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Introduction.

Maldiva Ltd. is a fast-growing consumer electronics retailer that runs 30 physical stores alongside an online store. Sales have grown quickly over the past year, but the systems behind the business have not kept up. This report explains why that is a problem and recommends what Maldiva Ltd. should do about it.

Maldiva Ltd.'s CEO hired this consultancy to investigate these problems and recommend a modern information system to fix them.

Main challenges that have been identified are: stock is tracked by hand, causing mismatches between stores and the website; customer data is spread across several disconnected systems; sales reports are built manually using spreadsheets, which is slow and holds high risk for errors; the business does not fully meet GDPR data protection rules; sales, finance, and inventory teams use separate systems that do not communicate.

The rest of this report looks at these problems in more depth, recommends and justifies a specific system, explains how it should be rolled out and summarises the outcome.

Evaluation to existing systems.

Maldiva Ltd. is trying to run a modern, fast-growing retail business on tools that were never built to work together. A manual stock count, customer records scattered across several places and spreadsheets standing in for proper reporting software. As a result, the business lacks the layered structure of transaction processing, management information, and decision support that a company of its size and growth rate would normally require (Laudon and Laudon, 2022). Each problem below traces back to this same root cause.

Inventory is tracked manually, with no real-time link between store stock and the online platform. As a result, customers can order items online that are already out of stock, generating complaints and refunds, meanwhile store managers make ordering decisions based on inaccurate stock readings. Research on ERP (ERP is business software that connects a company's core functions, such as sales and inventory, into one shared system) - enabled inventory optimisation shows that continuous, system visibility of stock materially reduces items out of stock and backorders, compared with manually reconciled records (WJARR, 2024), leaving Maldiva Ltd. structurally behind competitors who are already running synchronised platforms.

Customer data presents a parallel problem - records are held across multiple disconnected systems, so no purchase history exists for marketing or support staff to work with. Research confirms that data platform integration is the critical success factor behind improved customer satisfaction and loyalty (Journal of Telecommunications and the Digital Economy, 2024), not the CRM (software that stores a customer's full purchase and interaction history in one place) software itself. As a result, Maldiva Ltd. cannot achieve this even if a CRM tool were introduced without first resolving the underlying integration gap.

Decision-making faces a similar problem. Sales reporting relies on manual spreadsheets, which are slow and error-prone, leaving management without reliable, real-time visibility of sales trends — the exact limitation dedicated Business Intelligence and Decision-Support Systems (BI and DSS are systems that turn raw business data into real-time reports for managers) were developed to resolve (Decision Support Systems, 2021).

Most urgent issue is data governance, Maldiva Ltd. lacks secure access controls around customer data and is not GDPR (GDPR is an EU law that governs how businesses are allowed to collect and look after people's personal data) compliant, exposing it to regulatory and reputational risk. However, this is not unique to Maldiva Ltd. — studies of GDPR compliance in SMEs (small and medium sized enterprises) consistently find weak access control is the

norm rather than the exception at this scale (Freitas and Mira da Silva, 2018). Most importantly this is a systemic risk requiring a structural fix, not a policy patch.

Meanwhile, sales, finance, and inventory teams run on separate software that does not communicate, so staff must manually re-enter data between systems. Technically, this is an integration failure — Maldiva Ltd. has no enterprise application integration layer connecting its core business applications (IGI Global, n.d.). This gap is what makes every other problem above worse.

These are not abstract risks. RadioShack, a comparably structured electronics retailer, filed for bankruptcy in 2015 after years of an outdated inventory system that carried excess low-margin stock while missing emerging demand (CBS News, 2015). Its collapse was compounded when it attempted to sell its 67 million-record customer database during bankruptcy proceedings, in breach of its own privacy policy, triggering FTC and state Attorney General intervention (Proskauer on Privacy, 2015). The parallel with Maldiva Ltd.'s inventory and data-governance weaknesses is direct.

Collectively, these five issues are symptoms of one underlying cause: Maldiva Ltd. has no unifying information system architecture. The following section proposes a solution designed to close that gap directly.

Recommended solution.

What Maldiva Ltd. needs is one connected system that links its stores, its website, and its back office, so all data works in harmony. In practice, this means a sale in a shop should update stock online immediately, staff should see a customer's full history in one place, and managers should have real-time numbers to plan around — the opposite of manually filled spreadsheets, missed transactions, and over- or under-ordering.

Closing this gap could be approached in different ways. One option is to keep patching individual problems as they surface, such as replacing the spreadsheet reporting process without addressing inventory or CRM. Another option is to bring in separate specialist ERP, CRM, and BI applications and link them together through middleware. A more thorough option is a single, cloud-based ERP suite with CRM and business intelligence built in, all running from one shared database. Using McFarlan's (1984) strategic grid, Maldiva Ltd.'s inventory and order data fall into the operational category, essential to daily running rather than a helpful extra, which argues against simply patching problems one at a time. Between the two integration-based options, a unified cloud ERP suite is recommended: Maldiva Ltd. has no existing integration layer to build on, so linking several new systems together would recreate the same coordination problems it already has, just with newer technology.

In terms of cost and scalability, a subscription-based cloud system avoids a large upfront cost, allows new stores to be added gradually, and turns spending into a predictable cost that is easier to plan against revenue growth (Administrative Sciences, 2026), matching the CEO's ambition to expand without repeating current problems. A single shared database also removes the need to manually re-enter data between sales, finance, and inventory systems, since all three draw on the same information. As a result, stock becomes visible in real time across every store and the website, directly solving the mismatch problem, since real-time visibility, not the brand of software, is what stops stock-outs (WJARR, 2024). Currys plc, a UK retailer in the same regulatory context, is already investing in this exact configuration (AppsRunTheWorld, 2025).

On customer data and decision-making, the CRM module brings purchase history together into one record, the leading driver of improved customer satisfaction, while the BI module replaces manual reporting with live dashboards for accurate forecasting. Best Buy shows the scale of benefit possible: a similar unified approach helped grow its online sales to over 40% of total revenue (Cleverence, 2024; Harvard Business School, 2015).

Finally, modern cloud ERP systems include role-based access control and audit logging as standard, directly addressing Maldiva Ltd.'s most urgent compliance gap (SciTePress, 2022). Beyond legal compliance, this also raises wider responsibilities: data should be collected and kept only where genuinely needed, security should be reviewed regularly rather than treated as a one-off task, and moving to cloud infrastructure reduces the business's own hardware and energy footprint compared to running servers in each store.

Comparing specific options makes this more concrete. Microsoft Dynamics 365 Business Central is aimed at small and mid-sized retailers, integrates closely with familiar tools such as Excel, and is easier for non-technical staff to learn, which suits a 30-store retailer without a large in-house IT team (Microsoft, 2026). Oracle NetSuite offers stronger financial and multi-currency features but typically costs more, while SAP Business One suits inventory-heavy manufacturing businesses but is more complex than Maldiva Ltd. is likely to need. Considering Maldiva Ltd.'s size, budget and straightforward retail requirements, Microsoft Dynamics 365 Business Central offers the best balance of cost, usability, and required functionality. It includes retail relevant features, such as barcode support, batch and serial number tracking, and real-time stock visibility across multiple locations, along with built-in tools for managing transfers between stores — directly matching Maldiva Ltd.'s need for accurate, synchronised inventory (Rand Group, 2026). It also integrates natively with everyday tools such as Excel, Outlook, and Teams, which shortens the learning time for staff as usually everyone is already familiar with them. Implementation is also realistic for a business of this size - similarly sized companies typically go live within two to four months where data is reasonably clean and customisation needs are limited, fitting well within the phased rollout described in the implementation plan

Implementation plan.

The system this important should not be switched on everywhere at once. It needs to be introduced step by step, tested on a small scale first and only rolled out fully once staff know how to use it. Otherwise, Maldiva Ltd. risks replacing one set of problems with another during the changeover.

Following standard project management practice, the roll-out should happen in four stages: planning, pilot testing, full roll-out, and review (Maylor, 2010). The planning stage, likely taking six to eight weeks, sets out the scope, budget, and a realistic timeline. Since Business Central is sold only through authorised Microsoft partners rather than bought directly, this stage should also include selecting and engaging a Microsoft Dynamics Partner to handle setup and configuration. It is also important at this stage to clean up and organise existing data, such as stock records, customer details, and sales history, before moving it into the new system, since messy data carried over will simply reproduce the same problems in a new format.

Next, a small number of stores, alongside the website, should test the system as a pilot over roughly two to three months, allowing issues with stock accuracy or staff workflow to be found and corrected before wider commitment. Once the pilot shows stable performance, the remaining stores should be added gradually in planned groups over several months, rather than switching everyone over at once. Stores still waiting to switch over can keep using their existing processes in the meantime, limiting disruption if anything goes wrong. Finally, the project should be reviewed against its original goals, such as stock accuracy, reporting speed, and how complete the customer data is, to confirm the benefits described in recommended solution, have actually been achieved.

Training staff and managing the change matters as much as the technical roll-out. Using Kotter's change model, the case for change should be explained to staff early, by showing them the real cost of the current problems, such as lost sales, refunds, and compliance risks, and a group of store managers and department heads should help lead the roll-out rather than have it forced on them (Kotter, 1996). Training also needs to match each role: till staff need hands-on training on the point-of-sale and inventory features, marketing and support staff need training on the CRM's customer history tools, and managers need training on reading the BI dashboards. Early, visible successes, such as a pilot store showing fewer stock problems within weeks, help keep staff motivated through the rest of the roll-out.

Two challenges are worth planning for in advance. Staff resisting the change is the most common reason ERP projects run late or over budget, best managed through the staged,

staff-involved approach above rather than a rushed roll-out (ResearchGate, n.d.). Data migration errors are also a real risk, given how scattered Maldiva Ltd.'s current records are; cleaning the data before go-live and briefly running the old and new systems side by side during the pilot greatly reduces the chance of mistakes reaching customers.

By the end of this process, Maldiva Ltd. should have real-time stock visibility across every store and the website, a single customer record accessible to relevant staff, live sales reporting in place of manual spreadsheets, and access controls that meet GDPR requirements, directly resolving the problems in existing systems.

Conclusion.

In short, all of Maldiva Ltd.'s problems trace back to one cause, there is no single system that connects its stores, its website and its back office. A unified cloud ERP platform such as Microsoft Dynamics 365 Business Central, with CRM and business intelligence built in, addresses that cause directly, rather than treating each symptom separately.

Adopting this system would give Maldiva Ltd. real-time inventory visibility across all channels, a single customer record for personalised marketing and faster support, real-time reporting in place of manual spreadsheets, and role-based access control that provides the structural basis for GDPR compliance. The integration problem between sales, finance, and inventory teams is resolved because of the same platform, rather than needing separate treatment.

The case is just not theoretical it uses base story of RadioShack's collapse. It illustrates the cost of leaving outdated systems unresolved, while Currys and Best Buy show that this approach is already proven and the direction the sector is moving in. Handled responsibly, with ongoing attention to data privacy, cybersecurity and sustainable infrastructure. This system would give Maldiva Ltd. the operational foundation that is needed to support its growth.

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