

What Does My Golf Game Have To Do With ERP?



J. E. Boyer Company, Inc.
John E. Boyer, Jr., President

© Copyright 2009 by J. E. Boyer Company, Inc.

No portion of this article may be reproduced in whole or in part without the prior written permission of J. E. Boyer Company, Inc. Written materials and intellectual property are protected by United States copyright, trademark, and patent laws. J. E. Boyer Company offers no specific guarantees of the practices presented, but the professionals at J. E. Boyer Company make every reasonable effort to present reliable and fact-based information.

What Does My Golf Game Have To DO With ERP?

by John E. Boyer, Jr., President, J. E. Boyer Company, Inc

It was about a year ago when the household budget meeting took place. My main focus was to get the golf appropriation through, and on this particular day, the “plant manager” saw it in my favor ... \$500 completely funded. I could hardly wait for the weather to break!

Being fully empowered, use of the money was at my discretion and a decision had to be made. Technology or process? Here are some options for the \$500: 1) 10,000 practice balls at the local driving range, 2) 15 lessons from my local pro, 3) a new set of irons ... we’re talking oversize, cavity-back, two degree up, stiff shaft ... custom fit, too! What a dilemma. Should I work on my game or buy the clubs?

In evaluating the choices, my main criterion was improving my game, which is basically measured by my state handicap. But then there was my current set of clubs bought in 1973. Even though they were perfectly functional, I felt a little low-tech when out with my chums. If nothing else, a new set of clubs would just make me feel better. And then there was the effort factor. The balls and lessons, on the other hand, would take some hard work and effort over many days. Shot after shot. Practice, practice, practice. The lessons would be session after session. Drill, drill, drill. And my golf teacher would expect me to practice between lessons! This strategy would really take some commitment, involvement, dedication, and sacrifice on my part.

The whole analogy puts you right in the middle of the decision facing many manufacturing companies today. They are trying to lower their handicap ... in other words, improve measurable performance. And many times the decision is choosing the right improvement strategy: Invest in new technology or improve the process using the tools we have today?

Just like new clubs, balls, and shoes for golf, numerous technology choices are available to manufacturers in terms of robotics, computer systems, and automation. Estimates show that several billion dollars will be spent this year just updating manufacturing software.

Technology or process? Which strategy is right? Can they be worked together? Which is more cost effective? Our experience shows that many times the tools we have today are not quite as bad as we thought, and that more gain is possible by working on process improvement than anyone thought possible. Just think of the manager down the street (certainly not you or me) who every year buys the newest titanium, oversized, biggest stuff money can buy. How much is the game improved? Then think about the person you always want on your team – you know, the one who is always on the practice range building an excellent, repeatable process. Which strategy seems to pay off the most? Clubs or practice?

Don't get me wrong. If your business tools are incomplete, disconnected, outdated, or obsolete, it may be time to replace them. In other words, if you are missing the six iron, the sand wedge, and the string is unwinding from the hozzle of that pricimmon head driver, half the clubs are from your brother's old set and the other half from a garage sale ... it is time to get new clubs! But the tools are simply the entry fee to the tournament. To win, the process is the key. Work on perfecting the process ... training, repeatability, waste elimination, problem solving. Buying the technology is tempting, but the real benefit comes from the hard work, discipline, involvement, sacrifice, and dedication to process improvement. You've got to spend time on the practice range and take the lessons.

Oh, yeah ... about the \$500. I got the clubs. I said got ... not bought! By practicing and taking some lessons, the process worked well enough to win some prize money on the local weekend tour, and I used the winnings to get the clubs. The "plant manager" was delighted! Now if I can just apply the same logic in the manufacturing work place. You know, my golf game really is a lot like ERP!

J. E. Boyer Company, Inc. integrates lean manufacturing with enterprise resource planning to create world-class manufacturing environments where these two improvement strategies work together. We work on-site at your company. We do classroom training, one-on-one coaching, and project work ... individually or as part of a team. We work at all levels of the organization from the boardroom to the stockroom! Since 1984, clients from a wide variety of industries have improved their operations in terms of cost management, on-time shipments, inventory investment, people development, operational speed, and overall business performance.

More information is available at: www.jeboyer.com

Please direct your comments and questions to:

John E. Boyer, Jr., President
J. E. Boyer Company, Inc.
3347 North 900 East
North Ogden, Utah 84414
Phone: (801) 721-5284
Fax: (801) 737-0799
e-mail: jeb@jeboyer.com

