



Let's Solve

Whitepaper

JD Edwards Upgrades Made Easy

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1. Abstract

The recent economic downturn compelled most organizations cut all their budgets, including IT spends, thereby causing the business priorities for a majority of organizations to be changed – reducing operational costs, while improving productivity. As the market conditions have started improving now, organizations have once again started considering investments in growth-oriented areas, with IT being one of the key areas.

2. Introduction

As corporations become more dependent on their ERP systems, it becomes all the more important to strike the right balance between regularly updating the software and minimizing the cost and disruption to the business.

A Forrester study found that, Upgrades made the top concerns list of ERP customers together with improving integrations and shifting the process orientation, thereby establishing the fact that ERP upgrades is an essential activity in the ERP

software lifecycle. Further, this demonstrates that an effective and efficient execution of an ERP upgrade has a tremendous impact on an organization's continuous business process improvement. Therefore, the decision to upgrade an ERP is usually not driven by code deterioration or anticipated reduction in maintenance costs alone, but on several other criteria as well.

According to an AMR study, 55% of upgrades were voluntary business improvements triggered by the need for new functionality, expansion or consolidation of systems; 24% of upgrades were triggered by technology stack changes; 15% of upgrades were forced by de-support of the running version of software to avoid vendor support termination; and 6% of upgrades were triggered by bug fixes or statutory changes.

In this whitepaper, we analyze the options available to Oracle JD Edwards ERP customers for upgradation to newer ERP versions, along with the challenges faced by such customers and how innovative tools and methodology, coupled with the onsite offshore model, can significantly reduce the overall project cost and time.

When to Upgrade?

ERP is designed to be an integrated system that captures the transactional details of a business, including financials, inventory and order management, along with the operational side. It covers everything - from manufacturing to human resources (HR), and dealing with suppliers and customers. While early versions of ERP had a narrower focus around manufacturing, distribution and financial components, subsequent releases have expanded in features to incorporate Advanced Supply Chain Management - right from Advance Forecasting, Warehousing planning, Logistics, Human Resources Management and Customer Relationship Management (CRM), among other capabilities.

Ideally, ERP systems should serve as the primary source for all critical data, while delivering analytics and reporting functions that help companies make better decisions. If they don't, or if one of the following scenarios sounds familiar, it may be time for an ERP upgrade.

- When the current ERP system lacks the features and functions required to efficiently run the business.
- When consultants aren't available to support.
- When employees aren't using the system.
- When ERP system integration is difficult.
- When it's matters the most, irrespective of ROI.

There is no doubt to the fact that Upgrades are essential to get the maximum return out of JD Edwards ERP investments. In the long run, it brings new functionalities and features to the ERP solution, while keeping incremental costs low. However, an organization looking to extract the maximum benefit of an ERP upgrade, is recommended to engage a Consulting Partner, who could also work as your business partner to facilitate exploring out of the box functionalities to reduce the level of customization. Such consulting partners also bring with them the best-in-class methodology, tools and resources to ensure completion of the upgrade project within schedule.

Solution

ERP upgrades bring significant challenges pertaining to managing project expenses and controlling the project scope. While ERP users benefit from technical and functional benefits on upgrading to higher versions, upgrades can often be quite time consuming; identifying the potential problems with interfaces and testing systems appropriately, can be a complex task.

Customizations, Bolt-On Applications

One of the main reasons for the complexity of ERP is its flexibility in allowing users to fine-tune and customize the system to address their particular needs and procedures. The trade-off is ever-increasing code complexity, which in turn results in inability to accurately predict whether the multiple customizations and changes will function properly after upgrading to the new version or implementing other major changes. Further, it is seen that many organizations customize their standard JD Edwards applications without changing the system code. Since such changes are carried out in the system over a long period of time, it becomes difficult to identify such changes in the absence of proper documentation.

LTI has developed a tool RetroDash, which provides details of all custom objects, making it easy to identify the customization in the existing ERP system and hence considerably reduce the total time required for the upgrade.

Retrofitting of Custom Objects

Retrofitting of custom objects, particularly standard JD Edwards objects which have been customized, is not only time-consuming, but also requires multiple iteration resulting in high cost of upgrade projects. Poor quality of retrofitting could result in project overrun and consequent cost escalation.

LTI has developed a tool RetroSmart which automate the process of retrofitting resulting in saving of upto 60% effort while ensuring quality of code.

Processing Options

After the technical upgrade of the JD Edwards ERP system, it is important to ensure that the processing options values, data sequencing and data selection values are in sync before testing is undertaken.

LTI has developed a JD Edwards based tool named JCart, developed using BSFN's and Reports. It allows for comparison of Processing Options, Data Selection and Data Sequencing across releases or environment.

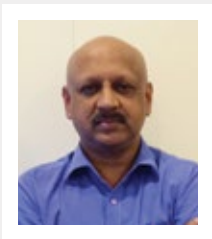
Brief description of the tools used in various phases of Upgrade projects and the likely reduction in effort is as follows:

Tools	Features	Benefits
RetroDash	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Detailed Customization Analysis and reports the object inventory • Identifies corrupted, missing and newly added applications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 60% reduction in customization assessment and reporting • Insight on various critical factors which otherwise are missed impacting schedule
RetroSmart	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Automatic retrofit of Layout, Design and Language • Retrofits Standard/Custom/Copy of Standard objects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 60% reduction in schedule for tools upgrade • Elimination of manual error in retrofitting
JCART	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides comparison reports of business critical configurations between releases/environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 80% reduction in time for configuration • 100% error elimination due to "Null Values"
JPACK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Automates end to end process to package and promote the developments and setups • Error preventive and auto correction mechanism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completely automated Package build • 90% reduction of manual intervention

Conclusion

ERP upgrade, an essential part of ERP lifecycle, requires high level of expertise to mitigate project risks and to ensure that project is completed with in time and budget. Invariably, non-availability of documentations pertaining to customization adds to complexity and uncertainty while executing the project. The innovative tools developed by LTI, helps in reducing Total Project Time by 20-35% and overall project cost by 20-30% depending on the level of customizations in the existing ERP system.

About the Author



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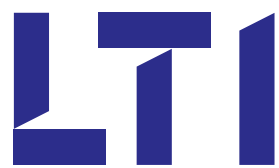
Arvind leads Oracle Practice at LTI. A visionary and inspiring leader with over 25 years of experience in the field of business process management, consulting and information technology. He works closely with CxOs in executing several large and complex global transformational programs (multi-countries, multi-cultural) right from strategizing, planning and executing ERP, CRM, SGM and related technologies worldwide. He holds the Doctorate (Ph.D) degree in Mechanical Engineering.



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Rakesh leads the JD Edwards delivery for LTI. He is a Senior Program Director managing several Global JD Edwards deployments. He has overall 34 years of experience, with 18 years in IT industry managing ERP projects and deployments. Oracle Certified Implementation Champion.



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LTI (NSE: LTI, BSE: 540005) is a global technology consulting and digital solutions Company helping more than 300 clients succeed in a converging world. With operations in 30 countries, we go the extra mile for our clients and accelerate their digital transformation with LTI's Mosaic platform enabling their mobile, social, analytics, IoT and cloud journeys. Founded in 1997 as a subsidiary of Larsen & Toubro Limited, our unique heritage gives us unrivaled real-world expertise to solve the most complex challenges of enterprises across all industries. Each day, our team of more than 25,000 LTItes enable our clients to improve the effectiveness of their business and technology operations, and deliver value to their customers, employees and shareholders. Find more at www.Lntinfotech.com or follow us at @LTI_Global

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