



Applications Implementation

A Success Story: Alon USA

Delivering a major application upgrade project ahead of schedule and under budget.

Challenge

Alon USA needed to enhance its JD Edwards applications at several locations. After an initial assessment by Perot Systems, now part of Dell Services, Alon decided to engage our team to implement a substantial JD Edwards upgrade program. Project goals were to integrate with recent technology, enhance application functionality, and facilitate integration between applications through web services. In addition, Alon needed to achieve greater value from previous investments, enhance functionality with new features, and streamline data transfer to and from spreadsheets for better reporting capabilities.

Solution

The upgrade implementation began September 3, 2008 with a projected "go-live" date of February 16, 2009. To achieve this ambitious goal, we used our proprietary Standard Upgrade Methodology. This five phase methodology consists of:

- Assessment
- Pilot/Gap Analysis
- Upgrade Execution
- Transition
- Go-Live/Support

This phased and disciplined approach is designed to anticipate, prevent, and handle project challenges and effectively deliver solutions per plan. At Alon, the JDE upgrade was delivered ahead of schedule and under budget. The Dell Services planning and deployment team included highly-skilled and experienced consultants, each with a rich background in implementing ERP and Oracle-family applications. At Alon,

we used a blended onshore/offshore delivery team to balance relationship management and project supervision with high-performance cost-efficiency. The onshore team consisted of a Project Manager, a Technical Manager, a Finance and Distribution Subject Matter Expert (SME), and a Manufacturing SME. The offshore team consisted of four developers to retrofit code, compile all programs, and unit test all retrofitted and report programs (DW, WW, FASTR, QUERY, and STAR). A key point in the agreement with Alon was that they wanted to turn the majority of the day-to-day implementation processes over to Dell. While Alon did supplement the Dell team with internal resources when needed, they trusted us to effectively and efficiently execute the solution without extensive oversight. We also made high quality use of the time spent with the Alon personnel by keeping meetings short, focused, and to a minimum.

Results

The upgrade project involved more than 100,000 objects and went live on January 26, 2009. Even with a scheduled four-week shutdown during the holidays, the launch date was a full two weeks early and 5 percent under budget. Major factors contributing to early delivery were the efficiencies created by the Standard Upgrade Methodology in conjunction with the effective onshore/offshore service delivery model. Alon now has 20 locations and 300 users running on the new JDE software with applications consisting of Financials (GL, AP, AR, and FA), Distribution (PO, IC, SO, and WH), ECS, and five applications that were custom-developed by the Dell applications solutions team. Other keys to achieving project goals included:

- A strong business relationship between Dell and Alon
- Our company's past experience in the Oil and Gas industry
- The right users were involved in script identification, script creation, and script proofing
- The job was parsed into manageable phases with specific deliverables

- Costs were tracked meticulously and continuously
- Large meetings were kept to a minimum with ad-hoc meetings utilized extensively
- The customer was directly involved in key in decision-making – especially the “go/no go”
- No new functionality was implemented
- A “Winning Environment” was created while making the project fun

Benefits

In addition to meeting Alon’s core business needs, the latest JD Edwards version offered several other advantages, including:

- Providing a platform for integrating new software and functionality
- Service Oriented Architecture (SOA) enabling ease of integration between dissimilar applications
- Interactive PC import/export functionality simplifying the creation of Excel reports saving valuable time during closing and reporting
- Approvals Management System to expedite routing of time-sensitive documents
- Improved Address Book functionality at the business unit level adding consolidation of like addresses in AR and AP
- Supported different tax, currency, contact, action code, and search type defaults by business units
- Enabled web functionality using the GUI interface now built into JD Edwards Worldsoft

For more information about any of our service offerings, please contact your Dell representative or visit dell.com/services.

About Alon

Alon USA is a \$5 billion company based in Dallas, TX. The company’s operations consist of four refineries with a combined output of 250,000 barrels per day, 12 asphalt terminals, more than 300 company-owned 7-Eleven convenience stores, 600 FINA branded stores, and more than 25 licensed distributors.

“The JD Edwards development and implementation work performed by the Perot Systems (Dell Services) team was top-notch. Their dedication to meeting our goals and making the project a success were exemplary through every phase of the project.”

Jim Carpenter
IT Director
Alon USA