

## **BUY VERSUS BUILD - FINDING THE RIGHT SOLUTION FOR COMPLIANCE SOFTWARE**

**Robert Dent, CEO**

**Achiever Business Solutions**

### **Answering the pros and cons debate of in-house development versus the implementation of packaged compliance software solutions.**

Regulatory compliance is absolutely vital to the health of a business. The threat of slowing time to market, or even heavy fines or imprisonment, makes constant vigilance imperative. The question that still exercises many minds is how best to address the issue – whether to build in-house software systems that are designed specifically for your business, or whether to buy in packaged software from an external supplier.

It can be hard to argue against the logic of a strong IT department with a history of developing systems internally. Yes, they understand the business and they would write specifically for what you do. Yes, they are already there, and dedicated to your organization's needs.

On the other hand, an external supplier is dedicated to understanding and addressing the issues of compliance, an area that is not a core focus of an internal IT department. The package supplier will have devoted hundreds of man-years to understanding the issues, translating those issues into software design, and developing the software. Moreover, the supplier will continue to monitor the changing shape of regulations, even as they develop in draft, and be ready with enhanced software as new regulations come into force. A good example of this is the recent changes in line with 21 CFR Part 11.

Is an external supplier too distant and its software too inflexible to understand and address the unique requirements of an individual business? We don't think so. At Achiever Business Solutions we begin with client workshops to understand the way their business and industry work – right down to the terminology they use in day-to-day operation – and then configure the software to fit the business' profile.

A key benefit of packaged software is that it lowers risk. Reputable and established suppliers will have proven their software with a range of customers across multiple industries and multiple standards. A packaged solution can be configured and implemented fast, ensuring that a business continues to comply with rapidly changing regulations. Speed lowers risk of failure to comply, and saves on implementation costs and disruption.

Cost is a key factor in itself. Organizations need to consider taking a more holistic view of their business than individual IT projects. By monitoring and automating entire processes, you can achieve greater consistency of information, more efficient allocation of resources, and improved accountability. Taking an overall view helps you raise productivity and decrease costs and risks significantly.

### **Integrated compliance management systems**

When evaluating compliance software solutions, from either an external supplier or internal build perspective, companies are becoming increasingly aware that compliance is required across many processes throughout the organization. Some requirements will be legislative, from Sarbanes Oxley requirements with a focus on financial controls, through to FDA regulations. Some may be mandated from customers and other stakeholders, such as ISO 9000 and ISO 14000. Additionally, the compliance strategy may also be required to meet best practice methodology, such as Balance Scorecard and Six Sigma, in order to improve the performance of the business.

Therefore, an important factor in determining the decision to buy or build, is to establish how the solution being considered will be applicable to this diverse range of requirements. An integrated compliance management system will simultaneously fulfill these multiple requirements, saving time and reducing overall costs on an ongoing basis, whereas a strategy of implementing various point solutions will mean ongoing dependence on in-house development and intensive user training, so will be more expensive to support and maintain.

### **Conclusion**

While the case appears stacked in favour of packaged software from a business point of view, there are strong arguments from the IT perspective that need to be addressed. Will the software do the right job for the company? Yes, configurability means flexibility. Is the software proven? Yes, if the supplier has successful reference sites. Is this the thin end of the wedge for replacing in-house development with third-party software? It doesn't have to be, not every issue is as complex and evolutionary as compliance, but where knowledge of the issues is vital, then expert external help has to be the answer.

**Robert Dent, CEO, Achiever Business Solutions**

Robert Dent has worked for over 10 years in the compliance environment from both a management consultancy and product vendor perspective. For the last 4 years as CEO of Achiever Business Solutions he has been at the forefront of understanding the ever changing demands of regulated industries. His focus is on automated systems and how they can help relieve the compliance burden and enhance company performance.

**Achiever Business Solutions** is focused exclusively on the development and implementation of world class compliance software solutions. Our mission is to support our customers' goals for continual compliance and business improvement across the enterprise, delivering consistency, efficiency and accountability through recognized best practice.

**Contact details:**

Achiever Business Solutions

Email: [info@achieverplus.com](mailto:info@achieverplus.com)

Web: [www.achieverplus.com](http://www.achieverplus.com)

<p><b>UK:</b></p> <p>Cross &amp; Pillory House Cross &amp; Pillory Lane Alton Hants GU34 1HL Tel: +44 (0)1420 547507</p>	<p><b>US:</b></p> <p>355 East Campus View Blvd Suite 285 Columbus Ohio 43235 Tel: +1 614 410 9000</p>
--	---