

# HARMONiQ: ERP DESIGNED FOR TILES



(l&r) Managing director of Micronet Systems, Drew Arthur and HARMONiQ general manager, Robert Butler

**What should you look for in an Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system? Which is really something of a trick question. Certainly, there are some key attributes every ERP should have, and it should tick all the boxes for the services your company needs. But the reality is – as anyone who has implemented ERP will tell you – that what matters most is the relationship between the ERP provider and your own business.**

**W**hen *Tile Today* interviewed Drew Arthur, the managing director of Micronet Systems, which provides the HARMONiQ ERP, there was one benefit he mentioned that stood out over quite a few good contenders. It was this:

"We've done [implementations at] a lot of tile companies, and particularly in the last 12 months we've been generating something called 'Tile Smart Start'. We have a lot of domain expertise that is specific to the tile industry, which means we can deliver a very smooth implementation. Realistically, a tile company customer doesn't need to explain to us anything about their tiles, because we really have a lot of knowledge already, so we can make the implementation task a lot easier for them. Using Tile Smart Start means a lot of the hard work is already done.

"Basically, we've built a HARMONiQ template for tile, for both retail or wholesale, meaning both importers and retailers. And this enables us to really fast track how that implementation goes forward.

"There really is not a lot of domain expertise

for tile businesses in most software companies in Australia. We think we've got a lot of expertise. The product is really highly tuned to the tile industry. It has been specifically configured with Tile Smart Start to make it a lot simpler for people to achieve a great outcome very fast, and help them move to the cloud quite seamlessly.

"Tile Smart Start is very, very customised to the tile industry."

For businesses moving to their first ERP, there is pretty much nothing else that is as important as that kind of expertise on the part of the systems supplier. Quite a few other retail and wholesale businesses fit into a more generic mould, but as everyone knows in the tile industry, it's not just that there are quite a few quirks and idiosyncrasies, it's also that understanding those quirks is how you please your customers.

That said, there are also advantages dealing with a company that has broader expertise as well. The company will experience requests from clients, and be exposed to new ideas that arise from specific

types of retailers (for example), and then roll those out for everyone. It is this breadth of market that HARMONIq can offer, according to Drew.

"We've been involved in the tile industry for over 20 years. However, we're not specifically focused on tiles. Because we have a breadth of knowledge from across industries, we've been able to put lots of complementary enhancements into the system from other industries that are outside the tile industry, ones that benefit all industries.

"For example, we are able to offer very, very flexible deposit calculations. So specifically for retailers, we can pull on each line at each invoice. You can have different deposit rules based on the customer, and how you want the accounting to work. So it really manages the problems very well."

Beyond having templates ready for the tile industry, Drew says that HARMONIq itself is not difficult to learn.

"Probably the biggest problem when you don't have ERP is people use lots of different systems to achieve the outcome. So there's lots of extra keying that has to happen between systems, and there's a lot of manual systems. Particularly around the sales order process and project process.

"Part of ERP is taking four or five different systems, and putting them into one location, all with the same interface. Once somebody learns how to do one thing in HARMONIq, it's very easy to translate that into other areas of the system."

### In the cloud

Drew also mentioned that one of major benefits of HARMONIq is that it is entirely based in the "cloud". That means that businesses using

HARMONIq do not need to invest in their own server — and therefore, most importantly, they don't need a specialist IT person to look after the server. Instead, the ERP software is hosted on servers in a remote location, and businesses access it via the internet. Drew explained some of the advantages:

"Probably the biggest advantage is that you don't have to worry about things like file servers and all of the equipment, the infrastructure to run it in-house. Essentially what we're doing is we're putting a world-class infrastructure together and you share in that componentry.

"Typically, people don't buy the biggest, the best and the greatest hardware to support the infrastructure in a small business. And so this enables you to use best in class in the infrastructure.

"This takes a lot of the concern away in terms of looking after the infrastructure, the network itself, the backup, looking after the data, making sure that it's safe from intrusion. Because obviously, in our data centres, it's a lot more protected than it would be in the back office of a small business. It's become very common for businesses to simply use cloud infrastructure and its quite uncommon these days for people put their own infrastructure in. Big businesses have been doing it for many, many years and now it has become very accessible to smaller businesses."

Another benefit of cloud hosting is that this makes it much easier for Micronet Systems to update the software, improving the way it works, and adding new features. ERP systems based on business servers would typically only do major

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HARMONIq can benefit tile businesses by integrating and seamlessly managing processes such as sales, accounting, warehousing, inventory, CRM and e-marketing

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releases every two years or so, because the task of taking down an existing server, fully backing it up, installing the updated software, then coping with unexpected errors to get it up and running, is exhausting and a real business risk.

### Integration and workflow automation

These two aspects of ERP systems — integration and workflow automation — go hand-in-hand in making ERP systems valuable. Workflow automation means, largely, that when you perform one action, there is a "conditional" that will trigger other actions, if they are appropriate. As the system is integrated, however, those actions could range across all of the business system.

One example of this that Drew provided was how sales orders work:

"One of the real key things is that when a sales order is generated, if you don't have stock, the system can generate a back-to-back purchase order for the retailer automatically. The sales order can be taken. You can email a copy of the sales invoice directly to the customer, and automatically email the purchase order to your preferred supplier. So for retailers that's a really good advantage."

In fact, the act of generating a sales invoice can queue up a series of different actions, automatically.

"Automatic emailing of the sales order to the customer when its generated is one example... We can generate an SMS, for the client that is sent when the product is ready for delivery or when it has been dispatched.

"HARMONiQ can automatically follow up a sales quotation. So for instance, if a retailer has generated a quote to a customer, we might say 48 hours automatically after that quote has been generated, send a follow-up email to the customer to say, Thanks for visiting. Please find a copy of the quote attached. If you'd like any further information, please just reply to this email.' What you find is

by doing that, you are automatically following up, where most of the time those kind of sales quotations are never followed up on."

A further kind of automation and integration that HARMONiQ offers is with some forms of marketing.

"One of the things about e-marketing is that it can be very cumbersome, and can require a lot of duplicate keying of data. The idea behind automation of e-marketing is you can directly link HARMONiQ to MailChimp or Campaign Monitor, which are direct mail campaign generators.

"If you have a list of people that you want to, for instance, send a promotion to, you can do that within HARMONiQ or from within MailChimp or Campaign Monitor, and you can monitor the responses.

"From within HARMONiQ you'll know that you've sent those people that particular promotion. You can see whether they've opened it, you'll see whether they've clicked through, if they forwarded it, if they liked it on Facebook. You can actually see that from within HARMONiQ, and when you respond, you can trigger another event.

"But it's not just monitoring. It's actually taking the marketing side and really linking it to the transactions. So you can actually see then what's happening from an e-marketing perspective. For instance, if you generated sales, you could actually record what promotion it came from, so you can start to track the effectiveness of your e-marketing as well."

The ability to manage marketing was one of the drivers behind Andrew O'Brien, business systems manager at tile retail company Amber Tiles, moving to adopt the software system.

"Having seen how HARMONiQ works, and understanding the power of its marketing tools, we know exactly how we're going to drive value out of it. With easy segmentation of our database, we can quickly divide our contacts by location, industry, or product for example. With an in-built integration with Campaign Monitor, a leading marketing automation platform, we can send beautifully designed email and e-newsletters to our customers and prospects — maintaining a strong brand presence and staying top of mind."

### Benefits

Summing up the advantages that HARMONiQ can offer tile businesses, Drew had this to say:

"With HARMONiQ, we have the whole jigsaw already assembled. Businesses don't have to put the pieces together by themselves. I guess that's the absolutely key thing. It's a very intuitive interface. It's easy for people to learn. It's in one location, so not having to dive from system to system makes it's a real time saver." ■

<https://harmoniq.com.au/tile-software/>



HARMONiQ has been used effectively in Amber Tiles