The Evolution of a Business System Hairball
...and How to Avoid it

Introduction

As heavy equipment and truck dealerships grow and evolve, they add software and systems to manage departments, automate processes and provide insights into operations. However, the result is frequently a "hairball" of disparate systems, loosely connected with glitchy integrations—sometimes referred to as "bailing wire and bubblegum." These disconnected systems prevent end to-end visibility that empowers employees to make insightful business decisions, which can hinder growth.

What about the cloud? Well, a hairball is still a hairball in the cloud. In fact, the cloud's low upfront costs that facilitate departmental purchases without oversight from IT or costly hardware investments sometimes makes it worse.

It doesn't have to be that way.

Summary

Have you accidentally ended up with disparate system overload as your company grows? The result can be a messy hairball filled with conflicting information. Read on and learn:

- How to determine if you're operating in a "business system hairball"

- How these hairballs evolve

- How to determine when it's time for a change

Here we share how to find your way out of the hairball by leveraging technology specifically designed for Heavy Equipment and Truck Dealers to modernize the customer experience and optimize sales, marketing, finance and service operations in a single, streamlined solution.

How did I get in this mess in the first place?

We all know the phrase "cash is king," so for most dealerships, a financial application is usually the first business software investment they make. They know Excel won't quite cut it, so they buy **QuickBooks** or another small business solution. Then things begin to get complicated.

+CRM

A dealership or any other business can't survive without sales, but sales people are infamous for their reluctance to input data and submit forms. They just want to sell, sell, sell and have someone else track their activity and enter orders. But at some point, the business needs to try and get them under control, so it invests in a CRM system. Management jumps online, Googles CRM and they end up with **Salesforce** or something similar.

+DMS

Now you've come to realize that your CRM doesn't help you manage your heavy-duty truck service shops, parts distributors or fleets with service operations. You purchase a DMS such as **Karmak** or a similar solution. They sell you on achieving better operational control and simplifying your business. At first you think they are right and that you've upgraded because you can now look up that VIN that you couldn't see in your CRM. You can now create a parts order or find the invoice that you previously could only find by searching your jampacked filing cabinets or countless stacks of boxes that reach the ceiling in your back offices.

However, you quickly realize how time-consuming and inefficient older generation software is. You are impacted by how slow the system is and how many bugs you continue to find in the system. Not to mention, customer support hasn't been very responsive and when they do respond they aren't very helpful. They tell you that your new DMS either cannot be customized to meet your needs, or they want you to pay extra for functionality that you were once told was included when you first purchased the software. Support is no help in integrating the DMS and the financials system — which is not "embedded," so every so often staff must pay to bring in a DMS and/or a QuickBooks consultant to help figure out what went wrong and how to re-sync the systems.

+S&OP/Planning

Once things really start to take off, management needs the sales team to provide monthly forecasts
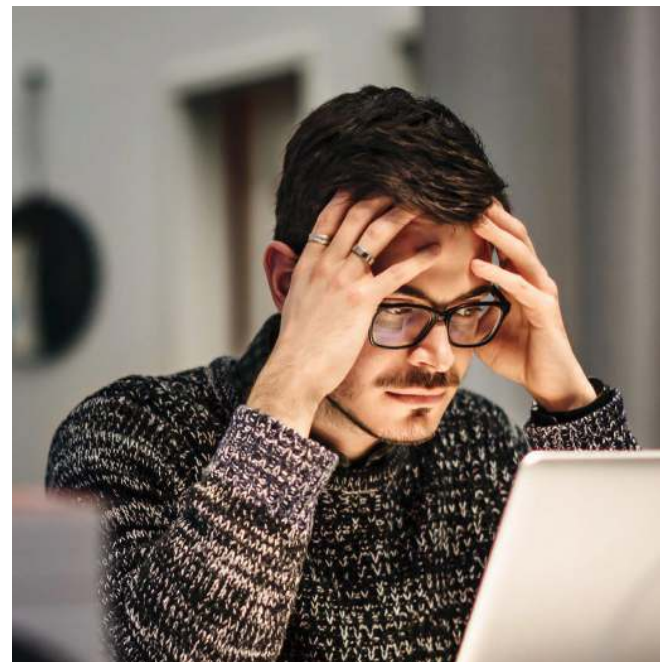
to predict how much inventory the company needs to meet demand. They quickly realize that all forecasts are wrong by nature or are not sure what information to trust since each system has provided different numbers. Now the dealership must pay to bring in a consultant to help sort this all out or invest in a **S&OP/planning** solution to analyze historical sales, look for trends, apply multiple algorithms concurrently and come up with a better guess than the sales team can provide.

+Customer Support

Ultimately, the management team and their employees start to get overwhelmed with after-sales support calls and return requests from customers. Since none of their solutions have an embedded **customer support system**, the business turns to another plug-in to handle all the requests as well as keep customers informed about the process and the status of their request.

+Quality Management

This leads to an evaluation of the quality management procedures which management is shocked to learn is still being managed in Excel. This creates the demand for a standalone **quality management system** that will define tests, acceptable parameters and inspection profiles, and will automatically tell the company when to inspect items, what tests to perform and will help the disposition of nonconforming inventory. The new QMS needs to talk to both the dealer management system and QuickBooks, so another consultant creates another **integration**.

+GPS Tracking

Then, a key employee doesn't like the way your current DMS performs GPS Tracking and can't stand the fact that there is no Mileage Tracking or Incident Reporting in the system. They suggest the company purchases an easy-to-use GPS tracking system that provides the proper reporting. They select a solution that specializes in GPS Tracking such as **ClearPathGPS**, **Samsara**, or **GPS Trackit**.

+Commission Tracking

As the sales team steadily grows, the previous, manual approach to calculating commissions by the finance team is no longer tenable and your current DMS isn't doing much to help the situation. Key reps are asking for formal plans and statements so they can make sure they are getting paid for everything they sell so you invest in a cloud-based **commission tracking system**. Sure, you need to do manual CSV dumps and uploads, but it's better than nothing.

+Ecommerce and Marketing Automation

The next step in the growth of your business requires the ability to sell online. At the same time, marketing wants to run promotions both online and during events, so the business bites the bullet and invests in both an **ecommerce package** and a separate **marketing automation** package. Unfortunately, there isn't a native integration between the systems you've selected so you need to add another **third-party connector**.

+HR/Payroll

As the company grows, unfamiliar faces are walking the halls and finding, hiring, onboarding and training new employees becomes even more daunting for staff, so the company buys a human resources system such as **ADP** or **Paycor**.

+Warehouse Management

The shipping/receiving department can't keep up with the volumes. They used to manually enter transactions in the inventory management system, but they are making more and more mistakes— shipping the wrong items and quantities on orders, etc.— so the business invests in a much-improved and more intuitive **warehouse management system**. The new WMS needs to integrate with the DMS and QuickBooks as well.

+Microsoft Project

With so many internal teams working on projects, nobody has time to do anything else. The company hires a project manager to try and keep everything on track and remove some of the admin from other employees. They recommend buying a copy of **Microsoft Project**.

+Manufacturing

The manufacturing team, who up until now have managed quite nicely, are also feeling the effects of the many product changes. Service levels/on time delivery metrics are starting to suffer. They just can't figure out the right mix of products to make to satisfy demand, so the company invests in a **finite capacity planning and scheduling** engine to try and optimize resources. The company also hires a master scheduler to run it.

+Vendor Management System

The master scheduler identifies that there's actually a bigger problem with managing vendors than the company's internal resources, but he has a solution. He's a big Mac fan and has plenty of experience with **FileMaker Pro**—so he implements a **vendor management system** to easily onboard
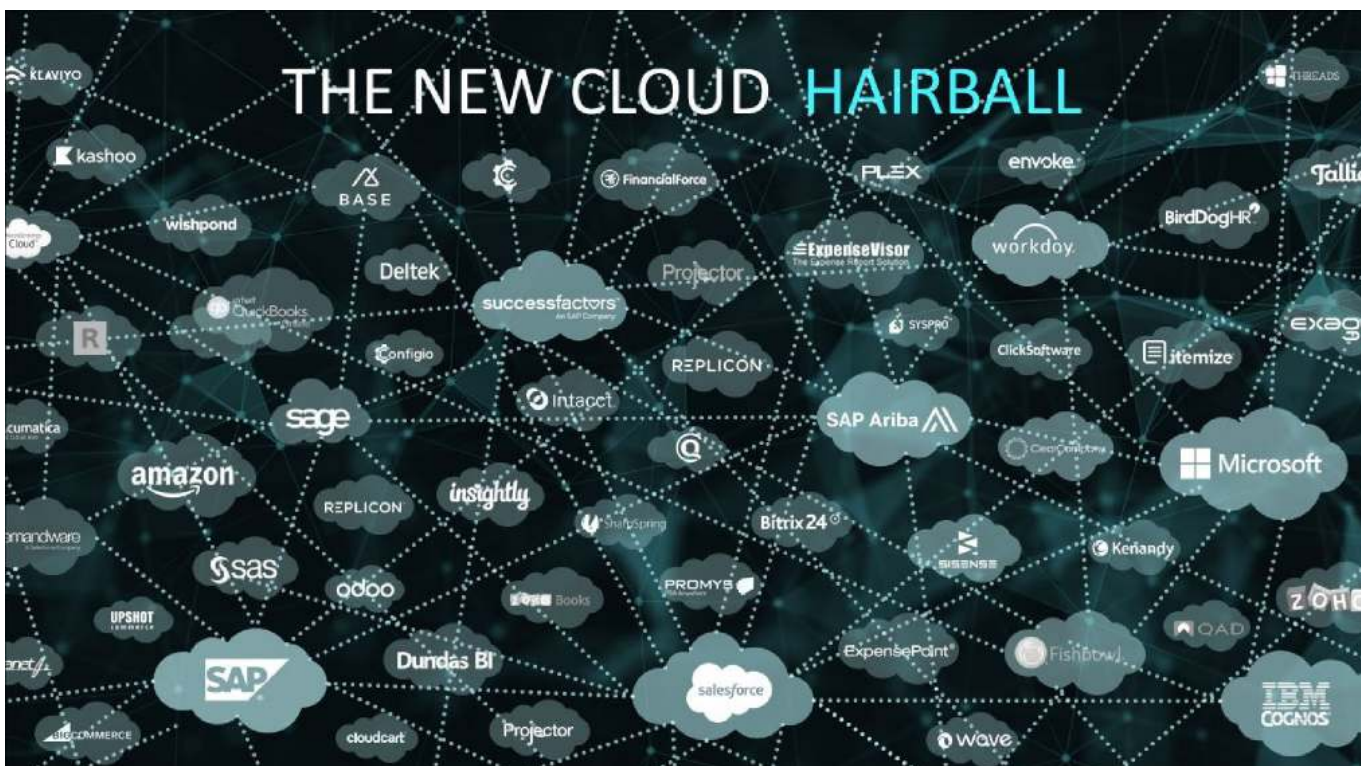
new vendors and manage the existing ones. He also buys a copy of **Crystal Reports** and creates a super-cool dashboard that shows vendor metrics. Now his reports don't match the reports that the executive team is pulling out of the DMS.

+Data Integration

The IT guy complains that he's struggling managing 30+ integrations and suggests a centralized **data integration system** like Dell Boomi/Jitterbit to make it easier to manage. The company gets one.

And there you have it, a good old-fashioned business system hairball: zero to 20+ systems in just a few years!

How do you know when it's time for a change?

There are a few sure signs:

1. Things are getting harder to keep track of.

   - Inventory, expenses, purchase orders, sales contracts, service invoices, etc.

2. There is no reporting, reporting takes a long time or is unreliable.

   - Financials, sales, inventory aren't really "connected", and you spend more time trying to fix inconsistencies than studying and learning from the data

3. It takes multiple conversations to get to one version of the truth.

   - When things go wrong, you have limited understanding of what happened, why it happened and who was involved.

An end-to-end solution

Velosio's end-to-end, cloud-based, full-service solution designed specifically for Heavy Equipment and Truck Dealers provides a single platform built on NetSuite – the leading cloud-based ERP solution and Advectus DMS, the premier cloud-based DMS platform.

Gain real-time visibility into your business by managing your entire dealership from a single modern cloud platform that fully connects all functional areas including accounting, sales, vehicle equipment management, servicing, parts and eCommerce. Imagine having a 360-degree view of your business - from any device, anywhere.

NetSuite was built to run your entire business, from end-to-end. Are you sure that your current business systems or hairball of systems has the same focus?

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✉️ email: info@velosio.com

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