

Sage ERP Solutions

Forget “business as usual”:
Thriving in the post-downturn’s “new normal”



Don't just weather the downturn—actively prepare for a post-crisis world

The economy is slowly recovering. So, will everything just go back to “business as usual”?

You've managed to stay afloat through one of the toughest economies ever. Now signs are pointing toward a recovery. But will everything just go back to the way it was before the recession? Not likely. The post-downturn economy will redefine how businesses operate and compete.

Welcome to the “new normal”

The current downturn is not simply part of a regular business cycle; it's part of a “new normal.” Recovery will happen—albeit slowly—but business has fundamentally changed.

Customers have adjusted their attitudes and shifted their expectations—and these changes are becoming entrenched. Doing more with less—cost-cutting, downsizing, improving efficiencies—is here to stay. The competitive landscape has also dramatically shifted. The recession caused a competitive shakeout, and only the strongest have survived. Your competition is leaner, hungrier, and wiser than before.

But uncertain times can be an ideal time for bold companies smart enough to take advantage of opportunity. While others are waiting the recession out, you can get a head start on the competition and watch your sales soar and your costs decrease.

To thrive, not just survive—you need to get ahead of the curve.

Take advantage of shifting market trends and thrive in a post-recession economy:

1. Get a head start—start reinvesting capital now

Most companies will wait for the recession to be declared officially “over” before they begin spending again. Beat the crowd and start planning for strategic capital spending now—on R&D, IT infrastructure, and enterprise resource planning (ERP) systems. It may seem counterintuitive, but if you plan for strategic capital spending in key areas now, you'll save in the short- and long-term and end up lowering your overall cost structures.

Vendors are more flexible now. Some vendors are offering longer-term agreements, so you can better predict costs.

Explore on-demand solutions; alternative deployment methods can reduce your licensing and hardware infrastructure costs.

The bottom line: Invest now, save later—and beat the crowd

2. Position yourself to benefit from pent-up customer demand

Improving the customer experience is critical to retaining—and attracting—customers in any economy. Signals pointing to a recovery will help your customers gain confidence. Focus now on building strong relationships with customers, targeting those in growth industries. As the economy begins to turn the corner, you'll benefit from your customers' pent-up demand.

Visibility into customer behavior is critical. An integrated CRM solution allows companies to improve the customer experience and more effectively convert leads and prospects into paying customers.

The bottom line: Improve your customers' experience and watch your top-line grow

3. Free up cash flow—the true measure of a successful business

Improving the bottom-line improves cash flow. Another way to spur growth is to find creative and effective ways to reduce your costs. Use your ERP solution to get costs under control, without increasing resources or operating costs. More effective supply chain processes reduce waste. Better planning reduces expenses.

The bottom line: Improve bottom-line revenues and free up your cash flow

4. Do more with less

Now is the time to optimize workflows to be smarter, more efficient, and more productive. When the recovery starts to gather momentum, you'll already be a lean machine. If you have had to lay off employees or freeze staffing levels, minimize “brain drain” effects by centralizing data and making your internal processes more efficient.

Automating processes, such as reporting, can save time and enable you to do more with less.

The bottom line: Streamline and automate your processes, and do more with less

5. Tap into business critical information so you can make faster and better decisions

Your data may be your most important competitive tool. To respond to market trends in a more agile way, you have to know how your business is operating on a day-to-day basis.

Make sure you have access to reliable data so you know what to do next and so you can quickly react to shifting economic conditions and seize opportunity. Real-time business intelligence will give you more transparency into your operations and support better decisions.

The bottom line: With reliable business critical information, you can quickly react to shifting economic conditions and seize opportunity

The post-downturn economy will redefine the way you do business and the way companies compete.

Agile companies are not just weathering the downturn, they're actively preparing for the post-crisis world. Will you be ready?

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Sage

13888 Wireless Way, Suite 120
Richmond, BC
V6V 0A3

888-298-6168

www.SageNorthAmerica.com



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