

BUYER CASE STUDY

Building the Agile Enterprise: In Partnership with Oracle

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IDC OPINION

Taconic set course back in 2008 to recalibrate and transform its IT strategy and framework to ensure it could sustain rapid business growth over the coming years. With a focus on core life science solutions, Taconic has been expanding its intellectual property (IP) in innovative lab animal models and in vivo scientific services to facilitate advanced drug discovery. Taconic's challenges with disparate legacy applications presented its leadership with long-term scalability, economic, and operational efficiency concerns. Guided by its CIO, Gary Marshall, who has experience in previous ERP implementations, Taconic undertook a strategic series of steps to accelerate and modernize the company's IT capabilities. Through a carefully orchestrated road map that is unfolding, Taconic has migrated to a fully hosted ERP E-Business Suite solution with Oracle On Demand and is laying a solid foundation to navigate toward a highly optimized, agile business model that will efficiently scale out to service a diverse set of Taconic stakeholders. Key learnings to date include:

- ☒ **Think differently!** IT's value proposition must take on a new operating paradigm, triangulating how people, process, and technology can support business goals, not the other way around. Weave IT into the business fabric by transforming IT into a business process competency center. Rebrand IT to "business first, technology second."
- ☒ **Adopt the wisdom of "leverage."** The dynamics of IT investment have changed. Leverage third-party assets or IP as extensively as possible to mitigate risk and to refocus the organization on strategic activities that enable competitive advantage. Taconic's CIO championed the opportunity to reuse standardized process flows (e.g., Order to Cash, Plan to Production, Procure to Pay) and drive sustainable high performance using hosted AM best practices (e.g., ITIL, disciplined change management). Taconic executives made a transformational decision to "let go" of owning, customizing, and managing their own legacy inventory of applications.
- ☒ **Partner for innovation and growth.** A global Taconic business model is being pursued in partnership with Oracle On Demand. By sharing and brainstorming its long-term vision with Oracle, Taconic can capitalize on its partner's investment strategies in integrating and optimizing the full IT stack. Taconic is leveraging the full Fusion Middleware stack to integrate with essential non-Oracle products, such as its evolving bioinformatics growth platform.

IN THIS BUYER CASE STUDY

This IDC Buyer Case Study reviews how a smaller enterprise in the life science solutions domain is innovatively leveraging off-the-shelf Oracle products and services (Consulting and On Demand) from Oracle's integrated technology stack to focus on business priorities. The document reviews the critical challenges and organizational decisions taken to initiate the move away from disparate legacy applications; corporate strategies used to steer toward adoption of prebuilt business process flows to increase quality, reduce time and cost, and minimize project risk; best practices and lessons learned in migrating to an on-demand ERP solution (e.g., Oracle E-Business Suite); and how respect for partnership can enable both customer and vendor to mutually benefit as they jointly drive adoption of a technology road map that supports scalable, operationally efficient, and agile business models.

SITUATION OVERVIEW

Organization Overview

Taconic, founded in 1952 as a family-owned business, has been building out a specialization in developing and delivering genetically engineered animal models and related laboratory services to the global biomedical research community. Taconic has essentially grown into one of the largest laboratory rodent breeding providers, with expertise evolving in the custom design and generation of genetically modified mice, mouse and rat breeding, and barrier systems, with in vivo models to facilitate the advanced drug discovery process. As of CY 4Q10, Taconic's operation encompasses seven breeding facilities and three service laboratories in the United States and Europe, with a staff of over 1,000 scientists and specialists.

As part of its growth strategy, Taconic acquired Xenogen Biosciences Corp., a subsidiary of Caliper Life Sciences, in 2009. The move enabled Taconic to acquire the full line of Xenogen Biosciences' in vivo service solutions, including gene targeting, compound profiling, phenotyping, and the ability to perform optical imaging studies using real-time imaging technology. The integration of Xenogen services with Taconic's drug discovery solutions broadens the combined entity's range of services (e.g., custom models, contract research, contract breeding, genetic monitoring, and health testing) that it can offer to organizations in the pharmaceutical, biotechnology, academic, and government sectors.

Taconic's growth strategy can be seen in the types of scientific development partnerships it is pursuing. In 2010, Taconic announced it would serve as the exclusive provider of genetically modified models to BioPontis Alliance, a biomedical company investing in early-stage technologies and managing the preclinical translational scientific development process. Taconic is also working as BioPontis Alliance's preferred provider for in vivo clinical studies in the areas of oncology, neurology, and infectious disease.

Taconic is continuing to accelerate the range of programs it offers to the scientific biotech world. For example, the Taconic Transgenic Models (TTM) portfolio includes over 60 in-licensed transgenic mouse and rat models; its Taconic Emerging Models

permits rodent models to be more readily available earlier in the life cycle; and its Taconic Knockout Repository of 3,600 knockout mouse lines and its TKO Rat Repository of ~90 knockout rat lines provide scientists with research tools that can compress the timeline of the drug discovery and development process.

Challenges and Solution

Challenges

In 2007 it became strategically evident to the board of directors and executives of Taconic that to accelerate growth they would need to address the limitations of their existing IT environment. Taconic identified that continued growth would create issues with service levels and product quality — critical elements needed for viable expansion of its biotech business models. Multiple disparate legacy applications, highly customized ERP systems, and many one-off customer-centric point solutions were being supported by a small IT shop, coupled with a major lack of documentation across the portfolio. Slow and expensive software maintenance activities were increasingly consuming the majority of available IT bandwidth.

There was recognition that "we needed to start thinking not like a small company anymore but much more like a big company where processes need to be scalable and repeatable." Moreover, while Taconic might be perceived as small in terms of revenue and size, it was dealing with the complexity of a much larger company because of its international presence and related requirements.

Part of the forward thinking and strategizing centered on the value and need to standardize on a single enterprise platform. While Taconic could have chosen to upgrade its legacy systems and continue adding individual applications to its fragmented application inventory, Taconic saw that its traditional approach to high levels of customization would seriously undermine its future growth.

Selection

As a result, Taconic took a bold, proactive step in evaluating tier 1 ERP solutions from Oracle, SAP, and Microsoft. While Taconic followed the traditional feature functionality criteria assessment (e.g., including needs for multilanguage, multicurrency, and multicompany), it also considered the strategic partnership perspective. Taconic, recognizing that feature and functionality are moving targets, used a selection process that took a close look at the strategic, technical, and operational components of choosing a partner. Strategically, Taconic assessed each partner's long-term product strategy and ability to execute against its vision, looking at the solution over a 10- to 15-year horizon. A tactical view examined whether the vendor could offer Taconic all the components necessary to help Taconic leverage the full value of the solution (e.g., consulting, support, hosting, training). Operationally, the feature functionality set was analyzed to ensure conformance to business requirements. Overall TCO, including licensing costs, maintenance and support, infrastructure hardware, and refresh costs, was also factored into the decision.

Taconic viewed the ERP selection as part of a long-term strategic decision, assessing the strength of each solution for its performance and optimization across the stack,

from application down to middleware, database, and operating system. The importance of being able to integrate each package with other critical third-party products, like bioinformatics software (e.g., Laboratory Information Management Systems [LIMS]), was also fundamental to Taconic's decision. Taconic was seeking an open, secure, flexible, and optimized standards approach, factoring in needs to meet specialized functionality with standardized commercial business requirements over the long term.

Taconic's decision process was not just about selecting a best-of-breed suite of applications — it was about addressing the full IT environment and driving toward a complete service-oriented architecture (SOA) that could meet Taconic's core business needs with robust integration flexibility. Oracle's ERP E-Business Suite won out in the final selection. This reflected Taconic's perspective on the value presented by Oracle's highly optimized architectural fit as well as its own estimated lower TCO projections (including hardware and maintenance and support) over the life of the Oracle contract compared with other tier 1 ERP options.

The biggest hurdles in the decision-making process centered upon internal acceptance of prebuilt modules as alternative industry best practices to existing Taconic methods. While there were clearly processes unique to animal breeding, there were many others (e.g., Order to Cash, Procure to Pay) that could take advantage of off-the-shelf assets to accelerate and minimize the cost of product deployment. A gradual shift in mindset away from heavy package customization to an open-minded attitude toward using prebuilt vendor IP assets was part of the journey and debate ahead.

Solution

The solution identified in 2008 was built on the full Fusion 11g technology stack including Oracle Real Application Clusters (RAC), the Oracle Business Process Management Suite, and other Oracle software assets. The multiphase rollout focused on full-stack optimization to meet the functionality, scalability, availability, and reliability targets that were critical to Taconic's future growth strategy.

Hosted Application Management — A Risk Mitigation Strategy

Taconic looked at the all-in-one Oracle On Demand strategy as a way to minimize the high transformational risk and to refocus internal IT toward critical business needs (e.g., starting with business process optimization). In taking the long view, Taconic not only looked at the need to manage the risk of the initial "lift and shift" onto another vendor's platform from an integration, test, and deployment angle but considered the overhead required to manage and maintain a complex ERP system.

The decision to host with Oracle On Demand would facilitate an all-in-one Oracle strategy, where Taconic would partner with Oracle across the life cycle of ERP requirements. This would encompass Oracle Consulting for up-front implementation and migration support, along with Oracle On Demand for 24 x 7 monitoring, change management, patch, and upgrade support. Rather than pursuing a multipronged vendor strategy, with one vendor driving the ERP implementation and another taking on application management, the single-vendor strategy would simplify the transition and allow Oracle to work jointly with Taconic through any issues related to handoff, implementation, or management.

Furthermore, the all-in-one Oracle strategy would allow Taconic to take full advantage of Oracle's long-term (organic and inorganic) investment strategies. Riding Oracle's coattails, Taconic could choose to adopt cutting-edge Oracle technology as soon as released, supporting its own internal objectives to accelerate innovation, agility, scalability, and reliability. Direct access to Oracle's consulting and support teams (for migration and long-term architectural planning) would support Taconic's functionality transformation. On Demand capabilities would mitigate the risk of the technology transformation, letting Oracle bring its hosted AM best practices and IP to the engagement (e.g., use of ITIL, causal heuristics, predictive monitoring, quarterly executive reviews, rolling 52-week planning). By engaging with Oracle's On Demand group, Taconic would have access to disciplined change management, planned patching, and upgrades to enable it to achieve higher levels of sustainable service reliability and availability. As dynamic elasticity is deployed in the On Demand model, where resources can be rapidly provisioned (e.g., CPUs, memory, storage), Taconic can choose to take advantage of such proven and innovative next-generation hosting and software management capabilities.

Oracle Product Deployment

The original plan was quite ambitious in scope, with intentions to migrate all existing ERP functionality to the Oracle E-Business Suite across multiple geographies at one time. As Taconic and Oracle worked through the project planning and stages of implementation, changes were made, but timelines remained aggressive. The base ERP system was rolled out over a 12-month period, followed by successive deployments of the E-Business Suite CRM modules (e.g., Marketing, TeleSales). Taconic and Oracle Consulting leveraged Oracle Business Accelerators (OBAs) for E-Business Suite, a set of deployment tools and methodologies incorporating leading industry best practices and the standardized documentation, to deploy quickly (e.g., between 60 days and 90 days) as shown in Table 1. The functional rollout of the Oracle E-Business Suite included implementation of HR, financials, discrete manufacturing, order management, CRM, and daily business intelligence.

TABLE 1

Oracle Product Deployment Timelines

Oracle Product	Time to Deploy	Implementation Date
Oracle Base ERP (12.0.6)	12 months	November 2009
E-Business Suite, CRM — field sales	90 days	December 2009
Company acquisition	60-day conversion	March 2010
E-Business Suite CRM Marketing	90 days	March 2010
E-Business Suite CRM TeleSales	90 days	June 2010
E-Business Suite upgrade (12.0.6 to 12.1.2) and Oracle Fusion Middleware upgrade (10g to 11g)	60 days	September 2010

Source: IDC and Taconic, 2011

Results to Date

Taconic has made significant progress since it took the decision back in 2008 to migrate to the Oracle E-Business Suite solution. Taconic has completed its significant "lift and shift" from its legacy ERP platform to Oracle and has implemented additional CRM functionality while standardizing on a platform that is helping drive global visibility into financial and operational performance. On top of ERP system stabilization has come the rapid restructuring from a geocentric governance model to a divisional framework. To facilitate and harmonize similar activities occurring across different locations, all animal breeding locations have been aggregated into one business unit, while genetic engineering functions have been consolidated into another business unit.

Benefits to Date

Taconic has looked at its success in ERP migration as part of a broader holistic IT transformational initiative. External customers are realizing hard and soft benefits (e.g., real-time access to inventory online, improved Taconic responsiveness, higher quality of service). In parallel, Taconic is tracking its own strategic progress, with return-on-investment (ROI) targets that tie into revenue growth, realistic cost avoidance, and cost reduction over a longer period of time.

Taconic has approached the ERP implementation not just as a "lift and shift" short-term project but as a multiyear journey with long-term strategic improvements targeted over time. While many companies try to front-load multiple hard-dollar benefits to justify accelerated ERP ROI claims, Taconic has taken the long view and is planning for realistic cost reductions and cost avoidance over a longer 5- to 10-year horizon. As Taconic's CIO comments, one mistake many people make is that "when they do the original ERP implementation, they wash their hands of it and say 'we are done' — no, you have just taken the first step on a lifelong journey!" Benefits include:

- ☒ **Strategic benefits:** Taconic has implemented functionality that is now giving it competitive advantage. For example, Taconic, unlike its key competitors, offers its customers real-time access to inventory online. The plan is for Taconic to increase the level of customer-centric information provided (e.g., detailed account data, order flow status) with its customer base, improving upon the way it does business with its customers.
- ☒ **Revenue increase:** CRM visibility is providing Taconic with better management insight into the working of leads through the opportunity sales cycle. Visibility into deals that were won or lost and why is helping reshape and tighten up sales strategies.
- ☒ **Cost avoidance:** The common platform is showing its scalability value. For example, accounts receivable has been able to increase the volume of invoices processed per employee, scaling from a few hundred to several thousand invoices per employee. The platform has enabled a companywide restructuring by division, which is expected to drive additional operating cost savings, streamline processes, and meet the ability to scale without additional overhead.

- ☒ **Cost reduction:** Taconic is building expertise in using the new ERP solution suite, thus beginning the gradual reduction in SG&A expenses, which are projected to fall by approximately 30% over the next few years. The overall IT solution will reduce complexity while streamlining the order management process, enabling Taconic to meet its customers' accelerating timelines in the drug discovery and development process.

Part of the continuous process of improvement will involve tracking to metrics to see where additional enhancements can be made. Some of the benefits are even unexpected and reinforce the value of thinking creatively, looking at how this new platform can be leveraged beyond the more typical IT strategies. For example, the Oracle solution set will support the evolution of the quality management program (including ISO certification) at Taconic — enhancements that can be easily integrated into its long-term strategic agenda, without significant major capital outlay.

Next Steps

Taconic's move to leverage Oracle package solutions (e.g., ERP, CRM) tightly integrates with its broader plan for building out a unified Taconic vision. The Oracle E-Business Suite will remain the underpinning commercial platform for driving all facets of the Taconic business. Taconic is planning to implement the full Oracle technology value proposition by leveraging the full Fusion Middleware stack to extend the process improvements beyond the Oracle E-Business Suite. Rather than cherry-picking a few process accelerators, Taconic is stepping up to leverage the value of the complete Oracle integrated technology stack, with Fusion Middleware serving as the foundational layer. A non-Oracle bioinformatic platform will be integrated into the mix, along with personal productivity tools and customer self-service Web capabilities.

While the Oracle E-Business Suite is already implemented, process optimization will continue to be a major activity to smooth out ERP flows, improve upon configurations, and incorporate automation using BPEL and the SOA suite of tools. Plans are in progress to track process metrics as well as to implement a broader quality management system with ISO certification.

As part of the Fusion beta group of On Demand customers, Taconic is evaluating the Fusion applications, with the goal of learning how to maximize the integration capabilities of a fully SOA-compliant environment. Part of the strategy is to ensure that as Taconic moves certain functions from internal management to self-service via the Web, the security architecture will be sufficiently robust to support data privacy and protection requirements.

FUTURE OUTLOOK

The buildout of Taconic's next-generation platform is slated to begin in 1Q11, with a target completion by end of 2012. This will ultimately become a showcase for the type of hosted business model that can be built and managed by the Oracle On Demand cloud services business unit.

Technology Road Map

Taconic's technology road map closely mirrors the Oracle strategy, taking advantage of a platform road map that is fully compliant to a service-oriented architecture. Taconic's approach to leveraging Oracle technical expertise and investments as they are released to market enables it to further capitalize on the value of its Oracle partnership. Taconic's migration to Oracle E-Business Suite On Demand and its deployment of Fusion Middleware and SOA Suite 11g are spearheading the process automation and ultimately the shift toward management by exception as it scales with reliable and consistently executed processes.

The goal is not to customize new functionality but to use APIs and noninvasive SOA strategies to enhance functionality and create a blended suite solution. Taconic's emphasis will be to leverage as much Oracle functionality as the company needs to present a highly progressive, functionally rich, flexible, low-cost development framework that will support its requirements for "innovation, agility, scalability, and reliability."

Seeing Beyond Accelerators — Triangulating People, Process, and Technology

Taconic's progress and future course are being enabled by much more than a traditional "lift and shift" ERP deployment. Taconic is in the process of creating the people, process, and technology triangle to drive the business value to the end customer. Rather than getting caught up in the game of implementing a few individual prebuilt software modules (e.g., for ERP, HCM), with IT only responsible for delivering to a technology road map, Taconic is weaving IT into the fabric of the business organization itself.

As Taconic's CIO explains, "Creating value is about process management — providing the ability to standardize, optimize, integrate, and automate — the latter being the epitome of the return on investment." Bringing together the technology components of continuous process improvement (e.g., Lean, Six Sigma) with BPM competencies can drive much higher levels of productivity, quality, and performance than are achievable in a manual environment alone.

IT Roles Shift

To drive the shift of IT roles to the next level, Taconic is working on the transformation of IT's role into a business process management (BPM) competency center, where IT will work intimately with lines of business. The focus and function of the IT organization change from being an in-house data-centric group to a group primarily engaged in managing partners (hosting, network, infrastructure) and improving upon business processes by working with key business stakeholders (e.g., finance, research community, quality control). IT will fine-tune internal processes and automate processes for its scientific community through the use of automated BPM and BPEL modeling tools. The journey ahead will entail blending processes that will traverse the multiple product line functions, streamlining and enhancing the way customers are serviced through the Taconic 2.0 portal. Desktop management will remain in-house as Taconic maintains very close ties with its regional locations to ensure that technology needs are understood and well supported.

ESSENTIAL GUIDANCE

As businesses strive to increase agility, lower cost, and improve quality of service, leveraging effective partnerships with external providers to accelerate process and technology change should be considered. While there is always a sense of urgency tied to optimizing ERP systems, it is essential to foster new thinking, especially as new processes radically improve or even change the way business is conducted. Key takeaways from this Buyer Case Study include:

- ☒ **Unlock IT's real value proposition:** Take a cue from Taconic and step up to navigate the people, process, and technology triangle to meet the end-customer value proposition. While this may feel like IT is being turned on its head, it facilitates the integration of technology within the business context, providing the key to unlock IT's real value proposition.
- ☒ **Champion the vision:** First, establish a clear vision of your company's customer value proposition. Second, develop an IT value proposition that supports the end customer. Third, select an executive leader to champion and integrate IT within the business framework. Teams across geographies need to align their perspectives as they embark on both strategic and tactical modernization initiatives like ERP migration. The introduction of leading business process flows via Oracle Business Accelerators (e.g., Order to Cash, Procure to Pay) means enabling the organization at large to think differently about how it fine-tunes processes, from the front end of the supply chain to the product quality, safety, and agility in service delivery. Building consensus and bridging together different stakeholder interests are part of the challenge and the movement toward agility. As highlighted in IDC's 4Q10 outsourcing survey, nearly 30% of 430 respondents identified difficulties in building consensus and cooperation from stakeholders across their company.
- ☒ **Partner for success:** A reliable partner can bring a set of proven reusable frameworks and best practices to a solution. Look for a partner that is willing to help identify the most constructive and expeditious ways to support long-term growth plans. Give the partner the opportunity to debate its solutions with you as it brings in its end-to-end IT life-cycle expertise. It is important to recognize this is not a "customer-vendor transactional relationship" but a carefully orchestrated partnership where both parties are committed to managing risk and addressing problems as a team. This strategy can enable you to redirect your organization to focus on its internal core competencies, spearheading innovation to create competitive advantage. In IDC's 4Q10 outsourcing survey, 34% of respondents identified themselves as being challenged by the inability to focus the right people and resources on strategic initiatives. This issue is front and center for many organizations.
- ☒ **Motivate and support:** Help the internal organization accept the impact of change on existing business practices. Ensure that staff are given adequate development and training sessions so that they can effectively integrate or shift to new methods. Do not presume that a transition from instructor-based training to elearning, for example, will be an immediate success in support of change. Incentives and motivational support can often help drive early adopters and ultimately pull in the laggards over time.

- ☒ **Recognize you are not unique — personalize, don't customize:** Look at noninvasive ways of enhancing functionality so you can protect the value of upgrades that your vendor provides. In the world of ERP transformation, pay careful attention to maximizing value of package standardization: leverage prebuilt interfaces and partner technology, process, and industry expertise to drive quality and speed of execution into implementations. As Taconic's CIO clearly spells out: "CEMLIs will kill you! — personalize, don't customize."
- ☒ **Don't cherry-pick — consider an integrated technology stack:** Part of the learning from this Buyer Case Study is "not to cherry-pick" and implement individual components in a slower suboptimal way but to consider integrating across the technology stack (in phases) for a viable value proposition. The question is how to best manage risk as one leverages a combination of third-party services and in-house talent.
- ☒ **Accept that your small business is an "enterprise in the making":** Stop thinking like a small company. Promote a wider collective thinking that thinks big. If you want customers to perceive you as a large company — and if you aspire to become a large company someday — it's imperative to adopt the same operational best practices as the companies you strive to emulate. As noted in this Buyer Case Study, it is important to heed the signs that your company may be outgrowing its older financial and business management practices and applications. Despite the added costs associated with implementing an ERP solution, the costs for delaying can be still higher.
- ☒ **Take a process approach:** Every organization is a collection of processes. Avoid the departmental "stovepipe" approach and bring business flow accelerators in to help standardize and optimize after implementation. Start with the easier package implementations including HR, procurement, and financials.
- ☒ **Evaluate hosting for end-to-end life-cycle services:** Consider the consolidated value proposition of linking ERP migration or upgrades with a broader hosted application management contract. Multiyear outsourcing or hosting engagements can also support cost-saving initiatives, with the option of spreading ERP project implementation costs over the full term rather than incurring all costs up front.
- ☒ **Develop a realistic business case for ERP implementation:** While most companies try to front-load multiple hard-dollar benefits to justify accelerated ERP ROI claims, such as cost reduction, cost avoidance, revenue growth, and increased profitability, this is often overstated in the short term. Be careful not to load all the value into a "lift and shift" approach but to plan for cost reductions and avoidance over longer 5- or 10-year horizons. As Taconic's CIO advises, "An ERP implementation is not a one-shot deal. It is a way of life."
- ☒ **Establish a POC:** Invest in a proof-of-concept or skunks workgroup to develop a mock-up of advanced platform services. This supports experimental thinking and helps the organization push beyond the mainstream of standard best practices to identify potential opportunities for competitive advantage.

- ☒ **Talk to industry veterans:** Turn to industry peers or recruit experienced senior executives who have done previous ERP implementations. This can accelerate the path to how best to engage a third party or how to negotiate contracts that can better match financial capabilities. It is always helpful to look for "lessons learned" to avoid repeating mistakes that other companies may have learned the hard way.
- ☒ **Fulfill market needs:** The true worth of any transformation project lies in its ability to not only meet immediate customer needs but sustain and improve upon target market satisfaction levels over time. While meeting ROI targets is always critical, this is not the only measure of success.

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