

Fast Forward

Hewlett-Packard is bringing speed and precision to the creation of e-business infrastructures to help companies get up and running on Oracle Application solutions

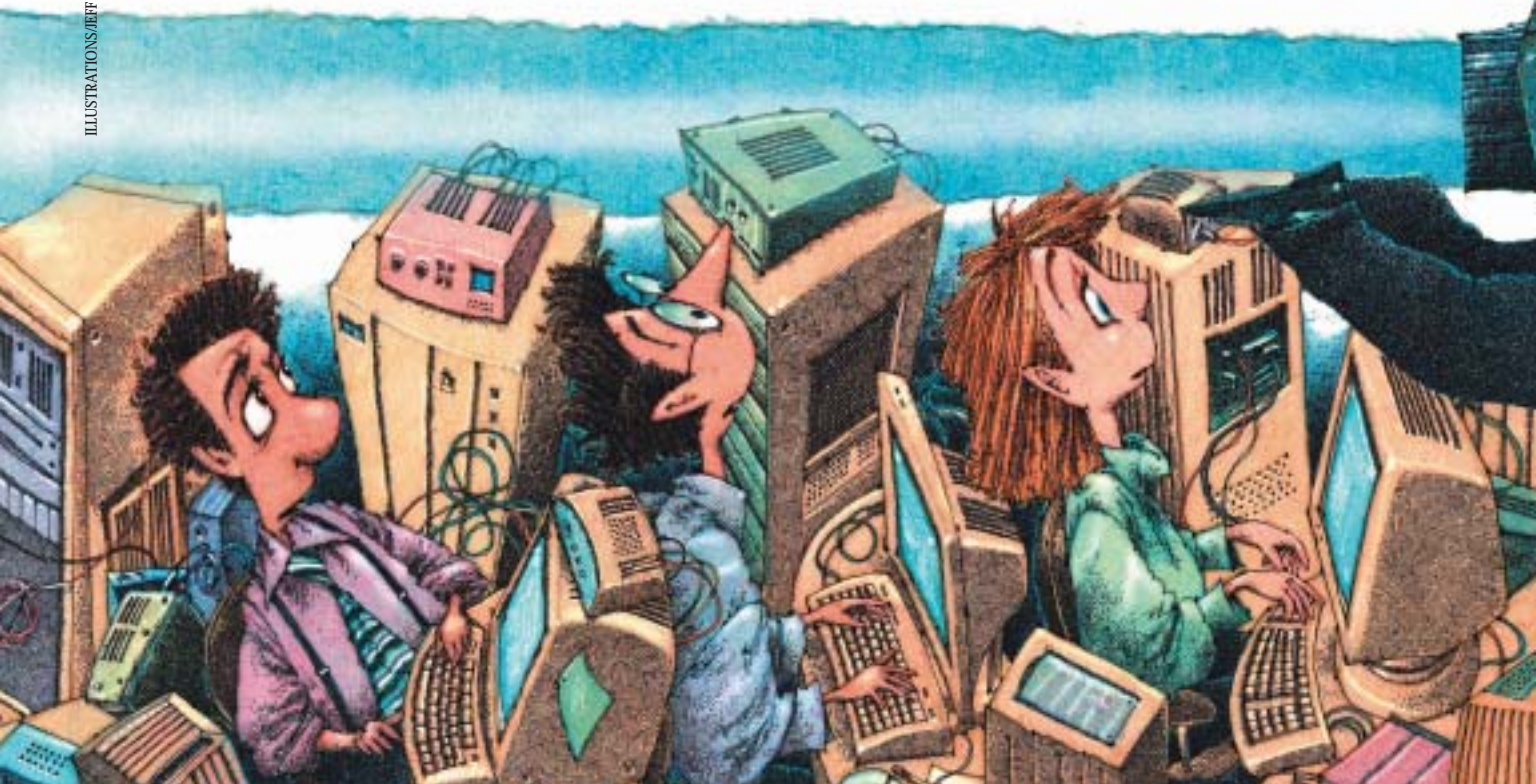
With the release of 11i of the Oracle E-Business Suite, Oracle Corporation is providing new possibilities for companies making the move to e-business—for developing an integrated view of business, focusing on the customer, driving internal efficiencies, and operating on a truly global basis.

But like any sophisticated application, the Oracle E-Business Suite requires a good foundation—the infrastructure of servers, storage, networks, and so on that the software runs on. And today's business realities are prompting companies to take

a hard look at how they go about planning, designing, and implementing those infrastructures.

For companies around the globe, tighter IT budgets mean there is little room for error and delay: The infrastructure for e-business must be designed with precision, from the start, so that it can provide both power and efficiency. And that infrastructure must be put in place quickly, so that the company begins seeing a return on its investment as soon as possible.

In short, companies migrating to Oracle E-Business Suite Release 11i face a dual challenge when it comes



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to infrastructure: “You have to do it right, and you have to do it fast,” says Mark Keever, vice president, CRM Global Consulting, Oracle. “For Oracle Applications such as CRM, a sound infrastructure is critical. Companies have to make sure their infrastructures match their specific CRM needs, and that they avoid delays in implementation. These are the keys to controlling costs and cutting your time to results.”

But doing so has traditionally been a challenge. An infrastructure can involve a complex array of hardware and software—and the need for speed can conflict with the need for precision. But rapidly evolving methods and tools from HP are bringing those two qualities together and simplifying the process of creating infrastructures that can help companies get the most out of the Oracle E-Business Suite.

NEW TOOLS FOR GETTING IT RIGHT

The need for accuracy in infrastructure design is always important, but it is especially so when implementing a powerful, com-

prehensive application such as Oracle E-Business Suite Release 11i. Companies have to make sure they have the hardware architecture to support the application and take full advantage of its features—and that the infrastructure provides the scalability to meet future needs. They have to determine how components best fit together. And they have to pay close attention to ensuring high levels of availability and reliability.

Like most vendors, HP has teams of experts who work with customers to sort through those issues to design infrastructures and total solutions. But unlike most, the company has developed a variety of tools and methodologies that streamline the efforts of those experts.

A key innovation on that front is HP's automated sizing tool, which engineers use to determine the computing power a company will need. HP experts gather detailed information about a customer's requirements and feed it into the sizing tool. “The tool automatically provides information about the memory,

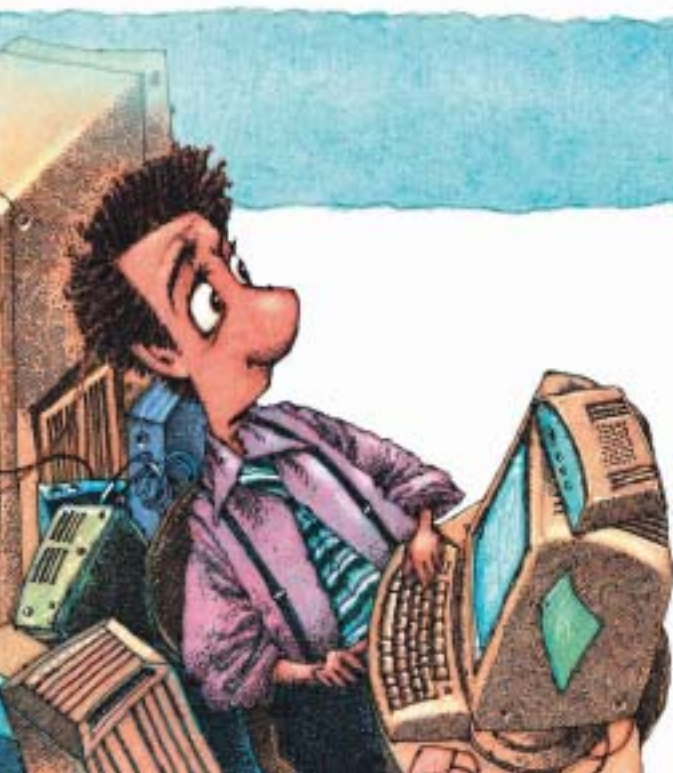
educated guessing. But the tool's outward simplicity masks a complex collection of underlying information, including:

❖ **Research on Oracle products.**

“We have a team that's focused on continually doing benchmarks of Oracle products, so they understand the requirements of those products in terms of memory, I/O, CPU, and so on,” says Keller. “We also have people working with Oracle to make sure Oracle products run well on HP, and to keep us up to date on the latest changes and any new products that might be coming down the road.”

❖ **Customer site statistics.** HP has developed automated tools that enable it to collect actual usage data from companies running Oracle products on HP platforms. “With the customer's permission, we gather all the nitty-gritty details, even down to what an individual user does all day long,” says Keller. “This gives us a lot of real-world information to work with.”

❖ **Feedback from Oracle Consulting.** “We talk with Oracle Consulting people who are



I/O, network, data storage, and servers that will be needed for the different tiers of the architecture,” says Kelton Keller, senior consultant with Partner Consulting and Engineering Services at HP.

That may sound like a relatively simple approach, and compared with traditional methods, it does avoid a great deal of calculation, spreadsheets, and

implementing Oracle on HP systems to find out what best practices they come across, and to learn from their experience,” Keller says.

With that information, HP “has various triangulation points to validate the sizing for a customer,” says Keller. Sizing recommendations that once took two or three days can now be completed in a few hours. And, adds

Keller, "that information lets us continually improve and enhance the tool. The customer can feel confident that they are getting the best solution possible."

ARCHITECTURE ON THE FAST TRACK

The HP sizing tool has provided the basis for another innovation: a recently developed Solution Design Wizard that assists experts in developing a complete infrastructure architecture design, which includes hardware, networking, and middleware components. "The Wizard asks questions that help you derive the appropriate architecture for the customer," says Charles Young, solutions technology manager at HP. "As you answer, it uses built-in rules and logic to figure out what products are needed and how they should be integrated together. So virtually all the engineering is done by the tool—you just tell it your business requirements. For example, you might tell it you need online backup that can be done within a four-hour window. It figures everything out, such as storage capacity and how many tape drives you

engineer goes through in designing an environment for the customer, and do so consistently," says Young. "In a sense we're taking experts and putting them in a box—and the answers that are coming out are what an expert would recommend."

The Wizard slashes the time needed to produce a complete architecture recommendation from a week or so to a few hours—or even minutes. That fast turnaround time helps ensure that companies are getting the right architecture, because the customer can consider more possibilities and iterations in a given amount of time. Young also points out that Oracle E-Business Suite Release 11i typically enables new ways of doing business, and as companies redesign processes, they may need to revisit initial architectural designs. "We can work with them from the time they start their pilot project until they go into production," he says.

"When they change their basic assumptions, it's relatively fast and easy to go back and revalidate the infrastructure."

The Solution Design Wizard is currently used by HP systems engineers and technical consultants, but HP plans to roll it out to the sales force in the field before long. "The goal is to be able to sit in front of the customer and actually go through various what-if scenarios with them, right on the spot," says Young.

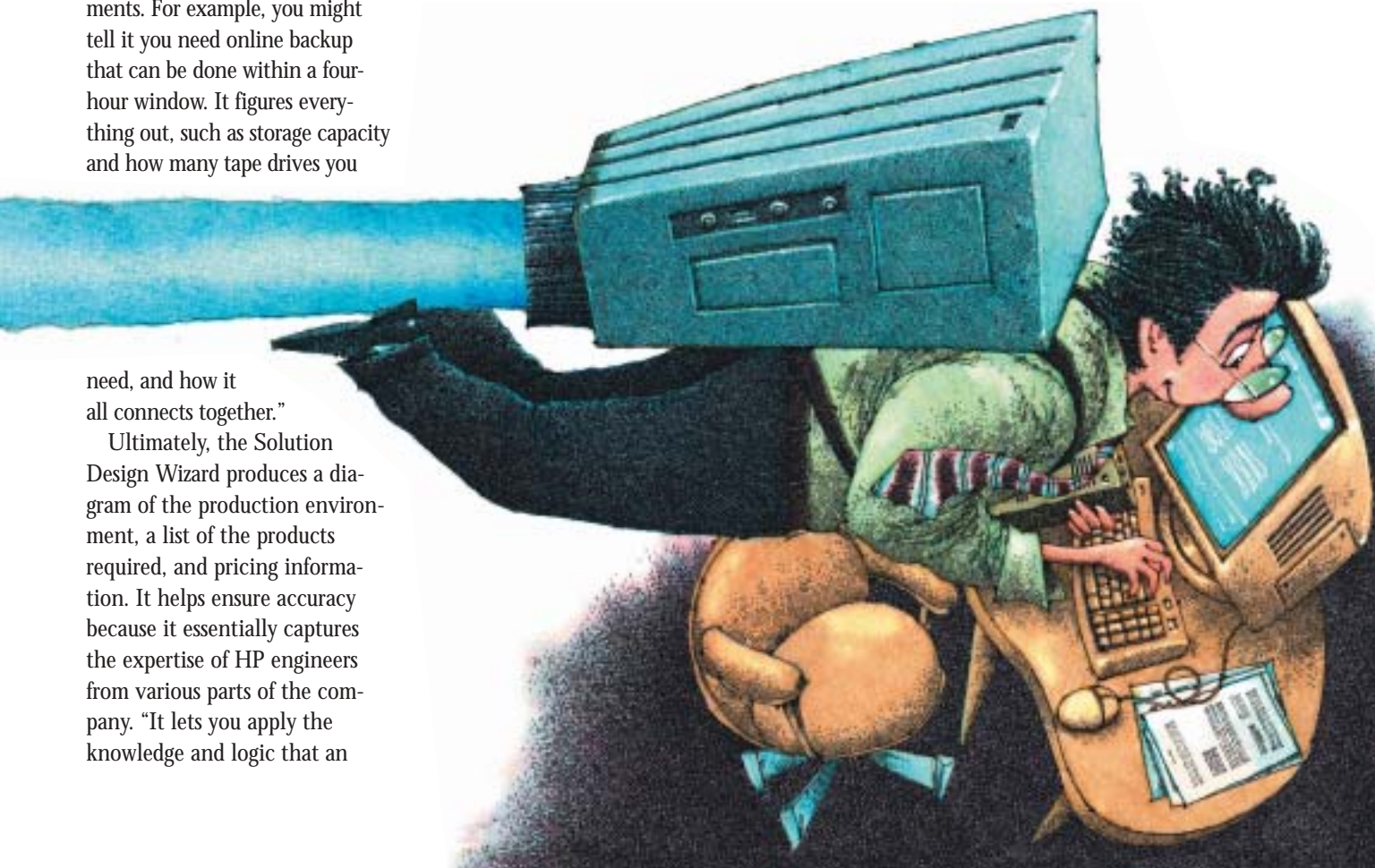
IDEAS INTO ACTION—WITHOUT DELAY

At some point, of course, those infrastructure designs have to be implemented—and that poses another set of challenges. In addition to sizing and solution design work, an array of hardware and software must be ordered and installed. Components must be networked and integrated. And systems must be tested to make sure everything is working right.

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need, and how it all connects together."

Ultimately, the Solution Design Wizard produces a diagram of the production environment, a list of the products required, and pricing information. It helps ensure accuracy because it essentially captures the expertise of HP engineers from various parts of the company. "It lets you apply the knowledge and logic that an



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For more information about HP and Oracle joint initiatives, visit www.hp-oracle.com.

“There are a great many factors to be considered in implementation,” says Manoj Mittal, HP Consulting technical lead. “Everything needs to come into place at the right time and in the right way. If it doesn’t, there can be errors and delays that reduce your ROI.”

Over the course of a decade, HP has honed a comprehensive methodology for orchestrating those efforts. Known as Rapid IT, this approach has been tailored to work with Oracle’s applications as well as those of other vendors. “The basic idea behind Rapid IT is to lay down an appropriate infrastructure as quickly as possible so that the customer can get up and running,” says Chris Lindstrom, a service developer with HP Consulting.

The Rapid IT methodology has four basic phases that cover an infrastructure effort from end to end: *Assessment*, which includes the evaluation of existing systems and sizing work using HP’s automated tool; *Design*, which includes the creation of a detailed architecture; *Implement*, which includes installation; and *Deploy*, which involves testing and rolling systems out across the organization. With Rapid IT, a company’s needs are identified, an infrastructure is planned, hardware is delivered and installed, and a working production system—along with documentation—is in place in a relatively short time.

HP Consulting offers a Rapid IT service for Oracle CRM that is designed to be provided in parallel with Oracle’s FastForward Flows for CRM offering. The combination of these two fixed-price services provides customers with a CRM environment in just three months or less. For its part, HP focuses on providing the infrastructure for Oracle CRM

HP: READY FOR RELEASE 11i

HP brings a number of strengths to bear to help companies make the move to Oracle E-Business Suite Release 11i:

❖ **PROVEN METHODOLOGY.**

HP’s methodology yields predictable, quality results.

❖ **EXPERIENCE.** HP has helped clients around the world implement Oracle solutions on Linux, UNIX, and Wintel platforms.

❖ **ORACLE PARTNERSHIP.** HP has a long-standing, close relationship with Oracle, and the two companies have worked together on a variety of projects over the years. Oracle CRM software was developed and tested on HP servers, and both companies run their respective internal CRM efforts on the HP and Oracle CRM platform.

❖ **DEPTH.** HP offers a wide range of hardware and software for infrastructures. In addition to IT implementation services, the company offers system integration, business consulting, and software engineering services, as well as hardware, software, and network support; asset management; training; financing; and operational support on an outsourcing basis.

and ensuring high performance, load balancing, data integrity, high security, and high availability. “A traditional CRM implementation can take anywhere from six to 12 months,” says Oracle’s Kever. “Finding a way to do it in less than 90 days was important for our customers. Oracle’s FastForward Flows for CRM, when partnered with HP’s

Rapid IT, accomplishes it for both the software and the hardware.”

To help achieve that short turnaround time, Oracle first implements a CRM customer’s application in its hosted environment, which comprises HP servers. At the appropriate time, the application is moved from the hosted environment to the HP production environment at the customer site. Having HP technology in use at both Oracle and the customer site makes the transition relatively smooth.

“We worked with Oracle to come up with an infrastructure that has been tested and configured for the CRM implementation,” says HP’s Mittal. That effort benefited from a close relationship between HP and Oracle. For example, Oracle develops its CRM software on the HP platform, so the two technologies are closely linked from the start. The companies also have a number of shared centers where they test and optimize their technologies.

HP’s Young says that the company’s efforts to enhance speed and accuracy in the delivery of application infrastructures will continue. “I think those qualities are only going to get more important. We plan to keep using these kinds of innovative methods to get better and better at creating HP infrastructures for Oracle technologies,” he says.

Overall, HP’s efforts to streamline these processes help reduce the risk and cost of building e-business platforms. And they help companies focus on their business, rather than their technology, says Chris Lindstrom. “This can be complicated, and it can be difficult. We are stepping in and saying that we can take this off your shoulders—and make sure you have the infrastructure you need when you need it.” ❖