



E3 Upgrade – Why and Why Now?

As any retailer managing their inventory with the use of JDA's E3 products knows, these programs are immensely complex. This holds true for Advanced Warehouse Replenishment (AWR) as well as Advanced Store Replenishment (ASR). If you have been using these tools for any length of time without changes, it can seem daunting to contemplate an upgrade of one or both of these systems. Time for justifying the potential benefits, testing subsequent to the upgrade, training, hardware assessment and possible upgrade... all of these seem like complications better left for another day.

The fact is, however, that the very complexity of the E3 system is its best asset. It's a robust and diversely capable suite of tools. Undoubtedly you've already seen many times over the impact E3 has had on your inventory – improved in stock, faster turns, reduced carrying cost, etc. And with every new release from JDA, its abilities grow.

Version changes are the opportunities for JDA to introduce new functionalities into their code. These are the enhancements that you in the user community requested through your discussions with JDA, the enhancements you voted on in your yearly SIG meetings. For example, in recent versions of AWR, JDA has added the ability to replenish from warehouse to warehouse in your supply chain and improved the notes function. In ASR JDA has added to the functionality and improved the efficiency of History Exceptions. Over the last few years JDA has worked on integrating both ASR and AWR directly with other programs in the overall portfolio: PMM, IDEAS, SPI.

The question becomes, how completely and effectively is your company using E3? How many functions and features of the program are being underutilized, or even ignored completely? There can be many reasons for this:

- Problems with the program, big or small, that you have found or your fellow users have warned you about.
- Exception conditions (with less than desirable results) that have yielded the “halo effect” of dismissing the positives in the majority of cases.
- Lack of time on the part of your inventory analysts to do the “fancy stuff.”
- General distrust in or misunderstanding of the results E3 has given to date.

Regardless of your company's culture or segment, your analysts have at least this one thing in common: they're going to do what needs to be done to get the job accomplished. If they don't like the results of an E3 allocation, they'll push product manually. If they can't get the Plans module to work, they'll use holdouts instead. If some of the SOQs generated by the system every morning aren't realistic, they'll comb through the numbers and make them right.

You may have a person on your team (maybe even you yourself) whose job it is to troubleshoot and address these challenges. If so, you know that bugs creep into the system, reducing overall efficiency. Chances are though, if you're at least a couple of years behind in your upgrades, you aren't familiar with half of the actual issues resolved and enhancements available since the particular version of the program you're using was installed.



In addition to added functions in new versions, some of which are listed above, there are dozens of patches that are introduced throughout the year in service packs. In a survey of patches from ASR version 2005.1.0 through 2005.1.7, there were 281 separate fixes. Included in that list were fixes to nightly processing, the Events module, Security, Truck Split and a dozen other areas of the system. Your company was likely not impacted by all of them... but you were probably impacted by many of them, some you didn't even know about.

By doing an upgrade, there could be literally hundreds of improvements to your installation of E3. The value of the information E3 gives to you would be increased. The time required by your users to handhold the system would be reduced. Your ability to truly fine tune your use of the system – with Events, Calendars, Master Pack, Daily Profiles, etc. – will be increased. Remember, it isn't doing one thing 100% better; it's doing 100 things each 1% better that yields the big results!

Isn't it time you did an assessment of your current environment? See whether or not it's the right time for your upgrade and discover where and how the improvements could improve your bottom line results.

About RPE

RPE is a leading consulting services provider exclusively focused on the challenging needs of the retail industry. RPE provides strategic consulting services, systems management, implementation, integration, modification and system upgrades for retailers worldwide. With a time-tested and proven record in retail, RPE delivers services on time and on budget. Areas of expertise: Manhattan Associates' Integrated Planning Solutions™, Integrated Logistics Solutions™ and Warehouse Management solution; Microsoft RMS; Island Pacific; and the JDA® ASP, PMM® and MMS® applications, E3®, Arthur® and Intactix®. For more information, visit <http://www.rpesolutions.com>.
