

Metex Legacy Application Modernization Solution

Customer Solution Brief – Pacific National



Metex and Fujitsu partner to modernize a critical PowerBuilder application for Pacific National, Australia's largest private rail business.

"We have partnered with Metex for many years and have tremendous confidence in their technology and work quality. Metex was a natural choice to provide modernization services for one of our key clients."

Chris Gaskin, Director, Fujitsu Australia

Customer: Pacific National Rail
Web Site: www.pacificnational.com.au
Industry: Transportation

Organization Profile

Pacific National is Australia's largest private rail freight business and second largest coal haulage operator, delivering approximately 95 million tonnes of coal per annum by rail to both domestic and export markets. Pacific National deploys over 2350 coal wagons and 100 locomotives, operates in all Australian states and provides a comprehensive range of integrated rail freight services.



Background

Pacific National plays a vital role in Australia's coal supply chain, working closely with customers, seaboard terminal operators, port authorities and shipping agents to meet cargo assembly requirements. Ensuring optimal delivery schedules and maximizing equipment utilization are critical factors in Pacific National's success.

All of Pacific National's coal operations are controlled by a mission critical PowerBuilder application known as the Operational Planning and Support System (OPSS).

Business Challenges

The Bulk Services Division of Pacific National was facing major challenges in its IT Department. Pacific National's growing business was driving demand for new systems functionality and enhancements to the OPSS application were required to support the business. Unfortunately, PowerBuilder developers were becoming hard to find and ongoing application maintenance was a constant concern.

Pacific National concluded that the OPSS application, the systems backbone of the company's coal transportation operation, needed to be upgraded to a modern .NET platform that could be easily maintained and provide a long-term technology solution for the business.

Pacific National asked Fujitsu, its strategic application outsourcing vendor, to find a solution to convert the aging, but mission critical, PowerBuilder application into a modern .NET architecture.

Business Goals

The OPSS PowerBuilder application had many screens that were dynamically modified based on the data being accessed and used PowerBuilder Foundation Class libraries extensively. Key technical requirements for the PowerBuilder modernization project included:

- Replacing all PowerBuilder Foundation Class libraries with native .NET code.
- Converting an extensive set of PowerBuilder DataWindow reports to Crystal reports.
- Providing a seamless transition from the original PowerBuilder screens to the new .NET GUI to eliminate the requirement for user training after the implementation of the new application.

Fujitsu had set a further project requirement defining code quality standards as the future maintenance of the transformed .NET application would be outsourced to their own internal development team.



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Solution

Metex's Application Modernization Solution allows customers to leverage their investment in existing legacy applications by automatically regenerating existing code bases into more up-to-date technologies and programming languages.

Fujitsu had partnered with Metex on several projects and was confident that Metex could transform the OPSS PowerBuilder application with its complex business logic into a modern multi-tier .NET architecture.

Using a sophisticated set of in-house tools and a proven methodology (developed over numerous years), Metex was able to recycle and transform over 1.5 million lines of the OPSS PowerBuilder code to native .Net code.

To provide effective project management and keep all parties well aligned, webinars were regularly scheduled throughout the project to verify that code quality was meeting Pacific National's standards and the User Interface was performing in the same manner as the original application.

As Fujitsu had a large experienced team in Australia, it handled the project management and helped Pacific National to write a comprehensive set of test cases to validate the transformed application during the User Testing phase.

Benefits

Metex delivered the modernized .NET OPSS application on schedule and Fujitsu assumed control of application maintenance immediately upon delivery of the .NET source code.

The modernized application now leverages all current technologies, architectures and frameworks and complies with both Pacific National's specific coding and architectural standards.

Advantages

Risk Mitigation:

"Metex and Fujitsu helped us facilitate a smooth transition to the .NET version of the OPSS application. Their dedication to completing the project well within its schedule gave us more time for a parallel test run. We were apprehensive at the start of the project as we had just completed a mainframe legacy migration that had a multitude of delays and difficulties. Fortunately, this project was successfully completed without major issues."

- Mario Philippou, CIO, Pacific National

Transparency:

Metex's ClearView system allows for consistent, clear communication between all parties and a web-based system to report, track and manage all progress.

Reduced TCO:

- Elimination of PowerBuilder and Sybase license costs
- Reduced on-going support and maintenance costs
- Modernized application provides for more timely and cost effective functional enhancements

