

Keeping IT Shipshape

JD EDWARDS UPGRADE CALMS WATERS FOR ROYAL CARIBBEAN CRUISES.

The global recession has meant anything but smooth sailing for the cruise industry over the last few years, but Royal Caribbean Cruises, Ltd. (RCCL) has managed to thrive and grow due to an increasing focus on the international market. Along with acquiring companies and opening offices around the world, including locations in Australia, Germany, Norway, Spain, and the United Kingdom, company leaders decided that it was imperative to modernize IT operations.

A recent survey from the Cruise Lines International Association predicted that 14.3 million passengers will cruise in 2010, nearly 1 million more than in 2009. Additionally, international passengers make up 14 percent more of the cruise market than in 2000. Indeed, RCCL management rode the wave of that international

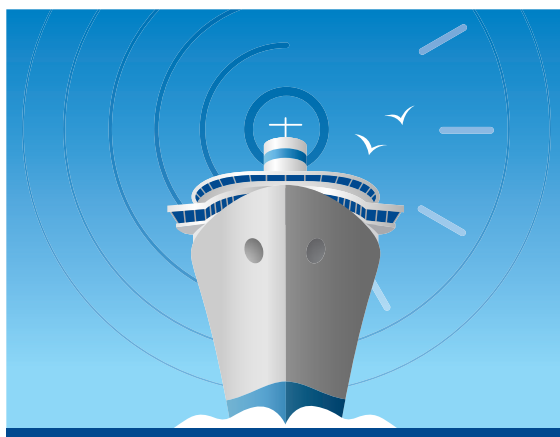
expansion by implementing Oracle's JD Edwards applications in 2001. But over time, a highly customized IT infrastructure started to inhibit growth.

"RCCL grew up as a North American company. Our general ledger systems were set up focused on accounting in North America," says Henry Pujol, vice president, corporate controller at RCCL. "The biggest reason for going into the upgrade project was system stability and support for the system. There was no 'if as far as upgrading—it was 'when.'"

Oracle Platinum Partner SYSTIME was tapped to lead the upgrade project, due to the partner's 15-year focus on JD Edwards and its strong global presence (30 offices worldwide). SYSTIME needed to complete the globalization and upgrade project in just 11 months, requiring close monitoring and strong project management under the auspices of its SYS-on-TIME methodology. "We were confident that SYSTIME would

stand out above the competition due to our specialization in JD Edwards, our global delivery model, and our reputation for keeping our customers competitive and agile," says Vishal Grover, president and CEO at SYSTIME.

RCCL Manager of IT Mark Musial says SYSTIME helped the cruise line overcome



some global systemic and functional challenges by working closely with the customer's team to configure and adapt the JD Edwards system to meet core project requirements. "They leveraged past experience and offered new ideas throughout the project efforts," he says.

The project's "Big Bang" approach involved rolling out the system in Australia, France, Germany, Mexico, Spain, and the U.S. So SYSTIME's proven global delivery model played an important role in the project's positive outcome. This meant migrating older JD Edwards applications onto a unified JD Edwards EnterpriseOne infrastructure—supporting 5,500 users and interactions with 30 internal applications and 6 external systems.

The new system features 16 new functionalities, including Sarbanes-Oxley compliance, global currency conversions, simplified regional accounting, and global alignment with RCCL's growth strategy.

"Before, we had the 'opt-out' model that required putting in a lot of manual controls, but now the system does most of the work, and that is extremely helpful," says Pujol.

Furthermore, the system's employee-profile functionality was redesigned to be managed shipboard, trimming boarding times and preventing delays. The hiring process also saw improvements with applicant tracking, which hiring partners around the globe can now access to streamline the recruitment process. And the entire RCCL fleet can access JD Edwards' shoreside and shipboard applications via satellite connections.

The new system offers critical stability. Prior to the upgrade, Pujol recalls frequent downtime that required support from in-house and outside IT. "Once we went live, we measured how many complaints popped up. It was very successful, and the issues were very minimal—even in the first couple of days," says Pujol. "The upgrade was delivered in perfect timing. We haven't experienced any stability or performance issues."

RCCL managers continue to look at additional functionalities within the JD Edwards EnterpriseOne system, further improving human resources management and currency management. "JD Edwards EnterpriseOne is a flexible solution that allows us to conduct business efficiently and effectively in global markets with appropriate local flavor," says Jason Liberty, vice president of strategy, corporate planning, and insurance at RCCL. "SYSTIME did very well. They did a good job managing through the organizations to make good tactical decisions. And the decisions that had to be made on a functional area level were always resolved very quickly." <>