

# The Essential Guide to ERP for Assembly Manufacturers



**IQMS**  
Manufacturing ERP



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Any progressive assembly manufacturer has heard some mention of enterprise resource planning (ERP) software. But what exactly is ERP software and why would it be useful to your business? ERP software is a system designed to gather and disseminate critical management information across your entire organization and run every aspect of your company, from manufacturing to accounting and sales to human resources.

Unfortunately, there are many common objections and myths that exist in the assembly manufacturing field regarding ERP software:

- ERP is for discrete manufacturers, right? I specialize in assembly processes.
- ERP is only for large organizations. My business is too small and our spreadsheets are working just fine.
- ERP requires too much customization and a dedicated IT staff.

Don't be fooled by the ERP myths above. Properly implemented ERP software can greatly improve all aspects of your operations while concurrently bringing your company to the next competitive level. The benefits are endless, provided you select the correct software for your business (please see the next page for tips on choosing the best fitting ERP software).









Assembly manufacturing processes can be complex and varied, so your ERP software should be as well. Why is it then that most ERP vendors don't offer tools and features specific to your assembly needs? When searching for new ERP software, don't settle for a one size fits all package. There are manufacturing ERP software solutions on the market today that offer key assembly features to greatly improve your ROI and success. When researching, be sure to look for qualities such as:

**Fully Integrated Solution:** To truly give manufacturers a complete picture of their business, the ERP software solution needs to be fully integrated with all modules sharing the same data. And not "best of breed" bolted together options that require third party add-ons. These types of options often lead to poor integration problems, expensive customization and missing data. Find the ERP vendor that offers everything in one package, from customer relationship management (CRM) to inventory control, electronic eCommerce, web portals, quality management, sales ... the list goes on. The transition and visibility of data across every aspect of your business should be seamless.

**Scalable:** Is the software system scalable? Is it designed to grow with your company on a modular and number of users basis?

**Easy to Use:** Don't underestimate the power of a user friendly interface when it comes to the adoption of new technology. A non-integrated ERP system will have differing screens and multiple ways of doing things that will require extra training and slower adoption time among your employees.

**Mobile Technology:** Tablets, smart phones, scanners and other electronic devices have entered the manufacturing workplace. Does the ERP vendor you are investigating offer state-of-the-art programs and apps to keep your facility modern? Are they behind the curve or pushing the boundaries of what technology can offer your business?

**Real-Time Access to Information:** Data is critical to the success of any operation, but only if it is timely. Receiving reports and data 24 hours after a product is assembled is not useful and certainly does not allow you to take a proactive approach to managing your operations.

**Industry-Specific:** This final item is by far the most important on this list. A cookie cutter approach to software will only equal costly customization or workarounds. Don't settle - there are ERP software packages out there designed with your specific processes in mind. Seek out assembly-specific features to assist with production planning, product lifecycle management and maintaining quality products throughout your processes. Features such as dispatch lists, labor reporting, sub-assembly support and line clearance security should all be standard features in your software to improve your company enterprise-wide.

For example, does the ERP software you are considering offer:

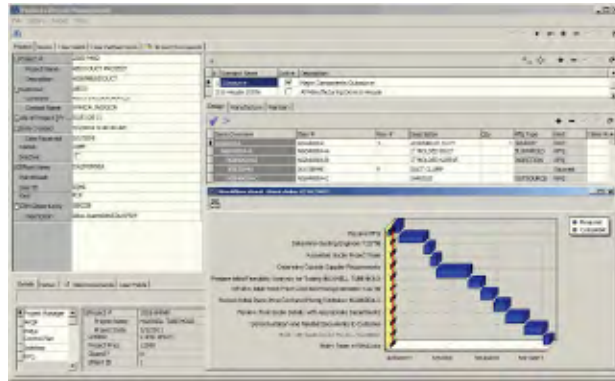
- **Assembly Configuration Flexibility:** Whether your assembly processes are work center based, assembly line based, application based or a combination of many types, find the manufacturing ERP software that offers industry-specific options for both continuous and batch production.
- **BOM Management:** Assembly manufacturers need the flexibility to create unlimited processes and attach them to assembly-specific BOMs for visibility across every step of production. Make sure your software choice supports multiple processes and multiple cycle times that create one unique product or multiple products, depending on your need.



*A screen shot from IQMS' shop floor assembly module.*

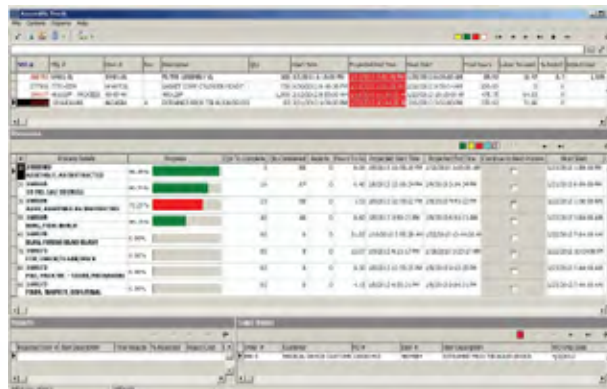


- **Kanban Capabilities:** If a Kanban system is integral to your company's inventory control, does the ERP software you are researching offer the necessary tools to support your operations?
- **Labor Reporting:** Some manufacturing ERP software offers labor focused manufacturing with the ability to labor report per process or per shift, track products at each stage or at the end and enter reject/scrap components at each process for continual visibility.
- **Process Security:** Can you choose to certify your separate processes or certify your employees for greater security? Are you able to assign manager rights for line clearance and final assembly approval?



*A screen shot from IQMS' product lifecycle management module.*

- **Product Lifecycle Management:** Can you track products from the design and quoting process through assembly and to the end of the life of the product?
- **Production Planning:** The software should allow you to handle detailed fabrication and assembly routings, capacity planning and sub-assembly controls easily.
- **Scheduling Flexibility:** Whether you require dispatch lists or finite scheduling (or a mix of the two), can your employees electronically log into their specific dispatch lists for the day to receive job details, operation schedule times and more directly from their work stations?



*A screen shot from IQMS' assembly scheduling module.*





Time and again, assembly manufacturers have discovered that a well-fitting ERP software solution has increased productivity, brought in new business and truly elevated the company to the next level. With the right fit and assembly-specific features, manufacturing ERP software can take you into the future.

**About IQMS**

IQMS uniquely combines ERP and manufacturing execution system (MES) functionality to give manufacturers a comprehensive end-to-end suite for running the business, backed by the real-time performance and scalability companies demand. Developed specifically for mid-market repetitive, discrete and batch process manufacturers, IQMS provides robust capabilities for addressing strict customer and regulatory certification and compliance. IQMS achieves this by delivering traditional ERP functionality for accounting, sales orders, material requirements, inventory and purchasing, plus extended native features for CRM, human resources, production scheduling, shop floor control, warehouse and quality modules. With offices across North America, Europe and Asia, IQMS serves manufacturers around the world.

For more information, please visit [www.iqms.com](http://www.iqms.com).