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INTEGRATED SYSTEMS FOR THE SOUTH AFRICAN PERISHABLE INDUSTRY

## How do you choose an ERP?

By Mark Peachey

Many software solutions that are currently on the market are described as "business systems". With so many options to choose from, you might wonder how to go about finding the right fit for your business. To shed some light on this topic and to help you make this very important decision, we've broadly categorised the various software solutions along with the potential advantages and disadvantages of each.

### In-house developed software

These software solutions are developed by employees within the business and tend to be hosted on older platforms that have been developed in older software technologies over many years. The advantage of in-house developed software is that you can accurately control functionality and prepare information according to your business's priorities. However, in-house developed software is costly due to its reliance on in-house employees. Furthermore, these solutions are not competitive as it is slow, isolated and tends to be based on outdated development technologies that are difficult to change and support.

### Best of breed software

These software solutions are concerned with and limited to a specific area of functionality e.g. advanced production scheduling or managing product quality. A major advantage of best breed software is that it delivers rich functionality as it requires a high degree of expertise in a specific area. However, as this form of software is characterised by non-integrated

and stand-alone solutions, building an integrated workflow is difficult. Also, these solutions require some degree of re-keying of static or master data and usually involves less than perfect and relatively slow data updates into the main ERP database, unless a specific service-based interface is developed. Ultimately, the more any area of functionality depends on granular, high volume integration, the less likely any integration will be successful.

### General purpose "Big Brand" ERP software

Large brands that successfully market themselves such as Oracle, SAP, Microsoft Dynamics and Epicor claim to be usable in any industry and sometimes profess to have knowledge of food as opposed to just Fast Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG). These brands often rely on the inference that success in one industry is transferrable to another. One of the greatest advantages of general purpose software is its broad functionality, including applications such as Customer Relationship Management (CRM), Human Resources (HR) and engineering, with the very latest technology offering that is well-integrated and offered by apparently large scale providers with large teams and financial stability.

The disadvantage of general purpose software is that these brands have little understanding and/or established experience of the specifics of any particular vertical market place. Furthermore, these software solutions have a tendency to shoehorn their offerings wherever they are

able to sell them. These businesses often use language that infers similarity without highlighting what is different.

When doing business with a big brand ERP, you are almost never dealing directly with the software developer. If they do try to chase a lower margin vertical market, it tends to be a smaller agent that does not have much control over the software. These agents write a large portion of the software that actually runs the specific trading and operational elements of the software whilst trying to use the main data components of the main big brand software. Consequently, much of the code is owned by and supported by the smaller agent. This is a very compromised way to develop ERP systems as no system allows its foundations to be changed if it is not suitable to the industry being serviced.

### Vertical Market Focussed ERPs

These ERPs build software from the foundation up for the businesses they serve in a specific vertical market i.e. a market that manages the same kind of product or services in largely the same way and for the same purpose. The advantage of using vertical market focussed ERPs is that it has the best of breed expertise but broad ERP functionality with a fully integrated workflow of applications for all tasks that are designed - without compromise. However, vertical market focussed ERPs usually have a smaller company size and is centered around one market.

## First Western Cape Tutorial for 2019 a Great Success

Prophet hosted its first Western Cape tutorial at the NH Lord Charles Hotel on the 4th of April. During the tutorial, many of the new features released in QX were presented and sparked interactive discussions among the attendees. Also, the feedback relating to multiple new QX financial functionalities was met with great enthusiasm as these enable users to streamline their workflows and spend less time on recurring tasks.


 Johan Vos and Lize Deyzel  
 (Goede Hoop Vrugte)

 Charl van Loggerenberg (Prophet SA)  
 and Linda Scullard (Seven Seas Fruit)

 Pieter Mouton (Prophet SA) and  
 Ebrahim Moses (Contour Logistics)


## 2019 CGA Summit

Prophet participated in the annual CGA Citrus Summit held on 12 - 14 March 2019 in Port Elizabeth. The summit showcases the latest developments taking place in the fresh produce industry. Prophet was also a proud sponsor of this year's event.

## Eastern Cape Tutorial

The Eastern Cape QX tutorial was held at Africanos Country Estate in Addo on 5 March.



Jo-Anne Bezuidenhout (Grow4U) and Rikus van Zyl (Prophet SA)



Daniel Alford and Natalie Furter (SAFFPRO) with Frikkie Burger (Prophet SA)



Frikkie Burger (Prophet SA) with Dominique van Niekerk, Natasha van der Merwe and Malan Smith (Freshgro)



Jannie de Wilzem, Willene Heath and Pieter Mouton (Prophet SA) with Steph Berry (Katrivier Citrus)

## Spotlight on Quintin de Klerk



Quintin de Klerk

Quintin de Klerk, a product support specialist, says that his colleagues' wittiness really make his day. Also, he really enjoys the exciting challenges that each new day as part of the Prophet team brings. A born and bred Capetonian, Quintin enjoys the people and majestic scenery of our beautiful city. When he is not working, he enjoys braaing and socialising with friends and family. Playing golf and camping are also some of his favourite pastimes. When asked to share an interesting fact about himself, Quintin responded: "I really like golden oldies when it comes to music and I am also an avid lighter collector. This is probably one of my best kept secrets as I literally hide them from curious smoker's eyes."

## Software That Evolves With You

Clients expect quality and outstanding results from products that are designed to achieve their end goal swiftly. It's no different in the fresh produce industry. In this fast-moving industry, having software that evolves with the industry and with you as your business grows and as your needs change is key to your overall business success.

### Dedication is key

Prophet's fresh produce and team-centric approach gives us a strategic advantage to build relationships to understand our clients' specific needs, thereby developing comprehensive solutions. Furthermore, we have total control over our technology and development environment, and our software is designed for the markets we serve.

### Our unique advantage

Just as family members understand each other's idiosyncrasies, so we consider ourselves experts in the fresh produce industry. We understand our clients' need for flexible, deep implementations therefore, our comprehensive and integrated Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) applications are designed to manage profit producing roles. Extensive configurability allows for rapid in-house adaption to suit your needs when you need it. Our software solutions are centred on live stock, activity-based costings and lot accounting to ensure accurate, information flow and profitability reporting.

### Better together

Actively seeking to understand the needs and trends in the fresh produce industry helps us to stay close to our clients' business. We believe that our product is successful because we partner with our clients to develop software through a process of maturing solutions together.

The saying "change is the only constant in life" has never been truer. The Prophet team understands this as we are constantly developing our software to ensure that our clients have the best advantage.

## Apply Changes to Shipping Documentation "on the fly" with Prophet's Dynamic Reporting Module

Taking the headache out of adapting the required documentation for multiple exports is possible with Prophet's Dynamic Reporting module.

Among others, some of the features of the Dynamic Reporting module include access to custom-designed document templates which may be fully edited, tailored selection of pre-loaded QX data to enable clients to complete documents and access control and capability for audit trails of report changes.

Smooth data interchange was the main motivation behind the development of this tool. Not only was the module designed in response to the need to make quick changes to various industry-related shipping documentation, but also to expand its use to other system documentation and reports throughout the QX offering.

The QX report editing tool is convenient and easy to use and allows clients to choose to have their document and report templates customised and linked to the module. It also allows for changes to be made to industry documentation that was previously difficult to amend. Users requiring instant changes to industry and in-house documents without having to rectify large amounts of source data or recapture entire documents will find this module an invaluable tool.

Contact our team to find out more about this unique solution.