CASE STUDY

A Move to Onshore Application and Technical Management Services for JD Edwards Improves Performance and User Experience

Federated Co-operatives businesses include agriculture, energy, food, and home and building solutions.

CHALLENGE

Federated Co-operatives Limited (FCL) wanted to improve JD Edwards EnterpriseOne system performance and reliability, as well as restore end-user confidence through improved service levels, moving beyond what the incumbent offshore Remote Managed Services (RMS) and Application Management Services (AMS) provider could deliver.

OUTCOME

Superior JD Edwards (JDE) North American RMS and AMS resources from Syntax, backed by Syntax EnterpriseCare®, a proprietary JDE purpose-built monitoring system, delivered a higher level of performance and service for the same spend, built JDE credibility among end users, and allowed FCL to focus on its multi-year JDE rollout to retail Co-ops across Western Canada.

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FLC INDUSTRY: Co-operative HQ: Saskatoon, Canada SUPPORTED SINCE: 2016

About Federated Co-operatives Limited

Federated Co-operatives Limited (FCL) is a wholesaling, manufacturing, administrative, and marketing co-operative that serves independent local Co-ops across Western Canada. FCL fuels, feeds, grows, and builds the region, with FCL profits shared across 180+ local Co-ops.

FCL is a trusted source for home-grown energy solutions, and operations include both upstream and downstream sectors. Co-op fuel, lubricants, and propane products keep daily commuters, family farms, and major industrial operations moving. As a wholesaler, FCL supplies high-quality grocery items to its members' retail locations. FCL also develops private-label products.

As a source of crop inputs, fertilizer, and animal feed, FCL and retail co-operatives provide farmers and ranchers with innovative technologies and solutions that make their operations more productive and sustainable. And FCL home and building supplies are distributed to retail co-operatives across Western Canada to meet the needs of developers, contractors, and DIYers. Learn more at https://www.fcl.crs/.

Syntax Solutions

- Syntax Professional Services (Implementation & Upgrade)
- Syntax Application Management Services (AMS)
- Syntax EnterpriseCare® Monitoring for JD Edwards
- Syntax JD Edwards CNC Managed Services
- Syntax Database Administration (DBA) Managed Services
- Syntax Development Managed Services

Technology Footprint

- Oracle JD Edwards EnterpriseOne 9.2, Tools Release 9.2.5
- Web Servers—Red Hat Linux and Oracle WebLogic
- Enterprise Servers—IBM AIX
- Database Servers—Oracle Exadata
- Multiple Third-Party Applications

JD Edwards Major Functional Area Usage

- Financial Management
- Order Management
- Asset Lifecycle Management
- Supply Management
- Logistics (Inventory Management)
- Application Security

Diverse 24x7 Operations Call for Technical and Service Excellence

Federated Co-operatives Limited (FCL) is a diverse co-operative that serves 180+ independent local Co-ops across Western Canada and includes a Co-op Refinery Complex (CRC), Co-op Ethanol Complex (CEC) and Co-operative Retailing System (CRS). Co-ops operate in four primary areas: agriculture, food, home and building solutions, and energy. FCL also sources and distributes products across all primary consumer-goods lines.

FCL provides a range of services to enhance retail members' capacity and reduce members' cost of doing business, including IT infrastructure support. Mike Smitten, Director of Business Solutions, is responsible for more than 50 business administration applications (and 100+ integrations), including Oracle JD Edwards EnterpriseOne (JDE E1). With an average of 500+ concurrent JDE users, FCL was approaching a rollout of JDE to its retail Co-op community, which would take the potential number of concurrent JDE users into the thousands. FCL's incumbent JDE managed services provider was a large, global provider that relied heavily on a offshore service model and was not meeting FCL's expectations of system performance or service level.

"Our JD Edwards customers are quite varied—from farmers to engineers, so we have to be extremely flexible in how we provide support and approach problems," explained Smitten. "It has to be very community-oriented, in line with our values. At the same time, we're a 24x7 shop and the reliability, uptime, and performance of the systems is paramount." With a goal to improve both performance and service levels for an expanding JDE E1 user base, FCL entered discussions with Syntax to better understand relevant capabilities and resources available.

Thought Leadership with Broad JDE Support Capabilities

Syntax had worked with FCL on a project basis since 2016, establishing a foundation of trust and credibility on which to grow. FCL had followed Syntax's consistent presence and thought leadership in the JDE space and was interested in leveraging that expertise more fully.

Through several discovery sessions, FCL and Syntax looked at everything from the volume of tickets and how long they were taking to clear, to which processes were enabled in the JDE application, integrations, scheduled jobs, how many environments were running, outage schedules, and refresh schedules. Syntax demonstrated an understanding that FCL's non-production environments were just as important as production, due to the sheer number of projects involved, as well as the volatility and monthly burn rate associated with each one.

To address FCL's needs, Syntax proposed Application Management Services (AMS) and Remote Managed Services (RMS) for both JDE CNC, the technical architecture for EnterpriseOne, and database administration (DBA) of Oracle Exadata. Syntax EnterpriseCare® Monitoring for JD Edwards, a

proprietary purpose-built monitoring tool, was an attractive component of the solution that would allow FCL to be more proactive. Applying best practices, including automating routine tasks, would allow FCL to move away from the incumbent provider's manual and time-intensive processes.

FCL appreciated Syntax's global support footprint with in-region capability, so that FCL users in Western Canada could benefit from North American support.

"Syntax has a long history in the JD Edwards space. Their visibility and growth, ability to attract talent, and sustainability in where they want to take JD Edwards is what we were looking for in a partner."

Mike Smitten
Director of Business Solutions
Federated Co-operatives Limited

Proactive Monitoring, Best-Practice Tuning and Superior Service

Federated Co-operatives Limited is a highly customized JDE customer with many third-party integrations, all of which adds to the complexity of the supported environment.

Syntax EnterpriseCare® enables FCL to stay in sync with its EnterpriseOne technology environment by proactively identifying issues and changes that can affect stability and uptime. Continuous monitoring—user monitoring, jobs monitoring, and database monitoring—proactively alerts to any issue or performance problem. For example,

- By creating Single Sign-On (SSO) Monitoring for Virtual User for FCL, Syntax EnterpriseCare® triggers an automated ticket any time the virtual user cannot log on or if it is taking too long to log on.
- In terms of monitoring database blocking, Syntax EnterpriseCare® has made a noticeable difference in expediting problem resolution. "Syntax EnterpriseCare® sends the alert so that we can run the scripts, find the root cause, and kill it off," explained Scotti Whitmire, Senior Database Architect at Syntax. "We're watching it all day, every day."

And FCL uses the Healthcare Score from Syntax EnterpriseCare® to monitor the progress being made towards a "healthier" system and to set goals for the year.

With both FCL and Syntax using ServiceNow as their ticketing software, Syntax performed an electronic bonding (eBonding) integration, thus automating the data exchange between the two and eliminating the need for dual entry.

The Syntax JDE CNC Remote Managed Services (RMS) team improves performance through on-going best-practice tuning. "To automate the package build, which is done daily on different environments," explained Mani Singh, Senior JDE CNC Technology Consultant, "Syntax installed an automated package deployment tool for JD Edwards. This reduces the possibility of human error and creates consistency in the process."

To troubleshoot a pre-existing issue with the database configuration and how CPUs were allocated within the Exadata stack, Syntax and FCL established a triage group. Through remediation to improve data refresh exercises, the Syntax CNC team added helpful expertise. "The attitude was 'we're going to get you what you need.' They understood the real impact on the business," observed Smitten.

Syntax Application Management Services (AMS) supports day-to-day processes to help FCL be more proactive in identifying and resolving potential issues before they become bigger issues. On a daily basis, for example, Syntax assesses Accounts Payable, Accounts Receivable, General Ledger, and Sales to make sure that transactions process correctly as they come into JDE from the mainframe.

"We are a 24x7 shop – we don't shut off. So having a partner like Syntax, with their CNC and technical knowledge helps us achieve our SLAs from a reliability, uptime, and performance perspective."

Mike Smitten
Director of Business Solutions
Federated Co-operatives Limited

Accomplishments

- Syntax monitoring, best-practice tuning, and overall technical knowledge has allowed FCL to meet their SLAs to their customers from a reliability, uptime, and performance perspective.
- A superior service level from Syntax has reduced the volume of service tickets in the system at any one time—reducing the required support hours from the previous provider's average of 1,800 hours per month to 800 hours per month with Syntax, thus allowing FCL to get a higher value.
- Syntax has identified that roughly 80% of the 18+ daily checks that are done after running the Finance integrity reports can be automated with an orchestration. "Having a partner who can come in, evaluate our processes and can build a business rules engine to do the corrections properly is exciting," added Smitten.
- Improved service and reliability is restoring end-user confidence in JDE, as well as in the FCL Business Solutions group and its ability to support the IT infrastructure needs of member Co-ops.
- With Syntax in a Managed Services role delivering superior functional support, FCL can confidently move ahead with its multi-year rollout of JDE solutions to its retail Co-ops.

"Syntax brings a level of professionalism and credibility to our group and to what we're trying to build in terms of day-to-day operational support of our JDE end-users. The front-end functional support people who are dealing with the business are far superior to what we had before. With Syntax, there's a confidence among end-users that wasn't there before."

Mike Smitten
Director of Business Solutions
Federated Co-operatives Limited

SYNTAX

Why Syntax

Syntax provides comprehensive technology solutions and trusted professional, advisory, and application management services to power businesses' mission-critical applications in the cloud.

With 50 years of experience, 700+ customers, and 1,900 employees around the world, Syntax has deep expertise in implementing and managing multi-ERP deployments in secure private, public, or hybrid environments.

Syntax partners with SAP, Oracle, AWS, Microsoft, and other global technology leaders to ensure customers' applications are seamless, secure, and at the forefront of enterprise technology innovation. Learn more about Syntax at syntax.com.

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