



“Synchronologic service is out of the ordinary. They met our needs with a rare and distinctive commitment. Their service to us made it clear that Synchronologic is a premier vendor, and that is a rating I don’t make lightly.”

Greg Sorensen,  
Vice President of Technology

## Department 56

### Department 56 Connects with iMobile Data Synchronization

For collectibles and giftware manufacturer Department 56, every day is a holiday. The company sells a variety of popular pieces that bring whimsy and nostalgia to holiday celebrants and collectors alike, primarily through gift, specialty, and department store retailers in the US and Canada. Department 56’s lighted village pieces and ornaments, for every holiday from Christmas to Halloween, have generated a secondary market, collectors clubs, newsletters, and avid fans all over the continent and even in Europe.



Retailers are eager to please the fervent fans that await seasonal releases and new editions with a passion known only to collectors. In this competitive environment, information and timing take on heightened importance, and can have a notable impact on value. The giftware manufacturer who can respond efficiently to that customer demand inevitably gets the competitive edge.

In spite of the urgency of accurate information, data exchange between account representatives and Department 56 corporate offices was not satisfactory. “We had to upgrade our Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) application to improve speed and service,” said Tony Malarz, Database and Technical Architecture Analyst. “Our plan was to give everyone in the corporate office, the warehouse, the showrooms, and sales representatives on the road the same information management capabilities.”

That’s where Synchronologic’s iMobile Data Synchronization came in.



Industry	Applications	Products
Consumer Goods	Strategic sales force automation	iMobile Data Synchronization

## iMobile Data Synchronization: the Only Choice

Department 56 set out to upgrade their technology and with it, the processes for data exchange. They chose OneWorld® by J.D. Edwards® as the ERP application to unify every department of their enterprise and bring more effective business processes into play. The next step was finding the right synchronization tool to empower their mobile team and accelerate critical information exchange. Success depended on a smooth marriage of synchronization and ERP software.

The criteria in selecting a synchronization engine were dictated in part by OneWorld. Department 56 had already settled on IBM's AS/400® for the central server. The J.D. Edwards application supported only Microsoft® Access® for the mobile client database.

"There's a lot of nice technology out there, but the key question was, 'Can the software replicate the mobile Access database instances with minimal intrusion into our ERP application?'" said Dan Doenges, Manager of Technical Services. "We found only Synchrologic could do that cleanly."

### Addressing Change

"iMobile Data Synchronization helped us navigate through a number of problems," said Mr. Malarz. "Some of the problems were application-related, while others had to do with change in general. In every case, Synchrologic helped us move forward."

Department 56 wanted to use their new ERP application with minimal adjustment. While OneWorld had some built in replication capabilities, they didn't meet the company's requirements. So Department 56 solved the first problem with the

selection of Synchrologic, the only option that would integrate smoothly.

The second problem was facilitating the change for sales reps. The new ERP software broadened the functionality available to account representatives in

***Synchrologic's iMobile Data Synchronization was the only application we found that could mobilize our database with a bi-directional, bandwidth-sensitive, data sync that wasn't intrusive to our ERP software.***

*Dan Doenges,  
Manager of Technical Services*

the field so they could do all the basic things that corporate headquarters did. New capabilities and new technology meant reps had to master new skills.

"Our sales reps had always focused on the end goal—productivity for the company—and syncing their data with our central database was a secondary activity to them," said Mr. Doenges. "A changing competitive environment brought about by evolving technology, and the new capabilities of iMobile Data Synchronization made synchronizing more significant."

In the beginning, some reps were not installing ERP application updates and fixes, which were cumulative. That meant that synchronization resulted in data that was either generated or interpreted incorrectly. This, in turn, meant more support calls and dissatisfied field agents. In other cases, reps who had long favored hard copy took some time to adjust to the absence of paper documentation.

With nearly ninety sales representatives using laptops on the road and another twenty-five operating from remote showroom PCs, staying competitive meant that connectivity and up-to-date information were critical. To leverage the singular capabilities of Synchrologic, Department 56 used iMobile Data Synchronization to do more than just sync customer data.

Department 56 configured iMobile Data Synchronization to specify criteria that would end the information exchange problems, using rules and exception reporting to tighten procedures. Using Synchrologic's software, the corporate office now advises agents of ERP updates and installation deadlines. The company also tracks account representatives' synchronization patterns: managers know when reps last connected, and when they are due to sync up again.



## Benefits of iMobile Data Synchronization

iMobile Data Synchronization's role in Department 56 has been evolving with the company's growing understanding of its own needs, and of the capabilities of Synchronologic's application. When sales representatives first faced synchronization of the OneWorld application, they were confronted with information overload, both on the screen and in the technical process.

"We were able to customize the data sync interface," said Mr. Malarz, "so that representatives now can just click on an icon and the sync process runs in the background. We also use more filtering capabilities to send information only to those who need it, thereby minimizing sync time."

*"The most impressive thing about Synchronologic was their dedication to a successful implementation."*

*Tony Malarz,  
Database and Technical  
Architecture Analyst*

### Streamlined and Efficient

The result is a streamlined workflow that allows reps to receive updated information at the same time they check their Email and verify the status of orders. Important features like checkpoint restart and field level synchronization ensure that communications sessions are efficient, so field reps can sync up quickly. In only five to ten minutes a day, Department 56's sales team can make sure that critical information is at their fingertips.

### Using Rules to Model the Business Process

iMobile Data Synchronization offers a

rules-based configuration, which is vital for system performance and usability, especially when there are large volumes of information and a complex enterprise data model. Department 56 was able to assure that each sales rep had to receive only data relating to his/her own accounts and orders. Rules-based distribution made that possible. It also helped the company get a clearer view of their business processes, and develop the monitoring capabilities.

"We didn't have to accept the base product. iMobile Data Synchronization gave us a significant degree of flexibility," said Mr. Malarz. "We were able to write the sync rules ourselves, and that gave us a much better grasp of who needs to know what, and how much information may be too much. It also helped us improve our understanding of the structure and organization of our data."

### Write Once, Apply Everywhere

An additional benefit was Synchronologic's 'write once, apply everywhere' capability. Department 56 could hone their business processes and then apply the rules elegantly throughout the mobile network, simply by making changes at the central administrative console.

The end result? Department 56 account managers have the informed mobility they need to keep the holidays bright...all the time. iMobile Data Synchronization captures all relevant information for the back end; helps the field team keep on top of their customers, items, and orders; and assures critical information goes where it needs to go in just minutes a day. Easily. Efficiently. In the background. And without intruding at all in the ERP application of choice.

### Synchronologic Service

"The most impressive thing about

Synchronologic was their dedication to a successful implementation," added Mr. Malarz. "A company's commitment to service can be as important as the product they sell, and in Synchronologic, we found the support department always ready to go one step beyond to help us reach our goals."

In fact, the Synchronologic team assisted Department 56 in resolving technical issues that were not even related to iMobile Data Synchronization. Synchronologic's assistance with debugging and problem solving helped Department 56 roll out on schedule.

"After a challenging ERP implementation, we needed a smooth integration and an efficient solution for data management and exchange," said Mr. Doenges. "Thanks to iMobile Data Synchronization and Synchronologic's top notch service, we met our objectives."

### Synchronologic: the Mobile Solution for the Long Term

As the ERP technology evolves, so will the company's use of it, and with it, their relationship with Synchronologic.

Department 56 migrated to another database as soon as OneWorld was able to support it, and Synchronologic's engine was already equipped to handle the new data capture mechanisms that the company needed. iMobile Data Synchronization's out-of-box functionality enables the use of database triggers. That capability gives the process more speed, flexibility, and stability. Had Department 56 custom-written their own data sync solution, the expected database change would have entailed a major coding effort on the sync side and major adjustments to everything else.

"Synchronologic has a long-term place in our organization," said Mr. Malarz. "When we started, we were limited by our ERP application. When we finished, we had a cutting-edge data synchronization tool for our mobile sales force."

## About Synchronologic

Synchronologic creates software solutions that give mobile workforces access to the information they need, wherever, whenever, and however they need it. By delivering the most powerful enterprise mobile and wireless infrastructure software available, Synchronologic's comprehensive product suite supports all aspects of mobile computing while lowering the total cost of implementing, managing, and supporting enterprise mobile initiatives.

The company's infrastructure solution hides the complexity inherent in supporting a mobile network. It features all the tools necessary to architect and implement a mobile strategy - including Email, address book, tasks, to-do, and calendar synchronization; asset management; software distribution; data synchronization; file distribution; intranet publishing; and third party content aggregation. Synchronologic solutions are uniquely flexible in allowing pervasive access to vital business information from any device, for any application, over any connection - wireline or wireless.

Synchronologic offers an intuitive and user-friendly experience, robust administrative capabilities, open platform architecture, and the only comprehensive mobile infrastructure solution available for handhelds, laptops, and future devices. The company's product suite generates a variety of benefits including better information, increased user productivity, improved IT resource management, lowered cost of ownership, and reduced communication costs.

Synchronologic's unparalleled technology is the winning product of over five years' experience supporting mobile and wireless initiatives for over 150 world-class corporate and OEM customers including Citicorp, Cisco, Hertz, FedEx, 3M, JD Edwards, and Nintendo. The company is privately held with headquarters in Atlanta, Georgia.

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