

# Is Best of Breed the Best Approach?



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We've all been indoctrinated to—and supportive of—adopting best of breed as it relates to technology. But in doing so, we sometimes fall into an unintended trap when facing the daunting task of managing multiple vendors and disparate layers of complexity. Whether working with smaller organizations that do not fully comprehend the requirements of larger enterprises or struggling with the inability to properly share data across multiple platforms, the best of breed approach can be fraught with issues—especially when it comes to the highly complex process of seamless API interactions and the attainment of added value.

So what is the best approach to implementation? What pitfalls do you need to avoid when rolling out new technologies? What are the major advantages of a synchronous solution? What questions should you ask your POS provider?

## ***The Best Approach is...***

Simply put and sadly speaking, there's truly no off the shelf answer, as your unique usage defines the suitable strategy. Although taken from someone who has seen his fair share of implementations, I'd argue that a synchronous solution from a proven multi-faceted vendor typically works best for reliability, scalability, and holistic data interpretation/sharing. Here's why...the fallacy of API equality in which vendors tout their integration abilities is more akin to Michelangelo's "The Creation of Adam," in which fingertips are poised for touch rather than for a solidified, entwined multi-finger embrace. Translation: there's basic integration (with potential caveats) and there's interwoven integration with measurable and meaningful value, especially when the process is native—especially when it comes to essentials such as "menu mayhem" and the resultant task of menu management, as well as comprehensive enterprise reporting with analytics.

## ***The Pitfalls to Avoid...***

Assuming and wishing are not strategies for a successful sustainable outcome. Based on your unique needs and requirements, your F&B POS provider should be willing and able to fulfill a standalone synchronous approach, a best-of-breed layered approach, or a hybrid approach. While some providers will likely hit the panic button, others will acquiesce... but in doing so, the onus is on you to fully understand their abilities and limitations—especially as it relates to the "heavy lifting" they may try to push onto your already full plate.

## ***The Advantages of a Synchronous Solution***

- Your responsibility to determine how to best unite your data for reporting purposes is eliminated
- You'll have fewer relationships to manage, and the accountability factor equates to a single point of contact if something goes awry
- You'll experience a simpler, easier, and more consistent user experience by always working within the same user interface

## ***The Questions to Ask...***

- Do all the dissimilar platforms "talk" to each other? How? And, if no, why not?
- What do we need to do to manage the complexity and diversity of our platforms?
- What enterprise-level analytical reports are available? Can we create new reports?
- How do we access and share our enterprise-based reports? Is there a mobile app?
- What happens when the technology fails? Is there offline access? Backup? Disaster recovery?
- How scalable is your technology stack?
- What about platform updates?
- Is everything PCI DSS compliant?
- How is data/cyber security ensured?

## ***In a Nutshell...***

For some—including those who have a dedicated in-house IT team of experts (with ample bandwidth)—a layered best of breed approach with numerous vendors may work well. But for most, a synchronous deployment from an experienced technology solutions provider that's willing and able to accept the challenge, perform the heavy lifting, and add meaningful and measurable value, provides an outcome that maximizes your ability to increase guest satisfaction, sell more food & beverages to more guests more easily and efficiently, and obtain the real-time information you need to make more educated business decisions, both individually and collectively.

## ***The Bottom Line...***

In the end, it all comes down to trust. With best of breed, you'll need to trust a multitude of providers—as well as your ability to put it all together and make it work every time. With a synchronous approach, you'll need to trust your POS provider to be full-service, innovative, transparent, reliable, accountable, and dedicated to exemplary customer service. If your provider is all that (and more), go for it. If they fall short, it's time to consider placing your trust in a company that can cater to your needs and deliver an end-to-end solution upon which you can depend.