IBM

APICIL focuses on its customers with a CRM solution on IBM @server zSeries

Overview

- **The Challenge**
  Standardise on a single sales force application to improve CRM capabilities, reduce infrastructure costs, simplify IT administration and improve speed of response to new application requirements

- **The Solution**
  Implemented Conso+ CRM application from Coheris, running on an Integrated Facility for Linux (IFL) under z/VM V4 on an IBM @server zSeries 800, with DB2

- **The Benefit**
  Single, robust CRM platform for improved customer service and enhanced operational efficiency; potential for reduced costs through server consolidation; improved performance with database and CRM application on same server

Headquartered in Caluire, near Lyon, and with offices in Paris, APICIL (www.apicil.com) is one of France's largest insurance co-operatives . APICIL offers personal insurance including health cover and life insurance, and also provides personal and corporate pension plans. The company has more than one million personal policy holders and 50,000 companies, and contributions in 2002 totalled almost €1.6 billion.

In 1991, APICIL launched an initiative aimed at improving operational efficiency across the organisation, a move prompted by successive mergers between the IGIREL, UPESE and APICIL groups (which now make up APICIL). A key part of the initiative was to focus on improving efficiency and customer service by building a unified approach to customer relationship management (CRM).

While several relational databases were in use across APICIL on various platforms – including mainframe, IBM @server iSeries and UNIX® systems – these were only employed for direct marketing campaigns. The combined APICIL sales forces had no central sales management or CRM system.

To meet its needs, APICIL selected Conso+ from Coheris as its enterprise-wide CRM solution, and then looked to consolidate its server infrastructure. As Thierry Jouseau, Operational Director, explains: "We wanted to reduce the cost of running and maintaining our IT infrastructure, and to become more responsive to the needs of the business."

A consolidated approach

Conso+ is a CRM software package designed for an enterprise's Customer Services, Sales Force and Marketing teams. The system covers all phases of customer relations: follow-up of sales opportunities, management of marketing campaigns, management of hotlines, and management of after-sales services. All team members benefit from sharing a unified view of all contacts.

To keep initial costs to a minimum, APICIL elected to run the Conso+ application under Linux on its existing IBM @server zSeries 800. Says Jouseau, "We could have run the application under UNIX, but that would have required us to invest in two new servers. By choosing to run the application on separate virtual servers

under Linux on the same z800, we have the same financial commitment, but with improved ease of administration. In addition, we believe that the z800 offers outstanding reliability and availability."

Coheris had not previously tested its Conso+ application under Linux for zSeries . The application was ported to the new platform under the supervision of the IBM PSSC (Products and Solutions Support Centre) in Montpellier, France.

Rapid benefits

Since the z800 had the capacity to run the new application alongside existing z/OS workload, the migration to the new environment is progressing rapidly. APICIL simply created Linux partitions under z/VM on the z800. Processing resources can be switched dynamically between applications in different environments.

All of the existing relational databases have been migrated to DB2 on the z800, and their proximity to the CRM application makes queries and reporting faster than before.

"With Linux on zSeries, we have a highly-secure, reliable, cost-effective, and easy-to-manage platform for the future."
Thierry Jouseau, Operational Director, APICIL

APICIL has also consolidated a number of Lotus Notes and Web servers from Microsoft® NT® systems onto the zSeries, further reducing administrative workload and cutting licensing fees. The high scalability offered by the z800 makes it likely that further systems will be consolidated in the future.

Says Jouseau, "The capability of the z800 to run multiple operating systems, and to share resources between them at the sub-processor level, made it the ideal server for consolidation. With Linux on zSeries, we have a highly-secure, reliable, cost-effective, and easy-to-manage platform for the future."

APICIL will be receiving certain benefits from IBM (such as IBM education credits or participation in certain IBM programs) in connection with APICIL's participation in the IBM Reference Rewards Program and this Customer Success Story.