Are you getting the most out of your software?

All too often, software applications are underutilized, or they are no longer configured to run your business in today's environment. There can be a number of reasons for this, but the end result is the same. You may not be realizing all of the benefits that the application has to offer. In reality, this can affect sales, margin, labor cost and even employee satisfaction.

Common Causes of Underutilized Applications

- Original implementation not fully functional
- Lack of or forgotten training
- Change in personnel
- Change in business requirements
- Outdated habits
- Menu options are hidden

There are often too many unfounded complaints about the applications that retailers are using to run their business. Certainly, there are times when an application should be replaced. But, there are also times when an evaluation of the way that current applications are being used can reveal great opportunity to tweak the use of the software or do a bit of retraining resulting in a much more productive use of the solution.

rpe

Integrating people, process and IT

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A Fresh Perspective of Your Application Use

In some cases, the original implementation was rushed or was not intended to take full advantage of the software. It is not unusual for the goal of an implementation to simply get the application up and running. There is likely an intent to circle back later (phase II, etc.) to take advantage of additional functionality. The problem is that too many times, phase II never happens. The result is that only a portion of the applications' capability (and your investment in the application) is realized.

Was your staff trained properly when the application was implemented? Training should be more than a couple hours in a classroom setting. That is a great start, but reality is that training should continue as part of go live. Issues and questions will absolutely arise when your staff is actually using the application to do their job. Having trainers available to provide guidance and address questions is critical.

Sometimes, staff simply forget what they were taught in the past. Even if a piece of the software was learned during training, if it is not used on a regular basis, staff may forget that it even exists.

Unfortunately, over time, staff changes. If the new staff is not properly trained on the use of the application, they tend to use only the most basic functionality. They cannot be blamed because they have never been exposed to the full capability of the software.

Businesses grow and change over time. Using an application the same way you did some years ago (when it was implemented) may not match up with today's business requirements. Every business evolves over time just as technology does. The retail industry and consumer expectations of the last five years have forced company processes to change quickly and doing things the same way as you did a few years ago will leave your company behind.

"We have always done it this way" is a mentality that must be challenged. It is surprising how often we hear this line. The wasted time and issues that result can be significant. Old habits should be challenged to break through this stifling way of doing business.

New versions of applications usually offer new features/functionality. Relying on software versions that are 5, 10 or 20 years old is likely hurting your ability to have the best information and processes.

While customized menus for various areas of the business can be beneficial, they also hide functions from the users that could be beneficial. Especially as your business changes, it is important to balance the cost/benefit to hiding menu options from users.

How RPE Can Help

RPE has been supporting retail applications including Blue Yonder (JDA) MMS and PMM merchandise management applications, Enterprise Planning, Allocation, E3 (ASR, AWR & OPT), and Demand Planning and Fulfillment for several years. We offer a complete range of services from Requirements Definition to Implementation and Continuing Support. Our functional and technical teams have many years of expertise and experience with these applications. Additionally, we provide 24/7/365 Hosting and Managed Services to ensure that your applications run smoothly.

If it is time for you to take a fresh look at how to get the most out of your retail applications and Blue Yonder software, let RPE help you!