

JACKSON NATIONAL LIFE INSURANCE

Jackson National Life Improves Team Productivity in Multi-Platform Environment

Overview

Jackson National Life Insurance Company (Jackson) is a leading provider of retirement products for industry professionals and their clients. The company offers a diverse range of products including variable, fixed and fixed index annuities designed for tax-efficient growth and distribution of retirement income for retail customers, and fixed income products for institutional investors.

With \$264.4 billion in assets, Jackson prides itself on product innovation, sound corporate risk management practices and strategic technology initiatives.

The company has more than 4,000 associates across the country and several million policies. Darren Kramer is Jackson's director of enterprise architecture, whose team sets the strategic technical direction of the organization and assists with the company's software and tool selections.

ORGANIZATON PROFILE

Industry Insurance

Headquarters Lansing, MI

Website www.jackson.com

Challenge

Jackson has a team of 10 DBAs and approximately 250 developers that oversees a diverse data environment with more than 1,000 database instances in production, featuring a mix of DB2, MongoDB, Sybase IQ, Oracle and SQL Server, that supports primarily web-based Java apps, along with some .Net and some mainframe programs. There are approximately 250 developers and 300 IT operations staff across the company, contributing to the increased complexity of the enterprise.

Initially, the team was using a single-platform solution, but when they expanded beyond DB2, they needed another solution. They also wanted to perform additional functions including ER modeling that the previous tool didn't include.

Kramer's team sought a single tool which could help them consolidate multiple needs, and reduce costs and training time. Key selection criteria included cross-platform support, an IDE to run queries, explain plans, ER modeling, schema compare, and usability. In searching for the ideal solution, the Jackson team considered open source (SquirrelL) as well as commercial products (IBM Data Studio, MongoVUE).

Solution

After originally looking for a multi-platform query analyzer tool, the team ultimately selected Aqua Data Studio (ADS) for its diverse platform support, extensive features, and usability.

The organization has used ADS since 2014, especially its query analyzer, explain plans, schema compare, ER modeling, and advanced DBA tools. They have been particularly impressed with the ease of migration to ADS, and ease of rollout -- which resulted in no negative feedback or deployment issues.

“The fact that we were able to roll this out to such a large number of users across diverse roles without a single complaint speaks to how seamless it was, both in usability and functionality,” said Kramer.

“That’s exactly what you want from a tool like this -- it doesn’t get in your way. It does its job, and it does it well, and you don’t have to think about it. There are lots of different capabilities with lots of different side benefits that were pretty cool.”

Results

Kramer estimates ADS has provided a 30-50 percent cost savings as a result of tool consolidation and by replacing their previous single-platform product. He also notes significant productivity gains due to reduced training time, and reduced expenses.

“We’ve been very happy with responsive support from the ADS team and the ability to make and receive feature enhancement requests. It seems like every new release includes major, substantial features. It’s nice to see that it’s a very actively developed and maintained platform, and continues to be so.”

In fact, Kramer is so pleased with Aqua Data Studio that he included it in an internal hackathon “Hot House” event, where multiple cross-functional teams were collaborating and competing to come up with web and mobile applications to solve actual business problems. This three-day event required each team to present a prototype solution at the end of each day for judging, and the winning proposal will move forward into full development and deployment within the organization.

The flexibility, rich feature set, and support for multiple database platforms within Aqua Data Studio makes it a perfect tool for these types of events. “We prefer to use tools that we are comfortable with for this activity,” said Kramer.

“**[Aqua Data Studio]** does its job, and it does it well, and you don’t have to think about it.

Darren Kramer **Director of Enterprise Architecture**

Increase your productivity with Aqua Data Studio

Aqua Data Studio is productivity software for Database Developers, DBAs, and Analysts. It allows you to develop, access, manage, and visually analyze data. Whether you are working with relational, NoSQL or cloud databases, your data is easily and quickly accessible with Aqua Data Studio. It supports all major database vendors, works on all major operating systems and is localized to 9 languages.

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