

Cattolica Assicurazioni

Micro Focus supports application modernisation to improve productivity and collaboration, and respond to changing business requirements.

Who is Cattolica Assicurazioni?

The Cattolica Assicurazioni Group is one of the biggest players in the Italian insurance market with a premium income of almost 7 billion Euros at the end of 2019. About 3.6 million clients trust the insurance solutions and products distributed by Cattolica and the other companies in the Group.

Modernising a Business-Critical Solution

LIFE is a business-critical application for Cattolica. Dating back to the late 1970s, it has grown with the business, holding all customer and policy details. LIFE supported the central management application system, while the

branches and underwriters used a different front-end solution to input data. It is a mainframe-hosted solution, and the Infrastructure Director with Cattolica was starting to see issues: "LIFE was our last mainframe-hosted application, hosted externally. Over the years, LIFE's MIPS consumption grew from 150 to 400, which became cost-prohibitive. We also noticed a performance degradation, especially in batch processing, which was how information from agents and underwriters' front-end solutions was transferred into LIFE, as the back-end solution. There was a general feeling in the company that we needed to move with the times, as LIFE was not designed to work in an Internet-enabled world, engaged with social media. Releasing a new insurance product would take up to six months, and with business requirements changing rapidly, that is just not fast enough anymore."

To better fit the organisation's requirements, the decision was made to replace LIFE and the front-end solution with a modern alternative running on a distributed hardware environment. Due to the prohibitive cost of retaining the mainframe service while the replacement system was under development, Cattolica undertook a feasibility study. This considered technical feasibility, time and costs affordability, and the ability to address cost management and performance requirements. It showed that

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INFRASTRUCTURE DIRECTOR

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At a Glance

■ Industry

Insurance

■ Location

Italy

■ Challenge

Respond faster to changing business requirements, improve system performance, increase flexibility, and realise cost savings

■ Products and Services

Micro Focus Enterprise Developer
Micro Focus Enterprise Server

■ Critical Success Factors

- + Real-time transaction visibility through unified solution
- + Reduced time to market from 6 to 2 months
- + 75% operational cost savings and 1 year ROI realised
- + Batch process performance improvement from 12+ hours to 20 minutes

“The big difference that we noted straightaway in the new, Micro Focus-enabled, environment was the performance improvement. Batch processes that were taking 12+ hours were now completed in under 20 minutes which gives us much-needed flexibility.”

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re-hosting LIFE in a more cost-effective manner would bring benefits in the interim period. This strategy enabled Cattolica to move the existing CICS TP monitor, JES2 as print queue manager, VSAM database, and COBOL application to a lower cost platform to alleviate the immediate cost impact to the business. It was to be one of the largest IT projects ever undertaken by Cattolica, and its importance to the business was not underestimated.

Real-Time Visibility in Distributed Environment

Cattolica had previous experience with Micro Focus when, some years before, it had moved a smaller-scale mainframe-based application to a distributed environment. This had been a success, and Cattolica felt confident Micro Focus could support this project too. Leveraging Micro Focus Enterprise Developer and Enterprise Server ensured COBOL code compatibility, as well as CICS and JES2 emulation capabilities. Keeping the data in VSAM files removed the risk of losing data during the migration process.

Several technology partners were involved in the project, and within six months the new solution was introduced to Cattolica, deployed on an Intel Linux distributed platform. One unified solution is leveraged by both the agents and underwriters, as well as Cattolica staff.

The Infrastructure Director explains how this helps streamline business processes: “With all stakeholders working in the same system, we have real-time visibility into our transactions. Previously, we could have a delay of up to two days before a new policy would be confirmed with customers. Now, this process runs seamlessly. The big difference that we noted straightaway in the new, Micro Focus-enabled, environment was the performance improvement. Batch processes that were taking 12+ hours were now completed in under 20 minutes which gives us much-needed flexibility.”

The distributed environment is cost-effective too. The servers are on-demand, memory can be added as required, and processes can be stopped and started. The window for backup and batch processes runs through the night, from 19.00 to 08.00 the next morning. In the mainframe environment, the batch process would still be running at 08.00 which would cause delays.

Cost Savings, Increased Flexibility, and Operational Excellence

Following completion of the LIFE re-host, the mainframe environment was terminated. The savings this brought were offset against the additional investment, and full ROI was achieved within the first year, a year earlier than anticipated. Although cost was a definite

consideration in this project, and a cost saving of 75 percent was achieved, the Infrastructure Director recognises many more benefits: “For us, this project was really about service continuation, increasing flexibility, and streamlining our processes. By bringing our stakeholders together in one solution, we have improved productivity, our operational excellence, and our customer satisfaction. All of these are difficult to measure, but of vital importance to us in adapting to this fast-changing world.”

He concludes: “Our users love the new solution. It is modern and user-friendly and gives us real-time visibility so that we can respond much faster to changing business requirements. Launching a new insurance product now takes just two months, compared with six months before. Micro Focus' support was fundamental to the success of this project. The collaboration between our teams was fantastic; we were truly one team working towards a clear goal. We appreciate the investment Micro Focus continues to make in COBOL. The new COBOL generations give us many new options, such as cloud, web services, or docker deployment. We are excited about the future of COBOL.”

Integrated 3rd party solutions

- JCICS
- VSAM
- JES2
- JCL
- BMC Control-M

Lines of code

- 8.3 million COBOL (in 6,800 programmes)
- 0.3 million PL/I (in 400 programmes)

Deployment environment

- Linux RedHat