

CAN KENANDY KICK IT?

Dan Roberts assesses a new force in cloud-based enterprise apps.



Dan Roberts: focuses entirely on manufacturing management

What do you get if you cross former Oracle exec Ray Lane, salesforce.com's Marc Benioff and Manman's founder Sandra Kurtzig? The answer is Kenandy – the latest enterprise application product to launch into the cloud. Founded by Kurtzig, Kenandy is funded by Benioff via salesforce.com and Lane via Kleiner Perkins Caufield & Byers.

If its heritage is anything to go by, then, the social manufacturing management tool will be a great hit.

Kenandy is based on the Force.com platform and benefits from integration with salesforce.com's tools, as well as a super-intuitive interface. There are all the usual advantages of being 100% cloud-based – speed of deployment, ease of upgrades, etc. The Force.com platform also gives it the security of a cloud veteran, as well as a highly connected information model.

The social aspects of the platform are also vital to the offering. The ability to share information back and forth is built-in. The core system understands how to deal with sub-inventories anywhere in the supply chain.

One of the underlying ideas behind the product is to change the perception of what a portal is. What used to be a portal is everyone and anyone's system of record – the key is to share rules for that.

Yet what makes Kenandy interesting, when there are numerous cloud-based enterprise systems available, is not just the heritage of its founder and backers. It focuses entirely on manufacturing management – no financials, no CRM.

The system can link to any financial system of record, leaving Kenandy to do what it does best – manage manufacturing. Kurtzig has leveraged her wealth of knowledge and experience of manufacturing best practice, and applied it to a collaborative environment.

Another important differentiator is that it's focused not on a single enterprise, but on the business network of suppliers, distributors and other trading partners. So the outcome is not just Manman on a cloud platform. It's a modern dashboard-based business tool, with the added capabilities afforded by being part of a social network.

Some of the expected benefits of this over the long haul are:

- Better visibility and co-ordination across trading partners – Kenandy allows companies to set up rules for specific sub-inventory views for various trading partners.
- Social media and chat functions in business context – Kenandy can associate Chatter (salesforce.com's social interaction tool) with specific objects or types of transactions and products in the core system of record. The goal is to make this work across multiple partners, not just inside an organisation.
- Improved sharing of best practices – the social-media style platform will encourage and enable knowledge-base building. Examples cited are optimal operations, maintenance, managing a particular type of equipment and how environmental factors may come into play in yields.
- Sharing and applying operational metrics effectively – such as seeing key performance indicators for inventory and plant floor loading change as a work order moves from start to end of the production cycle.
- Creating a benchmarking environment – over time, Kenandy's multi-tenant environment could create a community and marketplace for comparative analysis.

- Rating for confident trading partner selection – again, over time the shared environment will offer community ratings of suppliers or customers in much the same way as the best e-commerce sites.
- Suppliers can take a more active role in ensuring reliable customer operations – for example, if there is a hurricane approaching a critical supplier’s shipping location, they could help their customers find an alternative. This sort of added value helps to make loyal customers.

When successful pioneers come back out of retirement to launch a new venture, it’s bound to turn heads. If Kenandy is only half as successful as Manman was in its heyday, then it will have done extremely well.

It’s still very early days – Kenandy was only launched at this year’s Dreamforce conference – but what is clear is that social enterprise on the cloud has moved into the mainstream and is no longer just for mobile workers and human resources.

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