

**BEWARE YESTERDAY'S  
ALL-IN-ONE PITCH —  
IT MAY LEAD YOU  
ASTRAY WHEN  
THINGS MATTER MOST**

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**CLOUDGENIX**

***All-in-one versus best-of-breed used to be a simple decision between additional functionality and the benefits of lower costs and easier management. The all-in-one pitch, however, now rings hollow. For the modern enterprise, the trade-offs are much more significant than that, and the viability of the organization is now at stake.***

I remember the pitch vividly.

The salesperson stood in our conference room and explained to me why their integrated solution would help us reduce costs and overcome the management headache of dealing with a bunch of best-of-breed solutions.

It seemed to make so much sense. The salesperson explained that we were paying a heavy price in management overhead and costs by buying, deploying, and managing these different systems. Their all-in-one, integrated approach, he went on to say, made all that go away.

We had a decision to make.

For most of IT's existence there has been a tug-of-war between these two competing approaches: go best-of-breed or use an all-in-one single-vendor solution?

In the past, it was a relatively simple trade-off. Did you need the additional functionality that best-of-breed solutions delivered or could you get by with fewer features to reap the benefits of lower costs and easier management?

While the all-in-one pitch remains the same, it now rings hollow. For the modern enterprise, the trade-offs are much more significant than features versus cost and manageability — today, the viability of the organization is at stake.



## The Demise of the Jack of All Trades

There are two reasons that the all-in-one approach will no longer suffice and may actually represent a risk for the modern enterprise.

The first is the complexity of today's technology stack. In the past, it was conceivable that you could put together a horizontally integrated stack that could meet all the needs of a specific IT function. But that was a time in which there were only a handful of technology components necessary and creating a fully integrated out-of-the-box solution was possible.

Today, that's no longer the case. No matter how extensive the all-in-one stack, it will never be comprehensive enough to do everything that an IT function now demands. Those demands are just too complex and change too fast for any one company to keep up.

In response to this increased pace of technology evolution, the all-in-one players gobble up new market entrants to fill the continuously emerging holes in their line-up — which leads to the second reason that this approach no longer works.

This same complexity and pace of change also mean that the all-in-one solutions must continually acquire new companies, leaving little time to truly integrate the new acquisitions into the portfolio — negating the primary benefit of the all-in-one solution in the first place.

Even worse, the acquisition process often creates a distraction, leads to less innovation, and ends in technology homogenization that diminishes the value that the new addition was intended to bring to the portfolio.

The result is a broad, but often poorly integrated portfolio that is all-in-one in name only. But as bad as that may be, it's not the most significant challenge with the all-in-one approach.

## Fielding Your Best Team

Imagine that you are the new general manager of a professional baseball expansion team. You need to assemble your team from scratch.

Your head scout walks into your office and says that there's a new way to field a team using an all-in-one approach. A farm club in South America is building complete teams giving you the ability to acquire an entire team at once with every position filled by players that already know how to play together.

It would unquestionably make your job as general manager simpler, but would you do it?

The answer is almost certainly is a big fat NO.

**An all-in-one solution will inevitably come with trade-offs that will lead you to field a less-than-best team. In today's technology-drives-advantage world, that's a trade-off you can't afford to make.**

While in the short-run this approach would deliver some efficiencies, that would not be your primary concern. What you would be most concerned with is fielding the best team possible — a team that would win.

As an IT leader, you are in much the same position. We are far past the days in which IT existed solely to drive efficiency and optimization. Today, an organization's technology stack is a primary enabler and driver of business value and, as a result, it is growing ever-more complex as organizations seek to create advantage from it.

As an IT leader, your primary job is to field the best team that you can. That means selecting each player — which, in your case, is each element of your technology stack — based on its ability to help you achieve your objectives.

An all-in-one solution will inevitably come with trade-offs that will lead you to field a less-than-best team. In today's technology-drives-advantage world, that's a trade-off you can't afford to make.

## The Intellyx Take

When someone sets out to compare vendors in a space, they inevitably create a set of criteria by which to evaluate them. One such benchmark is often the *comprehensiveness* of the solution — which is usually code for this sort of all-in-one portfolio approach.

Including this criteria is an artifact from the days in which trading capability for management ease and cost reduction was a reasonable and valid assessment criteria. Today, it is nothing more than a red herring.

Yesterday's all-in-one solutions have largely devolved into less-than-best technology compilations offering little cost savings or management relief.

Most importantly, the entire orientation of this approach is wrong-minded. The all-in-one approach is vendor-focused and emphasizes the creation of a technology portfolio, rather than being focused on solving critical business problems.

A great example of this is the current bifurcation of the broad networking market. On one side you have legacy technology companies amassing disjointed portfolios that claim to do it all. On the other, you have best-of-breed players, such as [CloudGenix](#), which is delivering highly-targeted capabilities that help organizations take an innovative, application-aware approach to networking focused on enhancing application-derived business value.

Today, IT's strategic imperative is not ease-of-management, cost savings, or even integration. These factors all remain essential, of course, but what is much more critical is the ability for the technology stack to enable an organization to deliver competitive advantage and organizational agility. Doing so demands that every organization put their very best team on the field every day.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Charles Araujo is an industry analyst, internationally recognized authority on the Digital Enterprise and author of *The Quantum Age of IT: Why Everything You Know About IT is About to Change*.

He is Principal Analyst with Intellyx, the first and only industry analyst firm focused on agile digital transformation. He has authored three books and published over 100 articles. He has been a regular contributor to both InformationWeek and CIO Insight Magazine and has been quoted or published in magazines, blogs and websites including Time, CIO, CIO & Leader, IT Business Edge, TechRepublic, Computerworld, USA Today and Forbes.



He is the founder of The Institute for Digital Transformation and a sought after keynote speaker having addressed over 10,000 business and IT leaders in 10 countries over the last several years. He is passionate about the power of technology to deliver competitive and transformational advantage to organizations and in the critical need to develop next generation “digital leaders” that can transform their organizations into Digital Enterprises. He is presently at work on a new book entitled, *Thinking Digital: How to Thrive and Win in the Digital Era*, which will explore this topic in detail.

Prior to joining Intellyx, Charles served as an advisor and consultant for nearly twenty years, leading numerous large scale transformation programs for Fortune 1000 organizations and government institutions involving as many as 10,000 program participants. In his early career, he spent many years working in and with IT organizations in the healthcare, financial services and aerospace industries, directly leading teams of more than 100 members.

## ABOUT INTELLYX

Intellyx is the first and only industry analysis, advisory, and training firm focused on agile digital transformation.

Intellyx works with enterprise digital professionals to cut through technology buzzwords and connect the dots between the customer and the technology – to provide the vision, the business case, and the architecture for agile digital transformation initiatives.

## ABOUT CLOUDGENIX

CloudGenix ([www.cloudgenix.com](http://www.cloudgenix.com)) is the software-defined wide-area network (SD-WAN) leader, revolutionizing networking by transforming legacy WANs into a radically simplified, secure, application-defined fabric and unified hybrid WAN. Enabling application-specific, service-level agreements (SLAs), CloudGenix controls network application performance based upon application-performance SLAs and business priority.

CloudGenix ION (Instant-On Network) simplifies how WANs are designed and managed, enabling customers to build “networks without networking,” and achieve more than twice the performance at less than half the cost while extending data center-class security to the network edge. Founded in 2013 by a team that has delivered industry-leading products in networking, SDN, cloud, security and web-scale applications, CloudGenix serves world-class financial services, legal, retail and technology organizations.

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