It seems like a harmless assumption: that a successful cloud implementation should be customized to cater to an organization’s needs. On the contrary, the decision to customize rather than configure cloud systems can pull businesses down a sinkhole of wasted time and resources. Still, the idea that customizations are necessary plagues the corporate thought process.

While it used to be the case that customizations were the only way to achieve a software solution that was entirely in sync with an organization’s processes, that is not the case anymore. In fact, what often starts out as an effort to build a more robust solution, ends up hindering growth and slowing down processes.

### Are Customizations a Thing of the Past?

Software as a Service (SaaS) solutions have come a long way in the last decade. In the past, ERP or enterprise CRM systems were rigid platforms that could require a high level of customization and were extremely costly to upgrade. Functions that were not standard were painstakingly coded and added into the core framework. Organizations sank resources and time into maintenance; it was just seen as a necessary evil.

The good news is that today’s solutions, such as Salesforce, are highly configurable. Instead of requiring complex custom add-ons, these platforms are flexible and support a broad number of configurations that can be adjusted in order to cater to specific needs. Since they work within the software’s framework, these settings have the ability to adapt to business processes quickly and painlessly.
The Fast Track to Obsolete

The impact of customization is felt well beyond the initial, often higher cost of development. Firstly, customizations become problematic and even break each time an update to the core solution is released. As technology progresses, customizations become frozen in time. If an organization decides to upgrade broken customizations, they quickly realize that the cycle to develop, test, and rework is prolonged.

Alternatively, some businesses decide to suppress new features rather than deal with issues that arise during updates. The problem with this picture is clear. When you choose a powerful cloud solution, a core benefit is the regular stream of advanced features. Uncompromising customizations work at odds with some of the very advantages of cloud solutions. Not only that, SaaS providers are responsible for uptime, security, and upgrades. While suppression is seen as the path of least resistance, at a certain point updates may be mandatory for the cyber-security of your system.

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There is more, aside from the internal struggle to deal with a system that requires constant maintenance. Organizations also realize that they are inevitably falling behind the competition when a once-powerful solution quickly becomes obsolete. Hopes that a new system would fuel growth are dashed by the slow realization that customizations are not delivering. The kicker? Your competition will be racing along with a minimally customized solution.

The Right Time to Customize

It is true, there are still some challenges that can only be addressed with customization. If customizing is the first recommendation though, it is time to raise some red flags. So, why do some cloud consultancies customize first?
The old adage of, “if all you have is a hammer, everything looks like a nail” comes to mind. Companies that specialize in software development seem to have that approach in their DNA. Further, some companies lack the platform knowledge that is needed to leverage configurations according to best practices. Configuration requires in-depth knowledge of a platform and experience with implementations across a variety of sectors and business functions. This expertise lends itself to a collaborative process, where recommendations to configure are based on a rich history of past implementations. It is the kind of insight that cannot be achieved through customizations. An experienced firm will also be able to forecast the ramifications of customizations, if they are necessary.

Why Acumen Solutions

When you partner with Acumen Solutions, you are choosing a cloud consultancy that knows exactly how to configure Salesforce. With over 1000 Salesforce implementations and the highest customer satisfaction rating of all Salesforce partners, Acumen Solutions has the experience to deliver a successful, sustainable cloud implementation for you.

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