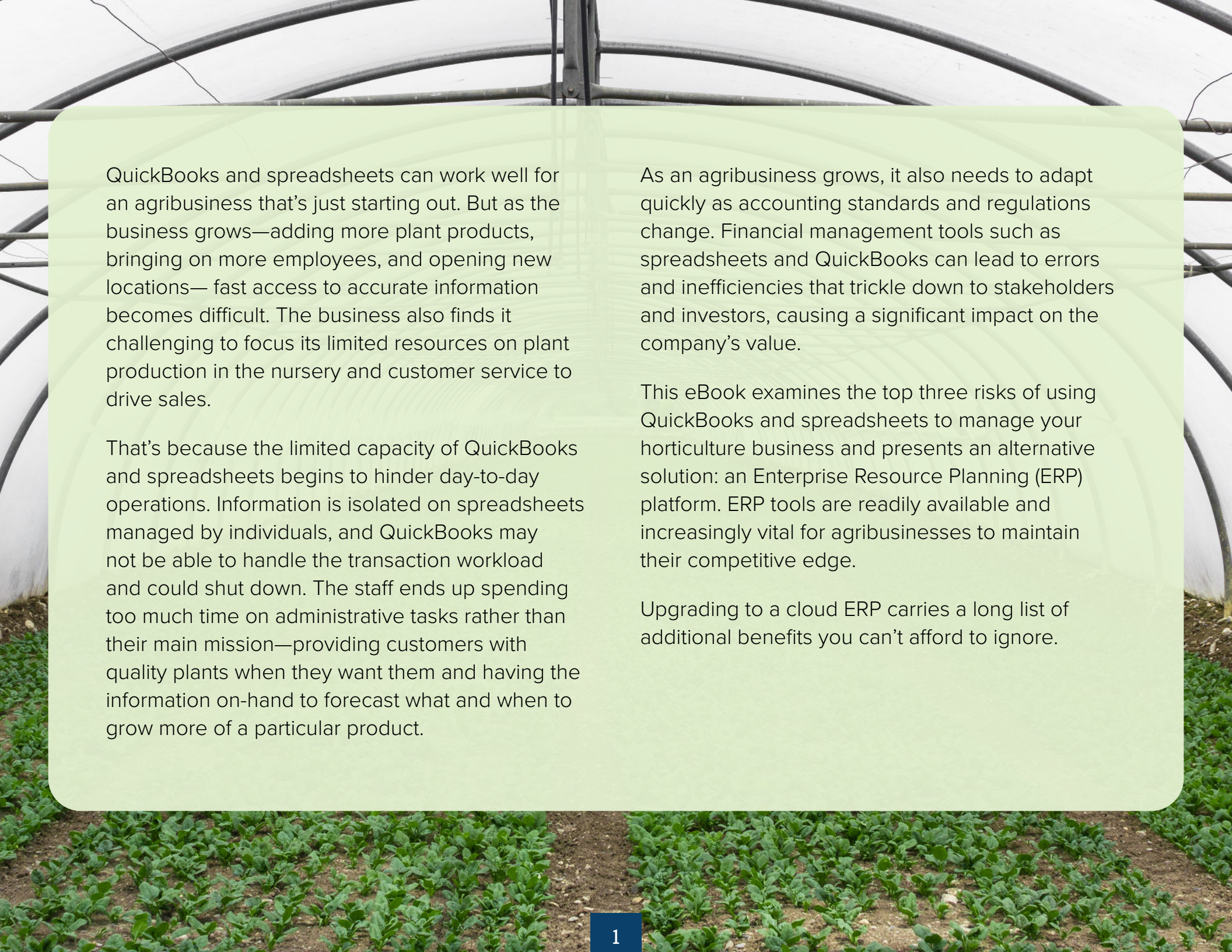


Is it Time for Your Agribusiness to Evolve Beyond QuickBooks and Spreadsheets?





QuickBooks and spreadsheets can work well for an agribusiness that's just starting out. But as the business grows—adding more plant products, bringing on more employees, and opening new locations—fast access to accurate information becomes difficult. The business also finds it challenging to focus its limited resources on plant production in the nursery and customer service to drive sales.

That's because the limited capacity of QuickBooks and spreadsheets begins to hinder day-to-day operations. Information is isolated on spreadsheets managed by individuals, and QuickBooks may not be able to handle the transaction workload and could shut down. The staff ends up spending too much time on administrative tasks rather than their main mission—providing customers with quality plants when they want them and having the information on-hand to forecast what and when to grow more of a particular product.

As an agribusiness grows, it also needs to adapt quickly as accounting standards and regulations change. Financial management tools such as spreadsheets and QuickBooks can lead to errors and inefficiencies that trickle down to stakeholders and investors, causing a significant impact on the company's value.

This eBook examines the top three risks of using QuickBooks and spreadsheets to manage your horticulture business and presents an alternative solution: an Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) platform. ERP tools are readily available and increasingly vital for agribusinesses to maintain their competitive edge.

Upgrading to a cloud ERP carries a long list of additional benefits you can't afford to ignore.

Top 3 Risks of Using QuickBooks and Spreadsheets

#1

Lack of integration limits true business intelligence.

To run back-office functions like sales, production management, purchasing, and inventory, many growers rely on manual processes that initially work well thanks to powerful spreadsheets. But the functions may be managed by multiple users. Their spreadsheets are isolated, so there's no integration and no real-time access for other users.

And for agribusinesses that keep track of finances using a combination of QuickBooks and spreadsheets, the lack of integration creates more problems. Data exists in a variety of spreadsheets and sometimes even in emails or perhaps a third-party e-commerce tool.

Part of the reason is that spreadsheets and QuickBooks are simply not good tools for integrating financial data. They also lack the ability to provide true business intelligence, which is critical for agribusinesses: Without robust data, planning becomes exponentially more difficult. With spreadsheets and QuickBooks, the data may be there, but it takes a significant amount of manpower to extract and analyze.

There's also extra work to move spreadsheet data into QuickBooks. The accounting team may have to rekey sales and purchasing information to generate invoices and to track receivables and payables.

Top 3 Risks of Using QuickBooks and Spreadsheets

#2

Dueling spreadsheets create data face-offs.

As your internal teams share spreadsheets tracking your daily operations, having two or more versions with inconsistent and conflicting data is a common occurrence. This problem happens because spreadsheets aren't bound to a single, unified source like ERP data.

Even if the original spreadsheet data is downloaded from an ERP system, collecting it at different times can result in mismatched spreadsheets. Additions or deletions are made to some versions but not others, which creates variances.

That's a problem too because thoroughly checking spreadsheets for errors is a chore no one wants to do. This results in errors that slip past unnoticed. And even if an error is discovered, finding the spreadsheets and the cells where the error occurs is sometimes impossible.

This also comes into play when considering inventory and sales orders. Managing these processes across multiple systems or spreadsheets means no one in the business truly had real-time insight into products available to sell against incoming orders.

Top 3 Risks of Using QuickBooks and Spreadsheets

#3

Spreadsheets drain time for your company and your staff.

Closing the books faster and more efficiently is an ongoing goal for the accounting team. But departments that use spreadsheets for the process are at a considerable disadvantage. And it's not just the closing process that is slowed.

Spreadsheets also slow down processes in many different ways that have a noticeable impact on how long it takes to get work done. They're fast and easy to set up, but when they're used in collaborative, repetitive processes by multiple people, they become time wasters. Significant time is spent consolidating, modifying and correcting the data.

Another issue that can drain people's time is when a person managing a key function with spreadsheets leaves the company. This can result in a scramble to pull together information on customers, vendors, or sales items. And even when function owners share information by emailing spreadsheet files, the data quickly grows old as new sales orders, purchase orders, and inventory replenishment come in.

The Solution: Integrated Enterprise Resource Planning

Relying on QuickBooks and spreadsheets creates a lot of extra work for your entire staff as it spends time finding information to keep the business running. This in turn detracts from the amount of time spent on plant production and selling to customers—the ultimate keys to operating profitably.

Yes, you built your agribusiness using QuickBooks and spreadsheets, but now that you are growing. Workflow processes are more complex, you need a system to uncover new business opportunities and help you act on them quickly.

A great tool for helping growers solve the risks of using QuickBooks and spreadsheets is an Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) platform. These solutions typically include integrated processes for managing sales, purchasing, inventory, production, accounting, and financials. They also give you the ability to run reports for intelligence on the performance of your business while generating additional key benefits:

- Fewer errors since each process ties into a single source of consolidated data.
- Greater visibility across the business so if errors occur, they're corrected immediately.
- Better data analysis to get a clear picture of business performance.
- Improved customer relationships through integrated reporting, data analysis, and unified processes.



Given that people are familiar with Excel spreadsheets, when looking for an ERP system, it helps to choose one that uses an Excel-like front-end, such as Microsoft Dynamics 365 Business Central. With a similar feel to Excel, Business Central reduces training time and learning curves. In addition, Business Central has advanced formatting capabilities that Excel users can leverage for management reports and dashboards.

An ERP Solution with a Familiar Look

An ERP solution that many agribusinesses have turned to is **Microsoft Dynamics 365 Business Central**. The cloud-based solution natively connects with all the Office 365 productivity tools your staff is familiar with—including Outlook, Excel, Word, Teams and PowerPoint—as well as Microsoft Power BI to streamline report analysis.

One of the attributes of Business Central that growers appreciate most is the flexibility to implement only the functions they're ready for. Some, for example, continue to run plant production in another system, such as Excel spreadsheets. And that's where the integration comes in handy. Velosio can show you how to format your spreadsheets so that you can quickly copy production and other data into Business Central.



Then the true value of Business Central kicks in: It becomes your master database of all your information in one place—customers, vendors, items, pricing, and inventory. With all your data in one centralized database, it's easier to keep the information accurate and up-to-date. And with Dynamics 365 Business Central running in the cloud, you can make that data accessible to everyone in the business in real time—anywhere they're working—the nursery, the back office, home, or while visiting customers and vendors.

Key Benefits of Dynamics 365 Business Central

- Gain real-time insight into business performance
- Keep up with increasing demand without adding headcount
- Automate and secure processes to reduce data entry and risk
- Manage multiple lines of business or multi-site locations
- Scale operations efficiently to support new business growth

Drive Process Efficiencies

In addition to centralizing all your business data within a master database, Business Central gives you four building blocks for an ERP system that enable you to drive process efficiencies across your business:

- 1. Sales** – track all your customers along with who is buying what items and at what price. The sales order function lets you see when each customer is expecting your items and automatically applies pricing based on customer price groups. You can also quickly see order status, customer balance, and order history so you can immediately provide answers to customer inquiries.
- 2. Purchasing** – determine what you need to purchase and when based on the current inventory, open purchase orders, and open sales orders. The system updates you in real time as the supply and the demand change. Whether it's cuttings, liners, seeds, pots, or any other production item, you know when it's time to order more.
- 3. Inventory** – identify what your team can sell and when items will ship so you can confidently make and keep customer commitments. This module is tailored for the grower industry so you can also look back on time periods to see what you planned to have on hand vs. what you actually ended up with so you can make sure inventory meets customer demand in the future.
- 4. Financials** – run financials in real time as all sales, purchasing, and inventory data automatically flows into the accounting module. This lets you easily compare rolled-up costs vs. revenue to determine your margins for each item, customer, and vendor. You can also streamline invoicing AR and AP to manage your cash flow.

Since all your data is in one centralized database, you can incorporate these functions into your business all at once or one at a time. You can also integrate Business Central with third-party software if there's a particular add-on tool that works well for your business. Each function can also integrate with Microsoft Power BI to run any type of report you need to analyze KPIs and historical data, or to forecast future sales and inventory availability.

ERP Tailored Specifically for Agribusiness

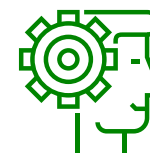
With **SilverLeaf** powered by Microsoft Dynamics 365 Business Central, Velosio accommodates specific agribusiness process workflows. Our ERP solution uniquely brings together business applications, data, documents, and devices in the cloud. With your internal team at the center, you can enable them to make the most of their time. And by relying on an ERP system deployed in the cloud, you get the **benefits of enterprise-grade infrastructure and support, increased flexibility, and lower total cost of ownership:**



Reduce infrastructure, hardware, and IT management costs.



Scale infrastructure up or down as needed.



Refocus IT from managing infrastructure to working on strategic projects.



Get up and running in hours instead of weeks.



Access your data securely from virtually anywhere on any device.



Access around-the-clock global support from Microsoft experts.



Get robust security, plus backup and privacy controls.

Whether you start with a base standard system or deploy the full functionality, we welcome the opportunity to show you how SilverLeaf powered by Dynamics 365 Business Central can empower your agribusiness to achieve its growth potential. To learn more, contact us today.