



Service: Legacy Migration Toolkit
Business Process Engineering
SOA Design/Implementation

Industry:
Education/
Retail

Engagement: Business Process Management
In-House and Cross-Site Mentoring
Full Lifecycle Project Implementation

Amentra Revolutionizes LPA Operational Controls and Visibility

Instilled best practices and led process improvements to enhance project delivery

AFTER AMENTRA

- Centralized management of regulatory compliance
- Near real-time feedback on Labor costs
- Near real-time operational visibility throughout organization
- Enhanced Business/IT alignment
- Cutting edge IT skill sets

BEFORE AMENTRA

La Petite Academy, the nation's largest privately-held early childhood education company, has a tremendous responsibility to both parents and licensing entities to provide safe and effective supervision of children in its care. To ensure that all such companies are providing proper care for children, federal, state, and local laws and regulations specify detailed employee-to-child ratio requirements based on the skill level of the employees and the age of the children being supervised and associated penalties for non-compliance. However, La Petite Academy's legacy technology platform, based on Visual Basic applications in each of over six hundred locations and a central, AS/400-based platform, required custom development each time any of the regulations changed and made centralized reporting for compliance and management for process efficiencies a near impossibility.

La Petite Academy wished to develop a new system on a new platform to address these regulatory needs and overcome the following major challenges:

- **Regulatory Compliance** – La Petite Academy needed a system that would allow them to assist each of their locations in complying with ever-changing federal, state, and local employee-to-child ratios at all times, even as these ratios changed at various times and attendance levels changed at each location from day to day.
- **Control of Labor Costs** – La Petite Academy also needed to optimize staffing efficiency at all locations at all times, ensuring that no more or no less staff were on duty than required. This was necessary to help proactively manage La Petite Academy's largest cost – labor.



- **Operational Visibility** – Proactively managing and directing staffing levels for districts and regions covering thousands of square miles required management to get a remote, near-real-time view of each academy’s staffing levels and compliance. The existing systems only uploaded data from the locations at the end of each week, long after the information was actionable.
- **Business/IT Alignment** – La Petite Academy performed all development from a regional development center located hundreds of miles away from corporate headquarters. Therefore, an effective means of cooperation and shared vision between the business users and the IT staff needed to be forged along with reuse of corporate business process and technical assets at both coarse and fine-grained levels.
- **Business and IT Skill sets** – The internal IT staff possessed extremely valuable knowledge about La Petite Academy’s business processes and needs, but were constrained by their legacy skill sets. In order to provide the most cost-effective development of business processes and systems going forward, La Petite Academy needed to retain this knowledge while modernizing the overall project lifecycle process of the organization and the skill sets of their business and IT staff.

AFTER AMENTRA

In order to align with regulatory requirements, La Petite Academy was forced to focus significant energy on compliance. Amentra partnered with La Petite Academy to help not only meet those regulatory demands, but also to shift the focus back to building its business using the new system as an opportunity to modify the entire business and IT environment. Amentra utilized a service-oriented approach in a way that provided:

- **Centralized Management of Regulatory Compliance** – All regulations are now stored centrally and re-checked against current attendance levels at each location in near-real-time, reducing administration costs and allowing for real-time updates in response to regulatory changes. Locations that are not in compliance get immediate feedback from this system, allowing managers at each location to quickly take corrective action.
- **Near Real-Time Feedback on Labor Costs** – The same system checks staffing levels at each location to ensure that the location is not over-staffed, thereby inappropriately increasing labor costs. Again, managers get immediate feedback when this occurs, enabling quick corrective action.





- Near Real-Time Operational Visibility throughout Organization – Operational management at all levels within La Petite Academy now have the ability to monitor staffing and attendance in near-real-time through a web-based interface. Locations that are under or over-staffed are immediately flagged for inspection by district, regional, and executive management. This creates an environment of benevolent oversight and enforcement of corporate policy. The technical infrastructure utilizing a service-oriented architecture (SOA) that provides these capabilities (e.g., data transfer, automated analysis, web-based reporting) was specifically designed to be reusable and easily extensible to support future needs such as centralization of billing, payroll, self-service human resources management, etc.
- Enhanced Business/IT Alignment – Amentra helped La Petite Academy adopt a modernized software development methodology and life cycle that allows for a process driven governance strategy for easier support of distributed requirements gathering and analysis while providing business-level visibility into the development processes throughout all phases of the project lifecycle. This will help reduce La Petite Academy's ongoing software development costs while supporting faster time to market for new systems.
- Cutting Edge IT Skill sets – Amentra utilized its industry leading signature mentoring methodology to re-tool La Petite Academy's business and IT staff, providing them with a deep understanding of best practices and approaches for its new product infrastructure. Amentra met a critical success factor for this engagement by mentoring the business and IT staff to a point where they are able to independently develop new business processes, enhance the existing systems and build comparable new systems. This ensures that they are not leveraged on consulting services in the future.

In order to truly move to the next level, La Petite Academy and Amentra engaged at a true partnership level. La Petite Academy recognized Amentra's unique mentoring model was perfectly suited to its needs. Amentra was engaged to provide mentoring to La Petite Academy's business and technical staff to establish best practices, identify best of breed tools and technologies, and to lead La Petite Academy in the design and implementation of the Optimal Staffing project. The Amentra team was simultaneously responsible for architecting, designing, and implementing the foundation for La Petite's SOA approach that can be leveraged now and in the future.





TECHNOLOGY USED

- JBoss Server & Portal
- Fair Isaac Blaze Advisor (Business Rules Engine)
- Cape Clear ESB
- Information Builders WebFOCUS (Business Intelligence)
- Spring Framework
- Hibernate
- Java Server Faces
- Java Messaging Service
- Microsoft SQL Server 2000
- Microsoft Access 2000
- Quartz Scheduler

APPLIED TECHNOLOGY & EXPERTISE

Amentra used its successful implementation experience in developing enterprise scale SOA with a wide variety of technologies and platforms to help La Petite Academy analyze its present and future need. Amentra worked with La Petite management to select a world-class, J2EE-based enterprise computing platform consisting of the JBoss JEMS platform (specifically JBoss application server, JBoss Portal, Hibernate, and Java Server Faces). In addition, the Cape Clear enterprise service bus and the Fair Isaac Blaze Advisor business rules engine were selected with Amentra's assistance to complement the existing investment in Information Builders WebFOCUS business intelligence suite. Amentra helped La Petite Academy to achieve even greater ROI by utilizing this predominantly open source platform that provided proven enterprise level SOA implementation success, a superior support mechanism through JBoss, and a significantly lower total cost of entry and overall total cost of ownership.

Amentra led the entire La Petite Academy IT team through mentoring sessions at corporate headquarters and at the regional development office. These sessions included mentoring in products, process, and best practices for developers, analysts, system administrators, and quality assurance specialists. Amentra also worked to help appropriately manage expectations for the new platform and application with key business stakeholders at executive and operational levels.

La Petite Academy's business analysts worked with Amentra to analyze and define requirements for a project addressing the oversight of ratio compliance. Once the requirements were set, Amentra worked with the architecture group within La Petite Academy to define the architecture of the enterprise La Petite Academy service-oriented architecture (SOA). Amentra also worked with the project management organization to help define a standard SDLC that provided the proper control points to define an agile yet complete governance strategy for the organization. Additionally, Amentra mentored the La Petite Academy developers, moving them from legacy programming methodologies and languages to a modernized toolkit while providing them with the expertise in the entire Software Development Lifecycle (SDLC). This will allow them to expand the existing architecture and build new systems on the platform without wholesale reliance on outside assistance. Led by Amentra, La Petite Academy's developers were retooled and a SDLC was put into place, all of which contributed to the successful development of the system that yielded the business success described above.

To find out how Amentra can help you please call 804.355.9360 or visit www.amentra.com.

Riverside on the James
1001 Haxall Point
Suite 701
Richmond, VA 23219
804-355-9360
www.amentra.com

