



The Chefs' Warehouse

Serving up the right ingredients to facilitate growth

Overview

The need

How can The Chefs' Warehouse ensure that its new foodservice businesses integrate rapidly and meet the company's very high service, payment and on-time delivery standards?

The solution

The Chefs' Warehouse implemented Oracle JD Edwards Enterprise One, providing visibility to inventory management, financial integration, process automation and improvements for operating business units.

The benefit

The Chefs' Warehouse endeavours that chefs' orders will be made exactly as promised. Acquisitions are integrated rapidly, with business improvements for all core functional areas.

The Chefs' Warehouse is a specialty food distributor, with over 30 years of experience sourcing quality products for high-end chefs. With locations in major metropolitan areas across the United States and Canada, the company supplies the finest restaurants, hotels, caterers and gourmet stores in North America.

In the exceptionally cost-conscious restaurant trade, outstanding service is a key differentiator. For the Chefs' Warehouse, this means knowing which of almost 28,000 products it has in stock, and delivering stock to chefs reliably and promptly – as they may have hungry diners waiting.

Frank O'Dowd, Chief Information Officer at The Chefs' Warehouse, explains: "The foodservice industry is a highly competitive low-margin business, and we work very hard to be as efficient and responsive to our customers as possible. We might take an order at 2:00 PM for delivery to a restaurant for that evening's service, and The Chefs' Warehouse's ability to deliver as promised is a key differentiator. We aspire to provide the best possible information on stock, pricing and delivery to make this possible."

Being able to operate as a single company, even during periods of corporate acquisition, is a key enabler of growth. "The Chefs' Warehouse is opening in Chicago. We thank JD Edwards and IBM for their contribution to the great story we have to tell about the company and our service, products and delivery," says Frank O'Dowd, Chief Information Officer at The Chefs' Warehouse.



Solution components

Applications

- Oracle JD Edwards Enterprise One 9.1

Services

- IBM® Global Business Services®
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Finding the right partner

With several ERP and best-of-breed solutions already in use at The Chefs' Warehouse, the company considered options from a number of vendors that would best fit the company's growth strategy.

"As well as choosing the right software, it was critical that we chose the right systems integrator," says Frank O'Dowd. "Selecting the Oracle JD Edwards solution and IBM Global Business Services would hopefully enhance practice and process controls at The Chefs' Warehouse, providing a stable foundation for our entrepreneurial culture."

"As part of the internal transformation necessary to implement an ERP solution, we wanted to bring in strong project management skills and process orientation into the company. IBM offered the deep industry expertise and experience to support this."

Made to order solution

The Chefs' Warehouse was running the General Ledger and Accounts Payable components of JD Edwards. Looking at other ERP solutions, the company chose to extend these applications to the complete JD Edwards suite. In practice, IBM recommended a fresh implementation of the new landscape, designed to suit the future business model.

Frank O'Dowd comments: "Rather than trying to modify what we had in place, we spent time with the business units to learn what they wanted. Based on this insight and the close match of functionality with our needs, we deployed core Oracle JD Edwards financials and distribution modules, and took a phased approach to the enterprise rollout."

"IBM has access to Oracle and is able to address specific needs in a way that few other vendors can offer. IBM understood our business imperatives and how to optimize the software for The Chefs' Warehouse. Additionally, for an international company such as The Chefs' Warehouse, IBM has the ability to scale as needed across multiple locations and phases."

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— Frank O’Dowd, Chief Information Officer,
The Chefs’ Warehouse

Enabling easier expansion

The project goal was to enable the integration of new acquisitions and facilitate The Chefs’ Warehouse’s organic growth more effectively by transitioning them to the standard JD Edwards platform rapidly and easily. This would provide enterprise-level visibility of inventory across the entire family of companies.

The project started by migrating business units in the Southeast, then the West Coast to the core financials and distribution modules. For those units already operating JD Edwards solutions, the migration included renumbering the Chart of Accounts. Additionally, IBM provided assistance with system configuration and optimization, application performance, and the technical services required for installation and deployment.

Frank O’Dowd continues: “IBM brought focus and discipline to the project, including extensive testing and process control, combined with their IBM Vision to Value methodology to implement Oracle JD Edwards. IBM took the lead in assessing the business requirements, identifying the match of solutions and developing the new business processes.

“The IBM team worked very closely with Oracle, providing in-depth technical and business support that enabled us to create a solution that matches The Chefs’ Warehouse’s needs.

“With IBM, we had a partner that knew when to step in to help manage the balance between the entrepreneurial company culture and the best practices necessary to ensure that we gained the best from the JD Edwards solution.”

“The Chefs’ Warehouse depends on its reputation and growth to satisfy busy chefs, and with IBM we can deliver on our chefs’ high expectations every time.”

— Frank O’Dowd, Chief Information Officer,
The Chefs’ Warehouse

Greater business weight

Through organic and acquisition growth, The Chefs’ Warehouse has grown significantly in the space of three years. During that time, the company has continued to build its reputation on its quality of service and efficiency.

Frank O’Dowd explains: “To deliver to chefs on time, The Chefs’ Warehouse needs to know exactly what it has in stock, where, and be able to replenish ingredients from thousands of suppliers. The process must be connected at every point. Specialty food distribution has a dynamic supply chain, and keeping chefs supplied with the best ingredients is a daily challenge.

“JD Edwards gives visibility of inventory, sales and payments through a single solution, and has greatly improved our ability to pay suppliers. Even as the company has grown, the Accounts Payable team proportionately handles significantly more transactions with a similar staff size. Again, for accounts receivable, with JD Edwards a certain percentage of all cash receipts are automatically applied, significantly reducing manual processing and cutting error rates.”

Hundreds of users access the JD Edwards solution, which includes General Accounting, Accounts Payable, Accounts Receivable, Expense Management, Sales Order Processing, Inventory Management, Procurement, User Productivity Kit and One View Reporting.

Hungry for more

With the JD Edwards solution in place, The Chefs’ Warehouse is extending it to each of its existing and new locations in turn. The Chefs’ Warehouse has formed a deployment and integration team that is building in-house expertise and experience, assisted by training and skills transfer from IBM.

Frank O’Dowd says: “To start with, we focus on replacing existing functionality with like-for-like capabilities, to avoid too much cultural shock. As more of The Chefs’ Warehouse migrates to JD Edwards, we are introducing some of its advanced capabilities, such as metrics for purchasing, finance and credit, and advanced pricing. One of the biggest benefits of converting to JD Edwards is the enhanced visibility of data – we can now set key performance indicators for the business based on this integrated data.”

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He continues: “The world is heading online, and by implementing an enterprise-scale solution The Chefs’ Warehouse is laying the foundation for e-commerce, based on the Oracle ATG Web Applications platform. We can now make our total range of products available to our sales people and to chefs, knowing that we are serving them with reliable information.

“For example, The Chefs’ Warehouse has acquired a foodservice company in Chicago, which brings us to this new market. IBM showed us how to use the flexibility of the JD Edwards software to enable new operations rapidly and cost-effectively.”

With more transactional data processed within the JD Edwards solution, The Chefs’ Warehouse is now positioned to take advantage of deeper use of the One View Reporting tool for mining data, as well as integrate JD Edwards’ capabilities with the e-commerce solution.

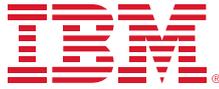
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For more information

To learn more about IBM and Oracle solutions, contact your IBM representative or IBM Business Partner, or visit the following website: ibm.com/solutions/oracle

Watch the IBM Oracle video on Chefs’ Warehouse: <http://ibm.co/18CZMY0>





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IBM-Allee 1
D-71139 Ehningen
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Produced in Germany
March 2015

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