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THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF TECHNOLOGY SOLUTIONS



## **SMALL COMPANIES - BIG TECHNOLOGY NEEDS**

*By Rick Ludolph, President, Productive Solutions*

Spend any significant time in the sewn-products industry and you will soon recognize that small and midsize companies face many of the same challenges as their larger competitors. Many of today's package suppliers and emerging brands are small but bustling businesses with big ambitions. In order to succeed, they must collaborate in the development of new product lines, manage the purchasing and flow of raw materials, master the complete range of manufacturing/ sourcing processes, and play an increasing role in logistics and inventory management.

There are plenty of these small companies with large-size company problems. Most analysts estimate that small and midsize companies account for more than 50% of the all technology purchases. With the rapid shift in roles and risks in the industry, many of these companies are taking greater interest in strategic business technology initiatives. Focusing on business processes can help small and midsize businesses become more efficient and adaptable to meet their large customers' demands.

But finding the right technology solutions can be difficult for these companies. Though their needs are complex, they've got millions of dollars less to spend on software and supporting infrastructure than large companies. They typically have little IT staffing and even less time to spend on software implementations. Yet they must compete globally with much larger companies or well organized networks of suppliers.

To overcome these constraints, small and midsize businesses are advised to look for applications that support their processes now and as they grow, without integration or customization headaches, complex training requirements, or massive support costs. Typically, they don't want to sink all their money into large scale enterprise solutions as much as they want software that helps them efficiently manage their processes and achieve visibility for themselves and their customers.

Choosing the right technology is obviously critical to meeting these needs. But also essential is the need for solid business partners that will help them every step of the way, from needs assessment to implementation and ongoing support.

While Fortune 500 companies typically rely on guidance from large analyst firms to help with technology decisions, mainstream companies with limited resources often rely on technology providers for the entire project. The product vendors are most often the perfect resource for product information, training, and ongoing support needs. However, many small and midsize companies are learning that utilizing industry-knowledgeable technology consultants in the needs assessment, process reengineering, and implementation processes can save significant time and money in the overall project cost. Moreover, this focused, objective technology guidance can help these companies avoid making big mistakes that may cost them even more down the road in form of loss of time, unexpected support staffing and costs, and inability to effectively compete.

As sewn-products market dynamics continue to change at a rapid pace, it's clear that small and midsize companies will require more sophisticated solutions to keep pace. This is true not only for technology, but also for the methodology these companies utilize to evaluate, procure, and implement these business supporting solutions.