CUSTOMER

THE IMT GROUP

INDUSTRY

Insurance

CHALLENGE

Unify mainframe and non-mainframe DevOps while re-platforming select applications

SOLUTION

t Compuware
Topaz™

f Compuware
File-AID®

X Compuware
Xpediter®

RESULTS

- Improved developer productivity
- Enhanced business agility
- Superior customer engagement
- Eased re-platforming burdens
- Reduced technology risk

IMT Leverages Compuware Solutions to Facilitate Mainframe Transition

BUSINESS CHALLENGE

Founded in 1883, Des Moines-based The IMT Group is a leading Midwestern P&C insurer with more than $300 million in assets. As is the case with many companies of similar size and vintage, IMT depends heavily on its mainframe for core applications. And like many such companies, that mainframe application environment is in transition.

IMT's mainframe transition strategy has two key objectives. One objective is re-platforming select applications. This re-platforming is a highly challenging process that requires intensive analysis of current mainframe code. In particular, it requires complete and accurate identification of "dead code"—sections of applications that have lapsed into disuse over the years, but remain present in source code—so that precious time and money isn't wasted re-platforming code with no business value.

The other key objective of IMT's mainframe transition strategy is converging mainframe and non-mainframe environments. This convergence is taking place because of how the company's newer web- and mobile-based applications depend on back-end mainframe resources. So rather than operate as two relatively independent technology domains, IMT's mainframe and non-mainframe developers have to work together.

Both of these strategic objectives require developers to have clear, complete visibility into the structure and runtime behaviors of highly complex mainframe applications that have undergone a lot of change over the years and are not always well-documented.

In the case of re-platforming, that visibility facilitates the conversion of mainframe-hosted application logic into alternatively-hosted application logic. In the case of convergence, application visibility helps developers with little or no mainframe expertise collaborate with their mainframe SME peers—and vice versa.

Mainframe application visibility also makes it more likely that new hires from the local community college's mainframe education program will be able to productively contribute to IMT's IT efforts.

"As the insurance business becomes more and more about what you do digitally with and for your customers, IMT has to become more and more adept at evolving and re-purposing all of our applications and data—including applications and data that currently reside on our mainframe," said Travis McAlpin, IMT's Senior Manager of IT. "The status quo of a siloed mainframe environment that can only be understood by our most experienced mainframe developers is no longer a viable option."

Compuware

SOLUTION

IMT has been making extensive use of Compuware's mainframe solutions for about 20 years. These solutions include:

Xpediter - Xpediter makes it easy for IMT developers at all skill levels to debug code before promoting it to production—and to quickly fix any problems discovered in production (such as those that result when a policy is improperly structured).

File-AID - IMT's developers use File-AID to make sure applications access the exact right data from the company's various DB2 databases. They also use File-AID to streamline extraction of test data from those databases.

Most recently, IMT extended its deployment of Compuware's **Topaz suite** to include Topaz Workbench, Topaz for Enterprise Data and Topaz for Program Analysis with an emphasis on the Runtime Visualizer feature. These solutions provide a highly intuitive graphical environment for writing and reviewing code, understanding the behavior of that code in production and understanding the relationship between different applications and data sources across the mainframe environment.

This broad Topaz suite provided IMT with several important new capabilities, including:

- Drag-and-drop application code and file management. Topaz's Eclipse-based operations free veteran developers from time-consuming manual tasks and eliminate learning curves for mainframe "newbies."

- Common look-and-feel across languages. Topaz's enterprise editor allows developers to work on mainframe and non-mainframe languages such as COBOL and Perl, respectively, in a common manner.

- Streamlined collaboration between developers with different skill sets. With Topaz, a developer can quickly create an Excel spreadsheet itemizing issues requiring review and share it with other developers who may be more qualified to resolve them.

- Fast, easy identification of "dead code." Topaz's visualization tools allow developers to easily see any sections of application code that are neither active at runtime nor called by other applications.

The new capabilities drew rave reviews across the board from IMT developers who expressed appreciation for everything from the use of color to differentiate functionally distinct sections of code to the ability to use multiple monitors and drag application views between them.

"When my team first talked to me about Topaz, I thought it was little more than just a pretty interface for the same old thing," McAlpin admits. "But now that I see how our developers are using it and how it is affecting their work processes, I have to say that its graphical tools are really helping to bring our two development worlds together."

RESULTS

IMT's adoption of Topaz visualization solutions in conjunction with its existing Compuware toolset for the mainframe has resulted in a number of significant business benefits, including:

Improved developer productivity. With Topaz, a smaller number of veteran mainframe developers can get more accomplished—and IMT's less experienced mainframe developers can make a greater contribution to any projects that touch technologies such as COBOL and DB2.

Enhanced business agility. When developers can collaborate more effectively across platforms, IMT can update its cross-platform applications with greater speed. In an increasingly digital insurance marketplace, that agility is a competitive necessity.

Superior customer engagement. Improvements to IMT's cross-platform DevOps processes translate directly into better experiences for its customers across both digital and traditional channels. These improved experiences translate directly into improved customer retention and loyalty.

Eased re-platforming burdens. Cost, complexity and risk have historically presented formidable obstacles to the successful re-platforming of mainframe applications. By making it much easier for developers to clearly and fully understand even the most poorly documented applications, Topaz significantly reduces these obstacles.

Reduced technology risk. Without Compuware's tools, IMT's mainframe environment could be threatened in the near future by looming shortfalls in Development and Operations management skills. With Compuware's tools, IMT is mitigating that risk by empowering even entry-level IT staff to handle everyday mainframe DevOps tasks.

McAlpin adds that Compuware's value to IMT as a technology partner goes far beyond its innovative mainframe tools. Compuware is also an invaluable source of expertise that IMT can count on for everything from solving a particularly thorny technical problem to devising an optimal long-term strategy for the platform as a whole.

"Compuware combines total commitment to the mainframe platform with an equally strong commitment to the success of its customers," declares McAlpin. "I would encourage anyone with a mainframe to take advantage of both."

Learn more about Compuware tools at **Compuware.com**.

The Mainframe Software Partner For The Next 50 Years

Compuware empowers the world's largest companies to excel in the digital economy by fully leveraging their high-value mainframe investments. We do this by delivering highly innovative solutions that uniquely enable IT professionals with mainstream skills to manage mainframe applications, data and platform operations.

Learn more at Compuware.com.