



# The Age of Amazons

How to thrive in the new  
competitive universe

# Keep up with constant change

With advancing technology, shifting demographics, tight margins, and a tough economy, it's not news that wholesale distributors operate in an era of constant, rapid change.

But this time, change itself is moving faster. Pushing deeper. Opening up opportunities and introducing threats that would have been unimaginable in the early years of this decade.

Gone are the days when deals were built on decades-long relationships, customers stayed loyal to their established supply lines, and "just in time" delivery still gave you a few days to move a standardized product from order form, to warehouse, and to final destination.

Today's distribution business demands drastic customization, mobile access, and overnight *or faster* delivery (with distribution drones coming soon to a regional supply center near you).

And it isn't just about AmazonSupply® or Alibaba®. More than ever, distributors face challenges from new entrants to the field, and from customary competitors who've already made the transition to business strategies that are leaner, more mobile, more social, and driven by up-to-the-instant business intelligence.

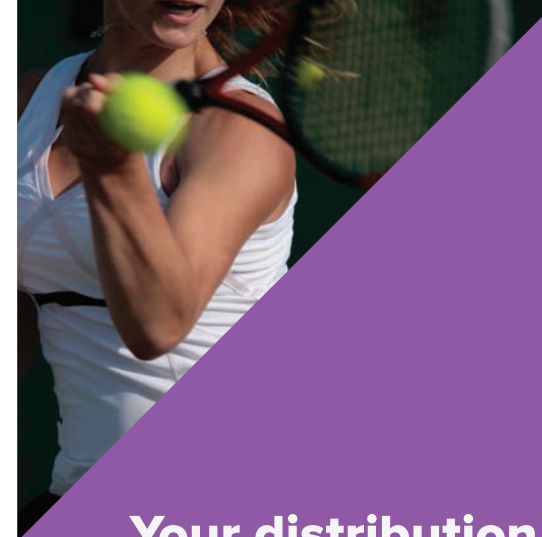


**The Age of Amazons is upon us,** and it heralds a fundamental rethinking of the distribution marketplace.

# Understanding the Age of Amazons

It's happening today. It's all around you. Understanding the Age of Amazons is the first essential step in preparing for it. And ERP software should be one of the cornerstones of your effort to do something about it.

We'll discuss five proven tools to help you survive and thrive in the Age of Amazons. Sometimes, you'll want to stand your ground. Sometimes, it makes most sense to use your adversary's strength to reinforce your own. Either way, it takes agility, precision, speed, insight, and ingenuity to win in today's hyper-competitive distribution marketplace.



**Your distribution business needs agility, precision, and insight** to thrive in this hyper-competitive marketplace.

# Agility

Evolve with the market; respond to shifting customer expectations, and embrace new technologies

The rate of change keeps speeding up, with e-commerce, social networks, mobile devices, and the Internet of Things transforming the buying process. Distributors that can evolve along with the technology will protect their business, gain market share, and find it easier to engage with the buyer of the future. In today's business world, the prize goes to the most agile. To win that prize, you need to:

- Align with customers and employees who expect the same functionality from your distribution ERP system that they get in their personal devices.
- Recognize that you must have a social business strategy built on an IT platform that delivers on the potential of social networks.
- Tap the Internet of Things to share data and deploy business intelligence in real time, for real results.

## Find out:

- What you can do to bridge the generational divide
- Why it's time to get serious about social business
- What the Internet of Things really means





# Precision

Make recommendations that anticipate your customers' most urgent needs

Your competitive advantage is to embody the value of deep customization. That means using CRM tools, recommended selling, in-context business intelligence, intuitive product recommendations, and customer loyalty programs to deliver more value than customers can get from a quick, generic transaction.

To succeed in the Age of Amazons, you need to

- Build a brand reputation for getting the job done by tailoring your products and every aspect of the sales process to meet your customers' unique needs.
- Develop an unerring ability to understand your customers and anticipate their needs.
- Build a new level of business intimacy with your customers by positioning yourself as a trusted advisor.

With e-commerce giants like Amazon Supply and Alibaba transforming the market, today's customers expect speed, quality, and low prices. In a hyper-competitive, global industry, you need any advantage that will help you attract business, boost efficiency, and meet unprecedented customer expectations.

One way to build that advantage is through a seamless, omni-channel approach to sales, distribution, and fulfillment. It's all about convenience. Using modern technology to deliver what your customers need, when they need it, and with their preferred method of payment is one way to ensure they will keep coming back.



**Dramatically improve your:**

speed of delivery   demand planning   stock replenishment   price competitiveness

# Speed

Speed depends on deploying real-time data to answer queries and process orders quickly. To accomplish this, you need:

## Order processing

You need an order processing system that can handle large volumes of data and information from multiple sources.

## Showrooms

A network of physical and online showrooms can build enduring customer relationships by getting inventory where it needs to go, as quickly as possible, using the most suitable distribution channel.

## Self service

Create a self-service model that allows customers to choose their own adventure through your product catalog

Consistent, speedy delivery also depends on your ability to restore IT operations, quickly and seamlessly, when systems are interrupted. **A recent study** showed that the average business suffers at least one successful cyber-attack per week, and that each successful attack takes an average of 32 days to resolve at a cost of more than \$1 million.



## Do you **know**:

- **How to thrive in a hyper-competitive environment?**
- **What Alibaba's rise means for your company?**
- **The 7 steps to recovering from a disaster?**

# Insight

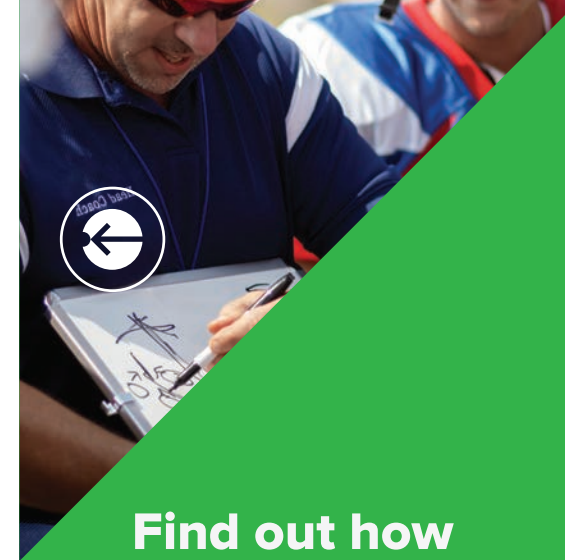
Organize a continuous avalanche of information and data to spot emerging opportunities and confront unexpected challenges.

Your business intelligence and performance management systems must support on-the-spot decision making and give you the flexibility to forecast and adjust your planning on the fly.

And that means delivering clear business insights on a variety of platforms and combining business analytics and financial data with an up-to-date view of any compliance risk.

Insight is about:

- Extending your vision and getting a finely-tuned perspective on your customers' needs and wants
- Gathering data in real time, then putting it in a context to help you spot emerging opportunities and confront unexpected challenges



## Find out how

Gartner<sup>®</sup> defines context-aware computing.



# Ingenuity

Integrate software tools and front-line operations to make your business indispensable to your most valuable customers.

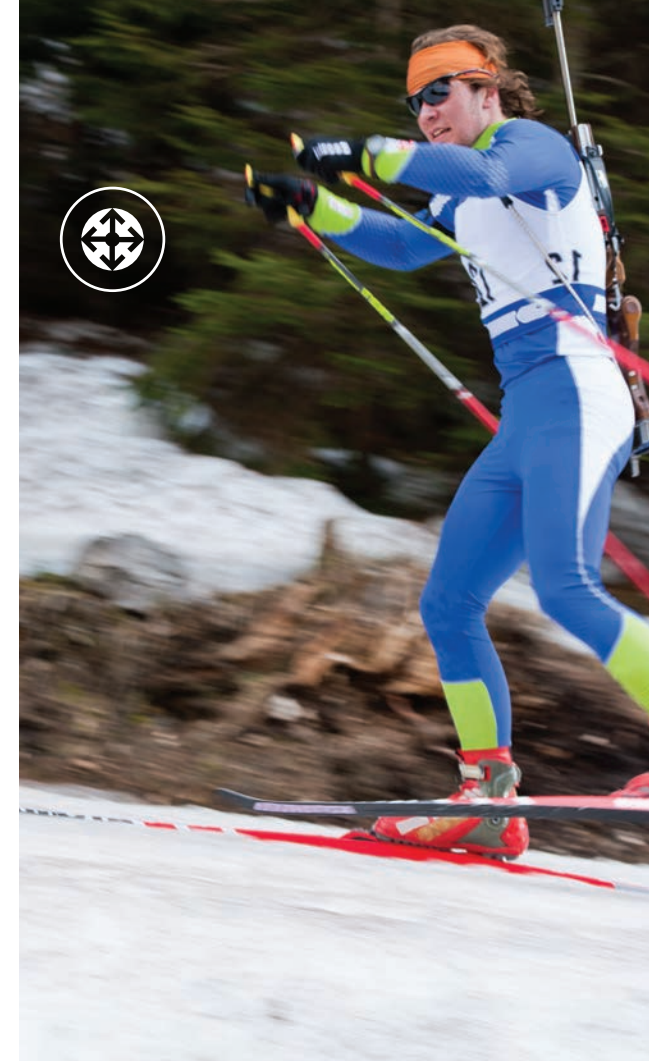
In the Age of Amazons, you need a savvy business strategy to take on competitors. You need tools that make it easier to explore new markets, expand and deepen existing relationships, deliver ever-greater value, and make your business an indispensable partner for your most important customers.

Ingenuity is about committing to continuous innovation. With business imperatives becoming more difficult to predict, you need an open-architecture ERP system that can seamlessly integrate new modules and components. This will help you respond to whatever challenges and opportunities the future holds.

**Integrated supply and effective store room management can help you cut costs, streamline delivery, and maximize visibility across your supply chain, while turning the ingenuity of your workforce into a powerful competitive advantage.**

## Find out:

- What keeps [Turtle & Hughes](#) sharp
- What [manufacturers are still struggling](#) with



# Putting it all together

To compete, established distributors need:



**Agility:** evolve with the market



**Precision:** anticipate your customers' needs and wants



**Speed:** process orders and queries quickly



**Insight:** spot emerging opportunities and confront unexpected challenges



**Ingenuity:** make your business indispensable to your most valuable customers

As you set out to compete in the Age of Amazons, make sure you have a reliable technology partner with a deep understanding of the distribution business, which will help you stay ahead of your competition.

Contact us today

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