



BILL BOOTHE



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Software Replacement Versus Re-engineering Assessment

Look Before You Leap

We continue to be amazed at the number of private clubs that dump their older club management software for something new without a thought of how they might retain and improve what they already have.

Helping clubs choose a replacement system has been the mainstay for almost 30 years. And if there's one thing we've learned through more than 350 replacement projects, it's that replacement is never pretty.

Virtually every club department is affected through data conversion, forms design, features configuration, user training, report generation – with a break-in period of 12 months or so as staff (and members) become comfortable with the new software.

In the past few years, about 50 percent of our replacement projects have switched to re-engineering following an assessment. That's because no matter what the club tells us they want (usually replacement), we always perform the assessment first to make sure replacement is really needed.

It's the same analysis we would perform for a replacement project, with a small extra step of verifying the feasibility of satisfying the gap list items with the existing software.

But wait you say! If the club's users are so dissatisfied with the existing software that they want to replace it, how could that software possibly be improved enough to retain it?

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Not to mention a significant financial investment to get from system A to system B.

In the end, is it really worth the effort, disruption and cost? For many clubs the answer is a definitive “yes.” But for many others, the answer is a murky, “I think so” or “I'm not really sure.” So how do you decide?

The good news is that there is an easy and inexpensive way to determine the merits of replacement versus retention. It's called a *replacement versus re-engineering assessment*.

This assessment begins with a thorough analysis of the club's software requirements, which produces a functionality gap list documenting every shortcoming and wish list items gathered from all club departments and management. The gap list is then reviewed by experts from the legacy software company to learn what can be done to address each item on the list.

If 80 percent or more of the listed items can be successfully addressed by the legacy software, then re-engineering becomes a strong contender versus replacement – especially if the remaining 20 percent or so aren't mission critical to the club's operations.

that are not being used, poor configuration and set-up from years past that continue to haunt current operations, and a belief that “new has to be better.”

But why go through all the hassle and expense of a replacement if re-engineering can address the vast majority of the sore spots? The old saying “look before you leap” certainly applies here. First assess the feasibility of retaining and re-engineering, then decide if you really want to make the leap. **BR**

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