



TEC PRODUCT CERTIFICATION REPORT

ERP for Mixed-mode Manufacturing
Epicor Enterprise Resource Planning Software System
Version 9.05

Prepared by Aleksey Osintsev, TEC Research Analyst
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TEC Product Certification Report

Epicor ERP certified by

Aleksey Osintsev, Research Analyst, Technology Evaluation Centers

Gabriel Gheorghiu, Research Analyst, Technology Evaluation Centers

Demonstration conducted by

Jeff Underdahl, Director, Systems Engineer, Epicor

Lisa Preuss, Director of AR/PR, Epicor

Kyle Pickus, Marketing Programs, Epicor

Technology Evaluation Centers (TEC) is pleased to announce that **Epicor** product **Epicor Enterprise Resource Planning Software System (v. 9.05)** is now **TEC Certified** for online evaluation of enterprise resource planning (ERP) solutions for mixed-mode manufacturing in the ERP Evaluation Center. The ERP Evaluation Center enables you to compare and evaluate functionality based on TEC's comprehensive model of ERP software for mixed-mode manufacturing. Data used in the Evaluation Center are obtained from the vendor's responses to TEC's request for information (RFI). Certification ensures that product capabilities have been demonstrated to TEC analysts based on the responses Epicor provided in its completed TEC RFI; and that TEC analysts have analytically and comparatively reviewed Epicor ERP RFI data against known benchmarks.



Benefits of Evaluating a TEC Certified Product

There are many benefits to evaluating a **TEC Certified product**. To potential clients of a software vendor, TEC certification provides the following:

- **Reassurance:** You can be assured that the data TEC provides about its certified products conform to a well-defined standard of accuracy. When a vendor's product is TEC Certified, it means that a trusted, independent third party has seen the product up close.
- **Better communication with vendors:** TEC certification helps ensure that vendors understand and respond accurately to their clients' RFI criteria. Certification with TEC analysts provides the opportunity to clarify any issues with the RFI criteria. This ensures that the vendor is speaking the same language as its potential clients—and gives the clients an unambiguous specification of product functionality to inform their selections.

The certification seal is a valuable indicator for organizations that rely on the integrity of TEC's research services for assistance with their software selection projects. Organizations looking for a solution can be confident that they're comparing the product on an "apples to apples" basis with other, similar products.

Background and Analyst View

Epicor enterprise resource planning (ERP) software is an enterprise-wide solution that not only is capable of supporting large businesses in functionality and scalability, but also remains user friendly and has a distinct and unambiguous logic, which even relatively inexperienced ERP software users can easily learn and comprehend. In this report, the functional aspects of the Epicor software are evaluated in comparison with other ERP packages for mixed-mode types of manufacturing businesses, represented by the virtual “average” ERP solution, based on TEC’s unique software evaluation methodology.

Epicor has been in the enterprise software market since its foundation in 1984, and the company became public in 1992. To fit its strategy of offering businesses a full-range solution, Epicor undertook significant in-house software development as well as acquisition of a number of vendors, eventually becoming a well-known global ERP provider with both direct and indirect presence in more than 150 countries, with more than 20,000 corporate customers working in more than 30 languages.

Epicor’s primary clientele represents all segments of medium-sized companies (from 100 to 1,000 employees), and particularly a lower segment of large businesses (up to 2,500 employees), where Epicor plays on the same field with larger competitors that historically focus solutions on multinational companies operating worldwide. The ideal customer of the Epicor ERP software would be a rapidly-growing and globally-operating multisite business that has outgrown a typical business package for small- and medium-sized companies, with requirements to access data in real-time mode and integrate itself into a global supply chain, while still remaining agile and flexible enough to address market and business challenges. Originally developed in English, the software has been translated into many languages by the vendor and localized according to its geographical presence. Along with established multicurrency, multi-language, and global taxation support, the multi-language offering provides Epicor with additional competitiveness. Epicor addresses the needs of various vertical industry markets—its major markets are various types of manufacturing, distribution, retail/hospitality, and service industries.

The typical implementation time for the Epicor ERP software is between three and eight months and, as with any other ERP package deployment, it depends on project priority for and resources allocated by the customer, as well as the number of modules and tools being implemented.

Epicor offers their prospects an “Up Front Guarantee” program, which formalizes the vendor’s performance and delivery commitments and associates those with the client’s contract payments.

According to Epicor’s converging development strategy, in a two-year period (2003–2005) the vendor transformed the original nine separate ERP and CRM applications into four products (Vantage, Enterprise, iScala, and Clientele), and finally into a single and fully functional product (Epicor 9, in 2009), which incorporates the best accomplishments of its predecessors while offering a unified technical platform and consistent user interface.

Flexibility and adaptability are two key words that we can use to briefly describe the Epicor software. From our standpoint, the solution's most impressive and distinctive feature is the capability to modify internal business processes and work and document flows, and to customize the user interface without source code changes. Certainly, such capabilities are not unique to the Epicor ERP product, as many other vendors offer similar features, but the Epicor software is developed with a substantial level of elegance. To our understanding, the vendor intentionally avoided creating as much specific functionality as possible to cover all conceivable areas of business processes. A big chunk of business requirements and custom procedures are left up to the business to decide on how exactly any given procedure will be configured and used—which thankfully is not a difficult task.

Based on the software comparison data that TEC possesses, Epicor is one of the richest and most complete products for ERP used by medium-sized mixed-mode manufacturers. Furthermore, the system, in our opinion, is actually capable of supporting larger businesses (up to 10,000 employees), with an offering that is comparable to tier 1 products in functionality levels, and also features reasonable built-in multisite and multinational potential along with a logical and coherent user interface.

Product Highlights

Epicor offers flexible approaches to software purchasing and delivery, where customers have a choice of functional modules of Epicor ERP. However, the core group of modules cannot be sold separately, and customers must still purchase the core functionality. There are three different core modules for each industry (manufacturing, distribution, and financials), with each core module containing the minimum requirements to meet the customers' needs in that industry.

The application is completely Web-enabled, which means that all forms, screens, and reports can be accessed via a browser, from anywhere in the world. Another nice feature is that both the Web version and the installed version look exactly the same on-screen (fields, screens, settings, etc.), with users experiencing no disconnect when switching from one version to the other. In addition, a mobile version is also available for popular mobile device operating systems.

Another important note is that the client has the option to select either the software as a service (SaaS) or the subscription-based delivery model. Furthermore, to provide more flexibility to its customers, Epicor offers complex options with various combinations of Web-based, cloud-based, and traditionally installed types of software deployment. This capability can provide customers with a high level of freedom and agility. The traditional weaknesses of such heavy-weight, sophisticated, and inertial applications, such as full-scale resource planning systems, can be minimized by the Epicor ERP software strictly on the assumption of having a competent and thoroughly planned implementation project and business processes afforded by these features.

Multisite and multi-company capabilities evidently were among Epicor's priorities, as much attention has been brought to bear on this functionality. Besides routine support for multisite and multi-language businesses, specific tools and small features are available that make life easier for multiple users. As an illustration, different themes can be applied to different companies or sites; cross-company reporting and dashboard functionality provides users with local-info access (i.e., that is limited by a specific entity or site) with access to other entities or sites—in other words, the system can tell you where a particular piece of data is from. Embedded support for multiple languages allows users speaking and working in different languages to log in their preferred language. Master file features permit system administrators to set up information for all sites and companies within the structure, from a single location. Although not all these tools are essential, they come in handy in the real world, as they may save a great deal of time in a live business environment.

Analyst Commentary

Based on four main principles, here is TEC's analyst commentary for Epicor ERP software:

Ease of Use

- **Layout:** All Epicor ERP's screens have a Windows look and feel, facilitating use by a user with average computer skills. The software is categorized into modules by functional area, and standard form layouts for all modules allow fast and easy navigation, drag-and-drop document attachment to any transaction or record in the system, and a visible current form navigation path. Each functional module consists of three standard folders: setup, general operations, and reports. All screens can be easily customized by the user. For instance, the creation of new groups, menu items, or frequently used operations is not a problem. The tree structure of functionality breakdown is also available along with a traditional screen structure.
- **Task performance:** A number of small features allow for a good level of convenience in day-to-day operations—e.g., the ability to summarize groups of records in any grid of Epicor ERP based on different algorithms, along with average, min, and max; different data elements can be pushed into Microsoft SharePoint, or other grids or charts.
- **Integration capabilities:** Developed in accordance with service oriented–architecture (SOA) principles, Epicor ERP's business logic and user interface are completely separated, in contrast to the client-server architecture. This makes the potential task of integration with other packages less painful for developers and, again, provides an additional layer of flexibility and adjustability to future needs.

Another tool facilitating integration is Epicor's Service Connect workflow designer, which allows linking of business processes in the system with other entities, users, or third-party applications. Users can use this tool to make light modifications to documents and to easily develop workflows for different scenarios. Service Connect is an optional tool, with either a one-time setup for use with initial system implementation or a full license for multiple amendments.

Workflow Design

- **Information retrieval:** The overall information retrieval task is not difficult, even for users with limited experience of ERP systems. Epicor ERP was developed to allow for consistent retrieval of data from the system and database regardless of whether it is from the user's desktop, Web-based software version, or mobile device. The very convenient and intuitive naming of the database fields enables users to easily recognize exactly what the field is about and what kind of information it contains.

- **Alerts and notifications:** Epicor offers a very practical and powerful tool called Business Process Management (BPM), which is basically an event condition/action trigger set with extended functionality. It allows users to not only configure and set up the entire workflow of the business—a standard component of the ERP product, but also establish relationships between various events and actions. Any transactions and records may lead to an action (including multi-prompt actions), via fully configurable conditions and rules. The overall idea is similar to Microsoft Office Outlook's wizard-driven logical rules creation, but in this case, it is applied to the multi-faceted ERP environment. Besides relatively simple actions, such as sending a notification or requesting an approval, it allows for more sophisticated workflow design changes, invoking a piece of code and the ability to make necessary modifications on the fly. Given its strength, this tool is nevertheless easy to learn and use. Along with Service Connect, the BPM tool is outside of the system's source code, so alterations of the source code do not lead to subsequent workflow process modifications, and software upgrades can be performed without touching existing BPM and Service Connect processes.

By creatively using this tool, businesses may resolve many conventional problems that usually arise while fine tuning the system or when making the inevitable business process changes that usually require software modification or customization.

- **Security:** Access and access limitation rules are pretty flexible and can be applied to a single user or to user groups according to various security levels. Different users can also be combined into groups and granted access at large.
- **Reporting capabilities:** Epicor ERP's standard reporting platform is Crystal Reports, although Epicor now offers SQL Server Reporting Services as an alternative if required. In addition to regular reports, Epicor ERP users also have a real-time view of the database via dashboards, where charts and diagrams are fully definable and drillable, and can be shared with other users. The dashboard provides data across different companies and sites, but in this case, the data is also drillable. ERP licences are not consumed when looking at data either via reports or dashboards.

Ease of Implementation

- **Server platforms:** Epicor ERP can be deployed on various server platforms (Linux-based, Microsoft servers, Unix), or can be deployed as SaaS or hosted. Various combinations of the deployment options are also possible, but will require additional discussion with the vendor.
- **DBMS platforms:** Epicor ERP can be deployed using two database platforms: Microsoft SQL Server and Progress. The SaaS option will not require any in-house database skills, as all technical burdens are carried by the vendor.
- **Flexibility:** Like the BPM and Service Connect tools, regular functional forms and screens are also easy to modify and adjust to users' needs, and even allow for the creation of a new user-defined screen. The software allows for screen modification by many ways without source code alteration. All user customizations that are made on the client version are fully convertible into Web versions—i.e., they are 100% synchronized.

Innovation

- **New features:** Available via both Web-browser and installed application, the Web 2.0 technology concept of enterprise search is an additional option available to Epicor clients. A Google-like search engine is embedded into the ERP system and allows searching for a document, for example, using a known piece of information, such as document title, customer name, or product serial number. Users can actually search for a previously system-generated document, a transaction record, or tags and links.

Another feature is a tracker concept of data view, as opposed to the traditional data entry screens, whereby screens and business process operations can be concentrated around trackers. For example, a customer tracker contains all the information related to customers. Like data screens, trackers are drillable and can provide multi-level data access.

- **Additional category:** Epicor ERP provides an extensive, visual, and helpful content-sensitive help feature. It automatically defines the system component in which the user is currently located, and delivers help content according to this current position.

Product Analysis

The following high-level graphs identify this product's functional focus and competitive strengths. All data may be reviewed in depth, using the TEC Advisor decision support system in TEC's public Evaluation Centers.

The TEC Focus Indicator™

This **TEC Focus Indicator** shows you which types of functionality are most likely to differentiate Epicor ERP from other products in the ERP for mixed-mode manufacturing software space. It includes three zones indicating the product's functional focus: the **Dominant Zone**, **Competitive Zone**, and **Minimal Support Zone**.

TEC's model of ERP for mixed-mode manufacturing systems is designed with a comprehensive breadth; generally vendors will deliver a common base of functionality. While it's necessary to know whether a product supports a base of common functionality, it's very helpful to understand how a product really differs from the crowd.

The rankings in this Focus Indicator represent neither the quality of the product nor an absolute quantity of supported functionality. Rather, *the rankings show support relative to the quantity of functionality supported, on average, by software products in this market space.*

The functional focus axes indicate the modules of a typical ERP for mixed-mode manufacturing product. Red dots that are near the center of the functional focus axes reveal where Epicor ERP is more likely to differentiate itself through breadth of functionality.

If your needs tend toward the type of functionality for which the red dots are located closer to the center of the Focus Indicator, this product will be a strong competitor for what you need.

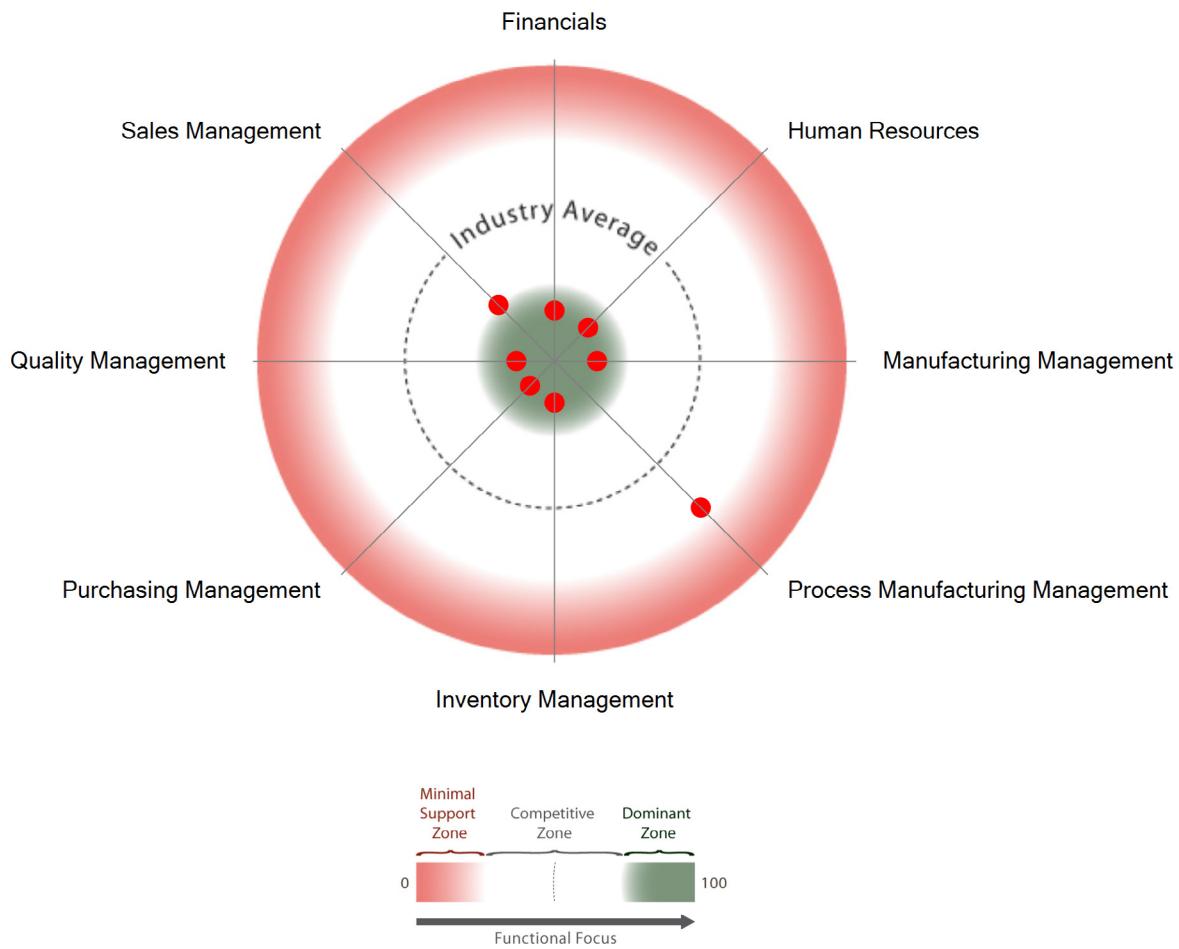


Figure 3. TEC Focus Indicator for Epicor ERP

The following explains the results for Epicor ERP in each zone of the TEC Focus Indicator. Details for the modules within each zone are available in the **Functionality Benchmarks** section later in this report.

Dominant Zone

Epicor ERP has six modules located in the **Dominant Zone**: Financials, Human Resources, Manufacturing Management, Inventory Management, Purchasing Management, and Quality Management.

Epicor ERP's strength in these modules is due to its well thought and developed software and equally strong support in all the six mentioned modules—a critical need for core business activities within a manufacturing organization.

This may reveal how the vendor has focused its product development. Dominant modules may or may not make up the bulk of the functionality within the product, but if you require more than the average breadth of functionality from these modules, this product will stand a much better-than-average chance of satisfying your requirements.

Competitive Zone

Epicor ERP has two modules located in the **Competitive Zone**: Sales Management and Process Manufacturing Management. Epicor ERP is competitive with most products in the sales management core area, but stands below the average ERP for mixed-mode manufacturing product in the process manufacturing area.

The fact that two modules of Epicor ERP are located in Competitive Zone does not mean that the software is not capable to support required business processes in sales or process manufacturing management areas. For the Sales Management module, it means that the difference in ratings of Epicor ERP and the average ERP product for mixed-mode manufacturing is not high enough to consider it as a dominant product. It still has high rating score and supports functions well, but other competitors in this module show good support levels as well. For the Process Manufacturing module, however, Epicor ERP demonstrates lower "out-of-the-box" support level, but business processes can be alternatively supported in other ways, such as modification, customization, or via integration with third-party or partner applications.

Minimal Support Zone

Epicor ERP has no modules located in the **Minimal Support Zone**.

Understanding the TEC Focus Indicator Zones

TEC defines an average solution using data about real software products available on the market. We assess the capabilities of the software and assign numeric ratings representing various levels of support in our models of enterprise software. Depending on the model, we use anywhere from a thousand to several thousand criteria to determine average scores. These models and product scores may be accessed through our publicly available Evaluation Centers.

We calculate what an average solution would look like based on the features and functions about which software vendors have provided us with recent information. We then normalize the scores of this solution as the circle labeled "**Industry Average**" bisecting the TEC Focus Indicator graph. We also define boundaries on the high and low ends of the average, which are the demarcation points for passing into Dominant or Minimal Support zones.

Next, we determine the quantity of functionality supported by the product for each module in our model. We assume that all criteria are equally important. In a real-world situation, of course, you would give a greater priority to criteria that are more important for your needs. However, for the sake of the TEC Focus Indicator analysis, we want to draw conclusions about the product's focus independently of any priorities.

The Industry Average forms the benchmark from which we calculate the difference in functionality offered by the product. The difference between the product score and the Industry Average is plotted as a positive or negative distance from the Industry Average line. For example, if the product offers a greater quantity of support than average for a particular module, the red dot will be located toward the inner focus of the graph.

It's important to note that a product is not "good" or "bad" just because it has more or less functionality than other products. To understand whether it will do what you need it to do, at a price within your budget, you must evaluate the product in depth.

The Zones

The area of functional focus within the **green Dominant Zone** indicates where a product has a much greater level of support for functionality than the average solution in this market space. Dominant modules are likely to be competitive differentiators.

The area of functional focus falling within the **pale Competitive Zone** indicates where the product has a level of support for functionality that is generally on par with what you can find from other solutions on the market. The functionality provided by the vendor likely remains a core part of the product's focus.

In some cases such a module may be considered a commodity within the market: many vendors offer the majority of the functionality, which makes it difficult to differentiate a product based on breadth of that functionality alone.

In other cases, a vendor may intend its product to compete on a level that satisfies most customers' requirements, with a market focus requiring that it differentiate itself through other modules or through the qualitative manner in which it provides its functionality.

The Competitive Zone is bisected by the **Industry Average circle**, which shows the quantity of functionality supported, on average, by software products in this market space.

The **red Minimal Support Zone** indicates where the product supports fewer features and functions than the average solution in the market. Modules listed in this zone are unlikely to be as important to the vendor's target clientele as the other modules. If a product has rankings in this zone, it generally offers the bare essentials and isn't focused on competing for clients that highly prioritize this functionality.

Even if a product has modules in the Minimal Support zone, it may still be entirely capable of satisfying your requirements, particularly if the average solution on the market offers more functionality than you require.

In all cases, it's likely that you will need to review the product in more depth to determine whether the functionality it provides in any zone is applicable or sufficient for your requirements.

Functionality Benchmarks

The following functionality benchmark graphs represent the quantity of support by Epicor ERP for the functionality within each module identified in the TEC Focus Indicator, on a scale of 100 points. The closer the plotted value is to 100 (toward the outside in spider graphs; toward the top in bar charts), the more functionality Epicor ERP supports. For the sake of comparison, you can see an average of what competitor solutions offer by referring to the dashed orange line.

Financials

The Financials module provides features and functions that allow accountants and financial managers to ensure financial transactions are tracked and properly recorded, and that this information is available via reports and other data retrieval tools. Traditionally, this module includes General Ledger, Accounts Payable, Fixed Assets, Cost Accounting, Cash Management, Budgeting, Accounts Receivable, Financial Reporting, and Project Accounting submodules.

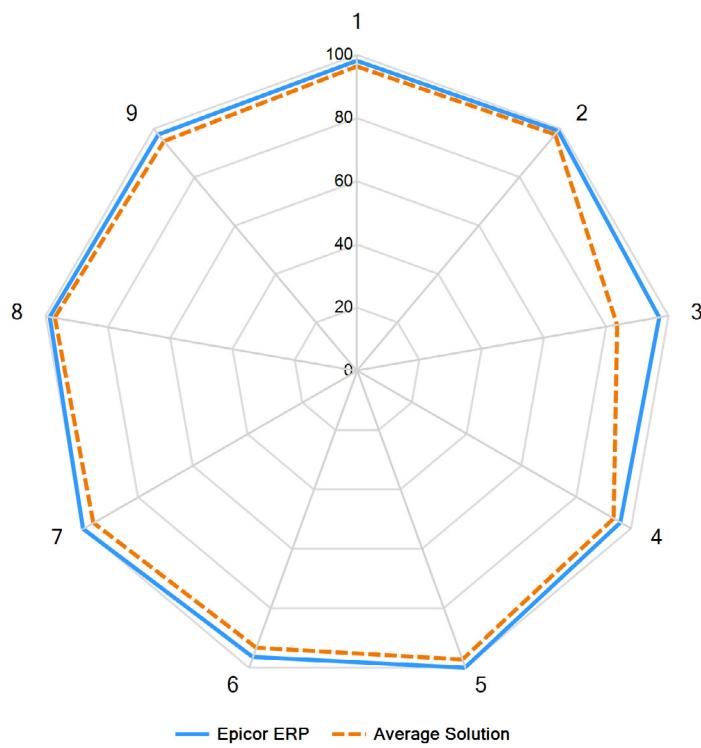


Figure 2. Functionality Benchmark: Financials

Epicor ERP demonstrates very high results for all submodules of the Financials module (figure 2). The support level for all functional areas is either equal or pretty close to 100%. Epicor ERP outperforms the average ERP package for mixed-mode manufacturing, with the biggest difference in the Fixed Assets submodule. Epicor offers a stable and rich functionality module that is capable of providing efficient accounting and financial management for midsized and larger organizations. Tax handling and alignment functionality, however, can be provided by the third-party software Avalara—an optional module that can be included if required.

Human Resources

Management of Human Resources encompasses all the applications necessary for handling personnel-related tasks for corporate managers and individual employees. Modules include Personnel Management, Benefits, Payroll, Employee Self-Service, Health and Safety, Workforce Management, and Training.

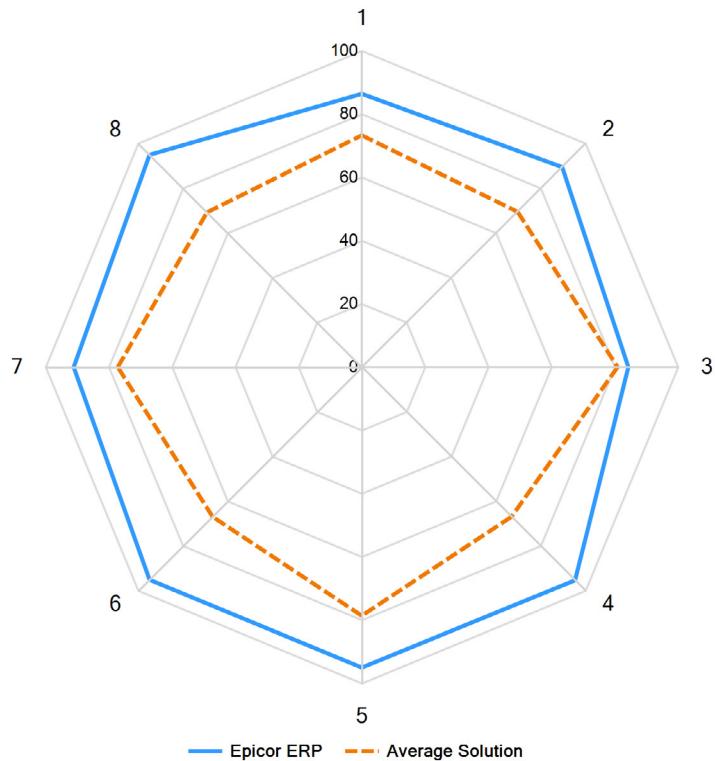
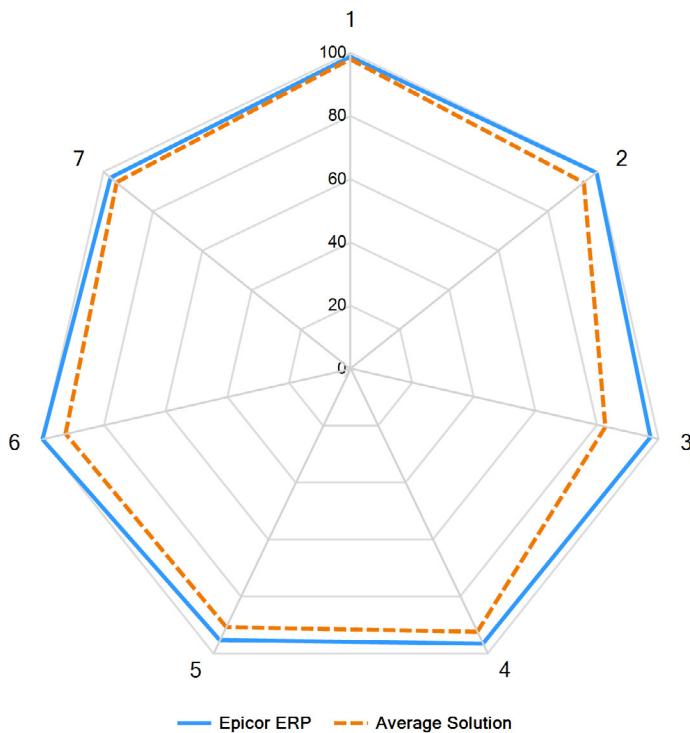


Figure 3. Functionality Benchmark: Human Resources

Even though Epicor ERP's rating score in the Human Resources functional module does not reach 100, it still delivers considerably higher support level compared with the average competitor in the ERP for mixed-mode manufacturing model (figure 3). The difference is impressive and is minimal only for the Payroll functional area. This is a good result for a tier 2 ERP vendor that has been targeting midsized companies and only recently started expanding its offerings to larger businesses. Epicor's recent acquisition of Spectrum Human Resource Systems Corporation should help raise its score for the Payroll functionality in the near future.

Manufacturing Management

Manufacturing Management covers discrete type of manufacturing and provides the ability to plan production at various scales, rolling high level plans down into daily schedules of individual machines and workers, and tracing real-time situations in production shop floor and in planning to control manufacturing and thus ensure manufacturing facilities follow production plans in an accurate and timely manner, and to alter manufacturing schedules and current operations as required. It involves product configuring, work centers and machines dispatching, all aspects of work-in-progress management, along with comprehensive Product Costing functionality. It also provides a consolidated view of the production situation using extensive multi-level reporting capabilities.



Criteria Legend		No. of Criteria
1	Product Costing	105
2	Shop Floor Control	385
3	Field Service and Repairs	119
4	Production Planning	297
5	Project Management	36
6	Product Data Management (PDM)	68
7	Product/Item Configurator	38

Figure 4. Functionality Benchmark: Manufacturing Management

High results for Epicor ERP in Manufacturing Management are conditioned by its extensive long-standing experience in discrete manufacturing. Its rating is close or equal to 100 percent for all submodules (figure 4).

Process Manufacturing Management

Process Manufacturing Management covers specifics that are applicable to process type of manufacturing. Formulas and recipes, modeling of process using formulas and routings, process batch control and reporting, conformance reporting, process manufacturing costing, process manufacturing-related material management are the major functional areas of this module. It also provides a consolidated view of the production situation using extensive multi-level reporting capabilities.

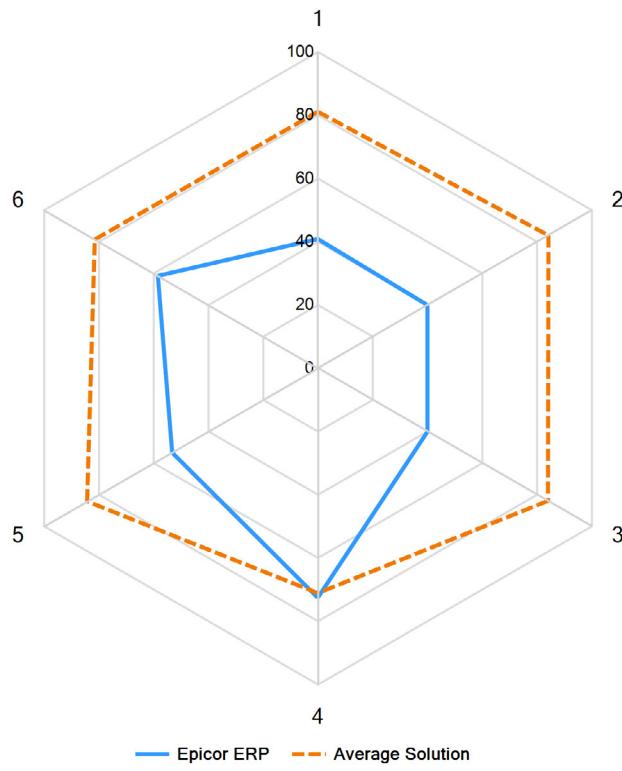


Figure 5. Functionality Benchmark: Process Manufacturing Management

As much of the Process Manufacturing Management functionality of Epicor ERP is not available out of the box, and can be delivered via customization or modification, or can be supported by partner software, the rating is relatively low (figure 5). In this module, Epicor's product is substantially behind its rivals for ERP for mixed-mode manufacturing. The only exception is Conformance Reporting functionality, where Epicor marginally outperforms the industry average. Although this module obviously is not Epicor's strength, the software complies with RoHS Regulations (Restriction of the Use of Certain Hazardous Substances in Electrical and Electronic Equipment Regulations) for process manufacturing.

Inventory Management

Solutions for inventory management are used for the record keeping of goods that are warehoused, and managing the movement of these goods to, from, and through warehouses. Forecasting, finished goods reservation and allocation processes, and inventory adjustments are also a part of this functional module.

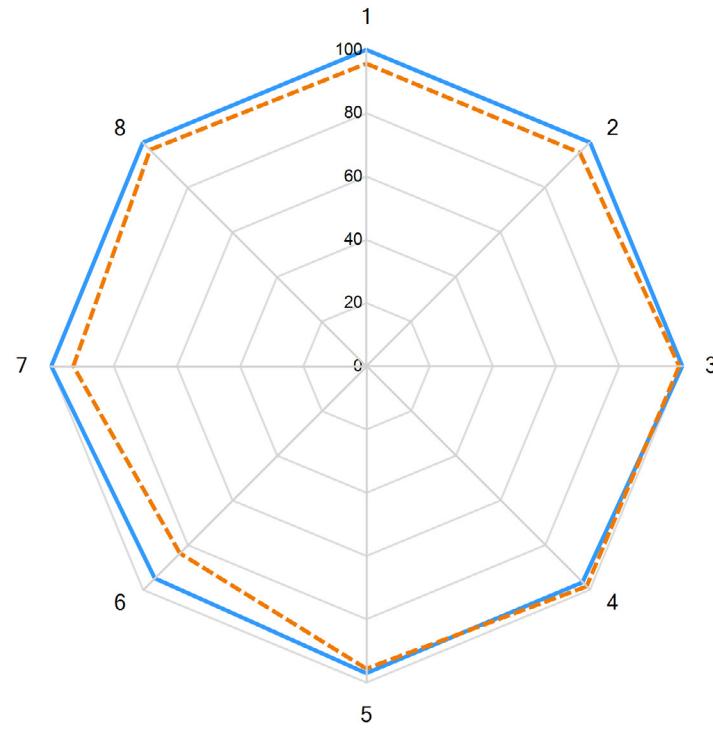


Figure 6. Functionality Benchmark: Inventory Management

Epicor's product is dominant in this functional module, with a support level higher than the average ERP product for mixed-mode manufacturing for all submodules; the average product is also strong, with minimal difference in Data Requirements, Reporting and Interfacing Requirements, and Locations and Lot Control (figure 6). The Inventory Management functionality is one of the mature modules for and is fundamental to any manufacturing management software, and thus has been developed quite well for the entire industry.

Purchasing Management

Purchasing management encompasses a group of applications that controls purchasing of raw materials needed to build products and that manages inventory stocks. It also involves creating purchase orders/ contracts, supplier tracking, goods receipt and payment, and regulatory compliance analysis and reporting.

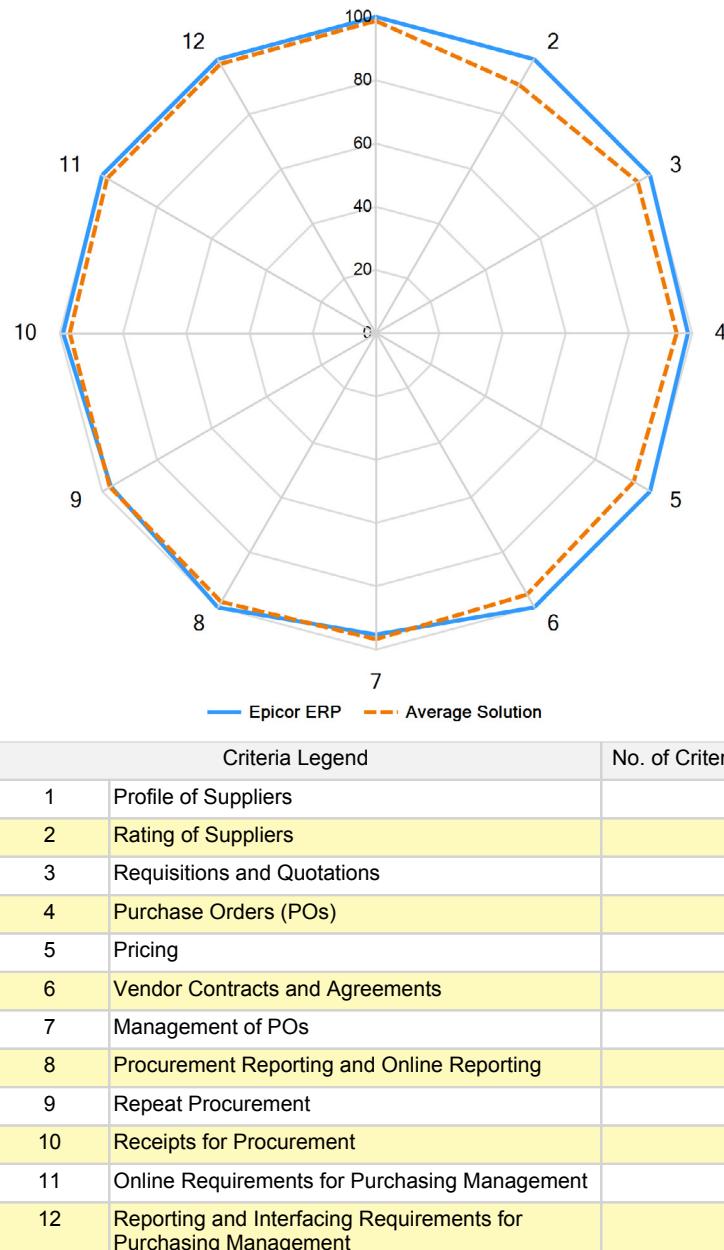


Figure 7. Functionality Benchmark: Purchasing Management

The Purchasing Management functionality is another competitive differentiator for Epicor ERP. Its support level is very high and fluctuates around 100 percent for all submodules (figure 7). Even though in Management of POs and Repeat Procurement, its rating score is slightly lower, and a few criteria are not supported out of the box, it is possible that light workflow and document flow modifications to Epicor's BPM tool can easily shift the balance in favor of Epicor's software.

Quality Management

For the Quality Management functionality in the ERP for mixed-mode manufacturing model, the only submodule is Production Quality Management. This area encompasses a group of applications that controls processes for quality data collecting, processing and tracking materials and finished products, and reporting quality-related information.

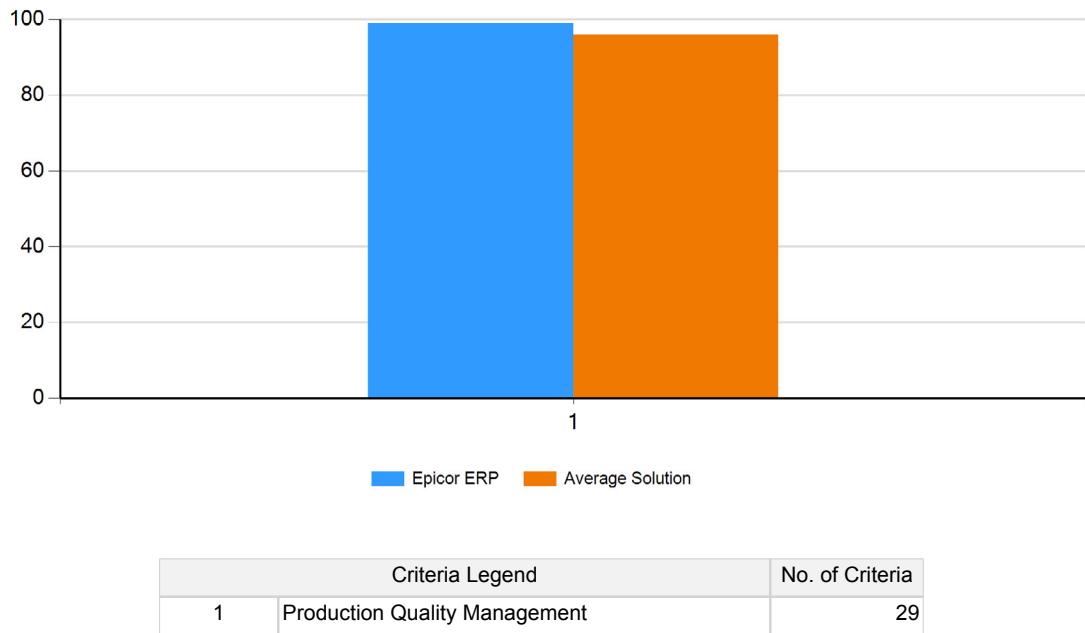
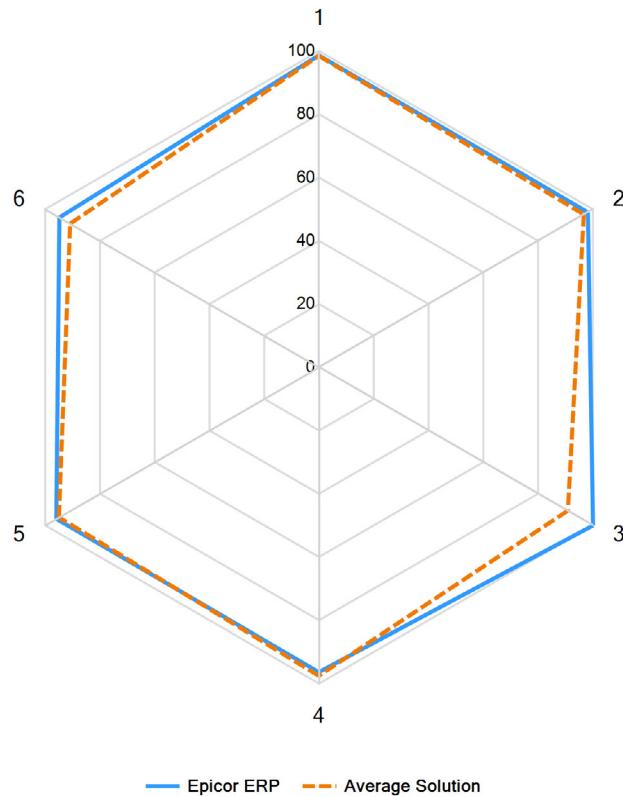


Figure 8. Functionality Benchmark: Quality Management

For the Quality Management module, the rating score for Epicor ERP is higher than the average ERP competitor for mixed-mode manufacturing (figure 8). The difference is not substantial, but it is enough to place this module in the Dominant Zone.

Sales Management

Sales Management encompasses a group of applications that automates the data entry process of customer orders and keeps track of the status of orders. It involves order entry, order tracing and status reporting, pricing, invoicing, etc. It also provides a basic functionality for lead tracking, customer information, quote processing, pricing and rebates, etc.



Criteria Legend		No. of Criteria
1	Online Requirements (Sales Management)	42
2	Reporting and Interfacing Requirements (Sales Management)	49
3	Available-to-Promise (ATP)	10
4	Pricing and Discounting	77
5	Customer Service and Returned Goods Handling	29
6	Customer Relationship Management (CRM) and E-Commerce Requirements	23

Figure 9. Functionality Benchmark: Sales Management

Sales Management is the only functional module that falls within the pale Competitive Zone area, which means this area is not dominant for Epicor ERP, although it is close to it (figure 9). Epicor ERP demonstrates a level of support for the Sales Management functionality that is generally equivalent to the average ERP application. Indeed, most of the submodules have a rating score within 1.5 percent of the average. Epicor's score for all the submodules is actually close or equal to 100 percent.

Analyst Summary

As TEC has collected, reviewed, and analysed detailed data on Epicor ERP, it is able to confirm that the overall functionality support level of the software is notably higher than the average ERP product for mixed-mode manufacturing and comes close to being competitive with larger vendors. The system's design and architecture leaves a positive impression. The vendor obviously follows a clearly defined product development strategy inspired by a deep business vision, and put into action using a well designed tactical plan.

The product's major highlights are as follows:

- Traditional and Web-enabled versions of the software can be used in parallel, depending on the users' requirements and the company's needs.
- The product is developed in accordance with SOA principles, allowing for easier and less painful integration to other packages.
- All known options of software deployment, along with capability of switching from one option to another, can deliver a cost-effective, rational system configuration.
- The product provides multisite and multi-language support—a standard delivery for any business with more than one location. The software offers many small tools and functions, making multisite configuration, setup, and maintenance user friendly.
- Adjustability, flexibility, and ease of modification are important attributes of Epicor ERP; BPM and Service Connect applications are outside of the source code.
- Epicor ERP's user interface and navigation tools were designed with users in mind. They are easy to learn, configure, and modify—programming skills are not required.

Epicor ERP is dominant in six of eight functional modules: Financials, Human Resources, Manufacturing Management, Inventory Management, Purchasing Management, and Quality Management. The Sales Management functionality is located in the Competitive Zone, but is near the upper border of the Dominant Module. Process Manufacturing Management is the only module that is relatively weak compared with the average ERP product for mixed-mode manufacturing, as many functions can be supported via application customization or modification.

With more than 20,000 customers in many industries, Epicor has a substantial number of clients in mixed-mode manufacturing that successfully use the software. We believe that the overall high support level and the advantages of flexibility and multiple deployment options provide Epicor ERP with a good competitive edge. When properly selected, configured, and implemented, this ERP package can contribute appreciably to manufacturing businesses, particularly for the medium and lower segment of larger enterprises.



Technology Evaluation Centers Inc.

740 St. Maurice, 4th Floor

Montreal, Quebec

Canada, H3C 1L5

Phone: +1 514-954-3665

Toll-free: 1-800-496-1303

Fax: +1 514-954-9739

E-mail: asktheexperts@technologyevaluation.com

Web site: www.technologyevaluation.com

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