

HRIS Integration with Enterprise Recruiting Software



Who Says It Has to be Difficult?

An ADP VirtualEdge White Paper

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1. HRIS/Recruiting Technology Integration: The Need

Many enterprises are looking for an effective way to combine their HRIS and Recruiting systems into an “end to end” solution for Human Capital Management (HCM). This will yield several benefits:

- Standardized job descriptions kept in the HRIS system could be “imported” to the recruiting system, thus eliminating a need to re-key all of this information.
- HR would not need to maintain two separate lists of job titles, salary grades, etc., with the attendant problems of keeping them synchronized.
- Information captured by the recruiting system during the hiring cycle could be passed to the HRIS system when an employee is hired.

When done correctly, integration between HRIS and recruiting systems can reduce duplicate work and allow vital information to be managed in the most appropriate place. The HRIS system can “drive” the Recruiting system’s job description library and populate requisitions with the correct details. The Recruiting system can “drive” the input of basic employee information when a hire occurs. The savings can be substantial for enterprises with large volumes of employees, resumes and jobs.

Unfortunately, the traditional view of HRIS/Recruiting system integration is, “Integration is very difficult, so enterprises must devote lots of money, time and resources if they want to get results.” But is that true?

2. What Kind of Integration is Needed?

It is important to review the business processes and information involved in the HRIS integration plan: is the HRIS being used to populate a job catalog in the Recruiting system, or is the Recruiting system notifying the HRIS of new hires – or both? Will data be moving in just one direction or two?

In some non-HR business processes, such as Supply Chain Management, there is a need for instantaneous, or “near real time” integration – where orders and inventory levels are updated and passed between applications using online transactions. While the real time nature of these processes seems appealing, it is overkill for the needs of the Recruiting function.

The method of choice for HRIS/Recruiting technology integration is data exchange via Import/Export operations.

The nature of Staffing and Onboarding is such that an “on-demand” or scheduled transfer of batched data is sufficient to satisfy all business needs. For instance, the HRIS system may only need to be updated with new hire information once every pay cycle, or the job catalog is updated infrequently. That is why the method of choice for HRIS/Recruiting Technology integration – by virtually every vendor providing the capability – is Data Exchange via import/export operations.

Data Exchange is the preferred method because:

- It supports every practical business use of the data.
- It can (if the right approach is used) be very easy for the IT group to manage, but requires only modest IT resources for implementation.
- It better preserves the integrity of each system.
- It eliminates the risk of one vendor’s application corrupting the data in the other vendor’s database.

However, there are differing technical approaches to Data Exchange – and that’s where huge differences in time and cost can come into play.

3. What is the Real Cost?

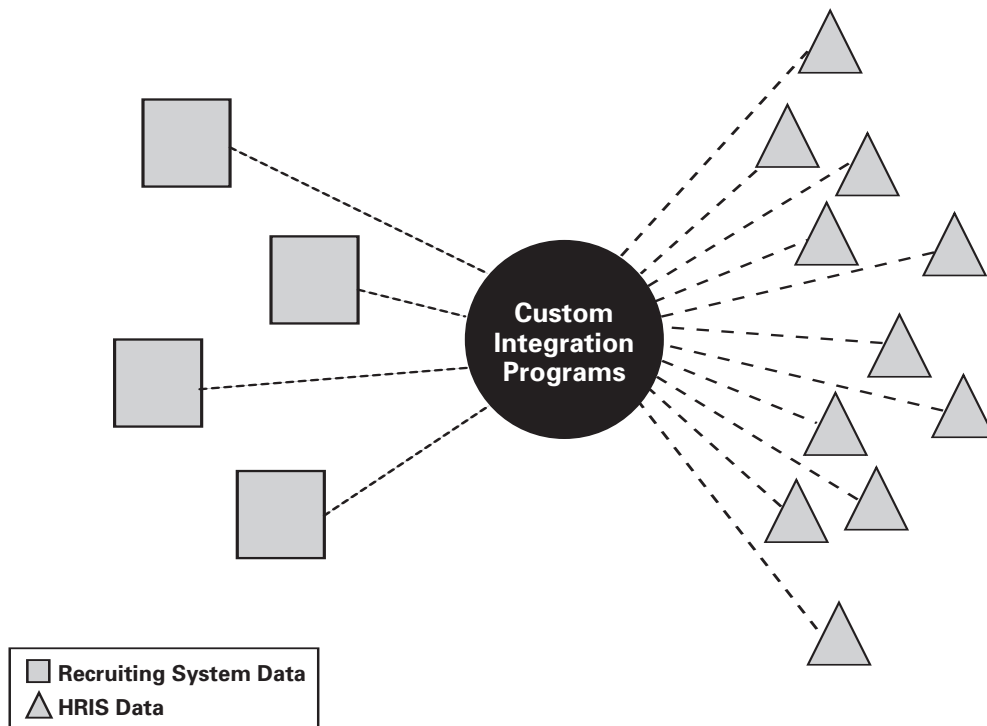
Some HRIS/Recruiting system integration projects have been fraught with problems because they use an approach that is much more costly and produces a less usable result. When evaluating alternatives, it is vital to know which approach a vendor’s product employs. Interestingly, even when the Recruiting software comes from the HRIS vendor, the integration architecture is not always the best or the most cost effective!

There are two major ways for HRIS and Recruiting systems to be integrated via the Data Exchange method:

1. Customization
2. Configuration

Most vendors employ the Customization technique, whereby a team of consultants and programmers create an “integration module” that imports and exports the required data between the two systems. Unfortunately, this approach reinforces the image of HRIS/Recruiting integration as a difficult, time-consuming and costly endeavor.

**Figure 1:
Custom Integration is Complex and Costly**



Customers are told that there are several reasons for Customization, and several benefits. First, since every HRIS system is different, and each customer's needs are different, the argument is that custom programming is necessary. Second, the enterprise will enjoy a solution that is tailored to its specific business needs. Third, it is necessary to write programs to map specific data elements between the two systems.

Unfortunately, the Customization approach creates more problems than it solves. For instance, whenever the enterprise's needs change, a team of consultants and programmers will again be required to update the integration module. Secondly, customized programming projects are always a long and high-expense route to take.

It is true that given enough time and money, a team of programmers can create a custom solution to just about any integration problem. But considering that it is your company's time and money being spent, can't a better way be found?

The real reason why many vendors employ the Customization approach (besides the professional services revenue it generates) is due to the technical architecture of their ATS product. Simply put, the only way many recruiting products can integrate with an HRIS is by writing a custom program – because their technical architectures are just too inflexible.

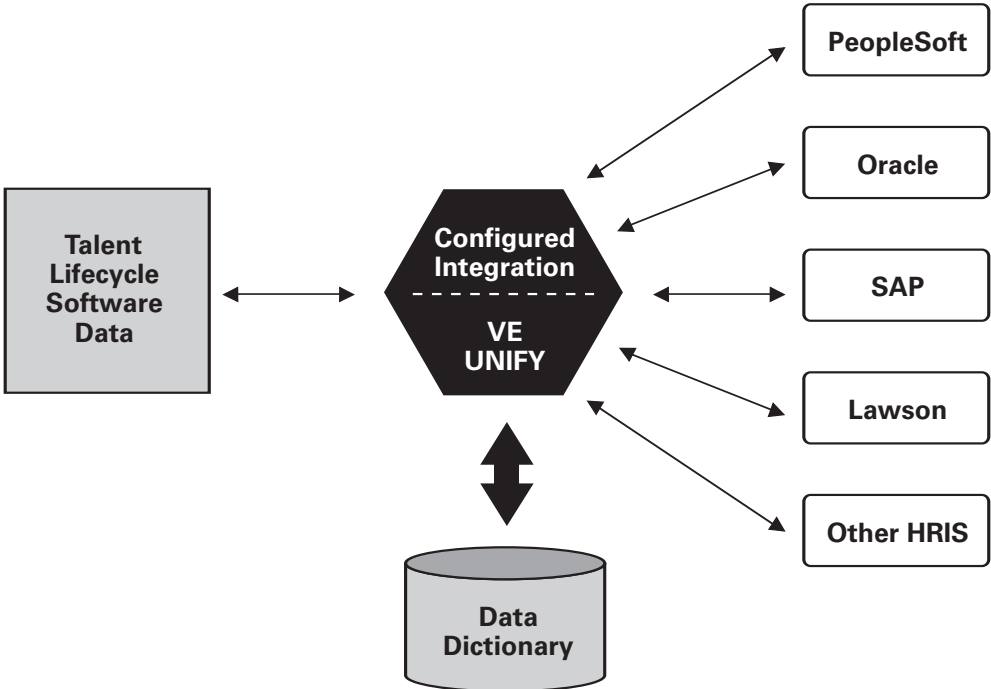
4. The Configuration Approach

The alternative to Customization is Configuration. Under this approach, no programming is necessary. The integration solution is “configured” using built-in options in the recruiting software architecture. The benefits are substantial: much faster deployment of a solution, and the ability to refine and change the solution as business needs evolve. In fact, its advantages make the Configuration approach compelling, because there is no integration scenario done with the more expensive Customization approach that cannot also be accomplished via Configuration.

Configuration, however, is only possible with Enterprise Recruiting Software such as ADP VirtualEdge’s Talent Lifecycle Software, because it requires the presence of an advanced technical architecture. At the heart of this architecture, is the concept that the recruiting software itself – not just the integration piece – must be highly configurable.

In ADPVirtualEdge’s Talent Lifecycle Software, virtually every informational component is table-driven and can vary. There are no hard-coded job descriptions, titles, codes, salary grades, or other information that cannot be provided, if need be, from an external source. Even the labels of HR data fields on the user interface are table-driven. A central Data Dictionary keeps track of how the overall system is configured. This architecture makes rapid change possible, and eliminates the need for custom programming projects that are so common to traditional ATS software.

Figure2:
Configured Integration is Easier to Implement



Its integration component, Unify, has the capabilities needed to map data between ADP VirtualEdge's Talent Lifecycle Software and virtually any HRIS. The system includes a means of configuring the integration solution, as well as processes to import and export data as needed.

To set up an integration solution with Unify, only two things are necessary: configuration of integration details in the Data Dictionary and creation of a simple HRIS Interface module. Internally, data can be exchanged using XML or a legacy file format. Data exchange can be either scheduled or on-demand. When working with ADP VirtualEdge's Talent Lifecycle Software, no programming is needed – everything is accomplished through the configuration of options. Enterprises can begin exchanging data with PeopleSoft, SAP, Lawson, Oracle, and other HRIS systems in just a few days rather than weeks or months.

5. It's Your Money

Integration with an HRIS system can be cost effective – instead of costly. With the emergence of Enterprise Recruiting Software with newer, more configurable architectures, companies can enjoy the benefits of integration without the huge overhead and up-front costs that the Customization approach entails.

When considering alternatives, you need to ask whether a vendor recommends custom programming as part of its HRIS integration strategy. If the answer is yes, then you will know that a Customization approach is being proposed – and you should ask how long the project will take and how much it will cost.

It is true that HRIS integration has historically been expensive and difficult. But with modern technology architecture, you can get better results more quickly, easily, and cost effectively by using the Configuration approach to integration.



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