

Aclara Services

Increased Uptime & Optimized Performance



Aclara Services

- ▶ Corporate HQ: St. Louis, MO
- ▶ Industry: Infrastructure Solutions

Technology Footprint

- ▶ Oracle JD Edwards E1 9.2

Syntax Solutions

- ▶ Syntax Enterprise Cloud®
- ▶ Syntax EnterpriseCare®

About Aclara Services

Aclara Technologies, LLC, is an international corporation providing device networking, data-value management, and customer communications to water, gas, and electric utilities around the world. With over 500 utilities in nine countries, Aclara is relied upon by many to provide proven solutions while connecting with customers.

For many years, Aclara has relied heavily upon their JD Edwards EnterpriseOne ERP system to support their business. Given the depth of solution offerings which Aclara provides, along with the global nature of their business, understanding their ERP systems is essential to their output.

Managed Services with Syntax

Steve Harris, Vice President of Information Systems for Aclara was looking for a way to improve performance and save money on servicing the Aclara JD Edwards EnterpriseOne ERP system. He turned to Syntax to support these needs, based upon their technical knowledge and ability to efficiently manage JDE environments.

A full-time Configurable Network Computing (CNC) system administrator had been on staff for quite some time at Aclara and as Aclara Senior Systems Analyst, Bob Patterson explained, “Full-time CNC people are expensive, but you’ve got to have that person on staff when you need them.” Harris added, “Even full-time employees have to sleep. They can’t be there all the time – but if the system goes down, you have to be able to get it back up as soon as possible.”

Designed with continuous improvement at its core, Syntax’s Managed Services offering provides both proactive and reactive services to ensure customers JDE CNC environment is always available and running optimally. Included in the offering is Syntax EnterpriseCare®. EnterpriseCare® is a one of a kind monitoring and alerting tool that enables the Syntax managed services team to be more proactive and efficient on issue troubleshooting, while providing IT management and a comprehensive view of the JD Edwards environment health 24/7.

Syntax EnterpriseCare®: Comprehensive Monitoring & Alerting for JDE EnterpriseOne

One key EnterpriseCare® module is a CNC Best Practices Report. Initially, Syntax ran the report on the Aclara environment to create a baseline score. The first finding shocked the Aclara team.

“When Syntax ran the first report from EnterpriseCare®, it turned out that we were operating at only 17% of our optimal system potential” said Patterson. “We had no idea how bad the inside of the system was.”

Heather Schloemann, Aclara Senior Business Systems Analyst, agreed. “It turned out that several times a day the system was losing the connection to the database. We knew it was restarting nightly and that there was a hiccup, but we didn’t know why, and we didn’t know how bad it was.”

Aclara immediately tasked Syntax to help figure out the problem. “It’s amazing how responsive they are,” said Schloemann. “They didn’t just point us in the general direction. They figured out how to solve the problem.”

Syntax helped Aclara rule out issues and point their resources in the right direction. Aclara was finally able to identify an old process that was crawling across SharePoint, building the same comprehensive and unnecessary search every night, while negatively impacting the JD Edwards ERP system.

“We had problems for four or five years that we didn’t have answers for,” said Steve Harris, Vice President of Information Systems.

“The system would hang up, and we were just living with it. We have now identified and solved that problem. It was there day and night for four years, and now it has just disappeared. It is a testament to the continuous improvement approach of Syntax, we haven’t had a problem in weeks.”



Unprecedented Insight & Control of the JDE E1 Environment

Syntax EnterpriseCare®’s monitoring capabilities also helped Syntax make another major finding. Like most JD Edwards clients, Aclara’s EnterpriseOne system has three environments that are to be identical unless under active customization: development, prototype, and production. Syntax soon discovered that they were not identical and that there were more tables and objects in other environments than there were in production.

“We didn’t even know the environments didn’t match,” said Patterson. “It’s like we were programming in oranges to work in apples – it might work, it might not work, but you can’t be certain.”

“We never knew why production didn’t match our prototype,” commented VP Harris. “There were old projects that were hanging out there. Some were opened and started on machines that were long gone from the company.”

“That’s all taken care of now,” said Patterson. “The Syntax team communicates so well, we feel like they’re part of our team, not just another outside service. They take our worries and fears away.”

Aclara now runs Syntax EnterpriseCare® reporting once a month, and the system’s monitoring alarm goes off in both companies whenever a major problem occurs. “They don’t require us to send a ticket when there’s an issue. They see when something happens and they jump in to help us fix it,” said Schloemann. “This tool has critically improved uptime,” says Harris. “We run lean because we don’t have phantom problems that get in our way anymore.”

A Successful Partnership with Measurable Results

The installation of EnterpriseCare® and Syntax managed services achieved the following results:

- ▶ Significantly greater system optimization: “We started with EnterpriseCare® showing us running at 17%,” said Patterson. “Now it’s consistently 95% – and 60% is considered good in our industry. I’ve never seen the system run as well as it’s doing right now!”
- ▶ Integration with a full-service, highly responsive, knowledgeable solutions team has lowered costs and increased confidence in the system. “We did not expect what we were getting,” said Schloemann. “We were just expecting the same sort of regular deployment. Instead, this is a 99.9% improvement over what we had before.” The Syntax Managed Services team is “proactive and comforting,” noted Harris. “Having them on board helps us sleep at night.”
- ▶ Patterson and Schloemann have been “freed up to look at projects and more efficient ways of doing things,” says Harris. “Hiring Syntax has allowed our internal people time to be more proactive.”

About Syntax



Syntax is a leading provider of cloud and managed IT services for Oracle and SAP customers. Syntax has been providing comprehensive technology solutions to businesses of all sizes since 1972. Syntax delivers the best combination of software, infrastructure, cloud, security, migration and application management services to meet the needs of its diverse range of customers in a wide variety of industries. Syntax partners include SAP, Oracle, Amazon, Microsoft, IBM and other world-class technology leaders.