

EXTEND YOUR USE OF MAXIMO WITH FINANCIAL INTEGRATION

By Tony Turner, Projects Director

Maximo has been around for nearly thirty years and accounting systems for somewhat longer. The integration between Maximo and your Accounting system used to be thought of as an advanced technique, but it is becoming an increasingly standard requirement nowadays.



There are a number of clear benefits to be gained by performing this integration. These include:

1. A single source of truth. Many organisations waste hundreds of man-hours each year trying to reconcile the costs shown in Maximo and those shown in the accounting system. When the two systems don't match, management teams lose confidence in both systems.
2. Reflecting the true cost of maintenance work. Many organisations do not know how much it actually costs to maintain an asset. Unless there is a reliable and proven cost recording mechanism, management teams do not have the information to hand to perform basic decisions, e.g. repair or replace the asset, or use in-house/subcontract labour, etc.
3. A number of organisations prefer to avoid the headache of integration by using a generic ERP system to manage their maintenance needs. In effect, they have avoided a £30,000 interface problem and inherited a multimillion pound headache that does not look after their critical assets properly.

Financial Integration Options

There are a number of off-the-shelf integration tools to address the most common integrations to SAP Financials, Oracle eBusiness Suite and Sun Systems. A number of independent consultancy organisations also have template solutions that can be deployed rapidly to less common accounting systems, such as Agresso, Dynamics, Open Accounts, etc.

Sometimes, an organisation's IT strategy may stipulate an interface mechanism using its in-house Enterprise Service Bus (ESB) and IT standards, such as Web Services. This may preclude the use of off-the-shelf integration tools and result in the organisation requiring a bespoke integration solution.

However, Maximo is based on Service Oriented Architecture and supports Web Services and the use of the Maximo Integration Framework. This makes the technical side of the integration relatively straightforward and allows users to focus more on the business touchpoints between the systems.

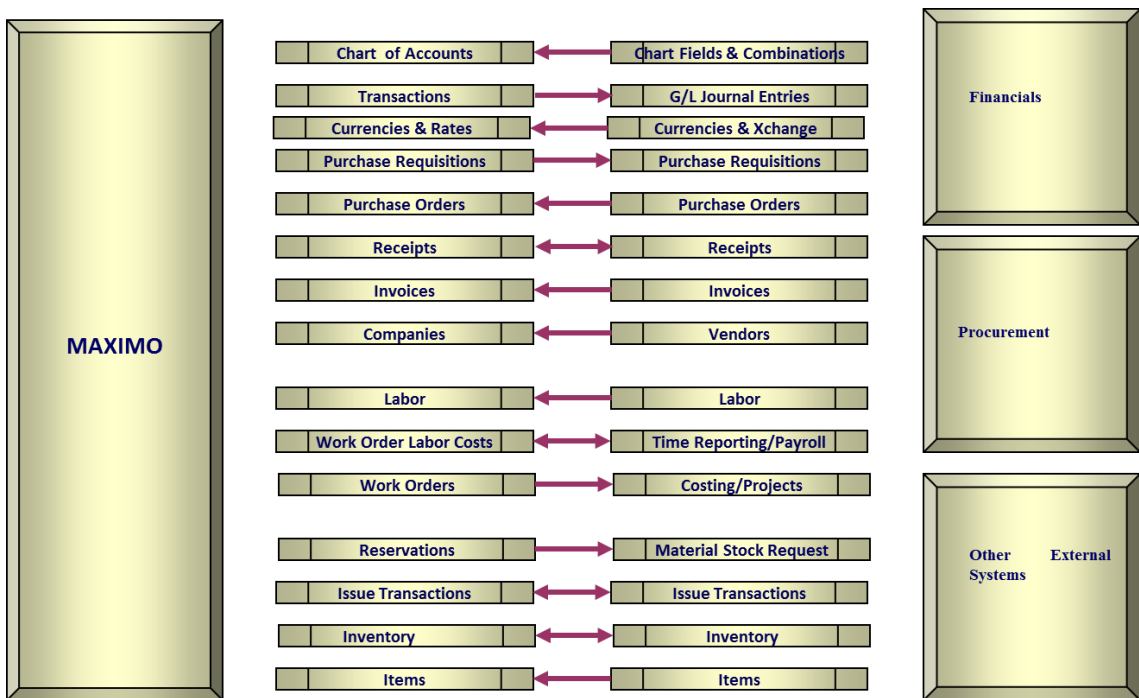
There are three basic business scenarios for integrating Maximo to the finance system. These are:

- Scenario 1 – Maximo used for Maintenance and the ERP used for Inventory Control and Purchasing. This is the most complex scenario, as it requires the most interface points. It also means that the user may lose a lot of Maximo standard functionality - e.g. rotatable item tracking, kits, item specifications (where used), item condition codes, etc - as the finance system may not have the engineering capability in its inventory module.
- Scenario 2 – Maximo used for Inventory Control and the Finance System used for Purchasing and Accounts. This is a slightly less complicated scenario and addresses some of the concerns about loss of functionality. However, many organisations find their financial purchasing system deficient when it comes to managing contracts.

- Scenario 3 – Maximo used for Maintenance, Inventory, Purchasing and Invoice Matching. The finance system is used for accounting. This is the simplest integration scenario in terms of touchpoints and also maximises the inherent functionality of Maximo.

Whatever scenario applies, there are a number of sub-options and additional touchpoints you may require, e.g. projects, fixed assets, HR data, etc. These can be implemented as needed.

A typical integration scenario is shown below:



Note that in the case of integration, it is worth considering that less is more. A number of organisations have taken shortcuts in their integration scenarios, e.g. not interfacing financial periods as there is only one transaction per month, or not synchronising the vendors' tables. This typically leads to problems downstream as transactions fail validation and then have to be manually fixed later.

Conclusion

Proper integration between Maximo and your financial system is a relatively simple task and can deliver massive benefits. In addition to making the lives of finance and operations teams easier, it substantially improves control of costs and can speed up routine processes, such as the payment of supplier invoices and the purchasing process.

For more information on Vetasi's Financial Integration solutions for Maximo, please call our sales team on 08434 610061, or email sales@vetasi.com.