BRITEHOUSE AUTOMOTIVE MODERNIZES BUSINESS-CRITICAL SOFTWARE WITH PROGRESS

Client

Britehouse®

Industry
Automotive

Products
OpenEdge

Summary
Britehouse Automotive consolidated three separate legacy ERP systems into a single, modernized platform using the latest version of OpenEdge, increasing database stability and lowering total cost of ownership.

Challenge

A Progress partner for more than 20 years, Britehouse Automotive offers a complete digital solution to the automotive industry, including Dealer Management Software (DMS), CRM, digital marketing solutions, industry-specific software development, learning platforms, social media consulting, telematics and web design. The company's market-leading DMS, Automate Evolve, is a Progress® OpenEdge® based solution used by franchised and independent dealerships in the Middle East and Africa region (MEA).

Britehouse had been developing and maintaining three separate Automotive ERP products, all with similar functionality, and all based on outdated technology. When contemplating the migration of these three products onto a single platform using Progress technology, the company discovered numerous integration challenges.

Britehouse Automotive's legacy software, Evolve 1.0, was developed using a software framework called DWP from Netsetup in The Netherlands. The development environment involved tight integration between OpenEdge, DWP and Roundtable, the source repository. Over time, the DWP and Roundtable integration became out of synch with OpenEdge, which

prevented Britehouse Automotive from continually upgrading to the latest version of OpenEdge.

"We wanted to upgrade to the latest version of OpenEdge, so we had access to the latest technology offerings. An incremental approach would enable us to run our existing Evolve software and slowly, over time, modernize and introduce smaller changes to customers," said Fergus Mcloskey, General Manager DMS Solutions at Britehouse Automotive. Given the large size of the platform, modernizing it module by module was not feasible, as it would take years before customers would realize the benefits. "With an incremental approach, we'd be able to quickly address customer-related issues, without going through a massive rip-and-replace exercise."

Additional challenges included minimizing training requirements for customers and documenting all changes for effective knowledge transfer from external to internal development teams.

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Solution

The Modernization team migrated all customers to the newest version of OpenEdge, and leveraged ConsultingWerk's SmartComponent Framework.

"In the initial analysis phase, we investigated undertaking the modernization in Microsoft or Java, because of our lack of available Progress developers within our region," Mcloskey said. "We decided on Progress OpenEdge because it enabled the incremental modernization, and saved us from completing a risky total rewrite at several times the cost."

Progress assisted Britehouse with project design and architecture. The Progress team was involved in the assessment phase, and instrumental in setting up an offshore software development team. Throughout the project, the old UI remained operational, using the old DWP framework while new, modernized screens using SmartComponents were presented in the modern UI. Essentially, the old UI screens were embedded within the new SmartComponents framework.

The planning stage of the project was very detailed and took roughly five months. During planning, different technologies were considered for the re-write (Microsoft, SAP, Oracle and Java), however using any of these technologies could have taken up to five years, depending on the size of the team.

The DMS Solutions are now offered in two ways to customers—hosted and on-premises. In the hosted model, customers access the datacenter using the OpenEdge® WebClient, an ABL GUI client that enables them to deploy OpenEdge applications remotely. The configuration is a client-server model, with OpenEdge Database AppServers. This model reduces hardware costs, and monthly operating fees are roughly 50 percent less. The company realizes additional savings in redundancy/backup costs and resources to manage the process.

Thanks to the incremental modernization approach, Britehouse customers didn't have to wait long to realize the benefits of the new version. "The framework integration, coupled with our incremental approach enabled a 7-month turnaround, so customers could start enjoying the benefits much sooner," Mcloskey said.

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First Rollout with Godrich Toyota

Britehouse Automotive's first rollout of the modernized application was performed with Godrich Toyota in Johannesburg, South Africa. The first process modernized was the Stock Count section of the Parts Module in the Automate Evolve 2.0 DMS. The old process was so difficult that Godrich had resorted to perform Stock Counts manually, outside of the system, and any discrepancies were captured into the system using the stock adjustment feature. With Evolve 2.0, the Stock Count functionality is much easier, and Godrich can use the system to drive the process, eliminating time-consuming, inaccurate manual processes.

The Modernization Team simplified the previous interface from five tabs to a single screen, providing a more modern, cleaner look and feel. The dashboard has been completely revamped, making use of widget-based information clusters and the newly available technology stack. It also loads significantly faster.

"In the previous version of Evolve, users at Godrich would have to wait for the entire landing page (system dashboard) to load before they could start working," Mcloskey said. "With Evolve 2.0 and Progress OpenEdge, they can begin work the moment they log in; the dashboard loads asynchronously in the background."

Results

By moving to the newest version of OpenEdge, Britehouse Automotive has increased database stability and lowered total cost of ownership—it's much lower than if his team had used Microsoft or Oracle ERP solutions.

Additionally, Britehouse Automotive's developers are more productive, because the Progress development environment is much easier to use. Although the Progress community is smaller by comparison, users are willing to assist with challenges. "Progress OpenEdge enables additional products to be developed and delivered to customers faster," Mcloskey said. "This will definitely help us respond to customer demand for new solutions and give us a competitive edge."

Having implemented the incremental modernization approach with this first project, Mcloskey's team intends to continue modernizing until the entire ERP system has been updated. Progress OpenEdge licensing fees include other valuable solutions, such as Progress® Corticon®, Progress OpenEdge Business Process Management (BPM) and Progres® Sitefinity™ CMS, all of which the team plans we plan to implement down the road. "We are also currently investigating the possibility of transitioning our current web-client ERP software offering into a full-fledged cloud solution," Mcloskey added.

Using Progress OpenEdge provides intangible benefits, as well, including customer satisfaction and improved brand image. "Not modernizing our systems would be putting the entire platform at risk of failure, and we could lose customers by having a system that does not

function optimally," Mcloskey said. "The modernization assures customers their success continues to be our priority. Most importantly, we now have a new technology stack with many new advantages and access to the latest tools and technologies Progress offers."

About Britehouse Automotive

Britehouse Automotive provides market leading dealer management software (DMS) through automate, to franchised as well as independent dealerships in South Africa as well as Africa and the Middle East, and has done so for over 30 years.

About Godrich Toyota

As one of the original Toyota dealerships in the country, Godrich Toyota have mastered the art of customer satisfaction and service, which has enabled them to build a reputation as one of the top Toyota dealerships in South Africa since 1967. Its brand-new, improved 6000m2 Toyota building in Bronkhorstspruit offers clients a wide selection of New Vehicles, Automark Certified Pre-Owned Vehicles, Hino Trucks, superior Toyota parts and accessories as well as an expert Toyota service center. A family-owned business, Godrich Toyota has a team of sales specialists for helping you meet your motoring needs.

Godrich Toyota

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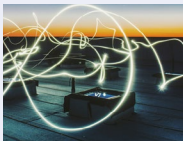
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