



Aptean Food & Beverage ERP

Eight Steps for Implementing an **ERP for Your Fresh Produce Business**





“ERP solutions can alleviate the issues of disjointed data and operational silos, helping to **future-proof your operations.**”

Are you finding that the various departments and processes across your fresh produce business aren't connected enough? Are there multiple “versions of the truth” depending on who and when you ask?

These are normal issues that arise as companies grow and expand, but you don't have to settle with disjointed data and operational silos. Enterprise resource planning (ERP) solutions can alleviate not only these issues, but many others as well, and help future-proof your operations.

That said, implementing an ERP system is not an overnight process—it is normally a matter of months before everything is complete, and significant effort is involved. But, it's time well spent, and we're here to help with eight steps to follow for a successful implementation.

1. Make Sure Your Employees Understand the “Why”

As mentioned, getting up to speed with a new ERP platform takes time, as well as money. That begs the question: “Why are we doing this?”

Make clear to all of your employees the advantages of your new system, and focus on the benefits you’ll unlock once the journey’s over. With all eyes on the prize, everyone in the organization will understand the purpose behind their work.

2. Have Clear and Quantifiable Objectives

It might seem obvious, but you need to set a clear end point. ERP implementations that exceed their anticipated time frame are likely seen as “unfinished” simply because no one established the measurable goals by which progress would be determined.

Envision your desired end-state, then lay it out in front of your employees and keep track of the milestones you pass along the way. Your people will seize upon the momentum and better understand why the goal is worth the work required to achieve it.

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3. Define Your Critical Processes

This step requires input from the whole team, so bring your management and key users together to explore your processes and identify the ways in which they need to be improved. By focusing on the pain points to address and how your ERP solution will alleviate them, the whole team will see the importance of the project and why they need to dedicate their energy to it.

4. Get Buy-In From Top to Bottom

It’s not enough that your leaders feel ownership over the process—everyone in the company needs to understand the value of the new system and what it will mean not only for their own day-to-day tasks, but also for the consistency and efficiency of all business processes.

Can you imagine a task as tall as putting a new ERP system in place succeeding when only a select few believe in the value of the results and their work toward them? That’s why this step is so vital. Everyone needs to understand the importance of the project and how the new solution will help support their job responsibilities and tasks.



5. Planning the Start of the Project

This probably sounds simple and obvious, but starting the project off in the right way is crucial. You should have a kick-off of sorts—an in-person or virtual event—in which you do the following:

- 1** Ensure everyone is aware of why the implementation is occurring and what the advantages of the new system will be.
- 2** Clearly explain the timeframes and milestones in your project roadmap.
- 3** Stress how important success in this endeavor really is.
- 4** Create an internal name for the project that emphasizes the benefits.
- 5** Schedule weekly progress meetings for the team and key stakeholders.
- 6** Regularly provide progress updates to the entire company via a newsletter or virtual call.

With good communication and the whole team on the same page, your implementation will get off on the right foot.



6. Find Fresh Produce-Specific Software and an Experienced Provider

It's critical to carefully consider not only what ERP software you want to implement, but also what vendor will be providing it. You need software with vertical-specific capabilities—like consignment tracking, grower certificate management, item-level traceability, flexible pricing and more. And you need it from a partner that truly knows the fresh produce space.

Your ideal provider would be one with a long track record of serving fresh produce customers, as they'll be able to provide greater insight into best practices and advice based on your unique circumstances and needs. What's more, they'll have built their system to facilitate processes unique to your segment.

7. Involve Your Best People

Implementing an ERP platform isn't an undertaking you're likely to do again in the near future, so you need to make the most of this opportunity. Your best and brightest employees are probably very busy already, but you really want them to focus on this project, even if it takes back-filling or getting temporary help for their regular jobs.

Surround your core team with support and let them concentrate on the critical portions of the process, and you won't regret it. Ensure that multiple functions are represented among the team members so that no part of the business gets left behind.

8. Appoint a Professional ERP Project Manager

There's a chance you have someone in-house with experience in ERP systems, and if that person also happens to be a capable leader, then your selection process for project manager will be simple. If, however, you don't have someone like that in the organization, you'll need to look outside.

Consult with peers in the industry, as well as your solution provider, for recommendations. Keep in mind these qualities when assessing candidates—the right person for the job will have:

- › In-depth understanding of the fresh produce industry
- › Past ERP implementation experience
- › Thorough knowledge of your particular solution
- › Excellent communication and people skills
- › A gentle, but firm, approach

Finally, don't cut corners on this step—find the best and pay them accordingly.



Moving Forward, Prepared for Growth

Getting an industry-specific ERP platform up and running is no easy feat, but it will pay off in spades. Do your research, follow these steps carefully, and rely on the experts—like the dedicated professionals here at Aptean—and you'll see it through to a successful end.

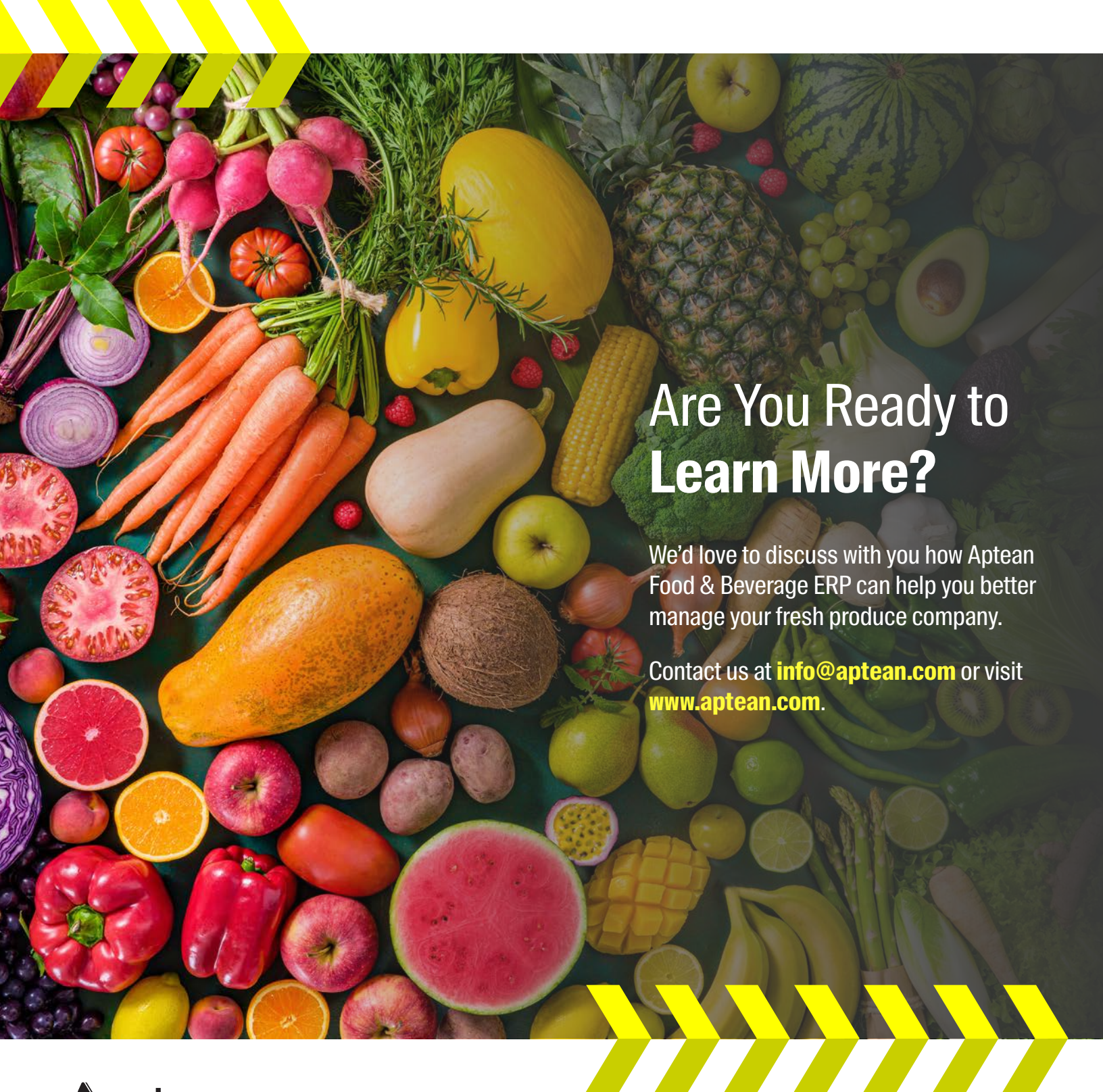
When you choose us as your fresh produce software provider, you're establishing a long-lasting collaborative partnership. We have decades of collective experience serving businesses like yours, and our cloud-first ERP leverages the foundation of Microsoft Dynamics 365 Business Central to provide companies with the advanced and tailored functionalities in a user-friendly platform.

Better still, we provide a full ecosystem of complementary solutions to integrate with your ERP, including overall equipment effectiveness (OEE), enterprise asset management (EAM), product lifecycle management (PLM) and transportation management (TMS) systems. So, by implementing Aptean Food & Beverage ERP—hosted in the world's most stable and secure cloud environment, and with cutting-edge AI tools embedded in the interface—you're establishing a unified system of record for a comprehensive tech stack.

Proven to generate rapid ROI and KPI improvement while solving for the challenges that only fresh produce businesses face, our expertly designed ERP can be the engine that accelerates your company's success.



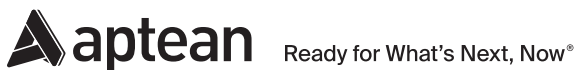
“You need software with vertical-specific capabilities—like **consignment tracking, grower certificate management, item-level traceability, flexible pricing and more**. And you need it from a partner that truly knows the fresh produce space.”



Are You Ready to Learn More?

We'd love to discuss with you how Aptean Food & Beverage ERP can help you better manage your fresh produce company.

Contact us at info@aptean.com or visit www.aptean.com.



About Aptean

Aptean is one of the world's leading providers of purpose-built, industry-specific software that helps manufacturers and distributors effectively run and grow their businesses. With both cloud and on-premise deployment options, Aptean's products, services and unmatched expertise help businesses of all sizes to be Ready for What's Next, Now®. Aptean is headquartered in Alpharetta, Georgia and has offices in North America, Europe and Asia-Pacific.

To learn more about Aptean and the markets we serve, visit www.aptean.com.