EPICOR FOCUSES ON USERS AT INSIGHTS 2018

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THE BOTTOM LINE

At its recent conference, Insights 2018, Epicor announced multiple technology enhancements, new products, new partnerships, and a cloud-first focus. Since it was acquired by KKR Private Equity in 2016, Epicor has expanded its offerings, worked to assist customers to move to a digital platform, and accelerated the pace of innovation. Themes of the conference focused on usability with improved visibility and flexibility across the application ecosystem, as well as enhanced functionality with additional capabilities.

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THE ANNOUNCEMENTS

At the conference, CEO Steve Murphy delivered the opening keynote, discussing market trends, customer expectations, demographic shifts, growth value of automation, and prioritization of technology as an asset. Some key announcements include:

▪ Partnership with Microsoft Azure to deliver enterprise-class solutions globally. Epicor selected Azure because of its certifications, security, reliability, and speed to support the company's growth strategy.

▪ Partnership with Jitterbit, an API platform for integration of manufacturing and distribution solutions, either with Azure Cloud or on-premise.

▪ Also introduced is a new user experience (UX) and user interface (UI), a three-part cross-network framework including Epicor Kinetic Design, Epicor Kinetic Framework, and Epicor Kinetic applications.

- o Kinetic Design provides user experience guidelines and patterns for building applications for Epicor solutions.

- o Epicor Kinetic Framework gives customers access to sample code and tutorials, a UI component code library, API documentation, and actual code, working on desktop, tablet, or mobile.

- o Epicor Kinetic Application is any application that is coded to Kinetic Design standards.

- DocStar ECM platform upgrades include PackageWorks to streamline collection and management of key documents as part of the case management process.

- DocStar ECM Mobile Application for iOS and Android devices delivers rapid and secure access to the DocStar ECM repository, enabling users to get timely approvals from their mobile devices.

- Additional DocStar Capture enhancements include improved speed and accuracy, improved optical character recognition (OCR), barcode code recognition, and document splitting. Forms Enhancements improvements contain clear design directions, drag-n-drop, copy and paste, and placement sizing for simpler and quicker forms creation and modification.

CUSTOMER REACTIONS

The many customers and partners in attendance at Insights 2018 represented a global customer base, and the verticals its products support. Nucleus spoke with a number of customers to get their views on their impressions of Epicor's performance and what the vendor is bringing to market.

PLUMBING SUPPLY AND DISTRIBUTION

An Epicor customer that uses on-premise Eclipse ERP system to manage its distribution accounting network and is in the process of deciding whether to move to the cloud.

The customer said: *"Epicor completely understands our business model and is able to address our concerns and questions. We have done multiple upgrades with Eclipse, and it always works efficiently. The improvement of our efficiency and productivity is directly related to Eclipse – one example is a process that used to require ten steps is now accomplished in four. We are examining the pros and cons of the cloud and will probably make the move within the next two years."*

MIDWEST MANUFACTURING COMPANY

A manufacturing company came to Insight 2018 to get a better understanding of the capabilities and recent upgrades of Epicor ERP. The company is looking to acquire several small companies to stimulate growth and revenues. It wants to have a plan in place for adding the new acquisitions to the Epicor platform.

The customer said: *"Our plans are still fluid, and we have concerns that neither potential merger prospects have experience with Epicor. We met with Epicor's team yesterday, and we are confident that the migration can be done efficiently, a factor to be considered in our decision."*

RETAIL COMPANY

A retail company with several outlets is using Epicor Eagle primarily for POS and inventory management. It was at the conference to discuss adding analytic services to its business.

The customer said: *"I was apprehensive that adding analytics was too technical for our small operation, but after meeting with Epicor staff, I'm more comfortable with the process."*

PHARMACY

A pharmacy with three locations is using DocStar for its document services and accounts payable for the past five years. They are considering adding HR in the next year and wanted to learn more about its capabilities.

The customer said: *"DocStar has improved our efficiency with its simple processes and fully supported services. We had some concerns when it announced that it was being bought by Epicor, but I can say that it has only gotten better. The capture process is so easy to use, and my staff has had no problems using all aspects of the program."*

EPICOR'S ROADMAP

Epicor has set aggressive plans and goals for the next three years. The release scheduled for later this summer includes such capabilities as e-signature, and greater usability for workflows. Other plans include advanced math tasking, enhanced functionality, sales order automation, robotic process automation, field-level data encryption, and bundled user compliance packages.

New customer focus groups participation in process design and beta testing are also on the horizon. DocStar is focusing on enhanced OCR and contextual searches as well as the other enhancements mentioned above.

It appears that KKR has supported the company without reservation and will continue to do so as long as sales continue to grow. Based on the investments made in enhancing usability and functionality, it is clear that Epicor will continue to be a strong competitor in its markets. Epicor's product development and enhancements demonstrate an understanding of its customers' needs and should continue to remain a market leader.