

# All-In-One Software Solutions are Failing Businesses

## Prioritize What's Best For You

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If you try to do too many things, you do them all poorly. This concept applies not only to humans but also to software, hardware, and just about anything else you can think of.

Many companies adopt all-in-one solutions meant to help them manage every aspect of their business. The vendors selling these solutions often advertise them as having everything your business needs and promising that you will never have to purchase another piece of software.

There is some value to the all-in-one approach, but it is essential to weigh the pros and cons carefully. Otherwise, all-in-one solutions can cost businesses more in the long term, not to mention producing inferior results.

### A better alternative

While the allure of all-in-one solutions is clear, the alternative may not be as intuitive. Vendors that provide all-in-one solutions often present them as an industry standard that you can't do without. Nothing could be further from the truth.

For each aspect of your business, there almost certainly exists a best-of-breed solution – a specialized tool designed to handle specific tasks within a narrow niche – to drive them to perfection.

A tech stack comprising multiple solutions for your business's various requirements is superior to an all-in-one solution, generally speaking. Vendors that offer best-of-breed solutions tend to be very knowledgeable about their specific niche and offer many valuable services within their technology.

They also tend to offer personalized support and, sometimes, custom solutions. That is because many providers of best-of-breed solutions are small companies created to solve one specific pain point that businesses such as yours have. They understand your needs far better than a conglomerate that offers all-in-one services. Because of their size, they also tend to put more effort into maintaining excellent relationships with individual customers. And, when something goes wrong, you can often reach out to their top-level people directly instead of being put on hold by an overseas customer support center.

## Overcoming common challenges

Best-of-breed solutions come with some technical overhead. Using four specialized systems, for example, instead of a single all-in-one system, means that you have four systems to maintain and four vendors to communicate with.

It is crucial to ensure that the vendor offers quality support for their product to mitigate the complexity. They usually also provide training for your employees who will be using their system. If they don't, talk to them about it. Small vendors are much more open to special requests than their larger counterparts.

Speaking of complexity, sometimes you need the various best-of-breed solutions to work together. Instead of creating interfaces to allow the systems to interact directly, it is better to have a small central system that facilitates communication and data syncing. This is especially important in terms of data integrity. For example, they might all need to connect to the same database.

Using this approach also reduces your exposure to potential problems with one of the solutions – if one system is temporarily disabled, you want the rest of your company to keep humming along as usual. This is very unlikely with all-in-one solutions – if a system managing your entire business fails, you're in trouble.

## Counter-arguments

The situation isn't black-and-white. There are valid arguments to be considered for the other side.

The most common argument against best-of-breed solutions is that they can add too much complexity. This is a valid objection, particularly when it comes to large corporations. If you have a very complex, multi-faceted international business with many employees (and many employee levels), adopting a large number of best-of-breed solutions may not be worth the investment. To keep all these systems in perfect sync while maintaining data security and integrity may be an uphill battle.

However, if you're a small business with a relatively narrow specialization, the argument doesn't hold true. The quality of individual services almost always outweighs the technical overhead.

Another common argument against best-of-breed solutions is that the vendors of such systems are often small organizations that do not understand the broader requirements of their clients.

This is, again, far more likely to affect large corporations than small businesses. As a small business owner, you should embrace the fact that a tech vendor is at roughly the same scale as you.

## Illusion of simplicity

Using all-in-one solutions creates an insidious illusion of simplicity. Having everything in one place sounds simple – until you try it. A multitude of features, most of which you will never use, interacting with one another, and in use by everyone in the company – it's very far from simple.

Having dedicated solutions for small areas of your business means there's natural simplicity in day-to-day activity. Everyone knows what tools to use, and everything has a clearly defined purpose. You pay for this simplicity with the additional overhead of integrating the systems and dealing with multiple vendors.

## Summary

If you wanted to take part in a car race, you'd use a racing car. If you wanted to take your family on a long road trip, you'd use a minivan. If you try to do both in a sedan, you will be slow in the race and crowded on the trip. Most families can't afford special-use cars, but companies can and should invest in special-use solutions.

Just because you can manage your entire business using one enterprise solution doesn't mean you should. You will often find that the system is sorely lacking in some departments and far too complex in others.

All-in-one solutions may be easier to set up, and they are easier to find – but as a business owner, your priority isn't what's easy – your priority is what's best for your business.



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