Automating & Optimising with JD Edwards Orchestrator at Argent LLP

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Introduction
Agenda

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- JDE Design and Implementation
- How we drove adoption at Argent
- Orchestrations and UDOs
- Things to be aware of
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Background
Who are Argent
My role Argent
Why JD Edwards?
Who are Argent?

• Argent LLP is a property developer founded in 1981
• Delivered some of the best mixed-use developments in the UK
• Commercial, residential, education, cultural and community developments in the country’s largest cities
• Notable projects are the King’s Cross redevelopment and Paradise Circus in Birmingham
• In March 2015 it entered into a new long-term partnership with US developer Related, forming Argent Related
• Latest developments are Tottenham Hale and Brent Cross South
• Progressive company that is happy to invest in its staff and systems
THE MASTERPLAN

22 OFFICE BUILDINGS
17 RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS
500,000 SQ FT OF SHOPPING
HOTEL, CULTURE, LEISURE AND EDUCATION

A MAJOR NEW PIECE OF CENTRAL LONDON
King’s Cross
Pancras Square from Regent’s Canal
King’s Cross
Coal Drops Yard
My Role at Argent

- I’ve worked in IT roles for 22 years
- I’ve been working at Argent for over 10 years
- Started as a systems technician
- As the business grew my role changed
- I’ve been working as a business systems analyst for the last 5 years where I’ve been helping to deliver new processes and solutions
- For example; Horizon property asset management system for King’s Cross, SharePoint 2013 for document management, replaced paper invoice and expense claim approvals with electronic processes
- I was seconded to the finance team for 18 months to assist with the delivery of JD Edwards
Why JD Edwards

• Argent had a 20 year old finance system called Exchequer
• As the business had grown quickly, and continues to grow, it had become clear that Exchequer was no longer fit for purpose
• Argent currently consists of 165 entities due to multiple complex project funding structures
• The business could not self-serve on budgets or actual spend information
• The chart of accounts had grown organically and was not consistent across entities
• We researched several systems including JD Edwards, Sun Systems and Microsoft Dynamics 365
• JD Edwards was deemed the best choice as our US partners had many years of experience using it and would make future alignment easier
• We have implemented JD Edwards version 9.2.2.4 on premise
• We have also implemented Hubble Reports and Scanman Invoicing OCR solution
Design and Implementation
New system. New processes
Implementing JDE
Argent’s not quite OOTB 3-way match
Self Service Timesheets
Importance of Adoption
Implementing JDE

- I was tasked with designing and delivering the P2P and Time & Labour solutions as I had previous experience with implementing new processes for the business.
- Argent didn’t have a true P2P solution before JDE, instead there was an electronic invoice approval process using SharePoint.
- The process was high risk as approvals only took place after expenditure was committed.
- There was demand from the budget owners to have visibility of their budget, committed and actual expenditure in one place.
- Argent use Timesheets to recharge corporate overheads such as salaries to relevant projects.
- This was previously done on a spreadsheet.
- There was a requirement to allow budget owners to approve time allocated to their budgets.
Implementing JDE

• On previous projects, I was able to phase new systems and processes in.
• This would allow the business to become comfortable with each new stage of a project or application that was released instead of having to learn everything at once.
• For the JDE implementation, we decided to take a big bang approach as the new system would require the new processes to go live at the same time.
• The project was challenging as not only would the business have to learn how to use a whole new application, but they’d also be learning new purchasing and timesheet processes.
• We also had challenges to overcome as Argent is a services company.
• No one had ever had to complete a purchase order at Argent before JDE went live!
• We developed a communications strategy that ensured our suppliers would be able to adapt to our new processes.
• A culture shift was required to get the business to acknowledge the importance of approving expenditure before it was committed.
• After months of design meetings, we agreed to use a 3-way match process, but with a slight difference...
1. Goods/Services Required
2. Raise PR/PO
3. Approval
4. Order Goods/Services Delivered
5. Invoice Received
6. Receipt Invoice
7. VMA Triggered
8. Approved Voucher generated
Implementing JDE

• Worth noting that the Argent 3 way match was created using lateral thinking and no customization
• For timesheets we only used customization to refine the UI
• We utilised employee self service
• Time is allocated to multiple time entry specific business units then submitted by each business user
• Each time submission is approved by the budget owner for the BU used
• We set all employees to be supervised by one timesheet manager account
• Using BU security and roles, each timesheet approver logs in as a specific approver role, reviews the time submitted in the timesheet manager account’s list but can only see the relevant BU’s due to security on the BU
• We can journal costs automatically when we’re ready but currently time allocations are reviewed offline before costs are allocated
Importance of Adoption

- So we had a lot of change to manage
- If the new processes and system didn’t work as planned at launch, we’d be fighting an uphill struggle to get buy in to the new processes
- We had to keep the processes within the system as clear and intuitive as possible
- We used the business requirements as a selling point of the new process; “You want to see commitments? You need to enter your commitments in the form of a purchase order”
- Some PO values would be hard to predict given the nature of the work Argent does (Services Company)
- We decided purchase orders could be raised for an entire contract to reduce the amount of button pushing a business user would have to do
- Each PO could receive multiple invoices against it
We also wanted the system to notify the business users when they had a task to perform
The notifications needed to be by email but we had to be careful not to generate emails for every single task the business users had to perform as this may cause email blindness
Business users had been used to having daily summarised emails which prompted them to perform their tasks such as Invoice approval
I found that using Watchlists along with Orchestrator Notifications, I could create these notifications on a schedule of my design
I’ll show you how this was done in the Orchestrator tool shortly, but first some UDO examples...
How we drove adoption at Argent

UDOs (User Defined Objects)

• E1Pages and CAFE1
• Grids
• Watchlists
• Forms & Layouts
User Defined Objects (UDOs)

“UDOs are web objects you create using the EnterpriseOne web interface. You can create them for your own use, view ones that other employees have created, or share yours so that others can view and use them. Your ability to perform any of these tasks depends on the permissions you and others have been granted by your administrator.”

• We wanted to use as little customisation as possible
• We also wanted to be as self sufficient as possible
• UDOs gave us the opportunity to design and manage our own UI
• For example you can create Queries, Grids, E1pages, CAFE1, Watchlists, Orchestrations and many other objects
• Users can create their own objects and submit them for approval to be shared
• For example, our IT team created their own dashboard for user management
• I’ll show you how we used UDOs to simplify our business processes...
Grids/Forms/Queries
JDE Orchestrator Studio

Automated email notifications
Notification Subscriptions
Data validation
Other uses and in development...
JDE Orchestrator Studio

Notifications
- Define a notification, which includes inputs, criteria for sending a notification, and the notification message.
- How to create a Notification

Orchestrations
- Define the orchestration inputs and add service request, white list, rule, and cross reference steps.
- How to Create an Orchestration

Service Requests
- Define the sequence of actions for invoking a particular process in JD Edwards EnterpriseOne applications or Java programs.
- How to Create a Service Request

Cross References
- Define relationships that map input values to JD Edwards EnterpriseOne values. For example, a device's serial number can be cross-referenced to an Asset Number.
- How to Create a Cross Reference

White Lists
- Define a list of authorized input values. For example, a device's serial number, if the value is not in the white list, the orchestration terminates.
- How to Create a White List

Rules
- Define a set of conditions against which the input from the IoT devices is evaluated to produce a true or false state.
- How to Create a Rule
Email Notifications

- Orchestrator Studio already has a notification object that can be used.
- When used with a Watchlist, a notification can be built in minutes.
- Make sure you build your Orchestration in the right order or you will be frustrated when trying to publishing it.
- Create and publish your Query first, then create and publish your Watchlist based on that query.
- Now, within Orchestrator Studio create and publish your Rule to check that the number of records returned from the Watchlist is greater than 0. Also create and publish a schedule for your email.
- Orchestrator supports Cron expressions for generating schedules.
- Finally, piece everything together...
Email Notifications

Type: Watchlist
Run As Subscriber: No
Allow Subscriber Overrides: No
Text:

Notification Inputs
Watchlist: Invoices awaiting receipt

Rule: ARG_RULE_Check_if_Value_Positive
Check if a value is positive:

Rule Input: record
Mapped From: records
Default Value:

Message
Output: Watchlist Output
Output Type: Watchlist

Invoices awaiting receipt:
You have invoices awaiting receipt. Please log in to JDE to receipt your invoices.

JD Edwards EnterpriseOne Shortcut
Data Dictionary

Schedule
Schedule: Run Daily
Run Daily
Notorchestrated notifications use a subscription model

• This means you can define if a notification is mandatory for all users, if the user can opt out of the notification or if the user can find and subscribe to the notification themselves

• Subscriptions are published to specific roles

• Worth noting that if a user has multiple roles and a notification is applied to multiple roles, that user will receive duplicate notifications
Other uses and in development...

- Scheduled timesheet notifications
- Used as reminders for time submissions and approvals
- Address Book monitoring, checks if a supplier record has correct tax code combinations, if not, notify the financial controller
- Dev - Notify IT that a new user has been created via LDAP and requires configuration
- Dev - Check for irregularities in the P2P processes
- Dev - Interface monitoring
Things to be aware of
Things to be aware of

• Try to get the most recent version
• When using email notifications, you need to have the JDE.INI configured
• This means some batch jobs will email their notifications to users
• Can potentially be managed with mailbox rules
• All notifications are supplementary and cannot replace built in notifications such as the PO Approval emails
Questions
Taking Pride of Place

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