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An interview with Micro Focus' Roman Schubiger

With Micro Focus and Metaware, customers can better prepare their infrastructure for the future, by moving mainframe apps or redistributing workloads off the mainframe with less risk and cost.

Micro Focus has a strong focus on Mainframe Modernization, can you tell us why?

Micro Focus has been working in the IBM mainframe environment for 30 years, so we know the market well, and our products are well known and trusted. Mainframe Modernization is a key requirement for customers looking for opportunities to grow their markets while minimizing costs. The growth in the IBM mainframe modernisation market has been increasing for several years, with at least 50% growth, so obviously it makes sense for us to look at the market possibilities. We're well placed to help customers wanting to carry out mainframe modernisation, and we're building the next generation of products to help customers move easily from one platform to another, if that's what they want to do.

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Why do z/OS users increasingly need to modernize?

On the mainframe or on other systems, legacy modernization is a key requirement. There are numerous drivers that compel an organization to explore Modernization strategies. With the fast pace economic environment, and the need to accelerate time to market and improve flexibility, requirements to adopt newer technologies, reduce complexity and simplify integration, become more important. That is what we're hearing from our customers while the demand to reduce costs is constant.

This is why it can make so much sense to modernise while moving some or wall application workload off mainframes, onto distributed platforms. The reduction in operating costs helps fuel the other modernization requirements.

Roman Schubiger is Director Solutions Consulting EMEA and Latin America at Micro Focus. He started the Swiss subsidiary of Micro Focus, and has built the modernisation business. Roman has a 15 year track of Sales and Consulting software solutions. Prior joining Micro Focus, he was CEO at Junisphere Systems and held various positions at BMC Software and ABB as technical director. Roman holds an electrical engineering degree of the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology as well as an MBA of HEC, Lausanne.

For example, one of our customers is Tesco, the supermarket chain. When they decided to move into the American market, they needed to build a new supply chain system within one year, and this would not be possible using a mainframe system. Instead, they moved critical z/OS supply chain systems to UNIX and integrated with Oracle Retail, and to deliver the key IP within the new system in the required timeframe.

❝ Due to economic pressures and the changed industrial situation, it makes sense to modernise onto cheaper hardware ❞

The mainframe is a solid and vast computing environment, so companies can modernise in place on the mainframe, but they'll pay a premium to do so. Many companies have decided that due to current economic pressures and the changed industrial situation, it makes sense to modernise onto cheaper hardware. They identify lower operating costs as a major benefit, alongside the way distributed technology gives them more options to choose from. More applications are available

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to just install and go on the distributed systems when compared to the mainframe. Then there's the speed at which distributed systems are progressing; companies making the move feel they're benefitting from an environment that is responding to changes by itself changing.

In some industries such as chemical, pharmaceutical, or mobile telco, mainframes have more or less disappeared because everyone has standardised on distributed technologies. By moving from mainframes, companies in these industries can make use of standard applications and because the environment is less expensive, they see an increased ROI in a shorter time.

What does Micro Focus provide to z/OS customers looking to cut mainframe costs?

We have a software environment that replicates the mainframe infrastructure so that customers can move mainframe apps, or redistribute their workloads off the mainframe with minimal changes in their applications. This means companies can make the move quickly, with less risk and less cost. What our customers tell us is that they have found that by using this product, they can generate sufficient savings to use them to fund further modernisation initiatives.

For example, Owens and Minor, a hospital supply company has moved their mainframe COBOL/CICS systems to Windows. They reduced their costs by 77% while doubling their processing capacity and quadrupling batch performance. Another customer is the US Postal Services. Their tracking system was based on a mainframe batch processing environment on z/OS. By making use of IFL (Integrated Facility for Linux), they moved the system to z/Linux to enable them to satisfy a business need that required a significant increase 69% less than if they had added capacity to z/OS.

For some customers, modernizing the IDE alone deliver significant benefits. For example, HSBC bank used to spend 90% of its development time on maintenance of existing systems, but by exploiting analysis tools on a distributed environments, they increased the time available for innovation from just 10% to 50%. Similarly, RBS, another UK bank, moved their IDE off the mainframe onto Windows and increased their developer productivity by more than 30 days per year for each developer, saving 8 million dollars a year in the process.

The main finding by our customers is that making the move to the distributed environment in a very easy and quick way with minimum changes to the applications reduces costs so that they can use the savings for further modernisation.

> ❝ **The combination of Micro Focus products and Metaware experience provides the best possible value for customers** ❞

How does this interact with Metaware?

Micro Focus, is a software vendor. As such, Micro Focus works in a complementary way with partner companies to fulfil customers' needs. We've carefully selected key service partners such as Metaware who like us want to deliver real value and modernization experience. The combination of Micro Focus products and Metaware experience in the field of mainframe modernization provides the best possible value for our customers. Metaware has a long-standing reputation in the migration community within Europe. They have relied on Micro Focus COBOL since they started their Bull migration business and was an early adopter of Server Enterprise Edition. Because Metaware has many years experience both in terms of mainframe migration and in working with Micro Focus, we can jointly deliver our products with less risk and cost to provide an infrastructure that's ready for the future.