



The new face of COBOL®

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Thanks to Acucorp, Moving to Linux on IBM zSeries Is Easy for Suomen Cobra Systems

"We must deliver our application on many different platforms, and Acucorp offers the best solution for that. We can develop on one platform, and run programs on others without recompiling."

—Pekka Mäkelä, Managing Director, Suomen Cobra Systems, Ltd.

Fast Facts:

- Software for the wholesale food industry
- Established in 1988
- Located in Helsinki, Finland
- Annual Revenue: €1.2 million
- www.cobrasys.fi

Application:

- ALPHA MANAGER
- Logistics and electronic data interchange
- Sales, production planning, warehouse control, purchasing, dispatching, and accounting

Business Needs:

- Portability
- Reliability
- Scalability

New Environment:

- IBM zSeries
- SuSE Linux
- ACUCOBOL-GT®

Previous Environment:

- HP Compac ProLiant
- Red Hat Linux
- ACUCOBOL-GT

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Business Issue

Suomen Cobra Systems, Ltd. provides logistics software and service for the food processing industry. Its solution, called ALPHA MANAGER, handles a variety of sales, production, and accounting functions for firms that process wholesale and retail food products.

Until recently, ALPHA MANAGER was running on a Compaq ProLiant under Red Hat Linux. Cobra Systems had 15 customers with hundreds of end users, but this number was growing fast. It required a more efficient and reliable platform that could scale with its business needs. It selected the IBM eServer zSeries running SuSE Linux.

Solution

ALPHA MANAGER was converted to ACUCOBOL-GT from RM/COBOL years ago, so moving it to the zSeries was fast and easy. All Cobra Systems had to do was copy its ACUCOBOL-GT object files onto the zSeries and obtain a new runtime port from Acucorp. ACUCOBOL-GT object files are instantly portable to over 600 platforms via Acucorp's COBOL Virtual Machine™. They don't even need to be recompiled. ALPHA MANAGER ran reliably in its new environment without modification.

Since moving to ACUCOBOL-GT, Cobra Systems has added electronic data interchange (EDI) functionality to its applications, as well as an interface for hand-held computers and barcode readers. It has also added many new components, such as production planning. Today ALPHA MANAGER has over 2,000 programs,

comprising 1,800,000 lines of code, and most application functions are automated.

Benefits

Because ACUCOBOL-GT is platform independent, Cobra Systems has been able to port its application to whatever platform users requested. Over the years, it has ported ALPHA MANAGER to SCO, DG UX, OSF1, and Windows. Its application runs on a wide range of customer hardware such as HP, IBM, Compaq, Fujitsu, Intel, Alpha Digital, Data General, and VAX/VMS.

When Cobra Systems decided to move to the IBM zSeries, the move was seamless. According to Pekka Mäkelä, Managing Director of Cobra Systems, the company saves time and money by developing on one platform and deploying on others without recompiling. ACUCOBOL-GT is also very fast to compile and debug.

Because ALPHA MANAGER is so critical to Cobra Systems' customers, reliability and stability are paramount. Mäkelä says, "ACUCOBOL-GT, Linux, and the zSeries are the most reliable platform for us." Twelve customers have agreed with this assessment and since adopted the zSeries themselves with no problems.

Future Plans

Using Acucorp technologies, Cobra Systems plans to continue developing ALPHA MANAGER for its customers, aiming to improve and to deepen its solutions and win more business. It is considering using the AcuBench® Screen Designer to develop a graphical user interface for the application in the near future.