Start Planning for 2024 now and stay ahead
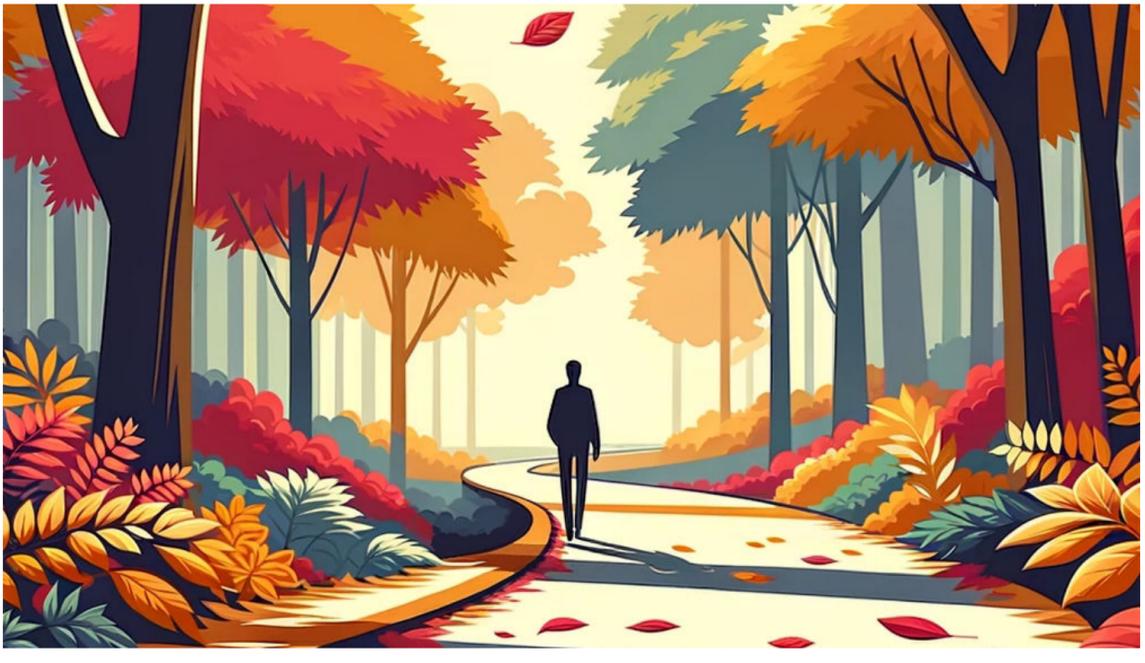
The start of October heralds for me, not just the start of Autumn, but the start of acquiring Christmas presents. I am not one to dash out on Xmas Eve, but I have a present cupboard already beginning to gather interesting items and an assortment of gifts. They don't necessarily have an owner yet, but they are items that appeal to me, and that I would like to receive so I can only hope my friends and family feel the same. So, what would you chose as a Xmas present in your working life?

Maybe some of the following....

- Tech expansions & upgrades approved and scheduled
- Sensible budgets to achieve IT goals
- Smoothly running projects
- Targets based on reality not fiction
- Automation of Long mundane business processes
- ROI plotting automatically from good data

In line with this wish-list our October newsletter explores what innovations are coming in 2024 that can help make your wishes come true.

Innovations for Infor ERP Industry-Specific Cloudsuite

Firstly, there was big news from INFOR this month which may have you wanting to schedule an upgrade to incorporate some of their new solution innovations. As part of Infor's new bi-annual cycle for major product releases the announcement describes the new **Platform Technology** improvements and enhancement to industry-specific CloudSuite ERP. In essence, it provides an ease of integration and ways in which you can now incorporate other solutions and technologies.

If you are looking to keep up with the Jones's and run a bi-annual cycle of upgrades, you will need project management and planning to ensure it doesn't adversely affect the day-to-day business, and who better to support you than ReInforce Technology with our skilled consultants keeping everything to time and budget. The Infor solution upgrades are designed to drive efficiency. Using the multi-tenant cloud platform organisations can deploy additional technologies more quickly helping them to operate more dynamically and increase speed to market with adoption of new solutions. This includes AI capabilities, process automation and machine learning – all of which help to reduce system complexity.

Product Feature Highlights

Cloud 9 for Infor ERP Product-Centric Enterprises

Also, announced this month, as if you were in any doubt, Infor has been named a leader in the 2023 Gartner® Magic Quadrant™ for Cloud ERP for Product-Centric Enterprises. This is recognised as a significant award as it reassures customers that the technology is future-proofed, and they can purchase with confidence, knowing that there is a roadmap that has been thoroughly scrutinised.

In Gartner's own words they state: *"Product-centric organizations are adopting cloud ERP applications with superior process automation and analytic capabilities. Application leaders should use this Magic Quadrant to evaluate cloud ERP vendors as part of a composable strategy that emphasizes process standardization and agility."*

The quadrant rates suppliers across two main areas: Ability to execute and completeness of vision. The vendors who scored highest on both these elements, alongside Infor, include Oracle, Microsoft, and SAP. So, we are in lofty company.

Discover why Infor named by Gartner as a leader in the 2023 Gartner Magic Quadrant

Infor delivers end-to-end Enterprise Automation
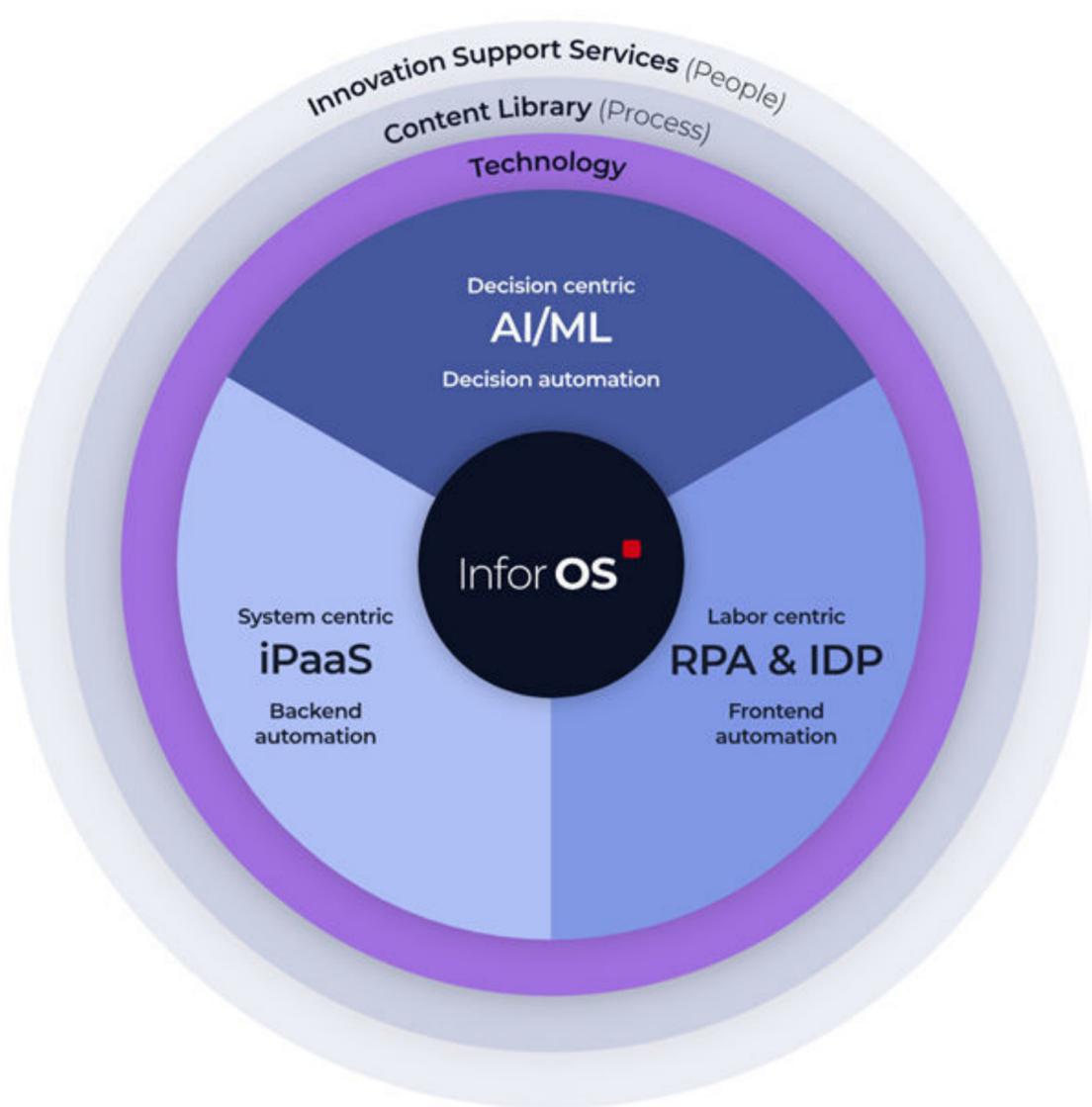
Infor shows how to take automation to the next level by adding robotic process automation, AI, and end-to-end automation to one **Technology Platform**. This is creating what they call hyper-automation. This new form of automation aims to remove all human error and intervention. This is a new focus as most technology "sprints" involve the melding of People, Processes and Technology whereas this Infor Enterprise Automation is a unique way to scale automation usage without the "people" element.

Infor provides prebuilt industry content, as expected with their vertical and industry strategy. The ultimate solution is combined on the one Infor platform as part of the Infor OS and directly within Infor CloudSuite and includes:

- Backend automation for development and app connections, governance and integration.
- Decision Automation with natural language processing and interpretation with predictive streamlining.
- Frontend automation where manual and routine tasks are automation and so relieving boring, repetitive and high volume, low value work.

For more detailed information and to drill down to understand more about hyper-automation and how it could help in your business – see here for more information

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What comes first, the chicken or the egg;
Budgeting or Planning?

And now a segway away from Infor new technologies and let's take a practical look at planning for 2024. It strikes me that the most sensible approach would be to start with the budget, as knowing what is available will dictate what you can achieve and do.

However, in most organisations the budget only becomes available upon a sound business case with an ROI (return on investment) that stacks up and a comprehensive plan. Therefore, you need to start with an understanding of the corporate goals and align your plan accordingly.

Know the goals – this may sound so simple and straightforward, but the over-arching corporate goals may not be formally announced or filtered down and if you are not clear – ask. There is absolutely no point starting this process without knowing what, you don't know if that is the case.

What are the motivators – this is more about peeking around corners, to understand what has motivated those goals, or more likely who is being targeted and PAID on what KPI's (Key Performance Indicators). Aligning your plan to who gets paid on what is a sound move as it will ensure you have executive sponsorship and buy in.

Impact on the team – can you sensibly do what you are planning or more importantly will all departments pull alongside you towards achieving the plan. If you are planning a system upgrade, does everyone know the value it will bring them as individuals, if not you will fail. Explore who will be affected and ensure they are all within the communication loop.

Step outside for a minute – look beyond your company at industry trends and who is doing well. And ask yourself why. All things technology continues to move at alarming speed and so sanity check that you are not missing a trick and your "competition" or those within your sector are not ploughing a different path. Maybe they are focusing on customer marketing or building stronger alliance partners. Take a few hours to do some background research and surfing.

Data is king – source industry data and trend analysis (Forrester, IDC, Gartner, Canalys, Tech Target, etc.) are all good sources. If your plan includes a request for funding, there is no better reinforcement than data that shows; *"8 out of 10 cats say that's what they want."*

Take your time – all plans need objectives, goals, activities, costs and importantly a timeline. When plotting your timeline, my only steer would be to always under promise and over deliver otherwise in 2024 you will feel you spend your entire time running to catch up.

ReInforce Technology helps with Project Planning

Upcoming Industry Events

- Seminar on visual components, Manufacturing Technology Centre October 31st **HERE**
- Infor Hyper-automation on LinkedIn Live event (on demand available) **HERE**
- Gartner IT Infrastructure, Operations and cloud strategies conference, London November 20th - 21st showcased as Accelerating Value - the Platform Revolution **HERE**
- International Project Management Conference December 15th to 17th in Cambridge 2023 **HERE**
- Robotics and Automation Event 1th and 20th March 2024 at the NEC Birmingham **HERE**

Need Assistance with your Infor ERP?
Drop us a line

ReInforce Technology provides expert consulting services for Infor ERP. Our consultants, developers, project managers and data analysts are highly skilled professionals who specialise in LN, Baan, LX, BPCS, M3, Lawson and other Infor solutions. We extend the life of ERP systems and knit together your systems and processes, with an integrated approach to data to optimise efficiency.

Support, Optimise, Enhance, Migrate