



Best Practices for JD Edwards Integrations

<http://www.portx.io>

hello@portx.io

The Drive for Connectivity

Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) systems, like JD Edwards, were created to provide an integrated suite of critical business software, offering a single source of information for many applications, such as finance, HR, supply chain, and more.

But enterprise technology has changed. While systems like JD Edwards can provide a vast number of business functions in a single suite, today's businesses leverage a greater number of applications than ever before, including important functions that ERPs don't address.

What's more, if an ERP's features don't meet a company's needs, there are many more options available, from on-premise solutions to cloud based applications and platforms. According to Surety's 2017 JD Edwards User Survey, only 36% of companies use the JD Edwards HR/Payroll module, with ADP and Kronos being used by almost 40% of the ERP's customers.

At the same time, having a full 360-degree view of a business's information has moved from being a competitive advantage to a business imperative. Systems like JD Edwards gives access data to multiple solutions within the ERP suite, but integration with outside applications can be challenging. The effect is data silos that can create blind spots for the enterprise, slowing reactions to changing business needs and reducing visibility to a company's strengths – and weaknesses.

Unfortunately, integrating JD Edwards with other applications can prove to be challenging. According to research sponsored by IEEE, 82% of organizations report experiencing technical problems with integrations with their ERP, 46% of which experienced problems with new business software, such as e-commerce applications and supply chain management.

While it's not impossible to build integrations to the ERP, the solution can create more problems than it solves. The key is to not assume that

integrations with JD Edwards need to be a one-off solution and to understand how to leverage a series of best practices to ensure a successful project.

Answering the Biggest Challenges

Through extensive experience with JD Edwards integrations, ModusBox has defined the best ways to address the largest hurdles facing a project involving connecting the ERP to other systems.



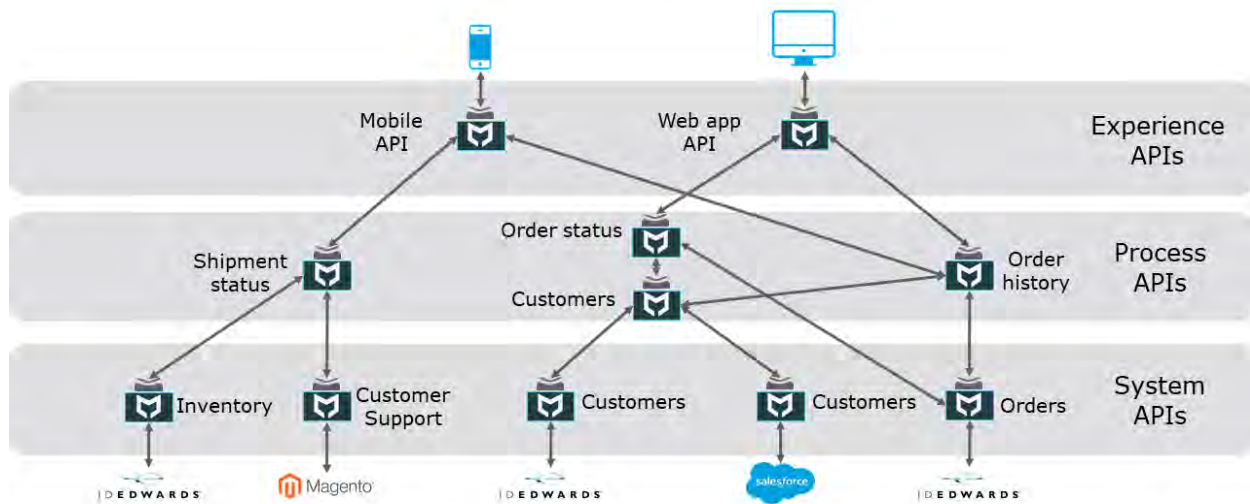
*ERP Problems and Application Integration Issues,
IEEE*

Specialized Resources Critical to Success

Oracle's JD Edwards solution is robust, but also complicated. While some of the more basic operations, like reporting and forms, can be tackled by less skilled IT staff, digging into the core of JD Edwards to build connections to outside systems requires someone with specialized knowledge, such as a CNC Architect.

Within almost any organization, though, the more specialized the knowledge, the more in demand the resource. In organizations with few, if any, CNC Architects, this presents a challenge to building out integrations to systems outside of the ERP. The lack of availability of an architect can slow an

The API-led connectivity approach



integrations project, or put other initiatives in jeopardy as the architect becomes mired in advising on integration strategy and execution.

As a complete solution, JD Edwards provides business functions for a vast number of potential needs. Yet this comprehensiveness increases the complexity of integrations. Inclusive knowledge of the more than six thousand business functions, or the ability to navigate the Oracle documentation, combined with an understanding of JD Edwards database structure, is needed to help those tasked with building integrations make the right intra-system connections.

Because of the high level of specialized resource needs throughout planning and execution of a project, it's in an organization's best interest to build these integrations to be as flexible and reusable as possible.

Use Tools that Enable Rapid and Standardized Development

Resources with specialized skill sets aren't the only hurdle that can slow down the

development and maintenance of integrations with JD Edwards. Without adhering to a standardized development strategy, integrations to the ERP can be costly both up front and in the future.

Building connections into JD Edwards can be done in a myriad of ways, using nearly any technology stack that the development team is familiar with. While this may seem freeing, the challenge comes in policing integration development and ensuring that teams are using technologies that are well-known within the organization. Without that, these connections can end up a part of the organization's tribal

knowledge, endangering both growth and business continuity.


It's also unlikely that a single resource will understand the inner workings of JD Edwards as well as the development patterns and languages to build effective integrations. This increases risk to the enterprise because, while the knowledge is distributed between several resources, no one has a full understanding of the solution. When embarking on an integration project with JD Edwards, take the time to choose tools and technologies that will be well

understood and supported by the IT organization, as well as ones that will be easy to learn. This enables standardization of integration implementation.

Chose an Architecture Strategy that Scales

As an organization begins planning integrations into JD Edwards, it may be tempting to build a single-use connection that can be built rapidly. This may work if a company only needs a limited number of integrations. But these solutions, such as point-to-point integrations, can cause major issues for support as well as become cumbersome as the number of endpoints increases.

As found in the IEEE survey, 42% of companies that participated were able to integrate one or more system with their ERP, most of them using some form of interconnectivity such as point-to-point integrations. However, all of the respondents that completed integrations indicated that interconnectivity is not the best solution, even those that chose that as their means of building out connections.



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Companies should look to view today's requirements through the lens of tomorrow's business needs. Doing so will drive an organization to adopt a scalable system with reusable components.

If this is the case, point-to-point integrations will rapidly overwhelm already strained IT resources. It is estimated that when utilizing an interconnectivity integration strategy, for x applications, $x(x-1)/2$ connections must be built and maintained. That means for only 5 applications, 12 connections must be implemented. Simply doubling the number of applications nearly quadruples the number of connection to be maintained, with 10 applications requiring 45 connections.

Instead, an API-led approach to building out system connectivity provides reusable components that are easily customized and flexible. An API architecture may also provide an opportunity for self-service, removing the need for long term commitments from JD Edwards experts for integrations projects.

ModusBox's JD Edwards Integration Platform

Having repeatedly encountered the challenges that most JD Edwards integration projects face, ModusBox built out a platform of solutions to address connectivity issues with the ERP and make it easier for enterprises to adopt these best practices.

With the JD Edwards Integration Platform, companies can minimize the need for extended commitments from specialized resources through its drag-and-drop interface. The tools also include dropdowns that allow developers to choose from both pre-built and customer created business functions while managing batch jobs, transactions and polling for JD Edwards events.

The platform is easy to use, and easy to learn, reducing the overhead associated with resources learning a new set of tools. And the platform was built to leverage API architecture to maximize reusability and flexibility of existing and custom components.

If you are interested in learning more about how the JD Edwards Integration Platform from ModusBox can help your organization create integrations to your ERP rapidly, email us at jde@modusbox.com, or visit us at www.modusbox.com.