

a GLOBAL focus

ADDRESSING GLOBAL BUSINESS NEEDS THROUGH
SPREADSHEET AUTOMATION TECHNOLOGY

Opportunity and Growth by Leveraging Current Microsoft® Excel Investments

***How spreadsheet automation helps JD Edwards® Customers
flourish in volatile markets and economic challenges***

Belt-tightening and write-downs are how many companies are dealing with the current market volatility and economic instability, reducing both staff and budgets. Smart companies discover opportunity and growth, even in a time of turmoil and retrenchment. Their secret lies in the investments they already have: *their spreadsheets*.

Discover how JD Edwards customers from all industries are using spreadsheet automation strategies to maximize the value of their investments and gain insight into new areas of opportunity, not only surviving, but flourishing in a time of market volatility and economic challenges.

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Introduction:

Painted into a corner

It is undeniable that businesses in all markets are not immune to such economic turmoil, for example the subprime mortgage crisis, fluctuating gas prices and the credit crunch. AIG suffered a liquidity crisis, Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac endured a federal takeover, Washington Mutual, Inc. filed for Chapter 11; these and more financial powerhouses around the world have collapsed, leaving our current market conditions uncertain, to say the least. Trickle down effects have caused the tightening of belts in consumers and businesses alike, both wary about their finances and their financial providers. From small business owners to Fortune Global 500 CFOs and everyone in-between, people are asking themselves the same question, 'what can be done to protect my valuable business assets against losses, volatility and widespread uncertainty?' Many business decisions could be considered reactive to the current economical conditions rather than proactive for the good of the company. Businesses once created and planned as meticulously as a piece of art are now splattered with job cuts, write downs, consolidation and downsizing. This kind of reactive decision-making results in vulnerability and weakness against competition, a volatile market and possible further economic downturns.

Companies should further pursue their decisions as a prudent painter, carefully managing resources so as to provide for the future while using good judgment to consider the consequences of each and every brush stroke. In today's environment the ability to leverage current technology to solve immediate business problems, reduce time and resources and improve financial data management is paramount to making critical business decisions.

The majority of these business impacting decisions are arrived upon the analysis of inaccurate financial data, risking the loss of sales, incurring extra reconciliations costs and even failing to collect receivables. Billions of dollars are lost each year from poor financial data management. Now more than ever there is a need for JD Edwards® customers to redirect focuses to optimizing current spreadsheet investments to guide future decisions. Therefore, the first step to flourishing during economic downturn is to ensure decisions are prepared from accurate and accessible financial information.

Leveraging Your Current Microsoft® Excel Investments: *From beans to beanstalk*

The Spreadsheet. The spreadsheet at its heart is something that accountants fundamentally understand, trust and believe in. Its familiarity and ease of use establishes confidence for accounting users from New York City to Beijing. Spreadsheets prevail over all other approaches due in large part to their logical presentation and intuitive usability.

It is not merely accountants that have discovered the capabilities and ease of use of the spreadsheet. Individuals at every level from administration to CEOs, CFOs, CIOs and presidents, have all discovered the spreadsheets ability to compute calculations, manage databases, and present any kind of data, particularly financial data in an intuitive and understandable manner.

It is no surprise that spreadsheets are the single most commonly used form of financial reporting, primarily due to their ability to communicate all necessary business information while providing insight to support decision making. According to a recent Business Performance Management (BPM) Forum, 76% of respondents use Excel-based spreadsheets heavily in the budgeting, forecasting, reporting and planning.* It is these financial spreadsheets that drive executive business decisions, and their accuracy that determines the effectiveness of those decisions. The ability to grow and flourish during challenging economic periods is directly tied to the company's ability to create accurate financial spreadsheets.

Understanding the Process:

Where do spreadsheets come from?

As the capacity and complexity of spreadsheets continues to grow, a gap expands between those analyzing the financial spreadsheet reports and individuals creating them. As indicated in the BPM survey a massive 84% of organizations are not performing budgeting and financial duties accurately, highlighting significant issues in the financial reporting, planning and decision making processes. Many of these processes revolve around the analysis of financial data, which is reported in a spreadsheet format. How exactly are these financial spreadsheets created and where do they come from?

The majority of financial spreadsheets are developed by users' manually managing and re-keying data from various applications such as their JD Edwards® World or Enterprise One platforms and BI tools into spreadsheets, leaving the accuracy of the data up to the attentiveness of the user. To minimize this time consuming process, spreadsheets are often updated rather than recreated. One mistake on an initial spreadsheet report is carried over to future spreadsheet reports, damaging the data's integrity.

Quality control is often deficient during spreadsheet generation resulting in data that is not 100% accurate, 100% dynamic or current. In addition, processes that rely heavily on human intervention for support such as changing the layout, the format or linking multiple spreadsheets together can corrupt financial data, in which case a single user could make one minor change resulting in the collapse of an entire financial reporting structure.

*BPM Forum® Survey, 2008

Ensuring Accuracy, Quality and Control in Microsoft® Excel: *Putting the ball back in your court*

The spreadsheet is so integrated into every aspect of business it is essential for JD Edwards® customers to eliminate risks and establish control over the developmental process. Ensuring quality control in a dynamic economic environment will redirect business objectives from reactive decision making to proactive responsiveness. JDE® customers should demand of their financial departments the delivery of 'live' business data within a familiar spreadsheet format in compliance with the JDE(R) category codes utilized, with formula and graphs delivered directly from the source ensuring accuracy, quality and control. Achieving these standards can be a reality by combining the existing skills of the JDE users with spreadsheet automation solutions to ensure robust and accurate spreadsheet creation.

Spreadsheet automation tools enable consistency of formatting and functional standards for financial reporting, putting users back in control of spreadsheet quality. Human error from manual intervention is eliminated by automating financial spreadsheets as well as the need to cut and paste data from alternative sources into Excel, while reports can be easily produced and distributed on a regular, real time basis, eliminating spreadsheet changes that occur in the distribution process.

Extensive insight and better integrated information to support critical business decisions is established by retrieving all of the necessary data directly from JDE® World or JDE® Enterprise One. Where a consistent and repeatable development and distribution process is in place, JDE® customers can be confident they have gained control of their spreadsheet environments, thus providing them with the ability to perform concise analysis for determining business decisions both small and large in scale.

Automating Your JD Edwards® Spreadsheets: *Time to start cooking with gas*

There are many tools in today's market claiming to efficiently conquer the task of transferring data from your JDE® platform into Microsoft Excel. Enterprise Business Intelligence (BI) tools are often turned to create a level of quality control over financial data management. These tools have fallen short in realizing the tactical role spreadsheets are required to play for decision makers. The data produced is static and read-only with limited interactive use which places end users in the position of running reports, queries and manually re-keying the data into spreadsheets.

In order to effectively close the gap between those analyzing the spreadsheets and the users creating them, the implementation of spreadsheet automation tools is imperative. The best automation tools integrate directly with the spreadsheet, appearing as the spreadsheet itself.

The best automation tools integrate directly with the spreadsheet, appearing as the spreadsheet itself. By reducing the complexity, spreadsheet automation tools leverage the capacity and power of the spreadsheet not only to enhance the report, but increase the value derived from the information.

Spreadsheet Server, a powerful Microsoft-Excel add-in, brings data from your JD Edwards® application dynamically into Excel Spreadsheets. Spreadsheet Server enables the user to automate spreadsheets directly from the data providing efficient, dynamic and accurate information. Unlike other tools, Spreadsheet Server requires no day-to-day IT support and can be implemented within a matter of hours. Spreadsheet Server for use with JD Edwards offers complete category code compliance and replicates the JD Edwards user security apparatus.

It is difficult during times of economic instability, where layoffs and budget cuts seem inevitable, to consider investing in additional complex proprietary applications to improve business standards. Facilitate flourishing in a volatile market by ensuring the integrity of financial data. Thousands of companies have gained insight into new areas of opportunity by acting on the need to capitalize on the value of their current spreadsheet investments. Implementing spreadsheet automation technology such as Spreadsheet Server provides the JDE® user community the opportunity to leverage significant investments made in Microsoft Excel applications.

With over 4,000 customers in 40 countries, Global Software, UK Ltd. is the No. 1 Worldwide provider of Microsoft® Excel-based automation tools for the JD Edwards® World and Enterprise One Communities. Global's Spreadsheet Automation tools including Spreadsheet Server, Executive DASH™ and Budget Manager are the fulcrum of Global's applications suite.

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