ERP PLATFORM	✓	✓	SEPARATE INTEGRATED SOLUTIONS
Data Management A suite of modules that share a common database, ensuring data consistency across all modules (finance, HR, supply chain, etc.).			**Data Management** APIs or middleware are used to synchronise data between solutions. This can result in data inconsistency if not done right but is far more common and less complex than ten years ago.
Cost The upfront cost of user licences, customisation and implementation can be significant, and scope often creeps, but you avoid paying for multiple smaller solutions. Complexity means that planning and delivering the solution takes time, so factor in the cost of lost benefits during that time.			**Cost** Upfront costs are typically lower and more transparent, especially if you select systems that you pay for as you scale.
Flexibility ERP systems are designed to be rigid. While they offer customisation, it's often within the constraints of the platform. Customisation beyond that can be costly and can limit future upgrade options.			**Flexibility** With separate systems, you can choose best-of-breed solutions that suit specific departmental needs. This allows you to customise each system independently, making it easier to adapt to changing business requirements. *Tip: Emma Finn of Fresho suggests asking your current ERP provider when the first code for your application was written. Without knowing it, you may well be locked into all the constraints of a core product that was built using 20-year-old thinking and technology.*
Hosting, Security & Resilience On-premise hosting has long been out of favour and can demand significant internal resources and expertise to ensure security and resilience. Remotely-hosted ERP should not be confused with cloud-native applications. ERP platforms can also require careful network management to avoid performance issues.			**Hosting, Security & Resilience** Most modular solutions are delivered from the cloud as Software-as-a-Service. This excels in providing advanced security, resilience, and compliance management but it requires trust in the vendor's ability to safeguard data. *Tip: Fresho's Jamie Galbraith advises his wholesale contacts to ask potential vendors for details of the data centres that they use. If they are recognised names that are used by large enterprises, you can infer that security is well in hand. He encourages wholesalers to dig deeper if they have specific questions. Any credible vendor will be eager to show their credentials in this area.*
Implementation ERP implementations are complex and can take months (or even years), requiring significant time for configuration, training, and integration.			**Implementation** Individual solutions can be quicker to implement, but consider with your vendors the process of making them work together smoothly. *Tip: Ask to speak with existing customers who are using the same solution-pairings as you are considering. It can be a straightforward part of due diligence, but is sometimes overlooked, according to Fresho's Toby Hartley.*
Vendor Dependency Relying on a single vendor for your entire business management can be risky if the vendor has problems with support and updates, or if ownership or pricing changes.			**Vendor Dependency** This option spreads your risk by using different vendors. It comes with the complexity of managing multiple relationships, but these can be managed at department level.
Support & Maintenance Having one vendor handle support and updates can simplify the process. However, issues in one module might affect the entire system.			**Support & Maintenance** You may need to manage support at department level. This can be time-consuming, although closer relationships can make for responsive vendors. *Tip: Ensure you agree who takes the lead on resolving issues between integrated systems. That's the advice from Nick Beattie at Fresho, who says it's best to establish beforehand which vendor will be accountable to you.*
Innovation & Feature Updates ERP systems often have slower innovation cycles due to their complexity. Major updates can be disruptive, and customisations can limit your access to newer versions.			**Innovation & Feature Updates** Separate solutions can be more agile in terms of feature updates and innovation. New, specialised solutions can emerge quickly, and it's easier to adopt the latest technology for specific business functions.
Impact on Customers ERP systems offer an e-commerce or webshop front end. But chefs and venues can be resistant to ordering online, especially when forced to use different systems by different suppliers.			**Impact on Customers** Modern order automation tools will allow your customers to order by email, phone, text or PO, and will convert their orders to the format you need. This helps avoid upset customers and the the risk of a failed rollout.