4GL Conversion – Jaguar Land Rover

When faced with the licensing and support costs to continue using applications developed in a proprietary language, Jaguar Land Rover (JLR) sought a solution that would give them the freedom to continue using those applications without incurring substantial costs. TSG Software, with more than 20 years experience in 4GL application conversions on IBM Mainframes, offered a solution that would do exactly that.

About Jaguar Land Rover

Jaguar Land Rover is a business built around two great British car brands that design, engineer and manufacture in the UK. A workforce of over 20,000 produce vehicles that are exported to more than 170 countries worldwide. JLR is part of Tata Motors, India's largest automobile company.

Problem
•Cost imposed by purchasing a licence for the applications developed in a proprietary 4GL language

Solution
•Convert 400+ 4GL programs to CICS COBOL
•Train JLR developers in COBOL

Benefits
•Avoidance of re-licensing costs
•Very quick, seamless conversion

THE PROBLEM

JLR made a strategic decision to change the 3rd party service provider that they used to provide core components of their IBM Mainframe infrastructure. Part of the move involved re-hosting applications from the old provider on the hardware supplied by the new provider. During the preparations for the move JLR discovered that the 4GL application development tool previously used to write programs on the old hardware was licensed to the previous service provider. The implication of this was that, in order to continue to run the applications written using that 4GL, JLR would need to purchase a licence of their own. The cost of the licence plus the ongoing maintenance was not a commercially viable option for JLR at that time.

THE SOLUTION

JLR sought alternative solutions to the problem of supporting the applications written in the 4GL product licenced by the previous service provider. One of the solutions offered was to convert the 4GL code into standard CICS COBOL, to allow the applications to continue to be supported regardless of the environment.

TSG Software, with more than 20 years experience in conversions of this nature, came up with a proposal that met the strict requirements of JLR. Because the need to convert the proprietary code had been discovered late on in the process, JLR needed a supplier that could move fast and convert the code before the deadline enforced by the previous service provider. This condensed time scale created challenges from a resource, timing, testing and complexity perspective, and required a partner that could complete the conversion, test the applications, and accommodate the fast-paced, changing nature of the project.

TSG Software were chosen to manage the conversion, and provided a level of service that met all of the requirements of project manager.

THE OUTCOME

With the assistance of the TSG technical team, JLR were able to convert 400+ programs written in the proprietary 4GL development tool within the enforced deadline, and eliminate the need to purchase a costly licence of their own for the development tool used by the previous service provider.

The speed and agility of TSG Software allowed for the project to be completed within three months, rather than the six months that had originally been agreed. Furthermore, TSG were able to provide training and development for the JLR team, who were unfamiliar with the machine generated COBOL code, in order for ongoing maintenance to be undertaken with ease.

IN SUMMARY

TSG carried out an excellent conversion project for JLR that resulted in significant cost savings by avoiding the need to purchase a licence for the proprietary 4GL development tool.

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