



# Assuring the Benefits of an Ariba Buyer Upgrade: User Acceptance Testing

A White Paper from  
CCP Global, Inc.

## **Executive Overview:**

### **The customer:**

A nonprofit corporation that provides or administers health care benefits to just over 4.7 million members through a variety of plans.

### **The challenge:**

The customer was increasing operational efficiency by upgrading the existing Ariba Buyer 7.0 to 8.2. The customer was determined that the upgraded Ariba Buyer application would not erode user satisfaction with the current buying experience.

### **The solution:**

CCP Global, Inc. used proven methodologies to develop core success criteria and create a comprehensive review of the upgrade by key stakeholders before rolling out the upgrade.

### **The benefits:**

The customer found in CCP Global, Inc. a strong partner in assuring that the upgrade satisfied the business and functional requirements in a *usable* way.

## What is User Acceptance Testing?

User Acceptance Testing is usually the last step before rolling out a software application. Unlike other forms of software application testing (Unit, Integration, and System) which are performed by system developers, User Acceptance Testing is conducted by the only people who really understand how the application is used. End *users* who will be using the system are asked to test the application before *accepting* it. During User Acceptance Testing, the focus shifts from software to functionality in real world situations.

## What are the prerequisites for User Acceptance Testing?

CCP Global, Inc.'s customer had already completed various levels of testing including Unit, Integration, and System. These tests had been completed in a test environment that closely simulated the production environment. Most of the technical bugs had been identified and fixed. This allowed User Acceptance Testing to be conducted in a *clean* environment with the focus on the functionality and usability of the upgrade.

## What are the steps in User Acceptance Testing?

- .....1) User Acceptance Test Planning  
As always, planning is the most important step. The CCP Global, Inc. consultant on the project worked with the customer to outline the process and describe key focus areas such as entry and exit criteria.
- .....2) Designing User Acceptance Test Cases  
Normally, use cases are created during the requirements definition phase of a project. In the original Ariba Buyer implementation project, the customer's UAT strategy centered on users performing test scripts designed for more technical levels of testing. For the upgrade project, the customer carried over the use cases from the original implementation. This strategy provided an added level of technical assurance. However, the CCP Global, Inc. consultant learned that a significant group of the customer's business stakeholders were not satisfied with previous UAT efforts. The original project team had not addressed the goal of assuring that the system satisfied users' functional needs. Some major users groups had not quickly embrace Ariba Buyer leading to inefficiencies and delays in the procurement process. The customer's upgrade business owner, the corporate procurement director was determined to win user confidence before the upgrade was moved to the live environment.

The CCP Global, Inc. consultant recommended substituting *user stories* for the usage scenarios use in the original Ariba implementation. User stories serve the same purpose as usage scenarios, except that they are not limited to describing the user interface.

The CCP Global, Inc. consultant subsequently gathered user stories in face-to-face interviews where the user described how the system is used to conduct daily business. The interviews avoided details of specific technology, data base layout, and algorithms. Rather they were focused on user needs and benefits. The CCP Global, Inc. consultant wrote the test cases using simple non-technical language. The test cases contained sufficient navigational detail so the tester could get a feel for the differences between the Ariba Buyer 7.1 and the 8.2 user interfaces. A team of customer business analysts assessed the test cases and approved them before they were released to the test team.

As a side benefit, the test case documents became templates for “job aids” (tutorials) later published on the customer’s intranet web site.

.....3) Selecting the User Acceptance Test team

Generally, the UAT team is a good representation of real world application end users. The CCP Global, Inc. consultant worked with the customer’s business analysts and procurement representatives to identify 15 subject matter experts to interview. This group also formed the nucleus of the test team. To round out the test team, the customer also identified 10 “power users” who would also execute test cases related to their job functions.

The CCP Global, Inc. consultant then prepared a battery of general questions to guide the user interviews. The consultant scheduled 30 minute interviews with the customer’s subject matter experts. Each interview produced 2-3 brief paragraphs of text which the CCP Global, Inc. consultant used to write the test cases. Because of similarities in user stories, the consultant was able to condense the user stories into 23 test cases.

.....4) Executing the User Acceptance Test cases

The CCP Global, Inc. consultant supervised the execution of the User Acceptance Testing. Each test team member was given a testing appointment at the test location. The location was a training rooming with a number of computers connected to the testing

environment. The test cases were given to the team members as they entered the test room. The test team members followed the test cases and logged the results for each step in the case. If the test team member achieved the desired business result, the test team member *accepted* the test case by signing and dating the test case document. If the team member was unable to achieve the desired result, the team member logged the defect(s) on the test case document. The test team member returned all test case documents to the CCP Global, Inc. consultant before leaving the test location. A total of 139 tests were executed by the test team.

.....5) Documenting the results of UAT

The CCP Global, Inc. consultant documented the test case results in a log for review at daily project team meeting.

.....6) Resolving the issues/defects

The CCP Global, Inc. consultant assigned the test cases with defects and/or issues to the technical development team for trouble-shooting and resolution. When the team developed and implemented a resolution for the defect/issue, the consultant was notified and the test team member who identified the defect/issue re-tested the case.

.....7) Sign off

Upon successful completion of the User Acceptance Testing and the resolution of the defects/issues, the CCP Global, Inc. consultant presented the completed test case documents and summary to the implementation team. The team secured the sign-off from the customer's lead business owner and completed the implementation of the upgrade.

## Summary

User acceptance of a system provides the customer with added confidence that it will provide benefits to the organization. This confidence goes beyond meeting specifications. A system may meet all of the technical specifications but until the customer can see that it delivers something positive to the organization. Real business users are the only ones who can check the system and determine whether it delivers and benefit. CCP Global, Inc.'s experienced consultants combine the technical know how and business savvy to help you make sure your organization's user find you next projects is better than technically perfect – it works!

## About CCP Global, Inc.

CCP Global, Inc. is a leading systems integration and consulting firm that has assisted over 100 companies maximize their return on investment for enterprise-wide business solutions. *What can we do for you?*