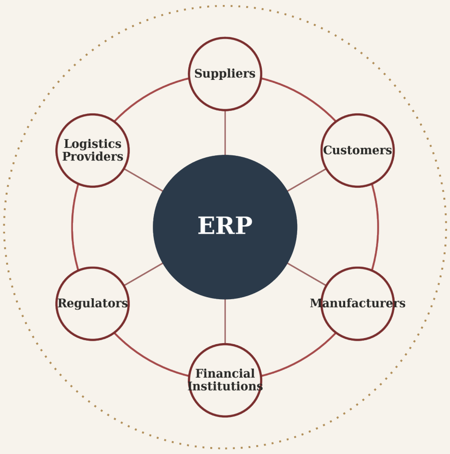
GULF ENTERPRISE TECHNOLOGY REVIEW

INDEPENDENT INDUSTRY ANALYSIS · ENTERPRISE TECHNOLOGY & DIGITAL COMMERCE DESK

Why Saudi Companies Need More Than an ERP System

Building Connected Businesses for Saudi Arabia's Digital Economy



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RESEARCH & INSIGHTS DESK

Prepared by the Gulf Enterprise Technology Review editorial team, covering enterprise software, digital procurement, and industrial technology across the GCC.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

For more than three decades, ERP systems have been the operational backbone of business management across every industry. But as Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 accelerates the shift toward a connected, diversified economy, this analysis examines why internal-facing ERP platforms are no longer sufficient on their own — and what a new category of ‘digital infrastructure’ is being built to address the gap.

This report draws on current market platforms — including Jazalla, a Saudi-native digital commerce and procurement platform — as a working example of how this emerging category is taking shape in practice.

PART ONE

For More Than Three Decades

Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) systems have been the foundation of business management. Organizations across every industry have invested heavily in ERP solutions to streamline accounting, procurement, inventory, human resources, sales, and operational processes. These systems have enabled businesses to automate workflows, improve efficiency, and gain greater visibility into their internal operations.

ERP systems remain one of the most important technologies within any organization. They provide the structure and discipline required to manage day-to-day business activities, support financial reporting, and improve operational performance.

However, the business environment has evolved significantly.

Today, organizations no longer compete as independent entities. Every company operates within a much larger ecosystem of suppliers, customers, manufacturers, contractors, logistics providers, financial institutions, government agencies, and strategic partners. Success is increasingly determined not only by how efficiently a company manages its own operations, but also by how effectively it collaborates with the wider business community.

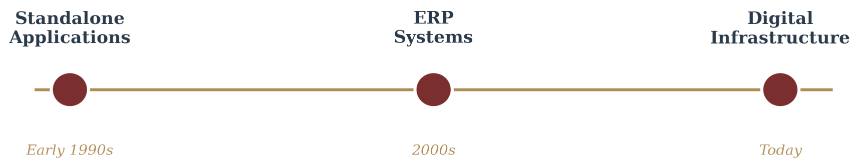
An ERP system is essential for managing an organization's internal operations, but it is no longer sufficient to support the connected economy that Saudi Arabia is building under Vision 2030.

PART TWO

The Evolution of Enterprise Technology

Business technology has progressed through several distinct stages. Early business applications focused on individual functions such as accounting, payroll, inventory, and customer management. While these standalone systems improved productivity within specific departments, they often resulted in duplicated information and disconnected business processes.

The introduction of ERP systems represented a major advancement by integrating these functions into a single platform. Organizations gained greater operational visibility, improved collaboration between departments, and more consistent business processes.



Today, a new generation of enterprise technology is emerging. Businesses are no longer looking only for internal integration — they need digital platforms that connect them with customers, suppliers, manufacturers, financial institutions, regulators, certification bodies, and government organizations.

This evolution has given rise to what analysts are increasingly calling Digital Infrastructure for Modern Commerce and Industry.

PART THREE

Where Traditional ERP Systems Reach Their Limits

ERP systems are exceptionally effective at managing what happens inside an organization. They provide answers to operational questions such as inventory levels, outstanding invoices, employee information, project costs, and financial performance.

However, modern businesses increasingly face questions that extend beyond their internal operations.

Common Cross-Boundary Challenges

- — Identifying qualified manufacturers and discovering new suppliers.
- — Verifying industrial capabilities and locating specific certifications.
- — Participating in digital procurement opportunities.
- — Establishing secure commercial relationships with new partners.
- — Protecting financial transactions with organizations never worked with before.

These challenges are not operational — they are collaborative. They require organizations to exchange trusted information across company boundaries, something traditional ERP systems were never designed to do. This does not diminish the importance of ERP systems; rather, it highlights the need for an additional digital layer that enables organizations to connect with the wider commercial ecosystem.

PART FOUR

From Managing Businesses to Connecting Businesses

ERP systems manage the internal activities of a business. They record financial transactions, maintain employee information, control inventory, and support operational decision-making. They provide visibility into what is happening within the organization.

Digital infrastructure serves a different purpose. It enables organizations to discover business opportunities, identify qualified suppliers, collaborate with customers and partners, exchange standardized information, participate in procurement activities, conduct secure financial transactions, and build trusted commercial relationships.

> *“Rather than replacing ERP systems, digital infrastructure extends their value by connecting businesses to the external marketplace. The two technologies work together to create a complete digital business environment.”*

PART FIVE

Supporting Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030

Saudi Arabia is undergoing one of the world's most ambitious economic transformation programs. Vision 2030 is driving significant investment in industrial development, manufacturing, logistics, digital transformation, local content, supply chain resilience, artificial intelligence, and private sector growth.

Achieving these objectives requires more than modernizing individual companies. It requires connecting businesses through trusted digital platforms that encourage transparency, collaboration, and efficient information exchange.

- Manufacturers need to showcase their production capabilities.
- Buyers need access to verified suppliers.
- Government entities require standardized business information for procurement and localization.
- Investors seek trusted data when evaluating potential partners and opportunities.

These requirements cannot be addressed through isolated business systems alone. They require a shared digital infrastructure capable of connecting organizations across the entire economy.

PART SIX

A Platform Example: Jazalla

Jazalla was developed to support this next generation of digital commerce by providing what its founders describe as “The Digital Infrastructure for Modern Commerce and Industry.”

Rather than functioning solely as an ERP system or an online marketplace, Jazalla creates a connected ecosystem where businesses can discover verified organizations, collaborate securely, manage procurement digitally, and participate in trusted commercial relationships.

The platform integrates a Business Directory, Industrial Marketplace, Business Services Marketplace, Digital Procurement, Financial Services, Industrial Intelligence, and optional Business Management modules within a single environment — allowing organizations to move from discovering a supplier to issuing an RFQ, negotiating a contract, generating a digital invoice, protecting payments through escrow services, and establishing long-term partnerships, within one connected platform.

Positioned to Complement, Not Replace

Notably, Jazalla is designed to complement existing ERP investments rather than displace them. Organizations can continue using their preferred accounting or ERP systems while leveraging Jazalla to connect with suppliers, customers, manufacturers, contractors, and service providers across Saudi Arabia and beyond.

PART SEVEN

Building Trust Through Connected Business Data

One of the greatest challenges facing organizations today is not a lack of software — it is a lack of trusted, standardized business information.

Companies often maintain supplier information across spreadsheets, emails, paper documents, and disconnected databases. Much of this information becomes outdated, incomplete, or inconsistent over time.

Platforms in this category, including Jazalla, aim to address this by providing verified company profiles enriched with detailed business information, manufacturing capabilities, industrial activities, certifications, products, services, local content data, and internationally recognized classification standards such as UNSPSC and HS Codes.

This structured information enables organizations to identify suitable business partners based on objective capabilities rather than simply company names or existing relationships — resulting in faster supplier discovery, better procurement decisions, and stronger commercial collaboration.

PART EIGHT

Enabling a More Connected SME Economy

Small and medium-sized enterprises represent the backbone of Saudi Arabia's private sector. Yet many SMEs continue to rely on manual processes or disconnected software applications that limit their visibility and restrict access to larger supply chains.

Digital infrastructure changes this dynamic. By participating in a connected platform, SMEs can showcase their products, services, manufacturing capabilities, and certifications to a much broader market. They gain access to procurement opportunities, investment prospects, verified buyers, secure financial services, and digital collaboration tools that would otherwise require significant investment to develop independently.

This levels the playing field, allowing smaller businesses to compete more effectively alongside larger organizations while contributing to the Kingdom's broader economic development goals.

PART NINE

The Future Belongs to Connected Businesses

The next generation of business technology will not be defined solely by larger ERP systems or additional software applications. It will be defined by connected ecosystems that enable organizations to exchange trusted information, collaborate securely, automate commercial processes, and make better decisions through shared digital intelligence.

ERP systems will continue to play a critical role in managing internal business operations. However, the organizations that achieve sustainable growth will be those that complement their ERP investments with digital infrastructure capable of connecting them to the wider commercial and industrial economy.

As the Kingdom continues its transformation toward a diversified, knowledge-based economy, businesses will require more than software to remain competitive — they will require a trusted platform that enables them to discover opportunities, build stronger partnerships, exchange reliable information, and collaborate confidently across an increasingly connected business landscape.

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That platform is not intended to replace the ERP systems organizations already depend on.
It is designed to connect them to the future.

This analysis reflects the independent editorial assessment of Gulf Enterprise Technology Review and references publicly available platform information current as of 2026.