
“BEST-OF BREED” OR “MIXED-BREED” ENABLEMENT

Changing the way you think about integration... And the way integration thinks about you.

The competitive global business arena is relentless in its demands that companies reduce costs, speed cycle times, and improve efficiency in order to succeed. Executives must have the right information in the right systems and in the hands of the right people so that critical decisions can be made in an aggressive marketplace.

Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) applications, such as SAP, Oracle, JD Edwards, and others, can be successfully implemented to manage and automate certain corporate functions like accounting, HR, procurement, and materials management. While there are specific modules that an ERP vendor may have that serve some industry-specific functions, the promotion of a single-vendor solution beyond the truly generic functionality has not played out well in most cases. Many companies embrace the single-vendor ERP approach only to find that the concept rapidly breaks down when mission-critical, industry-specific functionality needs to be addressed.

Industry-specific or company-specific business processes are better served by “best-of-breed” niche or legacy applications. Best-of-breed systems provide the “best fit” applications for the company’s interpretation of each business function. It is Stone Bond’s experience that elimination of best-of-breed systems carries a high likelihood of diluting or eliminating competitive advantage gained through fine-tuned processes and systems. For example, the “decision support supply chain” is driven and fed by systems that are designed for a specific business. **These areas represent the opportunity for competitive advantage, and are not likely to be as appropriately supported by ERP functionality.** Replacement of any planning, analysis, operations, or logistics systems should be done with great caution and the exercise treated as a potential risk to the bottom line and competitive position of the company.

While ERP systems are based on the premise that a single-vendor system could eliminate many IT headaches, the reality is that every ERP has functional limits beyond which it is unlikely to serve in the foreseeable future. Advances in integration technology such as introduction of EAI (Enterprise Application Integration) solutions to integrate ERP systems with other transactional systems (i.e., Customer Relationship Management (CRM) systems) resulted in an unfortunate assumption that requirements for integrating the many analytic applications were the same as for transactional systems. Still today, architectures are being designed with the assumption of technology portability from transactional accounting systems to simulators, optimizers and other specialized industry applications. The inevitable inclusion of this specialized software is done in an *ad hoc*, hard-wired manner and has become the “Achilles heel” of the enterprise solution, where attempted at all.

The most powerful solution can only be achieved by selecting software applications and integration technologies **for the most appropriate fit to business requirements while ensuring seamless interoperability.** Depending on business need, an optimal solution set may include a suite of best-of-breed applications that interoperate seamlessly and/or a suite of best-of-breed applications that interoperate with ERP implementation(s), which we refer to as a “mixed-breed” solution.

The risk introduced by the size and scope of a monolithic ERP project has, in fact, caused the demise of some companies that could not continue to conduct business during the extended implementation. Often ERP solutions overemphasize application replacement and standardization while ignoring the frontline functionality needs of the business units. “Best-of-breed” and “mixed-breed” naturally support pauses to reach a new equilibrium for the business and corporate culture, as needed. Costs associated with application replacement will be eliminated as well.

For a best-of-breed or mixed-breed environment, technical strategy should be focused on **seamless integration** via a technology providing an “enterprise nervous system” that brings visibility and governance to all existing and future business units.

Only best-of-breed and mixed-breed solutions, integrated with an infrastructure such as Stone Bond’s Enterprise Enabler, offer flexibility over time, as systems are replaced and as new acquisitions are accommodated.

NEXT GENERATION TECHNOLOGY FACILITATES “BEST-OF-BREED”

Stone Bond’s patent pending technology for synchronizing information flow among any number of software applications, data stores, sources, and business partners, is fundamentally different from the Enterprise Application Integration (EAI) and ETL (Extract Transform Load) products that have historically been used to integrate data across the enterprise. Stone Bond’s Enterprise Enabler (EE) dramatically reduces integration time, effort to maintain, and adjusts to change over time. It is designed to be used by business analysts who understand the applications and business requirements. **Enterprise Enabler is the only integration solution that will reduce the number of required outside consultants to a manageable size.**

One of the tremendous benefits of the Enterprise Enabler technology approach is that, as an infrastructure, it **will easily embrace ERPs as well as all the legacy, niche, and special purpose applications that extend beyond the scope of ERP software and deep into the core business functions of each business unit.**

Stone Bond’s Enterprise Enabler technology will reduce:

- Risk
- Time to implement
- Cost
- Disruption to business
- Dependence on outside consultants, and
- Static nature of the final deliverable;

And will ensure:

- Best fit to business processes or to best practices
- Rapid incorporation of acquisitions
- Rapid response to change
- Low maintenance costs
- Secured access and audit trails of all infrastructure changes, and
- Built-in capability to support electronic commerce.

STONE BOND'S TECHNOLOGY

Stone Bond Technologies' solution, Enterprise Enabler™ (EE), optimizes work and information flow by:

1. Rapid creation and maintenance of business logic, which controls information flow, without special programming skills - No need to call a specialist!
2. Generating accurate and manageable application integration in a fraction of the time it would take to “program” integration, by the internal intelligent inference technology.
3. Reducing the paper-intensive world by supporting document management applications, wireless data gathering applications, or any structured chemical analysis data gathering and storage technology.
4. Removing the archaic information architecture of ever-growing data warehouses and replacing it with “straight-through” integration to lower the total cost of ownership for IT infrastructure.
5. Proactively managing change to data and application infrastructure; in the Chemical industry, change is constant.

EE provides an integration environment appropriate to complex business requirements that are under continuous change. EE's technology is designed to rapidly embrace any application or data source on any platform without imposing additional requirements or standards that must be adhered to by the participating systems. Patent pending processes manage complex networks of information interchange, rapidly including new data sources and ensuring the integrity of the infrastructure as it adapts to change.

Stone Bond's philosophy is to use technology creatively to solve big IT problems in robust, manageable ways. With Enterprise Enabler, the need for huge, up-front investments in analysis, design, and infrastructure is eliminated. Stone Bond's software is built on and supports the latest technologies, while non-invasively including legacy applications, legacy pockets of integration, legacy standards, and even legacy skill sets. The technology provides strong underlying integration infrastructure required by current areas of interest, including Business Process Management (BPM), Business Intelligence (BI), Business Activity Monitoring (BAM), Sarbanes-Oxley compliance, XML/RNIF 2.0 internet-based business messaging, and others.

Key features of the Enterprise Enabler suite of products include:

- Graphical user interface (GUI) using *point-and-click*. Minimum programming required
- Architecture neutral, non-invasive, scalable and robust security
- AppComm technology that makes adapters obsolete
- Futorian: powerful, easy to use data warehousing technology
- Integration Integrity Process (IIP) (patent pending) for managing change in the integration environment
- Source of Record Manager (patent pending), for corporate metadata definition
- Robust engine for complex many-to-many data transformation
- Real-time operability
- Self-documenting
- Operating with messaging systems and other platforms, such as TIBCO, IBM MQ-Series, and Microsoft MQ
- Complements and integrates with other integration products such as NetWeaver, SeeBeyond's E*Gate, WebMethods, Biztalk , etc.