



# Legacy ERP Archiving and Decommissioning: A Guide for Healthcare Organizations

How to reduce costs, enhance security, and ensure access and compliance.

# Introduction

Top of mind for many health IT leaders and CIOs is transitioning to a modern ERP—an initiative that often coincides with broader EHR transitions. As organizations make these transitions, they also face pressure to reduce IT costs while maintaining secure, compliant access to legacy business records across HR, finance, and supply chain.

For many healthcare organizations, [archiving legacy ERP systems](#) represents a [significant opportunity in this regard](#). In fact, legacy ERP applications such as PeopleSoft, Lawson, and SAP often remain active long after organizations transition to a new ERP. This consumes valuable resources, creates security vulnerabilities, and results in unnecessary maintenance costs.

Over the past year alone, we've experienced a significant increase in the number of healthcare IT leaders who are asking: How can we retire our legacy ERP and eliminate the ongoing costs associated with it, without jeopardizing compliance with record retention requirements? This report provides answers.

## Legacy System Decommissioning: A Growing Priority

**80% of healthcare IT leaders** say their budget for data management initiatives has increased over the past three years.

**71%** say legacy system consolidation/data archiving is among their top 3 data management priorities.

*Source: [November 2025 Survey of CHIME members](#).*

# ERP Archiving: Why Now?

ERP archiving projects are often driven by forcing events, such as mergers, acquisitions, or system replacements that result in redundant legacy systems. In other cases, organizations decide to act after years of maintaining legacy ERPs. They tally up the annual costs and security risks, and realize they're allocating significant money and resources to maintain systems that deliver minimal value.

Regardless of the trigger, once organizations examine the numbers and benefits of ERP archiving, the business case is typically straightforward. Each legacy system requires ongoing:

- Licensing costs
- Infrastructure costs, including servers and storage
- IT labor costs, including ongoing maintenance and security monitoring

Combined, these costs can reach hundreds of thousands of dollars annually for large healthcare systems.

Beyond direct financial costs, legacy ERP systems

expose organizations to significant [security and compliance risks](#). Outdated systems are more vulnerable to cyberattacks and less likely to support compliance needs — creating liability that grows more serious with each passing year. Other risks include workflow fragmentation, lost data access or control, and operational continuity problems.

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We often find that hospitals and health systems have been paying maintenance on legacy ERPs for years without realizing the cost savings that can be achieved by archival. **When we explore the total cost of keeping their old system running, that's often the moment when decommissioning becomes a priority with a very quick return on investment.**”

– **Jim Hammer**, PMP, FACHDM  
COO, Harmony Healthcare IT

# The ERP Archiving Process:

## What to Expect

Archiving a legacy ERP system is a structured process and knowing what to expect at each stage makes it much easier to plan, resource, and execute. While every organization's environment is unique, most ERP archiving projects follow three key phases:

### 1. Discovery

During this process, your ERP archiving partner will thoroughly explore your legacy system and the data within it. This process includes:

- **Data volume analysis** — How many years of data are involved? How many tables and records?
- **Data type inventory** — What discrete and non-discrete data exists? What types? HR records, payroll history, benefits, credentialing, workforce management, materials management, supply chain, others?
- **Data strategy** — Which data needs to be migrated to a new ERP (if applicable), which should be archived, and which should be purged?
- **Customization review** — What custom fields, workflows, or modules need to be considered?
- **Access method determination** — How will data be accessed and extracted for migration or archival?

ERP systems that have been in place a long time are likely to have accumulated several customizations, workarounds, and undocumented processes that can impact data extraction, so thorough discovery and assessment is crucial.

### 2. Extracting, mapping and validating

Each ERP platform stores information differently and requires platform-specific expertise to ensure complete migration and archiving. Critical steps during this phase include:

- Establishing search indexes across key fields
- Configuring role-based access controls
- Migrating data to a new ERP and validating data within it (if applicable)
- Moving data to the archive and validating the data is represented correctly and completely
- Testing search and retrieval functionality

### 3. Deployment and decommissioning

Once the archive is validated and users are trained, the legacy ERP system can be decommissioned.

#### Four Key Benefits of ERP Archiving:

- **Cut Costs** — Eliminate licensing, maintenance, and infrastructure costs.
- **Bolster Security** — Retire outdated, unsupported applications.
- **Increase Efficiency** — Give authorized users instant access to historical data
- **Maintain Compliance** — Meet audit and regulatory requirements.

# Selecting Your ERP Archiving Partner

Choosing the right archiving partner is one of the most important decisions in the ERP archiving process. Not all vendors have the technical depth or expertise required for a streamlined and successful project. The wrong choice can lead to delays, data integrity issues, and compliance gaps. When evaluating potential partners and solutions, seek out these core capabilities:

## Capability

## What to Look For

### Long-term, secure data preservation

- End-to-end encryption during data transfer and at rest
- Secure, controlled, audit-ready storage
- Version control and data integrity verification onfiguring role-based access controls

### User-friendly access & search

- Intuitive, browser-based access
- Categorization by topic and data type (HR records, financial transactions, supply chain data, etc.)
- Robust search capabilities across multiple data points (employee name, ID number, date of birth, Social Security number, vendor name, transaction date, and more)
- Sorting and filtering options to quickly narrow down results
- SSO integration so users can access the archived application alongside active systems (when supported)

### Compliance & audit readiness

- HITRUST certification and HIPAA compliance
- Role-based access and features
- Comprehensive audit logging that tracks who accessed which records and when
- Compliance with record retention requirements mandated by the IRS, Fair Labor Standards act (FLSA), U.S. Equal Opportunity Commission (EEOC), and various state-level agencies

### Experience & track record

- More than 15 years experience specializing in healthcare data management
- Chosen by top healthcare organizations for migration and archiving
- Strong references from similar organizations with the same ERP
- Proficiency across hundreds of software platforms, including ERP, EHR, and revenue cycle systems
- Ability to handle financial, business, administrative, and clinical information

## Looking for more guidance?

Read "[\*How to Select the Right ERP Archiving Partner: 16 Questions to Ask.\*](#)"

# Best Practices for ERP Archiving Success

While every ERP archiving project is unique, certain practices consistently make a measurable difference in outcomes. As you embark on your project, keep these best practices in mind:

**Start early.** The best time to engage with archiving specialists is when you begin considering an ERP transition or replacement, not when you see that a legacy system contract is coming up for renewal. Early engagement allows for proper discovery, planning, and execution without rushed timelines.

**Think beyond a single system.** If you're archiving one legacy ERP, consider whether other systems (clinical, financial, and/or administrative) should also be retired and consolidated into the same archive platform. Economies of scale make multi-system projects more cost-effective. A strong archiving partner can help support these decisions.

**Involve stakeholders early and often.** The departments that rely on historical ERP data — including HR, finance, supply chain, and compliance — should have input on archive requirements, search capabilities, and access controls throughout the project.

**Plan for the unexpected.** Discovery almost always reveals data complexities or customizations that weren't initially apparent. Partnering with a strong and highly experienced archiving vendor can help ensure unexpected findings have a minimal impact on your project and timeline.

**Prioritize user experience.** An archive that's difficult to use will generate ongoing support burden and user frustration. Seek out an archiving platform that has an intuitive interface and Single Sign-On (SSO) capabilities.

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We see a lot of organizations start with one ERP system and then realize they've got three, four or more other legacy applications that can be archived. **With an effective archive platform in place, the process of decommissioning these systems becomes very streamlined.**”

— **Amanda Mais**, FACHDM, VP, Data Integration, Harmony Healthcare IT

## Final Thoughts

Legacy ERP systems present a significant risk-reduction and cost-savings opportunity. These applications consume valuable IT resources and create security risks. By following a proven archiving approach, partnering with an experienced specialist, and leveraging best practices, you can successfully decommission your legacy ERP while maintaining compliant, accessible historical records.

Harmony Healthcare IT has supported hundreds of healthcare organizations through successful legacy system decommissioning and data archiving projects. Our team brings deep technical expertise across 715+ applications including ERP and EHR platforms, proven methodologies, and a track record of completing projects on time and within budget with the highest standards of quality.

***If you are interested in exploring an ERP archiving project, [schedule a consultation with our team](#). We'll help you learn more about the opportunity and how it would benefit your organization.***

## About Harmony Healthcare IT

Harmony Healthcare IT is a data management firm that moves, stores, and manages patient, employee, and business records for healthcare organizations. Since 2006, our U.S.-based experts have worked with over 700 healthcare software platforms across clinical, financial, and administrative systems. We've built our reputation transforming critical data into secure, compliant, and accessible assets – whether that is converting data to a new platform or securing it in an archive.

# FAQs

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## Why should hospitals prioritize legacy ERP archiving and system decommissioning?

Legacy ERPs consume significant budgets through licensing, maintenance, infrastructure, and IT labor — with costs sometimes reaching hundreds of thousands of dollars annually for large health systems. Legacy ERPs also pose cybersecurity and compliance risks due to outdated technology and unsupported software. Decommissioning legacy ERPs reduces cost, eliminates security vulnerabilities, and preserves compliant access to historical data.

## What data from a legacy hospital ERP typically needs to be archived?

Common datasets include HR and payroll history, benefits information, workforce management records, financial transactions, supply chain and materials management data, and credentialing information.

## How long does a hospital ERP archiving and decommissioning project usually take?

Timelines vary by system age, size, customization, and data complexity. [Contact Harmony Healthcare IT](#) to discuss your specific needs.

## How do hospitals access data after a legacy ERP is shut down?

Users access historical data through a secure, browser-based archive platform with role-based permissions, search capabilities, and audit logging.

## What security standards should an ERP archiving partner meet?

Healthcare organizations should look for partners that support HITRUST certification, HIPAA compliance, end-to-end encryption, role-based access, and comprehensive audit logging at a minimum.

## How does ERP archiving support compliance and audit readiness?

A properly structured archive ensures long-term access to historical records and supports retention requirements from regulatory bodies. Audit trails document who accessed which data, ensuring organizations remain compliant even after the system is retired.

## Can multiple legacy systems be consolidated into one archive platform?

Yes. Many hospitals that start with one ERP soon recognize the benefits of consolidating other clinical, financial, or administrative systems into the same archive platform. Multi-system consolidation reduces cost, simplifies data access, and standardizes audit reporting.

## What should hospitals look for when selecting a legacy ERP archiving partner?

Key considerations include healthcare-specific expertise, experience across hundreds of platforms, validated methodologies, and strong client references.