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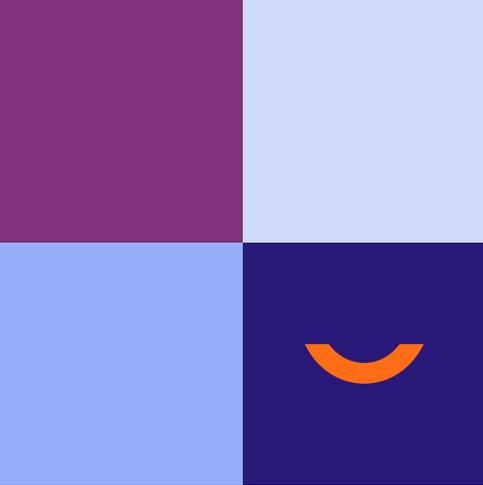
SUPERCHARGE YOUR ERP:

How ERPs and Purpose-Built Solutions Work Together to Future-Proof Your Digital Strategy
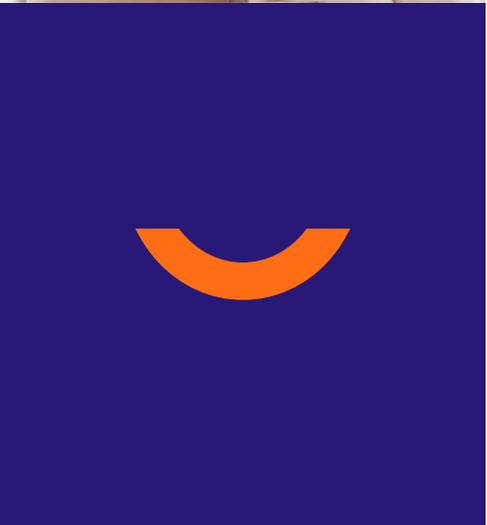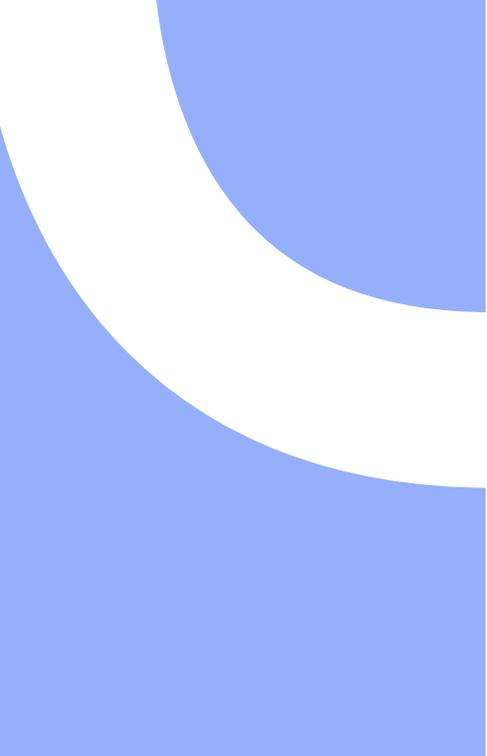
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INTRODUCTION

After a global pandemic, lockdowns, and ever-evolving constituent needs, few industries can say they've adapted more than the public sector. And at the helm of these changes has been the Chief Information Officer (CIO), tackling the mission-critical work that kept public agencies running efficiently. Developing the infrastructure for hybrid work; transitioning legacy, on-premise solutions to cloud-based software; ensuring data remains secure and processes remain compliant every step of the way — these are no small feats.

But as public agencies prepare to navigate projected economic and social volatility, CIOs are now starting to put in the work to pivot their enterprise digital strategy approach from *survival mode* to *thriving* and *future-ready*.

As public agencies prepare to navigate projected economic and social volatility, CIOs are now starting to put in the work to pivot their enterprise digital strategy approach from survival mode to thriving and future-ready.

Public sector leaders are shaping a new era of digital public service — one that prioritizes connectivity and operational efficiency across the agency; equitable access across all stakeholders; and rigorous transparency, compliance, and security. To achieve this, CIOs are embracing three core pillars of digital transformation: interoperability, modularity, and orchestration.

In this playbook, we'll dive deeper into those three digital values and how they manifest in best-of-breed public sector solutions for enterprise resource planning (ERP) software. We'll show how purpose-built solutions can effectively supercharge your ERP, thereby streamlining operations, fostering collaboration among your workforce, and saving your agency time and money.

PART ONE:

WHY DIGITAL LEADERSHIP IS CITIZEN-FIRST LEADERSHIP.

As public agencies renew their focus on delivering better services for their constituents, optimizing the productivity of their workforce, and leveling up their agency's compliance and security, CIOs know that the first step is to invest in the tools they need to make it happen.

Before we explore how to build on your current digital strategy and navigate ongoing transformation, let's dig into some key challenges CIOs are facing right now.

3 KEY PRIORITIES FOR PUBLIC SECTOR LEADERS RIGHT NOW

1. Embracing interoperability, modularity, and orchestration to overcome digital hurdles

Public agencies at all levels are spending more time and resources than ever before on technology to improve infrastructure, replace legacy systems, and enhance service delivery. This year, state and local government IT spending is forecast to grow 5.3% over 2022, from $130B to $137B. An estimated $41B of that will be spent on software investments.[1]

> **70%** of digital transformation projects fail
>
> **24%** of failed automation projects are caused by vague goals

While, on the surface, that looks like good news for citizens, research by McKinsey paints a bleak picture. Seventy percent of digital transformation projects fail,[2] and public agencies in particular remain far behind their private sector counterparts when it comes to digitization. Not only is this low success rate wasting public dollars and hampering the productivity of public sector employees, it's also preventing citizens from accessing the services they need.

Too often, organizations view digitization as an end in itself, which immediately hinders success. A study by Sapio Research showed that 24% of failed automation projects were caused by "vague automation goals," pointing to a lack of clarity around the true purpose of transformation.[3] On top of that, few agencies have the internal expertise and resources to implement projects that truly overhaul, reinvent, and improve inefficient legacy processes. In many cases, the effort to see digital transformation projects through to completion is stretching staffing resources to a breaking point.

The takeaway: As disruptive technologies emerge to transform our tools, interactions, and social norms, many CIOs are adopting three core values to help their agencies move faster and with more flexibility when it comes to their digital strategy: interoperability, modularity, and orchestration.

The CIO's Three Core Digitization Values

1. **Interoperability**
   Setting up all systems — including ERPs and best-of-breed tools — to talk to each other, ensuring better reporting, reduced human error, and greater citizen impact.

2. **Modularity**
   Adopting purpose-built tools based on your agency's specific needs, rather than pigeon-holing all processes into one system.

3. **Orchestration**
   Departing from a siloed digital implementation approach, instead mapping out how systems will complement one another and meet all stakeholders' needs.

[1] eRepublic 2023 State & Local Government Priorities & Tech Funding Outlook
[2] McKinsey, "Perspectives on transformation"
[3] Sapio Research on behalf of ABBYY, "ABBYY Survey Identifies Behaviors Driving Intelligent Automation Successes and Failures"

"As someone who works with CIOs across North America, I've seen firsthand how those that prioritize interoperability, modularity, and orchestration are the most successful at meeting the demands of the people they serve — both internally and externally," said James Ha, Chief Growth Officer at Euna Solutions. "At the end of the day, governments don't have time to perform discovery, reengineer business processes, and run redundant systems. These three digital values ensure that citizens' needs are met now — not years from now."

2. Building a future-ready talent pipeline

Public sector organizations continue to face workforce challenges, including labor shortages and an exodus of skilled talent. As McKinsey reported, "For every ten government jobs posted from July 2021 through August 2022, roughly four were filled — the worst rate of the ten major economic sectors tracked by the Bureau of Labor Statistics."[4]

The challenge for many public sector organizations lies in attracting and retaining the right people. It makes sense that experienced candidates with digital skill sets and innovation mindsets want to work for digitally advanced organizations. And with many public sector agencies lagging in technology and organizational culture, those that have only just begun their modernization projects have an even steeper uphill climb when it comes to attracting people who can get the job done. Without the right tools and culture in place, government employees experience frustration, burnout, and barriers to making the positive impact they envision, leading to low employee satisfaction and retention.

[4] McKinsey, "What workers want is changing. That could be good for government."

The takeaway: People, not tools, drive organization-wide transformation. For projects to be successful, agencies need skilled and experienced teams. But attracting and retaining the best talent means putting the right technology in people's hands, so they can do their best work. While it's a chicken-and-egg problem that defies a simple solution, working with experienced partners can help.

3. Delivering on digital citizens' expectations

Of course, the driving force behind digital transformation in the public sector is not technology, but the people you serve. In a time of instant messaging, self-serve options, and data at our fingertips, citizens want convenient, fast, easy, accessible, and high-quality government services — just like the interactions they're used to in the private sector. Beyond investing in modern customer-facing tools, agencies also need streamlined digital solutions and processes on the backend that help them meet citizens' rising expectations and deliver better, faster results.

As more government agencies adopt a digital-first service delivery model, they're also under pressure to ensure those services are as equitable and inclusive as possible. For public sector leaders, that means finding innovative ways to streamline and simplify the journey for all stakeholders — a process that requires extensive user experience and accessibility testing. Engaging citizens in the process, selecting tools that meet diverse needs, and ensuring digital services don't introduce new barriers are all important considerations in the quest to meet digital citizens' new and shifting expectations.

The takeaway: Ultimately, digital transformation is about making government services more accessible, streamlined, efficient, and enjoyable for all citizens — and that's the main reason every public sector leader needs to be a digital leader.

DIGITAL LEADERSHIP DONE RIGHT

With pressure to guide complex digital transformation projects to success, build a workplace culture that attracts top talent, and deliver a high-quality digital experience for everyone, CIOs have plenty to juggle. Fortunately, many of these challenges can be met with the right digital enterprise strategy — one that elegantly combines the power of ERP software with purpose-built solutions designed specifically for the complexities of the public sector.

HOW TO ENHANCE YOUR ERP WITH PURPOSE-BUILT SOLUTIONS.

If you're sitting at your desk right now, take a look at your work setup. Chances are, unless you're traveling or posted up at a coffee shop, it's not just your laptop or desktop. Maybe you have a second (or third) monitor set up so you can more easily toggle between multiple screens. Maybe you've replaced your trackpad with a Bluetooth mouse. Or maybe you've hooked up an external webcam to level up the quality of your video calls.

It's not that your computer doesn't come with these capabilities, and you can still function without these peripherals. But the addition of these items leads to more streamlined workflows, better productivity, and ultimately a better working experience.

The same goes for your ERP. ERPs are critical for managing and integrating essential functions all in one place — finance, communications, human resources, and more. They are essential to core transactional areas, helping you automate and manage many of your core business functions. They ensure the flow of data across processes, providing a single source of truth, breaking down siloes between front and back offices, and optimizing operations. But to go beyond tracking, connecting, and reporting on your agency's financial data, and to better understand the *impact* of taxpayer dollars, there are ways to enhance your ERP with modular solutions built for this purpose — leveling up the power of your ERP.

Are you familiar with any of these historic ERP gaps?

1. **They aren't built for everyone.** Traditional ERPs are modeled on the needs of finance teams and the specific complexities they deal with. For some users, like procurement bid evaluators or K-12 administrators, an ERP may not be suited to their day-to-day activities.

2. **Custom solutions can be complex.** Whether you're employing a third-party service or taking it on in-house, creating custom workflows in your ERP to address some of the nuances of your agency's processes can be expensive, time-consuming, and not user-friendly.

3. **Stakeholder engagement is at risk.** Whether they're citizens applying for permits or vendors submitting bids, everyone outside the organization experiences friction when a digital solution isn't tailored to the things they need to get done.
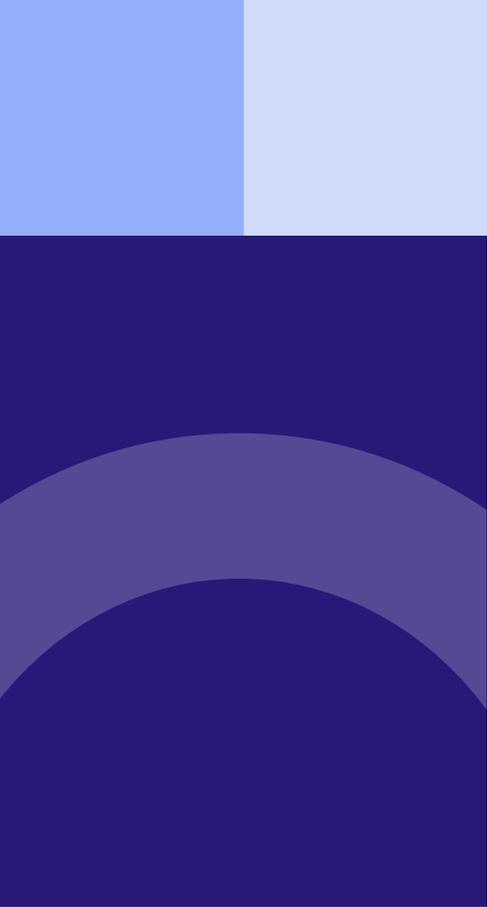
Traditionally, public agencies have taken an "ERP-first" approach to implementation, meaning they have hyper-focused on selecting an ERP provider first, then addressed potential gaps with modular solutions after the implementation is complete. This approach poses potential risks, like alienating some users or spending a lot of time creating custom workflows.

> To go beyond tracking, connecting, and reporting on your agency's financial data, and to better understand the impact of taxpayer dollars, there are ways to enhance your ERP with modular solutions built for this purpose—leveling up the power of your ERP.

Perhaps you already have an ERP in place at your agency that is powerfully handling many of your back-office functions. Or maybe you've gone back to the drawing board to evaluate new ERP solutions based on your agency's changing and growing needs. Whatever your situation, here's the good news — public sector leaders now have unprecedented opportunities to step up their ERP's capabilities by supercharging them with purpose-built, commercial off-the-shelf (COTS) solutions.

THE POWER OF POSTMODERN ERP

Purpose-built solutions are designed to meet the needs of public sector leaders, employees, and constituents as they seek enhanced, increasingly digital interactions, as well as greater efficiency and transparency. So what's the best way forward?

"Postmodern ERP" is a strategy that bridges the gap between the ERP and the hyper-specific needs of the public sector. Instead of taking an "ERP-first" approach to digital transformation, the idea behind the postmodern ERP is to explore and implement ERP and best-of-breed tools in tandem. Agencies continue to leverage their core ERP system and deftly complement it with specialized digital solutions, ideally from a unified third-party provider.[5]

By leveraging best-of-breed applications purpose-built for the public sector, agencies can increase efficiency, ease-of-use, and community impact. Adopting this kind of enterprise application strategy makes it both easier and more flexible to implement right-fit solutions, allowing you to:

- launch faster with commercial off-the-shelf solutions

- reduce implementation costs

- lower risks of digital transformation failure

- streamline processes

- tap into data insights

- see positive ROI right away

THE VALUE OF PURPOSE-BUILT SOLUTIONS

By supplementing your ERP with solutions that are tailored to ERP enhancement in the public sector, you can support your agency's goals and your constituents' needs, particularly in these key areas:

- Budgeting

- Procurement

- Grants

- Payments

- Permitting

- K-12 administration

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Public sector expertise

No two public sector organizations have the same mix of services, funding sources, statutory requirements, or community needs. That's why it's so important to work with a partner who understands the space and has a history of successful digital implementations across a range of public sector clients. An experienced partner will be well-equipped to properly evaluate gaps in your current solution stack and deliver a unique strategy that helps you meet your digital transformation goals.

An intuitive user experience

A modern digital experience feels easy, familiar, and enjoyable for all your stakeholders — most of whom are accustomed to digital-first interactions in their day-to-day shopping, banking, communications, entertainment, and more. Look for solutions that are designed with all your stakeholders' needs in mind: constituents, employees, partners, vendors, and leaders. They should be able to learn and navigate the system with minimal instruction or onboarding, and, if they do get stuck, the platform should give them easy access to online customer support (and a domestic help desk to call if they need to talk with an expert).

Faster implementation and results

A major advantage of purpose-built solutions is that they don't require time-consuming modifications or retrofits to your existing ERP. You can realize the benefits of a faster launch time by choosing a solution provider that delivers quick, easy deployment and swift return on investment. With a cloud solution, everything is managed by your partner, so there's no on-premise installation or ongoing maintenance needed by your IT team. Selecting a provider with a configured solution — that adjusts a pre-existing product to your specific needs — will also drive a faster implementation time than a provider with a customized (and therefore built from scratch every time) approach.

An experienced partner can also ensure that there are no interruptions to your regular operations throughout the implementation process.

Automated processes that save time and money

Purpose-built solutions can deliver savings and empower your organization to make the most cost-effective decisions. Look for applications that reduce manual effort, streamline processes, and uncover new insights. A good solution will simplify rather than complicate workflows, give you access to more and better information, and help you leverage data to drive improvements.

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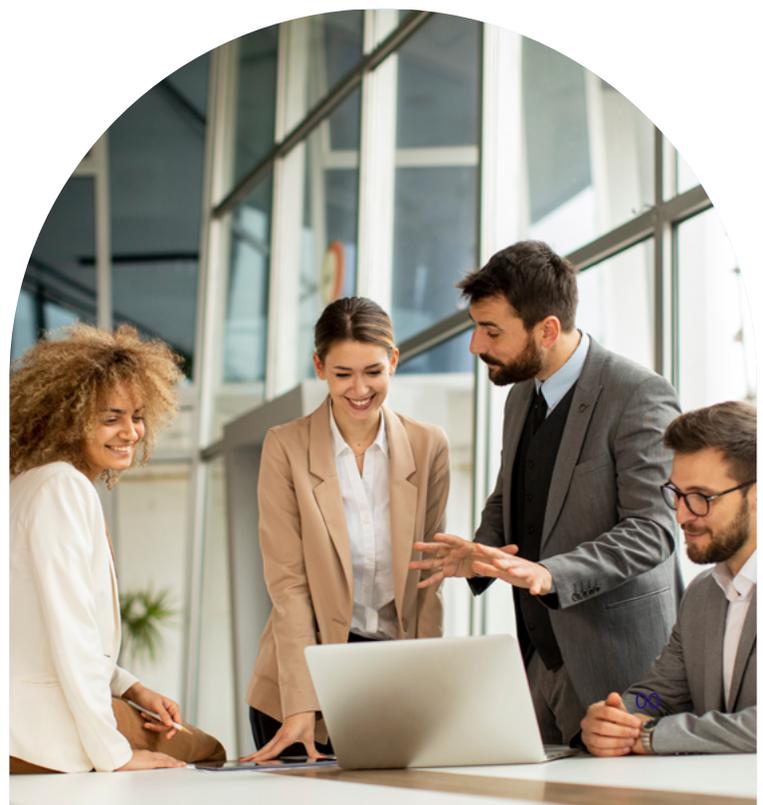
A consultative partner

Most agencies are facing workforce and expertise shortages that make it difficult to get new IT initiatives off the ground. Not every agency has the IT staff to undertake a big modernization project or the resources to recruit experienced talent. By working with a collaborative, third-party provider who offers consultative and managed services, you can access the knowledge, expertise, and results you need. Rather than set up a solution and walk away, a strong strategic partner will stay on the journey with you, helping to design and implement the project while supporting your ongoing success.

A flexible, agile cloud-based solution

The value of cloud-based solutions became clearer than ever during the COVID-19 pandemic. Agencies using on-premise software encountered major issues as they struggled to pivot to remote operations, while those running in the cloud were able to adapt on the fly to support their workforce and customers. By choosing cloud-based, purpose-built solutions to enhance your ERP, your agency minimizes disruption to service delivery when the unexpected happens, all while improving regular operations. A cloud-based solution also reduces demand on your IT team, since your vendor takes care of ongoing maintenance, updates, and improvements to necessary hardware and software that keep you at the forefront of digital best practices.

Rigorous security and compliance

Governments and public sector agencies tend to have much more stringent compliance requirements than private sector organizations. To ensure cloud environments are secure, many provinces and states across North America require security certifications for any and all cloud-based products that agencies use. When exploring ways to extend and enhance your ERP, you'll want to focus on purpose-built solutions that offer robust data protection and meet all security and compliance requirements.

ERP integration that breaks down siloes

One of the biggest challenges agencies face in digital transformation is making data more available, usable, and connected. Your agency likely has access to vast amounts of operational and customer data, but they may be buried in spreadsheets and disconnected on-premise applications. While purpose-built solutions are separate from your ERP platform, they shouldn't reinforce these siloes. Instead, your software should work together. By investing in purpose-built solutions that interact with your ERP, you ensure that information is integrated, rather than stored in disparate locations. That helps you realize the true power of data to transform the digital experience for your team and constituents.

HOW TO GET STARTED

When creating digital roadmaps, public sector leaders have historically put a laser-focus on the ERP—prioritizing its evaluation and implementation, then addressing potential gaps or risks. CIOs that adopt the three digital values of interoperability, modularity, and orchestration, however, know that an integrated approach—where the ERP and modular tools are considered hand-in-hand—is key to developing an enterprise strategy that enables your organization to remain ahead of the digital transformation curve, improve how you engage citizens and employees, and drive positive community impact.

But the world of purpose-built solutions is expansive and potentially overwhelming. So where do you begin?

Working with a single modular solution provider to digitize core public sector functions—including budgeting, procurement, grants management, payments, permitting, and K-12 administration—is the best place to begin because it helps ensure that your purpose-built solutions are selected, aligned, integrated, and successfully implemented with a plan designed for your needs.

Instead of sourcing disparate modular solutions from multiple providers, a roadmap partner helps you set your priorities, schedule, pace, and budget, guiding your transformation project to successful launch and ongoing high performance.

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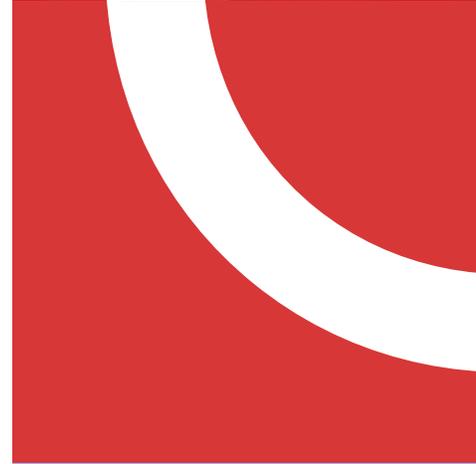
PHASE 1

Develop your
business case.

↓

Evaluate
your needs.

↓

Select a
solution provider.

PHASE 2

Re-visit your business
case with your
solutions partners.

↓

Re-evaluate your
needs with your
solutions partners.

↓

Create a
roadmap.

Take the first steps toward a future-proof ERP environment

Close collaboration between departments, IT, your ERP, and modular solution providers is critical to building a strategy and roadmap that meets your agency's unique digital requirements. Here's how to get the ball rolling:

1. **Develop your business case:** How will the digital transformation project support your strategic goals? Articulate the experience you want to deliver for your stakeholders (staff, constituents, partners, etc.), including where you are now and where you want to be. Identify your goals for the project, what success looks like, and how you'll measure it.

2. **Evaluate your needs:** Consider your agency and users. What niche processes do you need to support and what functionality will help you do that? What special requirements do you need to account for, such as accessibility, security, data privacy, and compliance? What do your stakeholders need to be successful?

3. **Select your ERP and purpose-built solution providers:** Based on your needs assessment, identify criteria for selecting the ERP and purpose-built solutions that will work together to develop the architecture that will meet your requirements. Focus on vendors that have repeatedly delivered enterprise-class implementations successfully.

4. **Repeat steps 1 and 2 with your solutions partners:** Experienced public sector solutions providers will have experience working with agencies like yours to develop successful and sustainable digital strategies. Re-visiting your business case and organizational needs alongside your solutions partners can open up a wealth of historical knowledge that can drive your digital roadmap towards success.

5. **Create a roadmap:** Work with your chosen providers to build a plan for your modernization project, revisiting and refining your business case, needs, and solution requirements. Prioritize incremental initiatives and include quick wins that help you generate momentum. Make sure you consult with key stakeholders throughout the process to build organization-wide awareness and buy-in on the transformation strategy.

CONCLUSION:

Navigating the complexities and opportunities of public sector modernization isn't easy.

Being a digital leader in the public sector means juggling numerous competing priorities — from budget realities to talent shortages to diverse stakeholder needs. CIOs that adopt the three core digital values of interoperability, modularity, and orchestration have a secret weapon up their sleeve: harnessing the power of both their ERP and purpose-built solutions to supercharge their workflows, drive cost savings for their agency, and improve services for their constituents.

Most importantly, by future-proofing your enterprise digital strategy, you're ready to leverage emerging technologies, respond to future disruption, and drive progress in your community for the months, years, and decades to come.
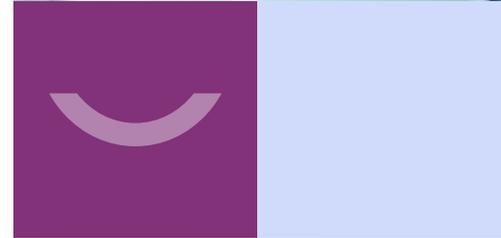
ABOUT:

EUNA SOLUTIONS.

Euna Solutions is a leading provider of purpose-built, cloud-based solutions that power critical administrative functions and financial operations for the public sector. Formerly GTY Technology, Euna Solutions offers easy-to-use solutions for procurement, payments, grant management, budgeting, permitting and K-12 administration that are proven to increase operational efficiency, transparency, collaboration, and compliance. Euna Solutions is a trusted partner to more than 2,000 government and public sector organizations across North America, empowering digital transformation and streamlining business processes through a relationship-centered, service-focused approach. Euna propels public sector progress.

To learn more, visit **www.eunasolutions.com.**