

# The Infor ERP SyteLine Smart Framework

The key to keeping your IT operations lean and your business agile

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## Executive summary

Every hybrid discrete manufacturer has a critical need to keep their IT operations as lean as possible without sacrificing the ability to easily adapt their business applications to keep pace with changing requirements.

The starting point, of course, is the implementation of an enterprise resource planning (ERP) solution that delivers core capabilities to help improve productivity, shorten time to market, and reduce operational costs. But since business is never static, manufacturers need to frequently extend and adapt their enterprise applications without wasting a lot of time and incurring a lot of cost.

The problem with most ERP solutions is that truly tailoring them to your business, beyond making cosmetic changes and adding user-defined fields, involves expensive and non-upgradeable programming. As a result, you are forced to choose between incurring a significant cost or running your business with software that is ill-equipped to effectively support your business.

By contrast, Infor™ ERP SyteLine features a unique software architecture that provides a cost-effective and efficient way to extend and adapt the solution to fit your changing business requirements. With Infor ERP SyteLine, your IT resource needs are minimized because the framework is based on the standard Microsoft® .NET platform. At the same time, the business value of your IT infrastructure is maximized because of SyteLine's adaptability. If your responsibilities lie on the business side of your company, this means the framework can help your efforts to lower costs and increase revenue.

This white paper explains the goals and business benefits of this unique framework, including the following:

- The ability to extend and adapt the Infor ERP SyteLine application to a virtually unlimited extent with no or minimal programming and with automatic upgrades of your changes
- Easy and powerful integration to your other software
- A rich user experience that maximizes employee productivity and extends to key customers and suppliers
- Simple and flexible installation and configuration
- Outstanding diagnostics and monitoring capabilities

With the Infor ERP SyteLine Smart Framework, your ERP solution allows you to keep your focus on your business and its growth, not on keeping your enterprise software up to date.

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## Infor ERP Syteline Smart Framework overview

The central defining goal of the Infor ERP Syteline Smart Framework is to minimize the amount of program coding required by Infor developers, partners, and customers, in order to maximize your ability to adapt quickly and cost effectively to emerging business requirements.

By minimizing the need for program coding in adapting the Infor ERP Syteline solution, changes to your solution are automatically upgradeable, development is accelerated, quality is increased through extreme code re-use, and your implementation is insulated from underlying technology changes. Since creating some new code is inevitable, the framework streamlines the process by enabling your team to use familiar and standard Microsoft .NET technologies and tools.

To meet these objectives, the Infor ERP Syteline Smart Framework uses a model defined by metadata (data defining the application behavior, stored in rows and columns in databases); for the user-interface (forms), the Smart Business Layer, which consists of the mid-tier business objects (IDOs, or Intelligent Data Objects); and business processes (Application Event Handlers). In the metadata approach, changes can be kept separate from the base application and your changes automatically upgrade using framework tools like FormSync.

# The major business benefits of the Infor ERP SyteLine Smart Framework

The Infor ERP SyteLine Smart Framework provides major benefits that contribute directly to your bottom line by keeping the cost of ownership low, improving overall business performance, and allowing you to remain competitive by quickly responding to business change.

## *Extend and adapt the Infor ERP SyteLine application: beyond user-defined fields*

The model in the Infor ERP SyteLine Smart Framework makes it possible to adapt the Infor ERP SyteLine application to new business requirements without incurring the high cost and delays involved in modifying or writing new code. This, in turn, makes it feasible to rapidly adapt the system to your business, while continuing to receive new features and fixes.

In most ERP applications, adaptability is provided as a separate layer over the base application, so your ability to extend and build new functionality is limited. The changes you need to make will inevitably involve modifying the base application logic and that means modifying code. But the base Infor ERP SyteLine application is built with the same metadata-driven approach provided to customers, so your capabilities to extend and adapt the application are virtually unlimited.

The Infor ERP Smart Framework allows you to access key locations in the base application and add extensions that are marked so that when an upgrade occurs the changes are automatically migrated forward. For example, if you want additional processing to occur when a user pushes a button on a screen or modifies data on a screen, you can insert your own event handlers, which can execute a wide variety of tasks without requiring coding and which automatically upgrade.

The Infor ERP SyteLine Smart Framework makes it possible to perform the following changes without programming:

- **Extend any portion of any screen:** By using the same tools as those used to build the base application, you can extend any portion of any screen, including new tabs, new fields, validation logic, and enabling logic.
- **Extend any business process:** Using the Smart Business Layer's Application Event System, you can have rules execute whenever an insert or update occurs to any business object (order, item, etc.) in the application or when trigger conditions you define become true. These event actions include updating any data in the application, automating any process provided by the application, prompting a user or group of users to approve the change, integrating to an external application, or simply notifying users of the change.
- **Extend any business object:** You can extend any of the Smart Business Layer's objects (IDOs) to create new relationships to other IDOs in the base application, add new calculated fields, add new tables and publish their properties on the IDO. You also can create your own IDOs over your tables.

- **Add completely new functionality:** You can build new functionality, such as new tables, IDOs, and forms as required by processes unique to your business. These are automatically deployed with the base application and automatically take advantage of other framework functions, such as translations, Web Service access, and the Application Event System.

This ability to extend and tailor the application helps you to lower the cost of your IT ownership and increase productivity for your business.

### *Easily integrate with other business applications: leverage SOA and more*

The framework makes it possible to integrate the solution with external applications without expensive re-coding. There is a wide-range of integration capabilities, including:

- **Native support for Infor Open SOA.** The Infor ERP SyteLine Smart Framework natively supports Infor Open SOA, Infor's approach to service-oriented architecture, as a layer over the framework replication system. As a result, interoperability with SOA components is built in.
- **Give external applications to access data, update data, and automate processing.** Because the framework provides a simple, consistent interface to all IDOs (the Smart Business Layer's business objects), and makes that interface available in a wide range of technologies (WebService, XML, .NET, COM), you can easily give your other applications full access to the data and processes in Infor ERP SyteLine.
- **Initiate integration from within the Infor ERP SyteLine application.** The framework provides several mechanisms by which you can set policy inside the Infor ERP SyteLine application to initiate interactions with other systems. For example, the framework's replication system provides a simple subscription mechanism so that when certain changes or processes execute, SyteLine will dispatch an XML message to the external system. There are additional capabilities, like the Application Event System, which allow you to add interactions with your other applications.
- **Integrate other software directly into the Infor ERP SyteLine screens.** Because the forms provided by the Infor ERP SyteLine Smart Framework can be easily tailored to embed other applications inside them, you can tightly integrate external applications at the user interface layer to maximize end-user productivity. For example, you can easily embed your customers' web sites into the SyteLine customer screen.

### *Increase user productivity and access for customers and suppliers*

The Infor ERP SyteLine Smart Framework's client component, WinStudio, is a SmartClient that uses Microsoft's Click Once deployment technology. WinStudio functions as a self-installing, self-updating internet-enabled SmartClient that delivers a wide range of business benefits, including the ability to:

- **Lower training costs and increase productivity.** The WinStudio SmartClient provides a genuine, rich interface because it is a Windows® application that looks, feels, and operates like other Windows applications. Because it has a similar look and feel to Microsoft Office and other Windows applications, user training time can be reduced and productivity can be enhanced.
- **Facilitate customer and supplier coordination.** Since WinStudio communicates to the server via XML over internet HTTP or HTTPS, no virtual private network (VPN) is required to give customers and suppliers access to their data. Instead, it is only necessary to give them log-in information and set appropriate security rules.

- **Reduce disk space usage.** SmartClients read from the server at runtime and, as a result, consume minimal disk space and don't need to be updated when the application changes.
- **Run on any web browser.** SmartClients are independent of web browser versions, so your users can run the version and type of browser your organization prefers.
- **Reduce network bandwidth usage.** SmartClients can make efficient use of network bandwidth by doing as much client-side processing as possible and giving form designers explicit control over when network round trips occur.

### *Simplify software installation and configuration*

The Infor ERP SyteLine Smart Framework provides simple and straightforward installation and configuration typically found in much smaller, less robust software packages. In addition, the Framework provides an extremely flexible model for international enterprises, which allows you to respond rapidly and effectively to new business acquisitions or relocations.

The Framework architecture maximizes simplicity because of the extraordinary concentration of application elements in its databases, outstanding tooling provided over remaining configuration information, and its self-installing, self-updating client component.

The Framework's configuration flexibility comes from the structure of sites and intranets, and the range of options built into the framework's replication system. For example, if a business unit needs to be moved from a data center in Europe to one in Asia, the framework makes that a straightforward process that simply involves moving the database, updating some screens to alter the location of the business, and updating the replication policy as appropriate for your cross-data center connectivity.

By streamlining the installation and configuration process, you can keep costs low for events like the move of a business unit from one region to another, the creation of a new test system, the addition or removal of hardware resources from production, or the upgrade of the system to a new version.

### *Enhance diagnostics and monitoring*

The Infor ERP SyteLine Smart Framework provides users with the same set of tools used by Infor during development of the base application. For example, the SmartClient WinStudio provides a highly-configurable diagnostics display. On your application servers, the framework's Log Monitor tool provides a consolidated view of all the framework elements running there. The SyteLine Smart Framework provides a basis for excellent diagnostics and monitoring tools.

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## Conclusion

Because of the Infor ERP SyteLine Smart Framework's architecture, Infor ERP SyteLine can significantly enhance your competitive positioning in the manufacturing marketplace. The Framework adapts and extends the software to fit your business, with no or limited coding and automatic upgrades, and delivers a rich end-user experience, as well as the ability to tie into your other enterprise software, easy and flexible configuration, and outstanding monitoring capabilities.

And, because the Framework is based on the standard Microsoft .NET platform, your IT resource requirements are minimized. At the same time, your IT resources are maximized because of the dynamic, flexible capabilities of the Infor ERP SyteLine Smart Framework.

### About Infor

Infor acquires and develops functionally rich software backed by thousands of domain experts and then makes it better through continuous innovation, faster implementation options, global enablement, and flexible buying options. In a few short years, Infor has become one of the largest providers of business software in the world. For additional information, visit [www.infor.com](http://www.infor.com).

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