Acumatica
The Cloud ERP

Evaluating Acumatica and Infor CloudSuite Industrial (ex-SyteLine): Considerations for Manufacturers

HOW INFOR CLOUDSUITE INDUSTRIAL COMPARES TO ACUMATICA IN SUPPORT OF MANUFACTURERS

Manufacturers have long recognized the need for a centralized system of record to manage operations from the shop floor to the board room. After all, manufacturing companies are more likely to adopt ERP systems than other industry sectors – over 33% of manufacturers have an installed ERP instance[1].

Two such systems are Acumatica Cloud ERP and Infor CloudSuite Industrial ("CSI"), formerly Infor SyteLine. Both applications offer specific capabilities for manufacturers who make to stock, make to order, configure to order, and perform mixed-mode manufacturing. They include solid inventory and warehousing features, strong accounting and financial management, robust sales order management, and even embedded CRM for managing the customer lifecycle.

Manufacturers need a modern software platform underpinning an ERP to compete in today's global and digital economy. Acumatica and CSI are built on a cloud-based infrastructure and offer various deployment options, consolidated reporting options, and visual dashboards for executives to manage their business by exception.

Evaluating numerous ERP options proves challenging. Companies typically wade through lots of marketing materials trying to determine which ERP products are worthy of further due diligence. While deep functional comparisons can make it *harder* to differentiate between ERP offerings, there are selection criteria that matter to users, which clarify the more well-suited solution for small and mid-market businesses (SMBs). Look beyond granular features and functions to determine which system, vendor, and extended ecosystem are best for your organization.

This solution brief examines several factors to consider when evaluating Acumatica and CSI, including system architecture, product updates, customizations, each product's partner ecosystem, and ease of doing business. Read on to learn why Acumatica offers many strategic advantages over CSI for growing SMBs who want to modernize operations and evolve their digital transformation.

COMPETITIVE DIFFERENTIATION: ACUMATICA VS. INFOR CLOUDSUITE INDUSTRIAL (CSI)

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[1] "Manufacturing ERP software: selection criteria and top vendors", itransition.com, April 2021

DIFFERENTIATION #1

System Architecture

For companies deploying ERP software, a cloud-native architecture is becoming a core requirement. In just four years (2017-2021), the prevalence of cloud ERP soared from 6% of implementations to 53% of implementations[2]. Manufacturers are no different, as cloud-based ERP systems are growing quickly due to lower costs, ease of maintenance, and better security. Acumatica and CSI are both cloud-based, but only Acumatica is “cloud-native”, and this is an important distinction.

Infor did not re-write the legacy SyteLine product for the cloud from scratch, but rather *ported* the software code so the system could be hosted in the cloud. The overhead associated with wrapping on-premises software with cloud features bloats the application. Among other issues, this slows the performance of the code and results in significant latency. CSI users regularly complain of slow response times and system time-outs. Uptime suffers as well, with unplanned outages frustrating users and decreasing productivity. The CSI mobile application is likewise affected by slow performance and time-outs.

Acumatica, in contrast, was built natively as a cloud ERP suite. Designed with modern tools, Acumatica is optimized for web-based and mobile deployments. Online performance doesn’t suffer from performance slowdowns or system latency. Users engage with the software on any device and from any location, while enjoying award-winning usability across the whole organization and with external trading partners.

“I am still amazed to think that I can be sitting in a Starbucks drinking a coffee while looking at our ERP solution, but that is the flexibility and usability that all companies should expect nowadays."

— TIM PATTON, ICT DIRECTOR, SAM

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DIFFERENTIATION #2

Product Updates

Catering to small and mid-sized manufacturers with limited IT staff means software vendors must consistently enhance product features to keep customers competitive in their target markets.

Infor CloudSuite Industrial has broad capabilities across financials, CRM, HR, field service, and supply chain management, yet a disproportionate of its product updates are dedicated to CSI’s manufacturing modules. Many customers find a slow pace to enhancements for the financial, CRM, and field service modules – which negatively impacts their ability to operate efficiently.

Additionally, CSI forces product updates on users without giving them a choice to accept or delay each upgrade. Without adequate preparation time, customers lament frequent breaks in the application’s logic, form fields, integrations, and modifications.

Acumatica devotes a majority of resources to the continued development of its product suite. Each module has a dedicated product manager, who lays out a clear roadmap of enhancements. The continuous development work fuels significant product updates twice a year, across **all** functional areas. Plus, users can freely choose if and when to deploy an update to ensure the update process does not interfere with a critical business activity. It helps explain why Acumatica receives a 91% positive rating for its product direction from customers. Comparatively, CSI gets a 68% positive rating from its user base.

[2] “Cloud vs On-Premise ERP: Which is right for you?”, Medium.com, July, 2021



DIFFERENTIATION #3

Flexibility

Catering to small and mid-sized manufacturers with limited IT staff means empowering users to make modifications suitable for their roles without the need for highly technical expertise nor support resources. This includes custom reporting, dashboards, and workflow process changes.

CSI offers basic standard reports, and most users require more sophistication and customization capabilities. Manipulating reports to satisfy users' needs is tedious if not impossible. Manufacturers must often hire developers to create custom reports. And, as one user lamented, "The ever-changing report software is also costly to our business." CSI's toolset allows end-users to only change their screens and forms. Adding user-defined fields, event triggers, and dashboard data requires technical staff. Finally, CSI has weak security and audit trail features that often fail to use adequate permission controls and audit logs to protect transactions and securely capture data.

Conversely, Acumatica's friendly user interface and adaptable code enable users to modify screens and forms, in addition to personalizing dashboards, generating workflows with visual, no-code tools, and modifying reports to include any data elements, and even user-defined fields – with a few clicks. Universal searching, generic inquiries, and export capabilities to various output formats complement Acumatica's superior usability. Moreover, the system supports role-based access for efficiency and security, whereas CSI does not.

"It's slow, it's hard to filter reports how I need to, it's hard to do lookups in the system, fields are [buried] under several clicks or windows that need to be moved."

— INFOR CSI USER REVIEW, G2.COM



DIFFERENTIATION #4

Partner Ecosystem

A strong user community and a growing ecosystem of partners can accelerate the value that customers receive from their ERP implementation. From consulting partners who help deploy, train, and support the application to independent software vendors who add complementary capabilities to the core ERP suite, partners fulfill many "last-mile" requirements for the user base. Here, there is a big difference in the partner ecosystems between Acumatica and Infor CSI.

Approximately 80% of CSI sales are through channel partners. However, CSI's website lists only 26 VARs and 22 Service Partners.. Globally, CSI has just 99 VARs and 36 Service partners as of August 2022. ISV solutions are also paltry. Just 12 ISV solutions for CSI are listed on Infor's marketplace.

CSI's partner network is caught in a contraction because re-sellers and consulting partners focus on more modern platforms (such as Acumatica) to accelerate their business growth opportunities. Additionally, customers who prefer to work with a partner may be out of luck, as Infor is known to take larger opportunities from VARs and sell to them directly, increasing their own profits.

Contrast that with Acumatica's thriving ecosystem. Partners are flocking to Acumatica; many Acumatica partners have switched away from selling legacy ERP to hasten their growth. August 2022 figures show 350 VARs and 270 ISVs, showing double-digit growth in the last year. There is a vital marketplace of ISV solutions – 271+ applications across 43 functional categories. Moreover, Acumatica relies on its value-added reseller partners for sales to customers. There is never a channel conflict between partners and Acumatica!

How do Acumatica's manufacturing customers drive success? CLICK HERE to learn the details.

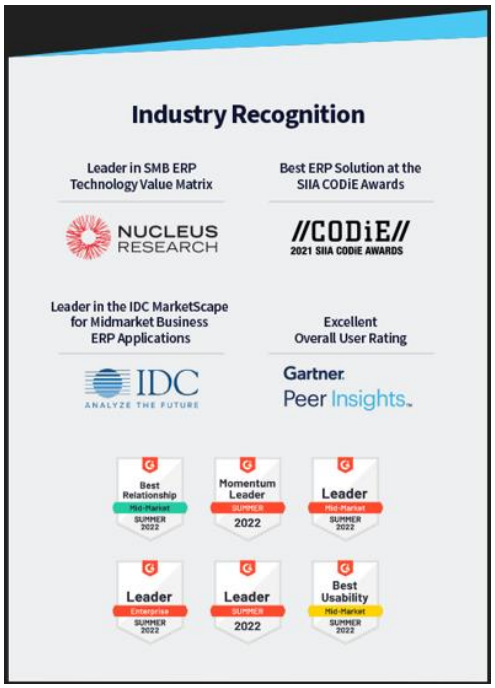
DIFFERENTIATION #5

Ease of Doing Business

How a software vendor engages with customers serves as another competitive differentiator. True partnerships between the software publisher, its channel partners, and end-users keep costs predictable, deliver new functionality prioritized by customers, and maximize the use of the system by all employees. As changes to business models occur, an adaptable software vendor can facilitate the needed alterations timely and effectively, securing the customer's ability to future-proof their company's success.

Acumatica LIVES by its mission to be the most customer-friendly ERP provider, as evidenced by:

- A formal "customer bill of rights" manifesto, guaranteeing every user fair and friendly treatment.
- An Acumatica customer portal to facilitate collaboration with trading partners such as vendors, customers, and outside consultants.
- A consumption-based pricing model, ensuring every employee has free access to, and participates in, the organization's efficient operation.
- A steadfast focus on developing and supporting a singular ERP product with significant R&D investment (75% of Acumatica resources help develop and test the software).
- Dual layers of customer support, in the form of reseller partners providing first level service and backed by Acumatica staff available for escalated and urgent support needs.
- Free online training for ALL employees via Acumatica Open University.
- Award-winning usability and satisfaction ratings from industry sources Nucleus Research, G2, IDC, and Gartner. Winner of the coveted CODIE award for the best software product in 2021.



"When we talk about Acumatica, it's not just about accounting but about where we do all our business. We work in Acumatica and don't need to leave."

— **SCOTT STARKWEATHER, PRESIDENT, BOULDER CREEK STONE**

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Acumatica is THE Choice for Small and Mid-Sized Manufacturers

SMB manufacturers face a litany of choices when determining which ERP platform can best support their production systems and overall business operations. Acumatica and Infor CloudSuite Industrial represent two of the most popular options. Aside from relative functional parity between the two systems, several other critical criteria must be considered.

To get the most from an organization's ERP system of record, look at each vendor's:

- **System Architecture** –
  Acumatica's cloud-native platform and ease of use supports manufacturers needing to retain a competitive differentiation with the latest technology – now and in the future.
- **Product Updates** –
  Acumatica's product update strategy continues to add significant enhancements to an already robust application suite.
- **Flexibility** –
  The open platform encourages users to tailor screens, forms, dashboards, business events, and reports to their needs.
- **Partner Ecosystem** –
  Partners are flocking to Acumatica; many partners have switched away from selling legacy ERP to hasten their growth.
- **Ease of Doing Business** –
  Acumatica LIVES by its mission to be the most customer-friendly ERP provider in the industry. Read our customer bill-of-rights!

The best choice for your next ERP system is rooted in critical factors beyond feature-function comparisons, and toward a true technology partnership.



"Acumatica has allowed OFSi to increase sales 100 percent year over year… Acumatica's flexible and full-featured software probably saved OFSi about $250,000 in consulting fees needed to modify software to OFSi practices with other ERP solutions."

- DAVID GREEN,
VP OPERATIONS,
OFS INTERNATIONAL

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Acumatica
The Cloud ERP

Acumatica Cloud ERP is a comprehensive business management solution that was born in the cloud and built for more connected, collaborative ways of working. Designed explicitly to enable small and mid-market companies to thrive in today's digital economy, Acumatica's flexible solution, customer-friendly business practices, and industry-specific functionality help growing businesses adapt to fast-moving markets and take control of their future.

For more information on Acumatica, visit www.acumatica.com or follow us on LinkedIn.