

CASE STUDY

NAVIGATING ERP CHALLENGES IN FOOD DISTRIBUTION: ALIGNING SYSTEMS WITH UNIQUE OPERATIONAL NEEDS

A prominent food distributor faced challenges with their existing ERP system, VAI S2K Enterprise OnCloud. The system's misalignment with their operational model resulted in increased workarounds, higher operating costs, and significant frustration. They turned to Judge to assess the current situation and advise on ERP solutions for their unique business.

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THE CHALLENGE:

Overcoming ERP System Limitations Amid Rapid Growth

The client's current ERP system was struggling to address the variations in their delivery methods, including the need to prioritize weight over size. They had been overpromised and underdelivered by their current vendor regarding the ERP systems configuration. With the client experiencing 4x growth, these ERP challenges were becoming increasingly critical, causing miscommunication and frustration between departments, employee burnout, and turnover. The client's extensive inventory is comprised of over 3,000 food products sourced globally and locally, catering to commercial kitchens across Maine, New Hampshire, and Massachusetts. The client was contemplating replacing their current ERP system but wanted to first analyze and better understand the current processes and streamline distribution operations.



THE SOLUTION:

Understanding Strategic Analysis and Mapping for Effective Solutions

Judge Consulting initiated the project with a three-day onsite workshop involving the client's key stakeholders and subject-matter experts (SMEs). This immersive experience allowed Judge's team to observe day-to-day distribution operations and engage in in-depth interviews with the SMEs. Over the next 2 months, additional interviews were conducted, and current processes were meticulously diagrammed. This involved process mapping the current state ERP-related processes of their products and service. Additionally, a technical resource was provided to perform an assessment of the existing VAI S2K Enterprise solution.



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Judge assessed the client's ERP-related distribution operations from a people, process, and technology perspective using a stoplight approach. Judge evaluated the businesses primary functional areas comparing ideal state with current state. The functional areas assessed include customer service, accounts receivable, accounts payable, finance, orders, purchasing, transportation, inventory, and warehousing. The below assessments were conducted across people, process, and technology.

People

- Organizational Structure Assessment
- Soft Skills & Competency Assessment
- Cultural Assessment

Process

- ERP Process Assessment
- Process Assessment
- Functional Area Process-Related Assessment

Technology

- S2K Cloud-based ERP System Health Assessment
- Functional Area Technology-Related Assessment

THE RESULT: **Fostering Operational Excellence with Tailored Strategies for ERP System Enhancement**

The insights gained from these activities provided Judge Consulting with a deep understanding of the client's operational pain points. Judge delivered detailed assessments for the client's leadership to evaluate. These assessments praised the teams problem-solving capabilities, communication, attention to detail, commitment to customer service, flexibility, and leadership in the face of technical limitations and high workloads. Key themes identified when analyzing the current state include the reliance on manual processes, lack of coverage and role specialization leading to potential bottlenecks, and inefficiencies presenting opportunities for process improvement and technology investment. Judge also provide detailed process maps for more than 45 specific processes across all the businesses functional areas.

Subsequently, a strategic plan was developed to enhance operations across a short-term (1-3 months), mid-term (4-9 months), and long-term (10-18 months) schedule. Recommendations focused on standardizing ERP-related distribution operations, refining inventory management, automating processes, and implementing system enhancements. The comprehensive assessment, tailored recommendations, and process maps were compiled into a detailed document, which was then presented to the client, marking a pivotal step towards operational excellence.



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