **Infor Pricing Science** you can set competitive prices for the products that are important to your customers and still find opportunities to increase your profits. Prices shift gradually over time for each customer— faster for less-valuable customers and slower for more important customers.

Learn more ›

Infor Project Job Management includes a set of easy-to-use and intuitive bidding tools, such as a project manager for multiple bids, a bidding, and an online document manager. And because Project Job Manager tightly integrates with Infor Distribution SX.e, your data can be automatically shared with and seamlessly used by your ERP system.

Learn more ›
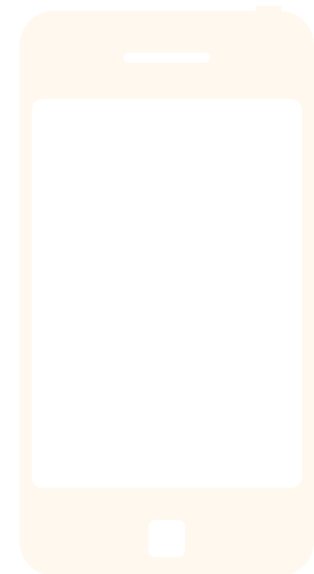
Mobility solutions

It's certainly not news that most companies rely on mobile devices to connect and collaborate. Increasingly, distributors are shifting some of their IT budgets to mobility and opening up their core business applications to workers on the go. For example, according to the Aberdeen Group, best-in-class wholesalers and distributors are 90% more likely to provide users with mobile access to their ERP system.[6]

"More than ever, mobile technologies are empowering workers across industries to connect, collaborate, and create new ways to operate and do business," says Jessica Goepfert, program director of IDC's Global Technology and Industry Research Organization. "It goes beyond providing a smartphone to liberate the deskbound worker. Rather, it is utilizing mobile technology to increase sales, improve productivity, and raise customer and employee satisfaction."[7]

Mobile access allows you to:

- Empower your employees to work smarter. By giving them fulltime access to core business applications, "down time" can turn into productive time.

- Satisfy your customers with self-service options and the information they need to track orders, ask questions, and run their own businesses more efficiently.

- Attract the next generation of employees who expect employers to offer a digital culture that embraces BYOD.

Whether it's a sales rep who needs to update invoices in real time, a customer who wants to track an order, or a procurement specialist who needs to modify a PO on the fly, integrating mobile devices with your core software can help you work smarter (and faster) than your competitors.

Resources for mobility solutions

Learn more about the trends driving the adoption of mobility solutions and specific strategies for addressing common challenges in the wholesale distribution industry.

eBook

Life in the fast lane— How distributors can accelerate the pace of profitability

The next generation of distributors has arrived, and is quickly adopting innovative technologies to optimize daily operations and hone their competitive edge. In this eBook, we explore ways that you can streamline, automate, and modernize your business.

View the eBook ›

Industry report

MDM survey report: Digital Strategy in Distribution

According to the results from the MDM-Infor survey on digital strategy in distribution, most distributors plan to expand their investment in technology, and those plans are relatively broad-based. Mobile technologies are one major area where distributors expect to invest heavily.

Read the report ›

Checklist

Five ways wholesale distributors can succeed with the Millennial generation

Many Millennial employees prefer to use mobile devices over a PC or laptop. Find out what tools distributors can use to empower their field sales professionals, and help make their Millennial employees more successful.

Read the Checklist ›

Mobility solutions shopper's checklist

Over the past few years, the use of mobile solutions in the distribution industry has increased exponentially. Distributors are realizing that by equipping their sales reps with mobile access to real-time information, they're giving them the knowledge and power to better execute business strategies, meet the needs of customers, increase customer loyalty, and convert opportunities into revenue. Embrace mobility to get the right information to the right people.

Learn more about Infor solutions for distributors ›

Mobile ordering solution—Having a mobile ordering application can make the difference between closing or losing a sale. Look for a solution that:

☑ **Improves customer experience**—Arm your salesforce with real time access to essential information that dramatically improves productivity on-the-go and allows them to deliver better, faster service to your customers.

☑ **Offers offline capabilities**—Validate orders against a local database on your mobile device when you are offline. The orders can then be processed and submitted when you're reconnected.

☑ **Provides access**—Give your salesforce mobile access to inventory availability and pricing models, credit status, and past order history.

Mobile delivery solutions—If you have your own delivery trucks you need to optimize your fleet investment. Look for a delivery solution that provides:

☑ **A handheld mobile application**—Manage delivery routes, driver profiles, track orders, capture signatures, and display critical order information through a mobile device.

☑ **Information in real-time**—Connect to your existing enterprise resource planning (ERP) system to transfer critical information between the delivery driver and your back office in real-time.

☑ **Improved customer service**—Helps you locate each delivery driver to monitor progress, accurately track orders, alert drivers to any real-time changes, and resolve disputes.

Mobile CRM—If you're in the market for a mobile CRM solution, look for one that offers:

☑ **A rich, flexible user experience**—Boost the efficiency and user adoption of your field staff by providing an intuitive interface that is optimized for use on today's smartphones and tablets, and can be easily customized and configured.

☑ **Quick and easy deployment**—Deploy quickly and easily, manage and customize centrally, and push updates automatically over-the-air to the user device.

☑ **Personalization**—Configure and personalize the application and settings simply to match your unique requirements and preferences.

Get to know Infor Mobility solutions

To not only empower your employees to work smarter but also to gain loyal customers, you should invest in mobile apps that boost the productivity of your salesforce. Infor's mobility solutions gives your sales force fast and easy access to customer and order information, inventory availability, pricing models and more to help make purchasing from you easier and faster.

OrderPoint is a robust, full-featured mobile ordering application that equips your sales reps with real-time access to essential information that dramatically improves productivity on the go. From inventory availability and pricing models, to credit status and past order history, OrderPoint gives your sales reps the key information wherever they are, which can make the difference between closing or losing a sale.

Watch the demo ›

Infor CRM Mobile gives your field force a strong competitive advantage that can help drive revenue and enhance the customer experience. Whether they're viewing up-to-the-minute account or contact information, updating an opportunity, scheduling an activity, or logging a call or email to history, with Infor CRM Mobile, your on-the-go professionals will have the secure, instant access to vital customer information and productivity tools they need to succeed.

Learn more ›

Infor Distribution Proof of Delivery helps distributors manage order delivery and capture customer information from a mobile device. You can manage delivery routes, driver profiles, track orders, capture signatures, and display critical order information. Proof of Delivery can connect to your existing enterprise resource planning (ERP) system to transfer critical information between the delivery driver and distributor in real-time.

Learn more ›

**Learn more about
Infor solutions for distributors ›**

Cloud solutions

Everyone is talking about the cloud—should you move to the cloud? When? Regardless of business type or industry, it's a hot topic. IDC's "**Worldwide Semiannual Public Cloud Services Spending Guide**" states that worldwide spending on public cloud services will grow at a 19.4% compound annual growth rate (CAGR)—almost six times the rate of overall IT spending growth—from nearly $70 billion in 2015 to more than $141 billion in 2019.[8]

Wholesalers and distributors are also beginning to favor the cloud as their deployment model for ERP solutions. And for good reasons. According to a recent study by Aberdeen Group, distributors with cloud-based ERP solutions are 59% more likely than those with an on-premise solution to have real-time visibility into the status of all processes.[9]

Cloud solutions that can be deployed quickly, adopted and expanded easily, with streamlined order processing, flexible pricing, and tools to optimize inventory, can be of great value to distributors.

Resources Cloud solutions

Learn more about the trends driving the adoption of cloud solutions and specific strategies for addressing common challenges in the wholesale distribution industry.

Industry perspective

Cloud security and your enterprise

As long as your system is connected to the public Internet, whether it's a cloud solution or on-premise software, you incur some risk of a data security breach. Find out what you need to do to minimize risk to the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of your data.

View the perspective ›

Analyst report

Cloud ERP in wholesale and distribution

Wholesalers and distributors are beginning to favor the cloud as their deployment model for ERP solutions. Aberdeen reports that distributors with cloud-based ERP solutions saw a 15% improvement in profit margins over the past 2 years, in comparison to an 8% improvement for those with on-premise solutions.

Read the report ›

Technology perspective

The art and science of value realization in the cloud

IT spending on cloud computing is booming, and there is no let up in sight. In this post-recession era of amped up spending accountability, how many organizations can produce reliable metrics that link IT cloud spending to business outcomes and business value?

Read the perspective ›

White paper

Driving real growth with cloud-based enterprise applications

Increasingly, organizations are deploying enterprise applications to the cloud. Discover how the cloud can provide a faster, more efficient path to growth.

Read the white paper ›

Cloud solutions shopper's checklist

No doubt, you've been hearing a lot about the cloud. But you may fear it's too risky to allow your data to be managed outside the four walls of your distribution company. The truth is, if you want to stay competitive, you can't afford to wait to move to the cloud. Besides cost savings, cloud solutions also offer you a comprehensive way to unify your business processes, increase visibility across departments and divisions, and enable better collaboration with your suppliers, customers, and partners.

To learn more about what ERP can do for you, contact us at solutions@infor.com ›

If you're in the market for a Cloud ERP solution, look for a solution that:

☑ **Supports expansion**—A cloud solution gives you the flexibility and scalability to easily expand into new markets and quickly adapt to change, and you get real-time data that is accessible anytime, anywhere.

☑ **Realizes a speedier time to value**—A cloud computing solution with preconfigured yet flexible, industry-leading business processes, templates, training materials, tools, and simulations, allows you to deploy or upgrade in weeks or months—not years.

☑ **Reduces total cost of ownership**—By moving to the cloud you can reduce your total cost of ownership, since you no longer need to own and maintain expensive servers and hardware, and can redirect IT personnel to more strategic activities.

☑ **Gives you flexibility**—The right cloud computing solution is available 24x7x365, no matter where your employees are located or what devices they're using. Because of their scale and expertise, cloud computing providers such as **Amazon® Web Services** can achieve system up-time levels and security and disaster recovery measures that cannot be matched.

Get to know Infor CloudSuites™ for distribution

Infor CloudSuites for distribution—Innovations built for the distribution industry

Infor's CloudSuites for distribution are designed to address the pressures exerted on wholesale distributors, including the need for speed, flexibility, and differentiation through services. The solution suites can be deployed quickly, and adopted and expanded easily. Plus, it offers streamlined order processing, flexible pricing, and tools to optimize inventory—all of which can be of great value to distributors.

Watch video: Infor CloudSuite Distribution Enterprise overview.

Choose your adventure

The simultaneous release of two versions of Infor CloudSuite for distribution means each company can pick the solution that best suits their needs.

- If your business is centered in North America and primarily focused on distribution in all its flavors, **Infor CloudSuite Distribution** is the solution you've been looking for.

- If you operate internationally with many language and localization requirements, or operate a hybrid business environment that includes both distribution and manufacturing, **Infor CloudSuite Distribution Enterprise** will better suit your more complex environment.

Visit the Infor CloudSuite Distribution Enterprise page to learn more ›

BI and analytics

The amount of information inside your company is constantly expanding, and to stay competitive, your data-insight strategy has to keep pace with business change. With multiple sources of data, it can be difficult for your users to get access to the information they need, when they need it. Your users need business intelligence (BI) and analytics that provide the most up-to-date information in a timely fashion, no matter where they are.

BI and analytics have transformed from high-end applications used only by a select few in an organization, to more accessible, easier-to-use applications for the masses. The improved accessibility and simplification of analytic applications allows a wider group of business users across organizations of all sizes to maximize their data to help drive performance.

"**Global revenue in the BI and analytics market is forecast to reach $16.9 billion in 2016**, an increase of 5.2% from 2015, according to the latest forecast from Gartner, Inc."

"Organizations must transition to easy-to-use, fast and agile modern BI platforms to create business value from deeper insights into diverse data sources," says Ian Bertam, managing vice president at Gartner.[10] Given the importance of BI and analytics for strategic decision making, it's not surprising that Gartner predicts this growth for BI and analytics solutions.

Now that companies have access to more data, they have come to realize that the key to unlocking its value is in making it available to the people who need it most.

BI and analytics shopper's checklist

According the MDM report "***Digital Strategy in Distribution***" wholesale distributors are looking for ways to grow their analytics capabilities beyond financial reporting, which is the most popular way distributors are using their analytics configurations now.[11] With data potentially affecting every area of your business, it's time to use that data to find areas of improvement, make better, more informed decisions, transform your business, and improve you bottom line.

The key to unlocking value is in making information available to the people who need it most.

If you are in the market for a BI and analytics solution, look for one that provides:

☑ **Integration**—By integrating your analytics solution with your existing enterprise resource planning (ERP) system, you'll be able to transfer critical data between different divisions and your back office in real-time. You'll have a unified view of your business and be able to analyze key information from all key systems.

☑ **Great user experience**—The less time your employees have to spend on finding information, the more they can spend analyzing it. Look for an analytics solution that delivers tools that are powerful but user-friendly, requiring minimal technical expertise to get your users up and running fast.

☑ **Industry-specific analytics**—Different industries have different analytics requirements. Look for an analytics solution that comes with pre-packaged roles and content that's been purpose-built for the wholesale distribution industry. It can help your business to easily start monitoring and analyzing performance.

☑ **Mobile access to data**—Mobile business intelligence is a necessity for executives, field staff, and sales reps who need access to business-critical data at all times. With mobile access, your employees can access data such as KPIs, business metrics, and dashboards any time on any device.

Get to know Infor BI and Analytics

The Infor portfolio of analytics solutions brings you the depth, breadth, flexibility, and speed you need to compete effectively in this new, data-driven environment. Industry-specific analytics, robust reporting capabilities, personalized dashboards, and workflows and alerts can all be accessed from your mobile device, with changes synced automatically to your desktop.

Learn more about Infor Performance Management solutions ›

Infor Business Intelligence, Infor Analytics, Infor d/EPM, and Infor Reporting

Infor Business Intelligence gives you a fully integrated, state-of-the art business intelligence platform for all types of financial and operational analytics and performance management. The solution provides standard reporting, dashboards, flexible ad hoc reporting, and analysis.

Learn more ›

Infor Dynamic Enterprise Performance Management (d/EPM) layers world-class business intelligence, business planning, budgeting, forecasting, financial consolidations, and business performance management capabilities onto Infor's technology platform to deliver simplified integration, beautiful design, and in-context business intelligence.

Learn more ›

Infor Analytics covers the "last mile" in the realm of analytics by offering pre-packaged content that is purpose built for a wide variety of industries. It helps you begin with an analytic framework that's ready to answer critical questions from day one.
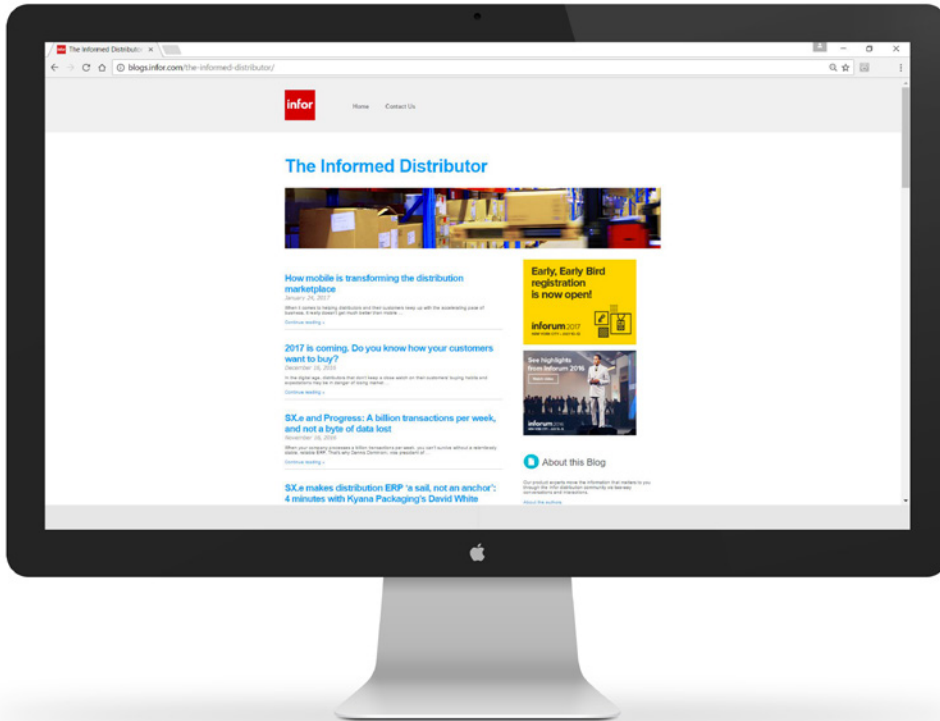
Learn more ›

Infor Reporting With Infor Reporting, you'll add unparalleled flexibility and reliability to you reporting processes to support quick, confident decisions that can lead to long term success.

Learn more ›

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Blog—The Informed Distributor
Stay informed on the issues related to wholesale distribution and learn more about the ways Infor solutions can help you achieve and maintain a competitive edge.

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About Infor

Infor builds business software for specific industries in the cloud. With 15,000 employees and over 90,000 customers in more than 170 countries, Infor software is designed for progress. To learn more, please visit www.infor.com.

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