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Software Reengineering Explained

It used to be that when a club became disenchanted with its management software, the focus was immediately put on finding a replacement system.

Fast forward to today and we see clubs taking a very different tact – retaining their existing club management software (POS, inventory, reservations, accounting, website, communications, etc.) and maximizing its capabilities.

In the past five years, about 75 percent of our club clients have elected to retain their club management software and reengineer it rather than replace the existing software solutions. But what's involved in reengineering? Here's a step-by-step description of the reengineering process.

Reengineering work is performed by experts from the legacy software company, who work diligently to address the gap list items and provide remedial training. In our experience, reengineering activity typically requires 30-50 hours of billable time from the software experts completed in a 90-day timeframe. The beauty is that the vast majority of the club's requirements are satisfied without disrupting club operations or affecting the member experience.

Step 1: Dissatisfaction analysis. Everything begins with software dissatisfaction. Displeasure can bubble up from the individual departments and users. It can come from executive management, from committees, from the board, or the members. Often the dissatisfaction comes from multiple sources. But what if the dissatisfaction is caused by unrealistic expectations, a lack of user training, poor system set-ups and configuration, or a lack of awareness of new features that have been introduced but not used?

Enter reengineering! The reengineering process begins with a thorough analysis of the source(s) of software dissatisfaction to determine just how valid that displeasure really is. The analysis includes documenting all complaints, determining the severity of those complaints, determining the level of user knowledge of the system and deciding on the validity of the dissatisfaction.

Step 2: Functional requirements analysis. This analysis documents the club's key software requirements, which produces a functionality gap list detailing every shortcoming and wish-list item gathered from all club departments and

management. Our experience with more than three dozen reengineering projects shows that the typical gap list includes between 100 and 150 items across all club departments.

Step 3: Reengineering. Once the gap list is completed, the actual work of reengineering can begin. Items are assigned a priority rating (high, medium, low) and the more important ones are tackled first. Intrinsic throughout the process is remedial training for all software users. The goal of reengineering is to optimize the system's configuration, train users to get the most out of the system and assure that all key requirements are satisfied.

The actual reengineering work is performed by experts from the legacy software company, who work diligently to

address the gap list items and provide remedial training. In our experience, reengineering activity typically requires 30-50 hours of billable time from the software experts completed in a 90-day timeframe.

The beauty of software reengineering is that the vast majority of the club's requirements are satisfied without disrupting club operations or affecting the member experience. Conversely, replacing the management software "turns the club upside down" as every department and every user must learn new and different features and procedures.

Bottom line: Satisfying the software gap list with minimal business interruption has proven to be the magnet that attracts clubs to the reengineering approach. BR

Bill Boothe is president and owner of The Boothe Group, LLC, an independent consulting firm that helps clubs understand computer technology, make good decisions and receive the highest value from their technology investment. During his 30-plus years in the club industry, Bill has assisted more than 400 private clubs with the planning, evaluation, selection and implementation of computer technology in all facets of their operations. Bill can be reached at bboothe@boothegroup.com.