



Mercer successfully migrates pension application from OpenVMS to Windows server environment

Mercer manages more than 1,000 corporate pension plans through a custom system that was fast approaching capacity due to growth and newly added self-service features. They wanted to retain the rich functionality of their system and the most viable solution to provide scalability was to migrate.

The Client

Mercer Limited, a wholly owned subsidiary of Marsh & McLennan Companies, Inc, is a leading global provider of consulting, outsourcing, and investment services. Mercer works with clients to solve their most complex benefit and human capital issues.

The services they offer include pension plan administration, flexible benefits, absence management, plan closures and changeovers, and bundled pension solutions. Mercer has over 1,300 employees looking after over 1,000 pension plans involving 1.6 million people.

The Challenge

Mercer manages more than 1,000 corporate pension plans through a system (MIDAS) developed in-house to provide the configurability required to support this diverse base. MIDAS ran on a dual Alpha cluster that was fast-approaching capacity due to new business and the addition of new self-service features.

"We have been developing straight-through processing facilities which further enhance our self-service capabilities," says Rob Hussey, Head of Solutions Delivery, Mercer Outsourcing.

"We knew that these features would increase the load on the OpenVMS Alpha systems and scalability was not going to be possible without a change of platform. Given the rich functionality of our MIDAS system, there was no viable package replacement. Migration, therefore, offered us a fast, cost-effective, and low-risk solution."

The Solution

Following the PathFinder assessment and proof of concept to de-risk the key technical elements, we migrated Mercer's system to a fully scalable Linux and Windows environment complete with an Oracle 10g RAC database to replace their Rdb.

New software development at Mercer is in Microsoft .NET and C#, with Web Services and XML, within the Microsoft Visual Studio IDE. It was therefore imperative that we migrate MIDAS to Windows.

MERCER

Client >

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Sector >

Professional Services

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OpenVMS Migration

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As part of the migration we converted the OpenVMS COBOL code to Micro Focus COBOL .NET (a Microsoft .NET managed code), which included Rdb embedded SQL converted to compliant Oracle SQL. This way, it can be developed within Visual Studio and can also interoperate with enhancements made in C#. The OneView Web application no longer requires the third-party middleware.

We completed the migration and acceptance of MIDAS on time and within budget. After an initial implementation of 25 pension plans, the remaining plans went live a month later.

Major Benefits

"With the migration, we retained the business logic and uniqueness of MIDAS and increased our return on the investment in this application," Hussey says.

"We could make changes in MIDAS during most of the migration, as there was no need for a code freeze at the start of the project. Also, there was no retraining of users required."

With MIDAS now running in Mercer's standard corporate deployment environment, support and maintenance costs have been reduced.

"We now concentrate our resources on new technology solutions benefiting the business, rather than diluting efforts by continuing to maintain the older OpenVMS environment," says Hussey.

"Ultimately, our aim is to reduce the overall costs of obtaining enhanced services for Mercer's customers."

About Advanced

Advanced is a leading provider of OpenVMS migration and modernization solutions with more than 30 years' experience, and expert staff dedicated to servicing the needs of organizations with legacy systems. Hundreds of organizations worldwide such as Citi, Gap, Chevron, and Westinghouse have enjoyed the business benefits of an Advanced application modernization solution. We work with a large network of OEM business partners, VARs, System Integrators and technical partners across the U.S., Europe, the Middle East and Asia to offer unparalleled solutions.

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