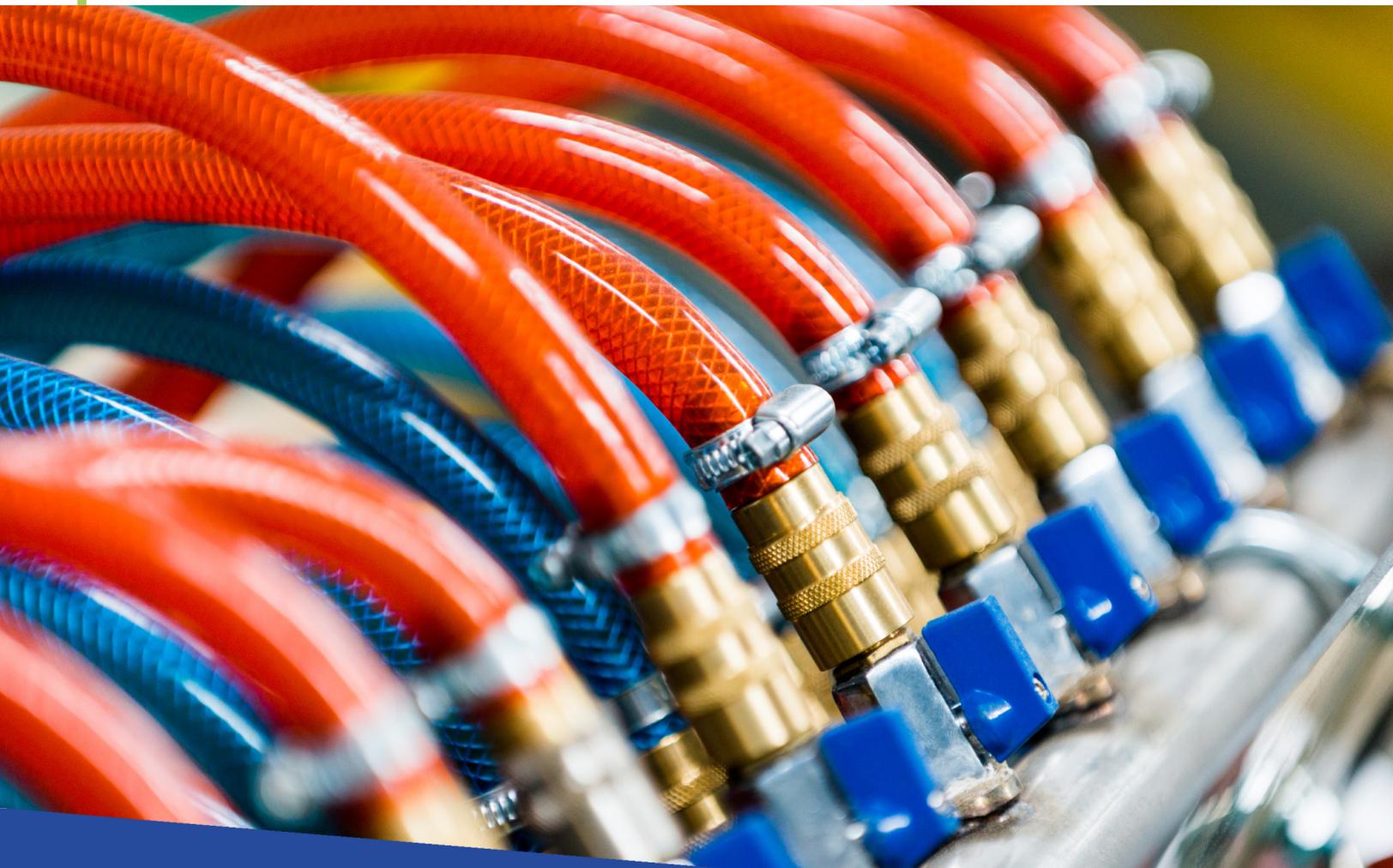


## ERP Software for Hose Distribution & Fabrication: How to Find the Right Vendor Partner for Your Company



# How to Choose the Best ERP Software Vendor for Your Hose Distribution and Fabrication Organization

It's a season for growth in manufacturing, so it's a great time to invest in your hose distribution business by upgrading your business management software. However, not all software systems for hose distributors are created equally.

Some ERP software vendors will tell you they can handle kits and production, but it's at a very basic level. They don't have the industry-specific features hose distributors need to conduct daily tasks efficiently. Others will tell you that their bulky production module will handle your hose assemblies easily, but it turns out to be more of a headache than you imagined, especially if you're a large-volume hose fabricator.

You'll have to separate the wheat from the chaff by finding the true experts in hose distribution and fabrication ERP software.

## How to Identify the Right ERP Vendor Partner for Hose Distribution

The first step is asking peers in your industry what they use, how they like the software and if the provider has high quality and reasonably priced software support.

Note which ERP providers have been long-time members of your trade associations, such as **NAHAD** (The Association for Hose & Accessories Distribution) or **NFPA** (National Fluid Power Association).

You also want to ask the ERP vendors under consideration some very specific questions about their features.

The vendor's software should provide the capabilities to easily enter and process hose assemblies and other important features which you'll find in [TrulinX ERP software by Tribute, Inc.](#)

TrulinX is specifically designed for hose and fluid power distributors and fabricators.

**The following must-have features will allow your organization to become more efficient and know your true profit margin:**

### Easy Order Entry

Entering a hose assembly into a software system should be a quick, easy process that includes all the information warehouse staff need for the correct build specifications (cut length, drawings, photos, crimp/assembly instructions). If you need to create a complicated production order each time, the vendor in question may not be right for your company.



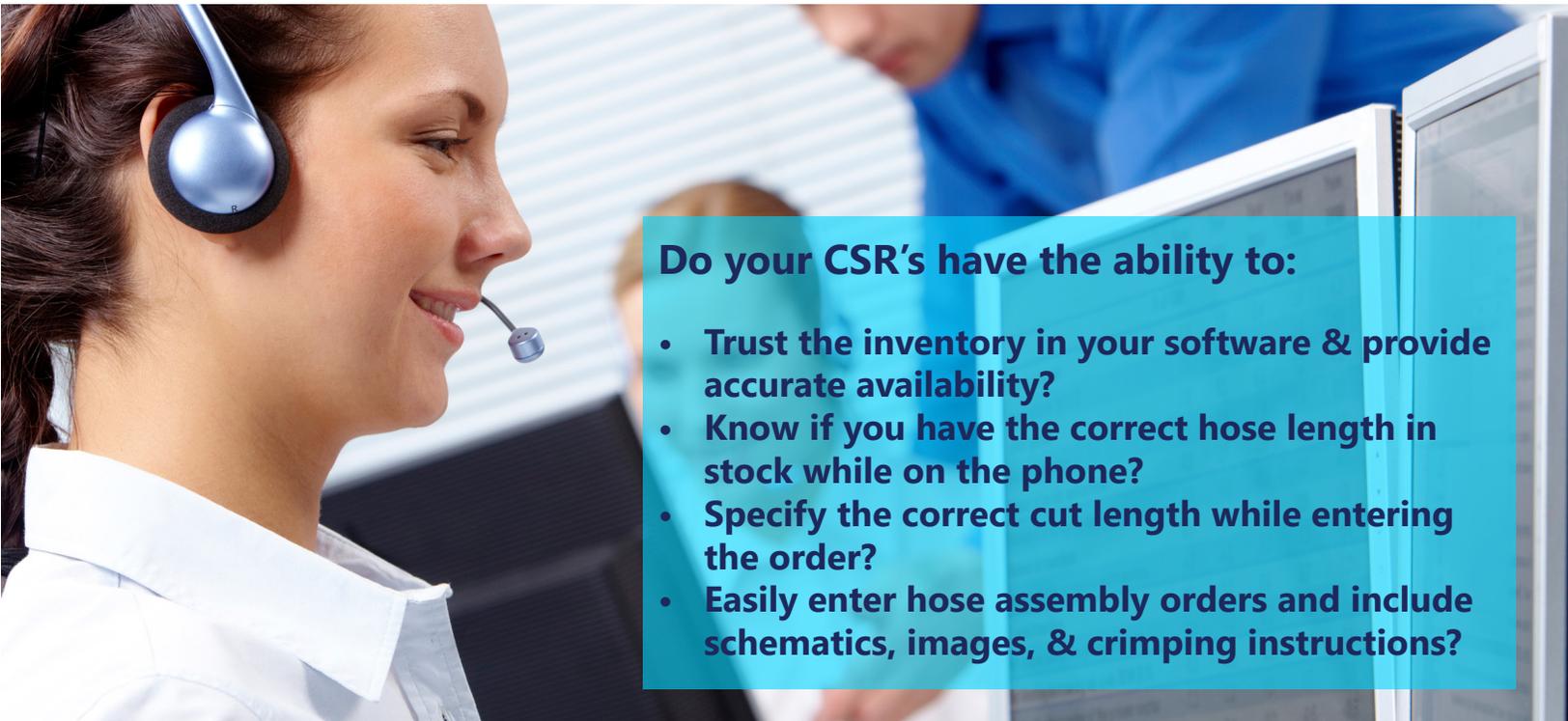
## Stocking Unit of Measure vs Selling Unit of Measure

Hose distributors buy product in large reels and then sell them as assemblies in another unit of measure, such as feet, meters, or inches. A vendor's software should easily handle measurements during order entry and any future parameter changes. If the software has difficulty with this, you'll likely run into problems during stocking and selling.

## Overall Length vs Cut Length on Hoses

Hose distributors know that there is a difference between the length of the hose assembly and the cut length of the hose. For example, you may order an Aeroquip FC350 AQP Engine & Airbrake hose that is 36" in overall length. To assemble that hose, you'll need two fittings (2.5" each), which requires a 31" hose to make your total overall length 36" once the fittings have been added.

These differences are why a vendor's software should allow you to specify the cutoff length unit of measure (UOM) and cutoff length for that part number's specifications. For example, the vendor's software should include cutoff length on the pick ticket so your warehouse staff cuts the exact length needed and doesn't create expensive scrap by cutting lengths that are too long. If it doesn't, you may want to look for a better ERP software for your needs.



### Do your CSR's have the ability to:

- Trust the inventory in your software & provide accurate availability?
- Know if you have the correct hose length in stock while on the phone?
- Specify the correct cut length while entering the order?
- Easily enter hose assembly orders and include schematics, images, & crimping instructions?

## Hose Templates for Commonly Entered Hose Series

Most hose suppliers sell their hose by the series, such as the Parker Hannifin Parkrimp hose series. The right ERP software should allow you to create order entry templates for your popular hose series, which allow customer service reps (CSRs) to accurately enter hose assemblies in seconds. Those templates should also determine the quantities of any components not in stock and then ensure they are included in the buy report. The right templates make a difference, which should weigh heavily on your choice of vendor.



## Ability to Add Labor & Burden

Labor costs play a major part in your bottom line. The right vendor's software should allow you to automatically calculate labor amounts based on the hose length and/or fitting diameter so you can capture true gross margins on all your assemblies. Another important feature is the ability to assign a fixed or variable labor rate based on hose segments and add 'Days to Assemble' so pick tickets are released in time to allow the warehouse to build the hose assemblies.

## Add Workflow and Hose Assembly Instructions

It's important to consider a software's ability to add specific instructions on the order as to assembly specifications (e.g. which crimper to use), labeling, or detailed packing and shipping on each type of hose assembly. This is an important feature for those companies that build kits for OEMs or organizations that have specific requirements, such as government entities.

## Prevent Broken Box Charges

Customer Service Reps (CSRs) should be able to see right away if the item they are looking up is sold in standard pack quantities, so they don't incur broken box charges by placing a PO for an insufficient quantity. Your ERP system should provide warnings for this instance, allowing your CSRs to encourage the customer to buy a few more and complete the standard pack quantity.

## Lot Tracking to Eliminate Shorts & Scrap

Your ERP vendor should be able to track hose by lots so you can buy in one unit and sell in another, e.g. feet, inches or meters, while managing all the various cut lengths. You should have visibility into the various lots from Quote/Order Entry while on the phone with a customer to ensure you have the correct lengths in stock.

## Automatic Generation of Serial Numbers & Labels

Make sure to learn if a vendor's software allows you to automatically generate serial numbers for hose assemblies along with the accompanying barcoded label so you can keep accurate track of each assembly. If a customer brings in a hose assembly for repair, you should be able to locate the original information quickly.

If you're a Parker distributor, look for software that easily integrates with the **Parker Tracking System**, so you don't have to manually enter this information into your ERP system.

Your ERP software should allow you to keep track of every component, every associated material used in your assemblies, and the labor involved to complete the assembly - including outsourced fabrication.

It should also allow you to track estimated vs actual costs so you can precisely track expenses and profit margin and more accurately quote future orders.

# HOSE DISTRIBUTION ERP SYSTEM MUST HAVES...

- ✓ **Tools to Easily & Quickly Enter Hose Assemblies including Cut Length**
- ✓ **Add Labor & Burden to Accurately Track Profit Margins**
- ✓ **Easily Add Instructions & Schematics for Accurate Builds**
- ✓ **Counter Sales Module**
- ✓ **Provide Outside Salesforce the Tools to Access Key Information on the Road**
- ✓ **Provide CSRs the Needed Tools to Service Customer Quickly & Accurately**
- ✓ **Partnerships with Major Suppliers to Streamline Your Supply Chain**

## Flexible Pricing Discounts

If you offer flexible pricing discounts, your ERP vendor's software should allow you to have several discounting schedules based on numerous factors. These factors include: component discounts based on cut length or overall length quantities, total discount on the parent assembly, or total list price of components based on cut length or overall length quantities.

## Easily Calculate Rebates

Review each software's ability to calculate your hose supplier's rebates according to their specifications and create reports. **Some hose vendors, such as Eaton, Gates, and Parker Hannifin, require rebate reporting at the component level.** Try to determine if a vendor's software will make it easy to extract that information out of their software system to report the components used in hose assemblies and if they have built-in capabilities to do the reporting. Consider whether those features come with the software or if there is additional programming required.

## Counter Sales Module

A robust retail/counter sales feature is an important aspect that can help you compare different vendors. Look for an ERP software that can enable you to quickly and efficiently process walk-in orders or pickups, including permitting multiple payment options, putting deposits on backorders, allowing returns & exchanges, and checking inventory real-time at all other locations.

## Load Manufacturer's Part Numbers & Price Updates Easily

Your new software should not only keep track of vital details, it should also make it easy to upload this information. Make sure your new ERP software allows you to easily upload major supplier's catalogs, so that you have part numbers, descriptions, price, cost, and automatic price updates available in a timely manner.

## Value-Add Services Management

Tracking doesn't only apply to standard services. Make sure your software vendor offers a sophisticated way to track your additional value-add services, including labor and burden. This should provide the ability to track each component and sub-assembly, including outsourced work, so you know the true profit of your expanded offerings.

## Inventory Sharing Integration

Certain ERP vendors partner with inventory sharing solutions, such as **WarehouseTWO** or **DistraNet**, to provide you an alternative option for locating parts you don't have in stock or getting rid of your excess stock. Quickly locating a non-stock item for a top-tier customer through an integrated application like WarehouseTWO goes a long way toward earning customer loyalty.

## Partnerships & Integration with your Industry's Major Suppliers

Some software vendors partner and integrate with major industry suppliers (such as Tribute's integration with **Dixon, Eaton, Gates, and Parker**) to provide you features that will streamline your supply chain. These can include **Point of Sale reports, rebate calculation, one-click exporting of POs to vendors, serial number hose labeling**, and other time saving features that can prove beneficial to your company.

## Access Key Information on the Road

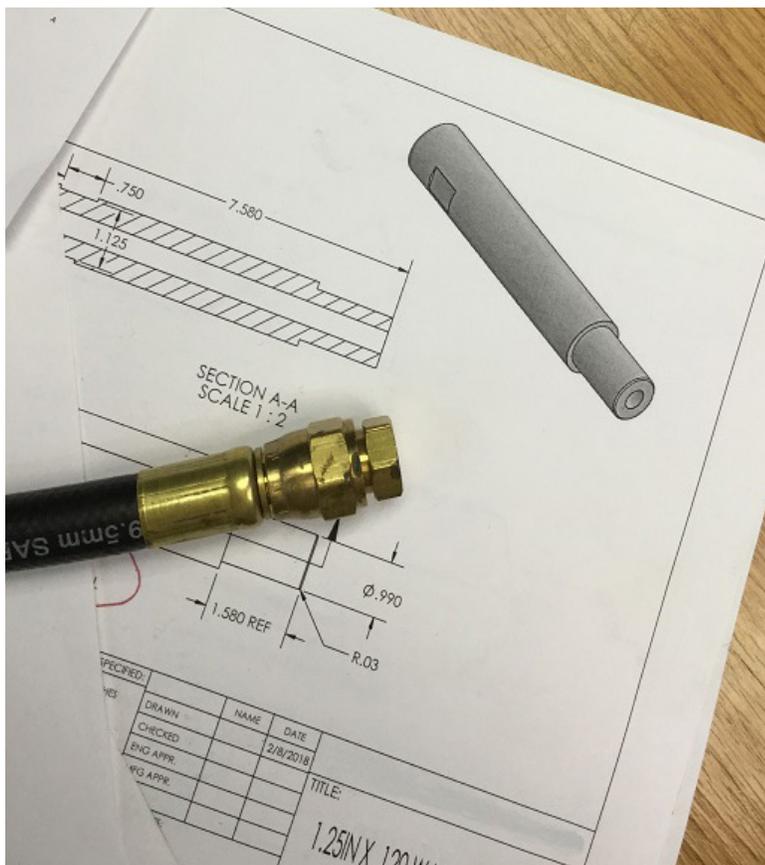
Your inside sales reps (CSR) are going to have more time to service accounts and keep customers happy if they don't have to take time to provide information to outside sales reps that can be easily provided by integrated sales force automation tools by **Rubber Tree Systems**. Giving your outside sales team mobile technology that is integrated with your ERP system allows them to access key information quickly on the road without having to wait for a CSR to call them back.

## Tools to Proactively Track Orders

Your CSRs should be allotted time and resources to ensure orders are being filled and shipped on time. If they don't have the time to do so, additional help should be offered to ensure their top tier customers are serviced in an excellent manner. Your ERP system should be able to provide reports on:

- Sales Orders by customer and date
- Customer service level reports
- Customer sales reports
- Customer credit rating changes
- Pick Tickets not yet shipped
- Inventory Stock out situations, and more

Proactively calling customers who haven't placed an order for 30 days or more is a great way to ensuring you're still their top provider.



## Provide the Tools CSRs Need to do their Job Efficiently & Accurately

An upgraded ERP software system should provide your CSRs the ability to do their job as quickly and error-free as possible by the following capabilities:

- ✓ Easily see the items most often ordered by that customer by date range and/or location
- ✓ Easily check all locations for inventory, including inventory-sharing services like WarehouseTWO or DistrANet, from one screen.
- ✓ Email quotes, acknowledgements or assembly instructions directly from their system to the customer for quicker turnaround time and a reduction in errors
- ✓ Provide critical information on order acknowledgements so the order is right the first time
- ✓ Have schematics, photos, assembly instructions attached to PNs so CSRs so the correct part or assembly is ordered and fabricated correctly
- ✓ Add comments to specific PNs or specific customers to ensure accuracy in assembling, shipping, etc.
- ✓ Notify the CSR about preferred items, so that those are sold before others
- ✓ Notify the CSR about substitute items so they can sell those if the other isn't in stock
- ✓ Notify the CSR about standard pack quantities so they can upsell the product and avoid broken box charges
- ✓ Integration with UPS Worldship and FedEx Ship Manager so they have that information at the click of a button
- ✓ Ability to easily create blanket orders
- ✓ Ability to easily separate distribution orders from agent (manufacturer rep) sales orders
- ✓ Provide the ability for outside sales and management to access real time information while on the road

## TrulinX Software by Tribute, Inc. is the Right ERP Software for Your Hose Distribution Needs

When considering ERP vendors for your short list, select software vendors that have a thorough knowledge of your industry via long-term affiliations with industry peers, manufacturers, and trade associations, all of which translate into features built with hose distributors in mind.

TrulinX by Tribute, Inc. is designed specifically for hose fabricators and distributors of fluid power products and value-added services. Tribute has developed partnerships with major suppliers in the industry to streamline their distributor's supply chain, including: **Air-Way Manufacturing, Brennan Industries, Dixon Valve & Coupling, Eaton Corporation, Gates Corporation, Parker Hannifin**, and more.

A member of NAHAD for 25 years, Tribute, Inc. has focused on the fluid power and hose distribution niche and are the experts at helping organizations run their companies more efficiently through the use of TrulinX ERP business management software.

For more information, [contact us](#) for a demo, call us at 800-TRIBUTE, or visit **Tribute.com**.



# TrulinX

## **Domain Expertise**

TrulinX software is ideally suited to help you successfully manage your fluid power, motion control and automation distribution & fabrication business because of our knowledge and industry focus.

## **Implementation Team**

Our experienced transition team has worked and been trained in your industry. They train your team onsite to get your business up and running quickly and efficiently.

## **Return on Investment**

With a staff that truly understands your unique business requirements and a timely implementation, you will realize your ROI much more quickly.

## **Customer Service**

Our knowledgeable and friendly support staff still answer the phone, and over 90% of support calls are resolved in the first day, statistics unmatched in our industry!

## **Customer Commitment**

We are 100% committed to your success because it's a reflection of our success.

