For many years Open Source ERP has been quietly maturing. With a large following from impartial sites like SourceForge.net and Open Source ERP Guru as well as the sites sponsored by Open Source ERP integrators and commercial Open Source companies, the information and collaboration is remarkable. The key to ERP is maturity and stability. While not all available Open Source ERPs are mature, many are and it is those that deserve a serious consideration.

The world of ERP has been dominated for years by the likes of SAP, Oracle, PeopleSoft and Baan. These ERP systems are broad and deep in functionality, but as we all know, are not as deep as Tier 1 ERP. Is that really important? It depends, but for thousands of companies world-wide, including SMBs and large Distributors, the answer is a resounding NO (it is not that important). Why do we believe Open Source ERP Is Ready, Willing and Able?

Adoption and Partner Programs
By definition, Open Source software is a community effort and in many cases free. Increasing Enterprise adoption of Open Source systems has created a niche for Commercial Open Source – Open Source software with the support levels and commitments that enterprises need, but at a fraction of the cost associated with proprietary tools. Open Source ERP also comes in several flavors from free to commercial subscription programs. The subscription programs are typically managed on behalf of the ERP provider by partners or VARs (Value Added Resellers). The VAR Guy (www.thevarguy.com) ranks Open Source software in general and several of the Open Source ERP products mentioned earlier in this article make the list for the second year. Compiere and OpenBravo both made the top 25 in a strong group of Open Source companies that includes RedHat, Alfresco and SugarCRM. The annual survey tracks Open Source companies world-wide. We would recommend you do your homework and involve a partner that can help you identify, roll out and support the Open Source ERP that is the right fit for your organization. Open Source ERP has come of age and is ready. Willing and Able to meet your business needs. Are you?

About Author
Tom Rodgers is Director of ERP Sales and Services for CIGNEX.

Commercial Versions Generally Payoff
To ensure peace-of-mind, we recommend the adoption of Commercial Open Source ERP (or Enterprise Edition), as opposed to the Community Edition (CE). For a nominal annual subscription, you would be entitled to the latest functionality, tested well before release and supported by the company or a representative partner. Adopting commercial Open Source ERP has yielded reduced TCO in excess of 90 percent – truly a compelling case for its adoption.

You get the Code
Open Source ERPs provide you access to the source code. We have all experienced situations where proprietary ERP companies have been acquired with the sole intention of killing competition or have filed for bankruptcy or have gone out of business. As we all know, we have all experienced situations where proprietary ERP companies have been acquired with the sole intention of killing competition or have filed for bankruptcy or have gone out of business.

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