Microsoft ®

ENTERPRISE RESOURCE PLANNING:
POWERING GOVERNMENT TRANSFORMATION

INTEGRATED BUSINESS SUITES HELP CONTAIN COSTS, MODERNIZE AGENCIES

When governments struggle with older information systems, public-focused services bog down and constituents suffer. Many government organizations — state, local or federal — depend on stand-alone systems, and that creates challenges for agencies to share information.

That's where a well-conceived enterprise resource planning (ERP) solution can help. ERP empowers government agencies to collect, analyze and exchange vital data, allowing them to function more efficiently and effectively.

For some agencies, collaboration still means carrying printed reports from office to office, where workers retype figures into different systems. By the time critical information is assembled, public officials often find it's dated or inaccurate.

That's the situation one Western city recently faced and is typical for many public jurisdictions. The city government spent excessive time producing standard requisitions, purchase orders and reports. The financial and planning system was slow, required a great deal of manual processing and resulted in frequent errors. City departments had trouble sharing information, and officials weren't sure they would meet deadlines to comply with accounting requirements in the Governmental Accounting Standards

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> — **Janet Lampert,** vice president of sales, Encore.

MICROSOFT PARTNER ECOSYSTEM OFFERS FLEXIBLE ALTERNATIVES FOR GOVERNMENT

Microsoft offers a partner universe that is unmatched in industry in terms of sheer numbers or depth of subject matter expertise. One partner, Encore Business Solutions, offers the best of both worlds to state and local governments that implement enterprise resource planning (ERP) solutions. An immediate advantage is that agencies that work with Encore receive applications uniquely tailored to government requirements.

For example, Encore's solution eases the job of accounting for grant money, linking each project expense to the correct funding source. It performs sophisticated fund accounting, and it helps agencies meet reporting requirements set by the federal Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB).

Agencies that work with Encore also enjoy the full range of enterprise tools that make up the Microsoft Business Tools — the Great Plains suite, for applications such as payroll, human resources and financials. Through its partnership with Microsoft, Encore delivers a much broader range of business functions than other government enterprise solutions — and for a dramatically reduced cost.

Agencies that implement the Encore/Microsoft suite gain a powerful range of budgeting functions. "Budget management is obviously huge in the minds of all government agencies today," said Janet Lampert, Encore's vice president of sales. With Encore Business Solutions, an agency can quickly and effectively create a budget, track expenses against the plan and make any necessary changes.

Encore's suite also provides an efficient, flexible engine for meeting a key responsibility of government: reporting to citizens. "There's a far bigger demand from the public today to be able to see and understand exactly how the government is spending money and where it's investing," Lampert noted. Instead of laboriously pulling information from disparate information systems, agency staff using the Encore/Microsoft solution quickly assemble the required data and present it in the format that best suits constituents' needs.

Integrated business solutions from Encore and Microsoft help agencies work more efficiently and deliver better services — the best of both worlds.

For more information, please go to: **www.encorebusiness.com**

Board's Statement 34 (GASB 34). Governments that can't keep pace with such federal regulations risk penalties and negative publicity.

And governments that lack enterprisewide systems often have trouble serving citizens. Think of the average person who calls to complain about a pothole, gets no response and calls back a week later only to find that the call-taker has no record of the first complaint. Think of the injured worker whose disability checks have stopped, and no one he calls can figure out why.

It takes an integrated approach and powerful, flexible technology to meet the challenges today's agencies face. Microsoft Business Solutions (MBS) for Government delivers the power of enterprise computing specifically tailored for the public sector.

Microsoft's Government Financials suite provides straightforward, seamless tools for managing budgets, handling income and expenditures, maintaining accounting records, generating reports and more. Making data available in real time to all applications that need it, Microsoft Government Financials reduces labor, helps governments meet critical deadlines and ensures that decisions are based on current business intelligence.

Microsoft's Constituent Relationship Management (CRM) suite delivers the muscle governments need to provide citizens with top-grade service. With Microsoft CRM, disparate agencies that address related issues can easily share information. Call centers gain access to data they need to solve problems. Law enforcement agencies can use data gathered in CRM to fight crime more effectively.

MBS for Government also includes the Microsoft Business Portal, an intranet tool that allows government employees to conduct transactions from any location. Staff can use the portal, for instance, to complete time sheets, apply for expense reimbursements or file changes with the human resources department, whether they're at their desks or in the field.

Because cost containment and cost avoidance are top priorities for most agencies, MBS for Government applications are less costly than enterprise solutions designed for the private sector, and they're much faster to implement. Because they're based on Microsoft technology, MBS modules work seamlessly with one another and with complementary applications from Microsoft Independent Software Vendors (ISV) that specialize in areas like tax, revenue and human resources, to name a few.

The Western city mentioned earlier worked with an ISV to implement a fully integrated financial and planning solution specifically tailored for government. The solution combined Microsoft's Government Financials with the ISV's own software. Today, administrators throughout the city have quick, easy access to the data they need, whenever they need it. Routine transactions take less time, freeing administrators for more strategic work. This type of governance — shared resources across multiple organizations — can help the city meet federal accounting requirements, and managers have better control over budgets and spending.

MBS for Government fits seamlessly atop existing Microsoft infrastructure. For example, many MBS for Government applications employ Microsoft SQL Server, the company's enterprise-class database. If agency staff is familiar with this tool, it can leverage any organization's investment, reducing total cost of ownership.

Agencies will also have no trouble finding IT professionals familiar with Microsoft technology to keep organizations up and running smoothly. Nor will managers need to look far for qualified experts to help with deployment. More than 5,000 Microsoft implementation partners, located in every part of the United States, have longstanding experience with Microsoft business applications. These local professionals understand the communities governments serve, and they stand ready to help agencies onsite. Through its MBS for Government division, Microsoft has made a long-term commitment to help state and local governments work faster, save money and deliver better services.