The JD Edwards EAP Comes From Nextworld

How a New Vendor Became the Enterprise Application Platform of an Established ERP System

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INTRODUCTION

The world of enterprise resource planning (ERP) has evolved since its inception in the late 1980s, and so have the software architectures underlying ERP applications. Enterprise application platforms (EAPs)[1] have stepped to the plate to allow enterprises to extend and integrate their ERP applications as well as build stand-alone automation as they see the need for it. This blog post details the needs for EAP and explains how Nextworld has become the de facto EAP for Oracle JD Edwards EnterpriseOne and World.

THE NEED FOR ENTERPRISE APPLICATION PLATFORMS

Traditionally, enterprise platforms were included with the enterprise applications of their respective vendors: The platform and applications were inextricably linked. In the past decade, however, both platform innovation and business processes have forced enterprise application vendors to open their platforms to customers.

Scenarios for EAPs include the following three archetypal use cases (see Figure 1):

- **Extend.** The requirement for enterprises to extend and/or customize their applications is the oldest usage scenario for EAPs. Changing the user experience (UX), adding more fields, changing menus, and so forth are staples of the Extend scenario.

- **Integrate.** Because enterprise applications do not stand by themselves, organizations seek better ways to integrate them with the rest of their enterprise automation technologies; EAPs need to facilitate this integration effort.

- **Build.** The most recent usage scenario for EAPs is the Build scenario, in which enterprises build their own stand-alone applications on the EAP vendor's platform. This scenario has been triggered by business best-practice uncertainty that rules the current phase of enterprise applications.

Figure 1. Extend, Integrate, and Build Are the EAP Use Cases

The Three Universal EAP Use Cases

Extend   Integrate   Build
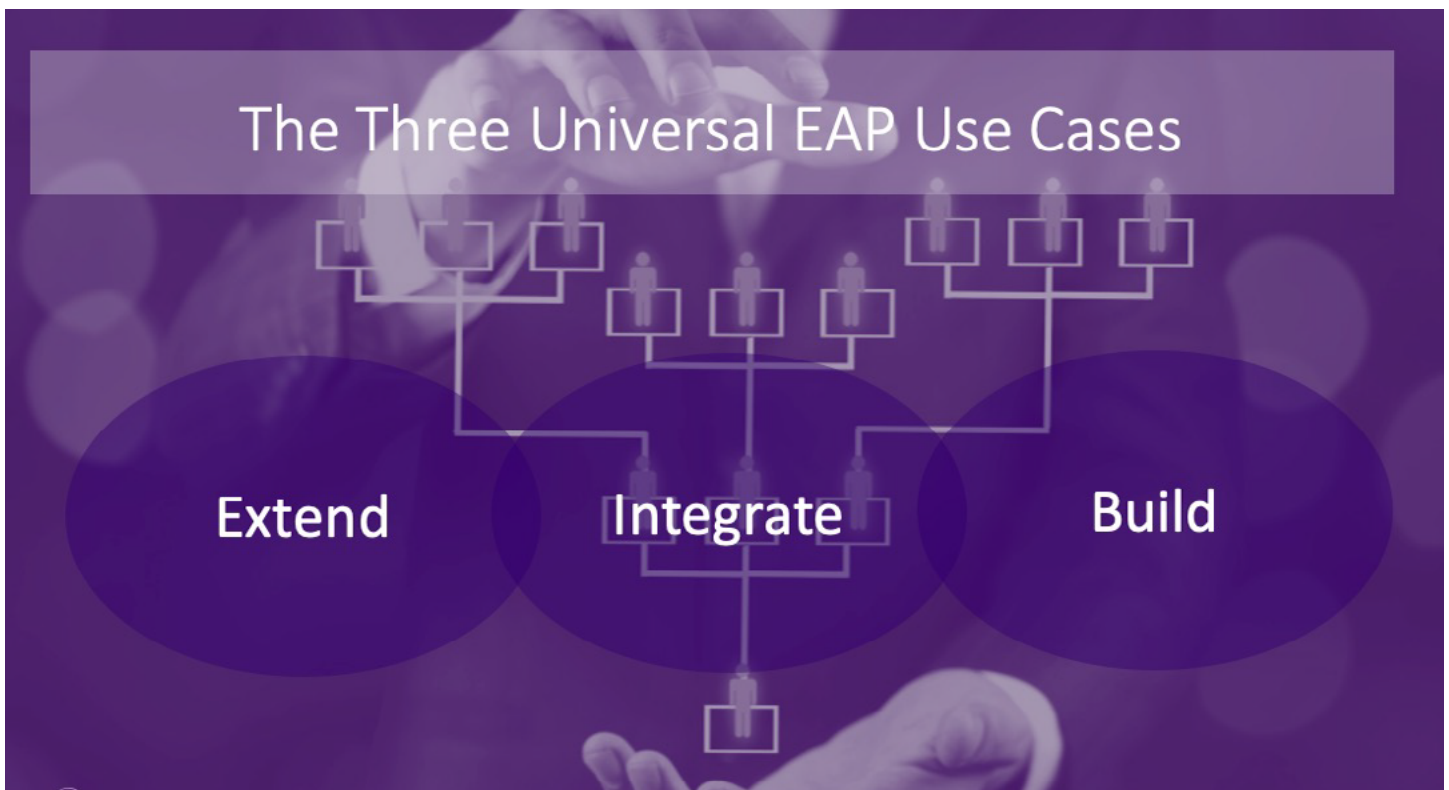
Source: Constellation Research

Another defining market characteristic is the availability of EAPs in the public cloud. The public cloud has changed enterprise IT as no previous technology trend has done, enabling the pay-as-you-go consumption-based licensing business model as well as exceptional resource elasticity.

Oracle acquired JD Edwards as part of its PeopleSoft acquisition in 2005. Oracle has been an exceptionally good steward to JD Edwards with its Oracle Applications Unlimited program, committing itself and delivering continuous innovation to JD Edwards customers, with a current end-of-support deadline of 2035 for EnterpriseOne and 2025 for World.

But while JD Edwards EnterpriseOne customers who are release-current keep receiving new features without having to upgrade, and new features are being delivered as updates to the Continuous Innovation release as well as being rolled up cumulatively into most current releases, Oracle is not changing the underlying JD Edwards architecture. And this architecture has supported Oracle JD

Edwards customers well. Being fair to the architecture, EAP was not something to consider when JD Edwards was first originally built in the early 1980s.

HOW NEXTWORLD BECAME THE JD EDWARDS EAP

Nextworld was founded by ERP industry veterans who wanted to enable enterprises to run their processes better than ever before. They started not with the applications, but with the platform, making Nextworld the only platform-first EAP vendor in the market.[2] Nextworld is close to JD Edwards, because it was founded by (among others) Ed McVaney (the "Edward" in JD Edwards).

The most prominent EAP platform qualities that Nextworld offers today are as follows:

- **100% declarative.** One of the key lessons learned by the original JD Edwards architecture team was to keep its architecture 100% declarative. Practically, that means human readable data (called "metadata" by Nextworld), not compiled code, is used at runtime to provide the Nextworld experience. This gives enterprises key benefits, the most critical being easier upgrades and direct data manipulation of key setup information. In addition, every aspect of the Nextworld platform and all of its applications are built using this approach that is unique among EAPs.

- **100% no-code.** Nextworld does not rely on any coding to operate; its native no-code application architecture leverages reusable and configurable "logic blocks" that dynamically interact with data items, tables, forms, workflows, and reports. These can be created by business users and automated Nextworld EAP applications without requiring any coding skills.

- **Business users are empowered to build AI apps.** Nextworld allows its EAP users to own their automation destiny not only for traditional automation needs but also for the newly emerged AI automation needs. This is a critical capability for EAPs in 2024 and beyond.[3]

Given the joint history of JD Edwards and Nextworld, it is not surprising that Nextworld has launched a connector to JD Edwards (see Figure 2). The result is strong support for JD Edwards for both the Integrate and Build EAP use cases and good support for the Extend use case:

- **Integrate with new data sources.** Nextworld is a platform that is integration-friendly, particularly when it comes to JD Edwards. When JD Edwards customers need to integrate with new data sources, they can do that with a modern approach via the Nextworld platform. No need to touch and expand the venerable JD Edwards connector for those sources; instead, enterprises can build, operate, and monitor those integrations in a modern cloud-based EAP.

- **Build modern applications.** New automation and differentiation capabilities can be built—even by business users—in Nextworld's EAP, faster and at a lower cost.

- **Extend with modern applications.** Although JD Edwards customers must extend their screens with JD Edwards tools and bear the related costs, they can also rebuild these capabilities or use Nextworld's out-of-the-box business applications inside the Nextworld EAP and likely achieve a lower lifetime total cost of ownership (TCO) for these automation capabilities.

Figure 2. The Nextworld Connector to JD Edwards
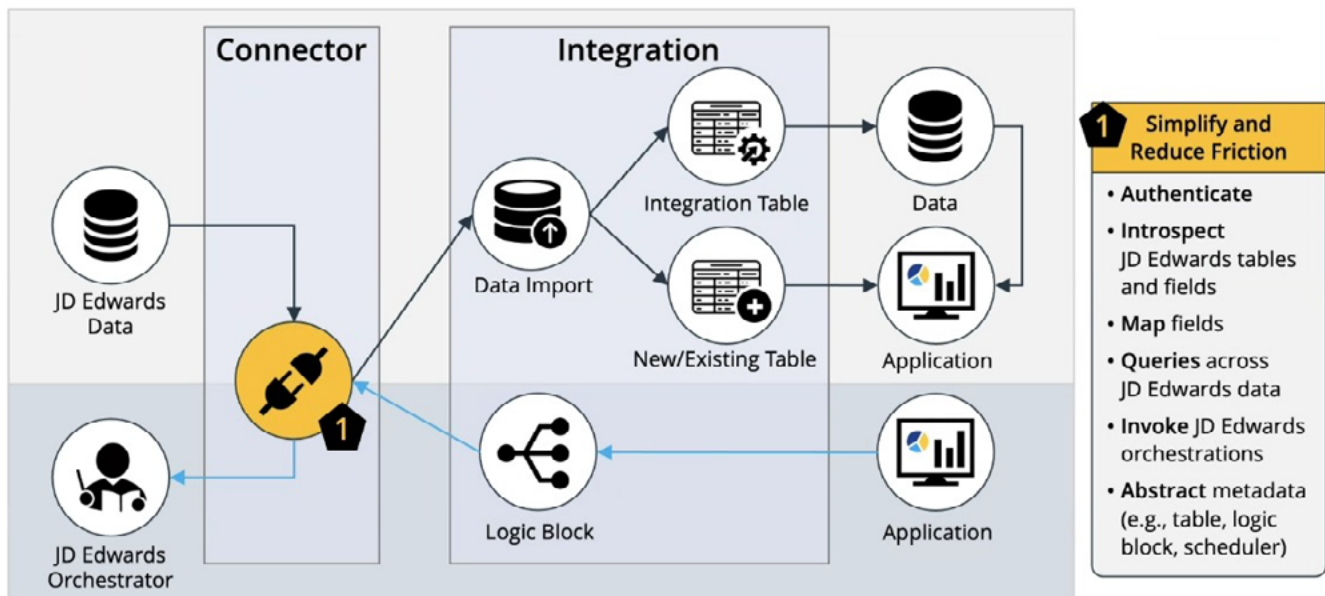
Source: Nextworld

MY POV

JD Edwards has a remarkable lifespan as an ERP product, and Oracle has been a good steward to expand the EnterpriseOne lifespan until 2035. But Oracle support does not include support for the underlying platform of JD Edwards. On the other side, things are usually done better when done a second time around, and the Nextworld team has achieved that in building the Nextworld architecture, which includes lessons learned from the JD Edwards architecture. This unique combination, powered by the Nextworld JD Edwards Connector that elevates process orchestration, makes an extraordinarily convincing case to use Nextworld as the EAP for JD Edwards. Joint customers practically get a new lease on life for JD Edwards, while having the option to use a state-of-the-art EAP platform, which enables no-code, business user–empowering capabilities fueled by AI and paves a clear path to what matters most to CxOs these days: Enterprise Acceleration.[4]

RELATED RESEARCH

For the Market Overview on EAPs, see: Holger Mueller, "Platforms Rule Enterprise Application Success in the 2020s," Constellation Research, February 26, 2021. https://www.constellationr.com/research/platforms-rule-enterprise-application-success-2020s

For a Constellation ShortList™ on enterprise application platforms, see: Holger Mueller, "Constellation ShortList™ Enterprise Application Platforms From Non-ERP Vendors," Constellation Research, February 21, 2024. https://www.constellationr.com/research/constellation-shortlist-enterprise-application-platforms-non-erp-vendors

ENDNOTES

[1] Enterprise application platforms (EAPs) *are defined as supporting the three universal use cases Extend, Integrate, and Build needed for successful enterprise applications. The Extend use case allows enterprises to add additional information and automation to existing capabilities; the Integrate use case allows enterprises to integrate automation with third-party data and processing needs; and the Build use case allows enterprises to build in-house, custom automation that can run stand-alone. For more, see: Holger Mueller, "Platforms Rule Enterprise Application Success in the 2020s," February 26, 2021.* https://www.constellationr.com/research/platforms-rule-enterprise-application-success-2020s

[2] *Nextworld became part of the Constellation ShortList for EAPs on April 16, 2024. See the press release here:* https://www.nextw.com/insights/nextworld-included-in-constellation-shortlist-for-enterprise-applications-platforms

[3] *For the latest EAP trends, see: Holger Mueller, "Key Trends for Enterprise Application Platforms in 2024 and Beyond," May 24, 2024.* https://www.constellationr.com/research/key-trends-enterprise-application-platforms-2024-and-beyond

[4] *Mueller uses the term* Enterprise Acceleration *to mean the need for enterprises to move faster and become more agile. For more, see: Holger Mueller, "Why the C-Suite Must Embrace Enterprise Acceleration," May 2, 2019.* https://www.constellationr.com/research/why-c-suite-must-embrace-enterprise-acceleration

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