



BILL BOOTHE

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My Favorite Software Myth Gets Busted

I'm a big fan of the TV show *MythBusters*. Originating in January 2003, this show continues season after season to highlight a variety of urban myths – and keep things interesting even after airing almost 300 episodes.

The cool thing about *MythBusters* is that from the outset you don't actually know if the myth being investigated will be "busted" or will prove to be true and not a myth at all. And that's a big part of what holds the viewer's attention.

For decades we've heard a compelling software myth in the private club industry: ***Using a best-of-breed approach should be better than buying a single integrated suite of software modules from a single provider.***

Seems logical. If we pick the very best software program for each club department, wouldn't that provide the best overall solution for the club? Let's investigate that theory by looking at the pros and cons of best-of-breed versus a single integrated solution. Starting with the advantages of best-of-breed. Here they are:

- Provides the best solution for each club department. Each vendor selected provides the strongest feature set for a particular operation or department.

That's it. One advantage. A big one to be sure. But how big in comparison to the offsetting disadvantages? Let's take a look:

- Does not share a common database of information. Each separate module has its own separate database. A major obstacle when performing business intelligence queries across multiple departments and separate databases.

- Must coordinate multiple databases by syncing them or interfacing them. These separate solutions don't just magically talk to one another. They require communications interfaces to move data back and forth between them. Not any fun when one provider updates their software affecting the interfacing with another provider's software.

- Must obtain customer support from multiple sources. Here comes the finger-pointing. Communications between Vendor A and Vendor B stops working. You call Vendor A to report the problem. Vendor A says, "Not my problem – call

vendor B." You call Vendor B and hear, "Not my problem – call vendor A." Tempers begin to boil.

- Always more expensive to acquire and support. On average two to three times more costly than an integrated suite.

Now on to the advantages of an integrated suite. As you might have guessed, they are the reverse of the best-of-breed disadvantages:

- Single member database. Easy to query and report across departments.
- No syncing or coordination of multiple databases.
- Single source for customer support – one versus many – no finger-pointing.
- Way less expensive.

Disadvantages of integrated suites? Just one. You will sacrifice some functionality in some modules because no single vendor can be the best at everything.

How significant are those shortcomings? In most departments hardly noticeable. But in a few departments/operations, the shortcomings might be severe with certain clubs. So, there is a place for best-of-breed, in what we call a limited best-of-breed scenario.

This approach can be effective if a single department truly cannot function with the module provided by the integrated suite vendor.

Common examples include golf tee times, court reservations, banquets and catering, spa management, websites and mobile apps.

Fortunately, there are companies that operate in the club market space that offer club-specific modules that are not part of an integrated suite.

But because they are geared for clubs, these best-of-breed modules are often able to interface with the major integrated suites to replace one or more of their modules.

Where does this leave us? In most cases, the best-of-breed myth is completely "busted." In a few cases, limited best-of-breed might be the answer. But in our opinion, full best-of-breed has no place in the private club industry. **BR**