FACT

Go Beyond ERP

A WHITE PAPER FOR BUSINESS LEADERS

Should a CEO be involved in the ERP implementation?

The CEO has to lead. The team needs the authority to act.



A NOTE FROM ARVIND AGARWALLA

I have spent 39 years implementing ERP solutions. My view is simple: the CEO has to be involved.

Your staff may know what needs to change. But do they have the authority to change it? Give them that authority. Settle the decisions that cross departments. The implementation can then move forward.

Arvind Agarwalla

Founder and CEO, FACT Software Group

CEO LEADERSHIP SETS THE PACE

CEO	PEOPLE	PROCESS	DATA	VALUE
Authority to act	Empowered owners	Faster decisions	One trusted view	Business outcomes

THE EXECUTIVE CASE

Yes. The CEO must lead.

ERP changes how your company works. Orders, purchase approvals, stock, cash and margins involve several departments. Your team needs someone with the authority to make decisions across all of them.

After 39 years implementing ERP solutions, my view is simple: it has to be top-down. The CEO sets the objectives, empowers the team and settles issues departments cannot resolve. The project manager organises delivery. The authority to change the company must come from the top.

> **“It has to be a top-down approach.”**
>
> Arvind Agarwalla | Founder and CEO, FACT Software Group

The CEO sees the whole business

Sales wants to keep its promise to the customer. Production needs materials. Finance manages credit, cash and margins. Each has a valid concern. The CEO sees how they fit together and can decide what works for the whole company. That overall view matters when designing ERP processes.

Give the team authority to decide

Staff may know what needs to improve. But can they change approval limits, remove duplicate checks or set a common process across departments? Often, they cannot. The issue returns at the next meeting. Configuration, testing and training wait. Give them clear limits and prompt decisions.

Use the system yourself

Use ERP information to review the business. Your team will understand that this is how the company will work. Keep asking for separate Excel sheets and those sheets will continue. The team takes its cue from you.

> **“ERP transformation moves at the speed of leadership. Clear authority and timely decisions turn a software implementation into business change.”**
>
> FACT Software Group

Listen to the people doing the work. Let them design and test the processes. Give them the authority, time and resources to put their expertise to work across the company.

THE IMPLEMENTATION BOTTLENECK

Decisions determine the pace

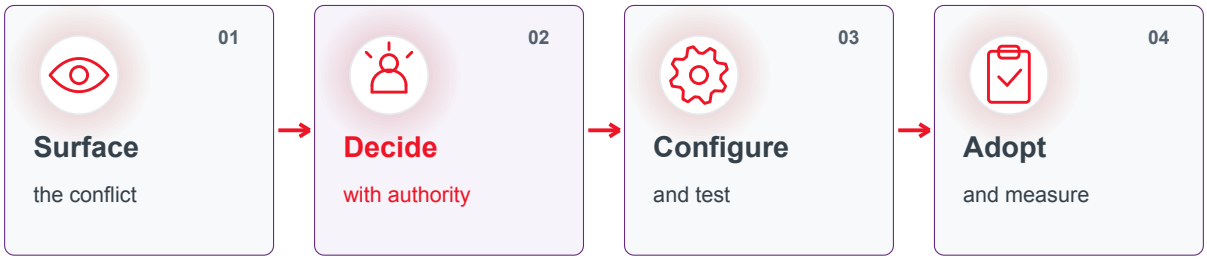
Business process reengineering means changing how you work to get a better result. If you copy every old form, approval and Excel sheet into the new ERP, you will carry the old delays with you. The investment should help you remove them.

A purchase approval exposes the problem

Take a manufacturer setting up a common purchase approval process. Procurement wants faster approvals. Finance wants control over spending. Production needs materials urgently. The team can list all three concerns. But who can set the approval limits and decide when an exception is allowed?

In this example, the CEO brings the process owners together, decides the way forward and makes responsibility clear. The team can then configure the process, test it and train the users. The decision allows the work to move.

HOW A DECISION BECOMES DELIVERY



Until the decision is made, the work waits.

FACT reports a fastest go-live of 29 days. [1] That is how quickly implementation can move. If your team waits several days for a policy decision, you lose valuable project time. The software team may be ready to proceed. Your business needs to be ready to decide as well.

Decide how decisions will be made before kickoff. Put the process owners' authority in writing. Keep a short list of open decisions, with an owner and a due date. Escalate issues involving several departments promptly. Aim for a decision or a clear resolution plan within one to two working days, adjusted to your project.

Move quickly. Keep the essential checks. Agree the scope and use configuration where it meets the need. Allow proper time for data validation, user acceptance testing and training. The CEO should remove delays in decisions while making sure the team is ready for go-live.

The 29-day figure is a FACT-reported fastest implementation, not a universal schedule. Scope, data readiness, integrations and customer decisions affect delivery.

THE BUSINESS RETURN

One source of truth changes work

95% **of spreadsheets eliminated**

FACT's published reduction figure. [1]
Decide which Excel sheets will go. Measure the reduction.

A stock list in one Excel sheet. A sales forecast in another. Someone combines the figures for the management meeting. Then the discussion starts: which number is correct? Every extra copy means more data entry, more reconciliation and more time spent checking figures.

FACT ERP.NG connects finance, sales, procurement, inventory, manufacturing and related controls. [2] You get a single source of truth for the business. As CEO, make it clear that this is the record everyone will use. Agree common definitions, give people responsibility for the data and set access rights. Entries must be made on time.

What this means for your business

Cash and margin visibility. See collections, commitments and profitability together through integrated financials, receivables and payables. Decide what needs attention in cash and margins without waiting for someone to prepare another report. [2, 3]

Better control of inventory and fulfilment. See stock across purchasing, sales, warehouses and manufacturing. Track batches, serial numbers and expiry dates. Use reorder controls to replenish in time and keep the information needed to trace a transaction. [4]

A wider view across the group. Compare companies, currencies and years without rebuilding separate workbooks. Multi-company, multi-currency and multi-year reporting give you the wider picture. Use common definitions so that the comparisons mean something. [2, 5]

Evidence that stays with the transaction. Keep audit trails and supporting documents in the Document Vault. Use e-invoicing, statutory reports and due dates to support controls. Connect ESG reporting with the operational records behind it. [1, 2, 6]

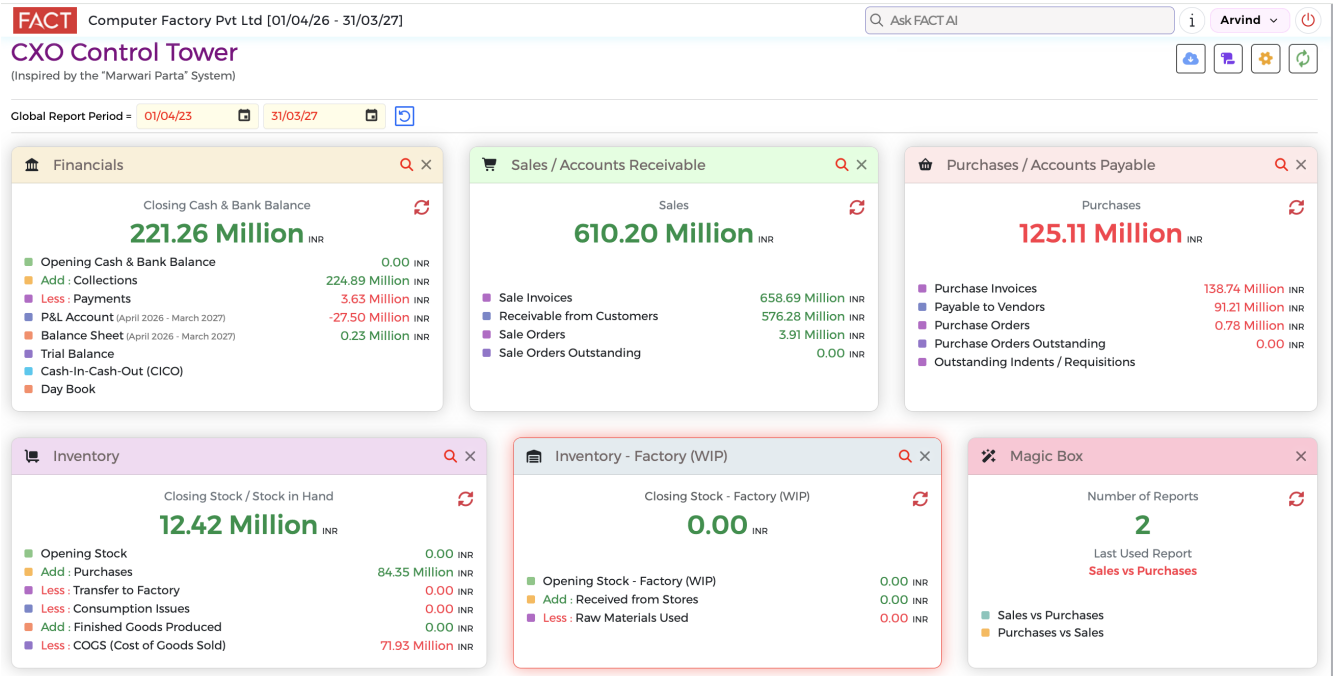
Remove the duplicate work as well as the Excel sheet. List the recurring sheets, agree what will replace them and validate the new process. Then retire them. Count the files removed and the preparation hours saved. Keep controlled spreadsheets where they serve a real analytical need.

The 95% figure is a FACT-published claim. Results vary with implementation scope, process adoption and the starting spreadsheet baseline.

THE CEO AFTER GO-LIVE

See the numbers for yourself

With FACT ERP.NG's CXO Control Tower, you can see cash, receivables, payables, orders, stock and exceptions in one place. Drill down to the transactions and supporting documents. When a figure needs explaining, you can look into it yourself. [3]



> **"Real-Time is the distance between an event and a decision. Collapsed to zero."**
>
> Arvind Agarwalla | ISCA Tech Talk presentation, October 2026 [2]

Ask the next question while you are looking at the numbers. Embedded AI supports natural-language questions, summaries, comparisons and forecasts within the ERP. [7] Lightning Fast Reports and multi-year analytics help you look further. [1] Check important conclusions against the source records and what you know about the business.

Use live information in your management meetings. Look at cash, overdue customers, open orders and stock exceptions in the ERP. Decide who will act while everyone can see the same figures. Keep the data complete and current. A fast report will not fix a late entry.

THE CEO IMPLEMENTATION PLAYBOOK

Lead the change at every stage

Focus on business results, resources, decisions across departments and readiness for go-live. Give the team authority to manage the project tasks and get on with the work.

01 Before kickoff

Record reporting time, recurring Excel sheets, month-end close, inventory accuracy and overdue receivables. Name the executive sponsor and process owners. Set aside time for workshops, data preparation, testing and training.

02 During process design

Agree how departments will work together: approval limits, master-data ownership, reporting definitions and exceptions. Require a business reason for customisation. Ask the people doing the work to flag practical problems before finalising the design.

03 During configuration and testing

Meet briefly each week; handle urgent decisions between meetings. Track each open issue, its age, impact and owner. Have users demonstrate complete scenarios and exceptions with validated data. Resolve competing demands on people promptly.

04 Before go-live

Check opening balances and key records reconcile, critical processes work, permissions are correct, users are trained and support is ready. Agree cutover duties and contingency plans. Approve go-live against agreed criteria, with an owner for each remaining risk.

05 After go-live

Use ERP information in management reviews. Check adoption and benefits at 30, 60 and 90 days. Retire validated duplicate reports. Fix recurring exceptions and improve processes. Keep business ownership in place after the project team steps back.

Make it clear who can decide. The project manager runs delivery. Process owners work within agreed limits. The CEO resolves major conflicts and protects the business case. An empowered executive can lead day to day, with direct access to the CEO.

Decide how the company will work.
Give your team the authority to make it happen.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR AND SOURCES

Make the business ready to change

Your ERP team needs clear direction, authority across departments and someone accountable for the result. That has to come from the CEO. With that backing, a connected ERP can help your company reduce manual work, retire Excel sheets and make decisions from the same set of facts.

Arvind Agarwalla is the Founder and CEO of FACT Software Group, with 39 years of experience implementing ERP solutions.

This paper draws on that experience and the FACT ISCA Tech Talk presentation, *Real Time Numbers for Real Time Leaders*.

See what FACT ERP.NG can do for your business.
Look at the CXO Control Tower. Discuss the processes you want to improve, the decisions your team needs and the results you will measure.

Visit factsoftware.com | arvind@factsoftware.com

Sources and notes

Product descriptions and figures come from FACT materials. The leadership recommendations reflect the author's experience. The purchasing example is illustrative. Web sources accessed 12 November 2026. Titles below are clickable.

[1] **FACT Software.** Why FACT Wins

[2] **FACT Software.** Real Time Numbers for Real Time Leaders. ISCA Tech Talk presentation, 30 October 2026; slides 24, 32–40 and 48. FACT collateral.

[3] **FACT Software.** CXO Control Tower

[4] **FACT Software.** Inventory Management

[5] **FACT Software.** Multi-Company and Multi-Currency

[6] **FACT Software.** ESG Reporting and Carbon Accounting

[7] **FACT Software.** Embedded AI

The page 5 quotation is from slide 24 of the ISCA presentation. Photograph from the FACT brochure; logo and product image © FACT Software Group. Diagrams created for this paper.

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Five countries. One FACT.

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Singapore

+65 6220 8832

FACT Software International Pte Ltd

10 Anson Road
#22-08A International Plaza
Singapore 079903



India

+91 33 4010 7050

FACT Solutions India Pvt Ltd

11 Circus Market Place, Agarwalla Chambers
Kolkata 700017, India



Malaysia

+60 3 7803 0830

FACT System (Malaysia) Sdn Bhd

A-03-03A Empire Tower, Jalan SS16/1
47500 Subang Jaya, Malaysia



Philippines

+63 917 700 8606

FACT Software Philippines Inc

252 Sen Gil Puyat Avenue
Burgundy Corporate Tower, 27th Floor
Makati City, Metro Manila NCR, Philippines



Nepal

+977 1 5452788

FACT Nepal Pvt Ltd

Sanepa, Lalitpur; PO Box 573
Kathmandu, Nepal

Let’s talk about your business.

sales@factsoftware.com | factsoftware.com

Offices: FACT contact page. Flags: FlagCDN. Accessed 12 November 2026.