

What is the MERP?

A Guide to Understand the Big Advantages of Etere MERP.



Etere Cloud MERP

OVERVIEW

ERP stands for: Enterprise Resource Planning systems. It attempts to integrate all data and processes of an organization into a unified system. A typical ERP system will use multiple components of computer software and hardware to achieve the integration. A key ingredient of most ERP systems is the use of a unified database to store data for the various system modules. All ERP systems use a single common interface. It's the natural evolution in IT world! Think about SAP: actually represents the most famous ERP system used worldwide in a lot of companies and million people using it every day. SAP was founded in 1972, now is the time to apply the same concept to the media companies!

ERPs are cross-functional and enterprise wide. All functional departments that are involved in operations or production are integrated in one system. ERP systems are a lot of advantages:

- Single database that contains all data for the software modules across an entire company
- People in different departments all see the same information and can update it
- The computer security is guaranteed in all systems, it protects against both outsider and insider crime
- Combines the data of formerly separate applications
- Standardizes and reduced the number of software specialties previously required
- Allows companies to replace multiple complex computer applications with a single integrated system
- Replaces two or more independent applications and eliminate the need for external interfaces previously required.

HOW WAS BORN THE ETERE'S ERP APPLICATION?

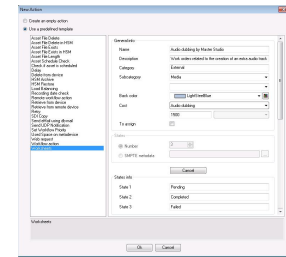
Etere, a company in the forefront of new technologies, has made the ERP approach its own. This concept was not introduced unexpectedly, but rather, through a comprehensive study based on the "best practices" collected by Etere over 20 years of software solutions developments and a deep knowledge of the broadcast industry. The Etere's software analysis has taken to heart all these information which has enriched the feedback from customers, developing and testing them to create a MERP system suited to the broadcast world. Etere MERP is an extension of E.R.P. - Enterprise Resources Planning- applied to Media/IT companies, it is able to connect all the activities of a multimedia company and integrates internal and external management information across an entire organization thanks to the use of 'smooth and intelligent' workflows, thus becoming into the most effective way to perform each business processes while providing a big advantage: the integration of all myriad processes with consequent saving of time and expenses. Etere MERP is a total software solution able to connect and manage the complete lifecycle of a Media/IT company. MERP stands for Media Enterprise Resources Planning, and is the core solution for the newest way to revolutionize the media/IT management structure, in synthesis; it is definitely a system ready to grow with your company. Etere MERP is 100% software solution able to control all the processes and costs inside the company. It integrates all company's information and its purpose is to facilitate the flow of information between all departments.

This paper will attempt to illustrate the concept of MERP, its various uses and its importance for stations who intends to adopt this approach.

First step towards a MERP system & its benefits

We start saying that the MERP approach is only one, that is, it is all about a single software application with a broad range of functions scalable to fit the customers' needs. Etere MERP can be bound to specific departments or sectors of activity, being each station able to decide the area from which the innovation process should start. The definitive application of the MERP approach directly depends on the size of the system. Another key factor consist in the need of an initial period for analysis, start-up and testing, this, for ensuring that all the implemented functions will work in the right way. Implementing Etere MERP on a broadcast station brings various benefits; the most remarkable ones are listed below:

- Cross-platform, multi-format and multi-channel
- Fully customizable workflows
- User-friendly and completely tailored interface
- Paperless approach to help the environment
- Real-time scheduling and conflicts management
- Total control over resources, processes, and costs
- Flexible tool to easily streamline inefficient workflows
- Tightly integrated billing and accounts features
- Time and cost savings for content resources management
- Low total cost of ownership
- New business opportunities based on the market requirements
- Fully tapeless workflow for the management of assets
- Respectful of corporate policies and best practices
- Completely provided with e-mail alerts
- Efficient collaboration between company areas and with partners, supplies, collaborators
- Project change management improved with enterprise security



Benefits of Etere MERP

For certain aspects, ERP could be considered as a set of modules. Conservative people who believe that ERP can be only applied to "classic" companies since they state that it is formed only by four basic modules:

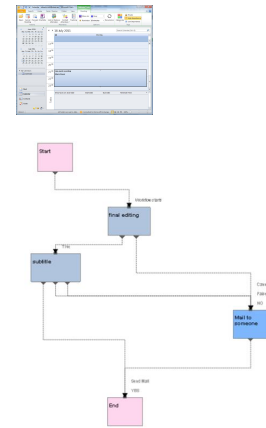
- Financial
- Human resources
- Work orders management
- Production

All the rest of functions added in the course of time (e.g. CRM, SCM, and PLM) are not strictly part of ERP. Other observers state, conversely, that the "MERP boundaries" also includes the previous functions due to its tight relationship with the four basic modules. Beyond to any semantic controversy (new differentiation category or integration extension), defining ERP in terms of the quantity of its modules is reductive: the real strength of ERP resides in the tight integration between modules rather than the number of functions of each module. It becomes important to widen our focus considering how the various tiles of the business mosaic are tessellated between them. Etere MERP represents a technological strategy that integrates a series of business functions (purchases, finances, human resources) with operational aspects (production, distribution) through very tight connections, from transactions to financial records. With Etere M.E.R.P., your company has now the opportunity to have only one system to manage: production facilities (newsroom, production, postproduction, play-out, etc.) and administration tools (scheduling, planning, CRM and Business Intelligence).

The multimedia-related processes of Etere M.E.R.P. are detailed as the following list:

- Multimedia Resource Management
- Media Assessment Management (MAM)
- Media Archive
- Programs Scheduling
- Multimedia File Exchanging Management
- Video-and-audio-based Business Operation
- Resources Management & Planning
- Sales & Customers Relationship Management
- Commercial Accounting
- Purchase & Production
- Automated Playout
- Legal Office

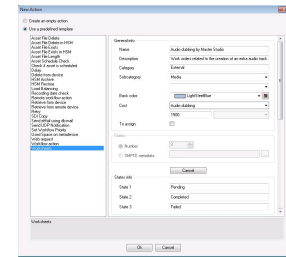
The concept of integration is therefore essential and important as a differentiating element if compared to the sole management which could be possibly complete of functions but fragmentary in terms of connections between modules.



Analysis on the Benefits

A further analysis on the benefits derived from a MERP implementation is following provided:

1. Lower integration cost, Legacy solutions requires important integration costs in order to manage end-to-end business processes. Data consistency (specific to ERP systems which bear on a single database) allows managers to focus on the company's mission without caring about data integrity issues.
 2. Platforms consolidation, The implementation of the ERP concept on media systems allows rethinking the current infrastructure and rationalizing obsolete applications.
 3. Increased processes efficiency, If correctly implemented, the Etere system allows to standardize processes and manage them in a simplest, fastest and easiest way. The processes mapping, a must step when studying and analyzing the project, facilitates the internal reorganization since the company's "core" processes are already identified.
- Lastly, it is a remarkable fact that Etere has made has made the ERP concept its own since it is based on the best practices collected over more than 20 years of use and it is enriched by the feedbacks received from our customers.
4. Individual productivity, Etere permits to have a broader real-time view of all the data related to the operations currently in progress within the global workflow, thus maintaining data under control and making it easy to take efficient business decisions.
 5. Better quality of work, Etere is able to save administrators time and effort by deploying a total cost control and reporting service, providing powerful and real-time business for executives and managers, helping also employees since they are not allowed to make errors when controlling costs and monitoring budgets, Etere will reduce human errors, connect workgroups, enhance communications, minimize duplication, and make better informed business decisions. Etere M.E.R.P. provide a comprehensive overall view (without "information islands") to make real-time information available for management, at any time from anywhere thanks to the external access available through an Etere Web integration, where thanks to a friendly interface, users will be allowed to manage and track, in few minutes, the availability and bookings (ingest/editing rooms) of all resources, personnel shifts, maintenance schedules for equipment and out-of-service days. In this way, decisions can be made more quickly and with fewer errors since data becomes visible across the entire organization and under a single database, thus allowing multiple users to work on the same object.
 6. Indirect benefits, The possible hardware reduction derived from the platforms consolidation helps to develop a green business strategy and a major rationalization. The automation and standardization of processes will reduce the circulation of paper documents inside the company and the compliance and governance related costs, thus resulting in the reduction of paper, ink and garbage. Moreover, it will be also possible to reduce the purchase and disposal of tapes due to a tapeless conception of the entire workflow.



Time to update the system

A particularly critical moment for the company's ERP consists of understanding when the time of change arrives, how to know when it's the right moment to update?

Let's start asserting that the complexity of an upgrade is very changing since it commonly depends on the number of installed modules and the obsolescence of ERP. In case of updating applications such as the Supply Chain Planning (SCP) it will be relatively easy to perform the upgrade, whereas working over the Supply Chain Execution (SCE) or the Customer Relationship Management (CRM) is surely a different matter. As all Etere solutions, Etere MERP is sold and not rented, that is, the system will belong to the customer and all the updates will be included in the assistance fee. Then, it will be up to the Etere consultants to advise the customer about the real value derived from the update, the potential impact on the team, the possible business risks and the time at which it should be performed. Generally, an upgrade implies important technical or functional updates which also require a significant period of time for testing and training users.

