



Highlights

- Combined COBOL and Java for Web-based application development
- Implemented innovative application development methodology
- Protected and extended valuable legacy application business logic

Starsoft Develops Cross-Platform Applications with Veryant isCOBOL

Innovative application development methodology produces portable Web applications

With a strong, successful business history, Starsoft, which offers professional IT services to insurance and finance companies, was looking for the next level of growth through new markets. The company sought to move beyond its traditional expertise with the IBM® iSeries® platform to provide services to companies with open systems environments. Starsoft selected isCOBOL Evolve from Veryant to create a new cross-platform methodology for its traditional COBOL customers, and enter the Unix/Linux open systems market.

Starsoft Seeks to Expand Markets

Starsoft Professional Services, Ltd., an Israeli-based firm, has strong, long-term relationships with the leading companies in its market. As the number of customers and potential customers seeking COBOL modernization, open systems options, and modernization choices grew, Starsoft saw an opportunity to add more choices and flexibility to its offerings.

In order to meet its corporate growth plans, Starsoft wanted to offer vertical insurance applications on multiple platforms, especially COBOL and open systems. The company sought a technology that would allow it to continue providing services for COBOL customers, but gain strength with companies using other platforms.

Starsoft had several goals beyond basic application development on open systems; it wanted to reduce the resources required to develop applications, enable all development work to be performed in a standard Web browser, and provide a viable option for legacy modernization.

Starsoft Evaluates Options for New Technology

When outlining development plans for its initial open systems project for building Web-based, platform-independent applications, the company evaluated various technology options in the market. It selected Veryant's isCOBOL Evolve because it best met the multiple criteria Starsoft had established. Among these were 100% platform portability, convenient data access, flexibility, and support for standard Web interfaces.

isCOBOL Evolve is a complete environment for developing and deploying applications across Linux, UNIX, Microsoft Windows and Mac systems. Because the isCOBOL Runtime Environment is implemented in Java, it produces extremely portable code that simplifies integration and interoperability. isCOBOL also supports COBOL exit routines, which would enable Starsoft to maintain data integrity and modernize existing applications without changing application code.

Starsoft's development methodology is based on structured metadata definitions. For applications requiring modernization (definitions-based solutions or use of structured scripts), the company translates these descriptions into its metadata definitions.

"Delivering modern interfaces to long-standing business logic is very important to our customers," commented Dov Keshet, CEO and founder of Starsoft. "isCOBOL provides the best of both worlds. It protects long-standing COBOL application business logic and enables cross-platform deployment as pure Java objects through standard Web interfaces."

New Methodology Project Begins

Starsoft first built a set of internal utilities to support the application development methodology that had evolved from years of experience working with many different companies.

Starsoft's development methodology is based on structured metadata definitions. For applications requiring modernization (definitions-based solutions or use of structured scripts), the company translates these descriptions into its metadata definitions. In just a few minutes, the same application will run as a Web application on Linux. This frees up resources so the IT team can focus on other integration issues.

The effort then shifted towards integration ... setting up the development and runtime environments, the operating systems (both Linux and Windows), database (MySQL, Oracle and IBM DB2®), IDE (Eclipse), Java integration (JSP/Servlet model, Web Services), and the client-side user interface (CSS and JavaScript, including JQuery, and browser support).

The company then launched its efforts to develop the first business application, using the methodology and isCOBOL.

Veryant Delivers Results

"We had no critical issues regarding development, and never encountered anything that didn't work - or didn't even install - as we had with other products we evaluated before selecting Veryant's isCOBOL," Keshet continued. "Questions for the Veryant team were answered promptly, often within minutes. This was critical for us, as we had never ventured beyond the IBM iSeries, and we were then working in an open environment for the first time."

While their new applications could have been written in Java, Object Oriented COBOL is Keshet's personal preference, and isCOBOL provided the capability to integrate both. isCOBOL's Java connection was one of the strongest capabilities that Starsoft found compelling. By compiling COBOL source code into Java and deploying pure Java byte code objects, developers can add the power and flexibility of the Java platform to existing COBOL programs and make isCOBOL investments easily accessible to the Java world.

"Developing with isCOBOL has allowed us to take a step forward in a strategic area that is critical for our growth. We were operating primarily in organizations whose core systems were based on the IBM's iSeries, which limited our options for company growth," Keshet explained. "In fact, our first project with isCOBOL is for a new customer using a Unix/Oracle platform."



Veryant, 925 Vista Park Drive, Pittsburgh, PA 15205

© 2011 Veryant. All rights reserved. isCOBOL is a trademark, or registered trademark of Veryant in the United States and other countries.

IBM and iSeries are trademarks or registered trademarks of International Business Machines Corporation in the United States, other countries, or both. All other marks are the property of their respective owners.