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SYSTIME: AN ORACLE AWARD-WINNING JD EDWARDS FOCUSED PRACTICE

UPGRADING ENTERPRISE APPLICATIONS IS COMMONLY PERCEIVED AS A PAINFUL PROCESS THAT ORGANIZATIONS AVOID AT ALL COSTS. HOWEVER, DONE CORRECTLY, AN UPGRADE PROVIDES ENHANCED FEATURES AND FUNCTIONALITY THAT IMPROVE PRODUCTIVITY, REDUCE COSTS, AND FACILITATE THE ADOPTION OF BUSINESS PROCESSES, ALLOWING COMPANIES TO BECOME MORE COMPETITIVE.

Fortunately, the upgrade process does not have to be as complicated as many fear. By following industry best practices and teaming with an experienced implementation partner, organizations can create a seamless, successful JD Edwards upgrade experience.

A Long-Term, Viable Enterprise Solution

Before moving into a discussion of upgrade best practices, it is worth pointing out that in addition to the common upgrade fears – which we will dispel below – over the past few years, JD Edwards users have also had to determine whether or not to extend their investment in the JD Edwards solution. While a series of acquisitions by PeopleSoft and Oracle helped to validate the technology leadership and domain expertise in the JD Edwards suite, it left some questions regarding future product direction. These fears were finally laid to rest when Oracle announced that future versions and upgrades for JD Edwards EnterpriseOne and JD Edwards World would transcend to Oracle Fusion.

Oracle's public commitment to JD Edwards provided customers with a comprehensive, well-defined product road map – backed by Oracle's Lifetime Support and Applications Unlimited policies – which restored confidence and unleashed pent-up demand for JD Edwards implementations and upgrades. Now, the only barrier between JD Edwards users and countless business benefits is a well-defined, well-executed upgrade.

Building a Foundation for Upgrade Success

The fundamental objective of a sound ERP strategy is to enable an organization to identify, adapt to, and capitalize upon change. With that in mind, every upgrade must maximize return on investment while providing the organization with enhanced capabilities to compete more effectively. As mentioned earlier, most companies find upgrading a huge challenge. However, based on our global JD Edwards implementation experience, we have identified three key concepts that can significantly streamline the upgrade process and ensure organizations achieve their upgrade objectives.

Understand the Full Upgrade Potential

Failing to assess the full potential of an upgrade is arguably the biggest oversight an organization can make during the upgrade process. Typically, this simply results in missed opportunities, but it can also cause missed cutovers and upgrade delays as organizations scramble to add additional functionality to the upgrade in-flight. Avoiding these mistakes simply requires a little more effort in the planning phase. By combining a thorough understanding of the features and functionality in the latest JD Edwards release with a comprehensive view of your current implementation, you can uncover all upgrade options. This enables you to clearly define the subset of features to implement that will bring the most value out of your investment. In addition, it accomplishes two key objectives. First, it prevents missed opportunities that would otherwise diminish the return on investment. Second, it clearly defines the upgrade scope, which streamlines execution.

Eliminate Customization

Almost every enterprise application implementation has been customized to some degree. However, customizations are costly to maintain and should be avoided when possible. An application upgrade provides a valuable opportunity to review existing customizations and replace them with standard functionality where possible. As such, itemizing existing systems customizations and determining a plan to handle them is a critical part of the upgrade planning process. In addition, several companies are using older versions of the JD Edwards software. Newer releases may have the features and enhancements as part of the standard software, so you do not have to carry customized solutions forward.

Unfortunately, most implementations lack proper documentation which makes it more difficult to efficiently resolve customizations. At SYSTIME, we highly recommend that during the Upgrade Assessment process you take the time to create the necessary documentation and replace customizations with standard functionality whenever possible. With our offshore model, we can cost-effectively conduct the retrofit activities while lowering the cost and complexity of future upgrades, which ultimately increases your return on upgrade investment.

Minimize Downtime

One of the common objections organizations use to justify not pursuing an upgrade is downtime. The notion that upgrades cause downtime and disrupt business operations is an overwhelming misconception. The reality is that there are tools and methodologies that can be utilized to minimize – if not eliminate – system downtime. In addition, through the offshore model, upgrade processes can be managed in a follow-the-sun manner that reduces the total time it takes to perform an upgrade while providing real-time support to protect users in the event of unforeseen issues. By combining the flexibility of the JD Edwards

Organize. Globalize. Standardize. Localize.

architecture with the support of an offshore partner, an upgrade can happen in a virtual environment with various options for change management while minimizing the disruption to ongoing operations.

Defining an Effective Rollout

How you roll out the upgrade changes is a critical factor in upgrade success. Unfortunately, this is an often-overlooked aspect of an upgrade, and many upgrades struggle due to the lack of a cogent rollout plan. A well-defined Global Rollout simplifies the transition process from one version to the next and helps enterprises derive maximum business value from an upgrade.

There are four cornerstones to creating an effective rollout strategy:

- **Organize.** Rollouts often overlook the fact that organizational structures vary in different locations. These variances make rollouts unmanageably complex and lead to disintegration, defeating one of the core purposes of a global rollout initiative. A successful rollout plan relies heavily on a common organization structure and corporate policy framework. Global rollouts also benefit heavily from early buy-in by executive and regional management.
- **Globalize.** Successful global rollouts manage the trade-off between single instances and multiple instances. They take into account common business best practices, while factoring local needs such as multiple currencies and languages, and create a global company model that can be replicated across instances. Establishing a global helpdesk supports this model with every request/query. Besides benefiting from SYSTIME's proven global methodologies, companies can also leverage SYSTIME's local experts in the regions. SYSTIME local professionals can increase your company's level of expertise and experience in strategic projects.
- **Standardize.** Standardization is both the means and the ends of a successful global rollout. Adopting a set of processes across the globe is the critical starting point for a rollout. A consistent implementation methodology needs to be devised for all locations that takes into consideration the organizational structure and needs of the business. All master data and transactions should be captured and reported, while maintaining security requirements.
- **Localize.** A global rollout must be useful and usable across all regions. To succeed, a rollout must support regional requirements, such as legal and statutory regulations, language translations, and currency conversions. Carefully

planning for regional issues increases the likelihood of regional user adoption, which is critical to achieving upgrade objectives and sustaining enterprise value.

Implementing Change

Although deploying and maintaining an ERP system requires a substantial investment, an effective ERP implementation dramatically improves enterprise performance and unlocks opportunities that otherwise remain dormant. However, there is risk associated with this reward; ERP implementations can be complex and many initiatives fail to achieve their stated objectives. As experience teaches and studies reveal, the key differentiator between success and failure is expertise.

A successful ERP implementation requires an intricate understanding of ERP technologies, deep domain knowledge, and years of experience to ensure a seamless execution. Most organizations lack the skills necessary to implement an ERP solution alone. For them, choosing the right implementation partner is critical. The right partner will collaborate with your organization to ensure your implementation process embodies the following best practices:

Make Change Irresistible

Change is not always easy. Organizations, like people, often resist change. Over time, this can cripple growth and profitability. Whether due to a lack of visibility into ROI, fear over job security, or simple a desire to maintain the status quo, the key to overcoming inertia is to make change irresistible. Stakeholders must clearly understand the value of change and become motivated to achieve the stated milestones.

The right partner must ensure that change management runs in parallel with the ERP implementation – not just at the time of system cutover, but from the beginning. During the planning stage, users must understand and embrace the efficiency and the ease-of-use gains available from the upgrade. This helps transform key users into upgrade advocates that will evangelize the new ERP solution within the organization. By establishing and maintaining consistent and continuous communication with all internal stakeholders throughout the project lifecycle, stakeholders become more involved in the process and thus, better prepared for change.

Eliminate Guesswork

A successful ERP solution is one that is implemented in line with core business drivers. Most implementation partners lack the business scope and the corresponding subject matter expertise in

JD Edwards, and hence resort to guesswork with implementation. Consequently, enterprises are left with missed opportunities for standardization, expensive scope creeps, missed cutovers, and implementation delays. By contrast, working with a partner that has deep expertise with your chosen ERP software enables you to move more quickly and avoid common mistakes. An expert will help you determine the key features and functionality available to streamline your business processes and enhance organizational efficiency.

Invest in Training

Educating end-users on the benefits of an application upgrade and training them on the new functionalities is critical for success. More often than not, training is inadequate or administered too late in the project lifecycle, leading to poor adoption and alignment post go-live. Successful implementations allocate ample budget and resources to training – and when budgets get tight, they resist the temptation to reduce training spend. By having well documented processes and a solid method to transfer knowledge to users, companies can continually take the most advantage out of their JD Edwards solutions, even when key people leave the company.

Embracing JD Edwards EnterpriseOne

Most analysts recommend an ERP strategy that has a clear evolutionary path. Consistent with this philosophy, Oracle has demonstrated its commitment to existing JD Edwards users with JD Edwards EnterpriseOne and JD Edwards World. From an enterprise standpoint, JD Edwards is a strategic choice – it comes with the lowest TCO compared to similar solutions, and promises consistent returns on investments. As organizations across the world have reduced their IT spends to reflect current market conditions, an effective JD Edwards implementation cannot afford to be expensive; instead it should make sure that every dollar returns a compelling ROI. To achieve this, a lot will depend on the partner you choose.

SYSTIME: An Oracle Award-Winning JD Edwards Focused Practice

To manage IT at an enterprise scale, it is crucial to have the right support to hold the ERP systems. SYSTIME is one of the few service providers with a strong focus on JD Edwards. For more than 17 years, across 130 implementations and 33 upgrades, we have refined our JD Edwards capabilities and built the largest JD Edwards practice in the world. Over that time, we have collaborated closely with Oracle to aide in the development of the JD Edwards application and have been repeatedly recognized as the Oracle JD Edwards partner of the year.

When you choose SYSTIME as your JD Edwards implementation partner, our team of experts will leverage the best practices highlighted above to deliver faster solutions with higher ROI. Our proprietary SYS-on-TIME™ Methodology ensures all our engagements are thoroughly assessed, planned and successfully completed on time and within budget.

Conclusion

Effective ERP systems provide the backbone for enterprise execution. To achieve the maximum benefit from these investments, organizations must take advantage of the latest features and functionality. However most of this value is lost due to the perception that upgrades are costly, disruptive, and unsuccessful. For the unprepared, this can be true. However, if you collaborate with the right partner and embrace best practices, success is seamless. When it comes to JD Edwards, SYSTIME can help you achieve your upgrade goals with minimal business disruption and create tangible business value.

To learn more about SYSTIME visit us at www.SYSTIME.net or email us at info@SYSTIME.net.

