

CGI Sweden

Micro Focus Visual COBOL and Micro Focus COBOL Analyzer ensure business-critical COBOL-based payroll solution's long-term future.



Who is CGI?

CGI is one of the largest IT and business consulting services firms in the world. The organization's insights-driven and outcome-based approach helps accelerate returns on clients' IT and business investments. Across 21 industry sectors in 400 locations worldwide, 82,000 professionals provide comprehensive, scalable, and sustainable IT and business consulting services that are informed globally and delivered locally.

Importance of Supporting a Business-Critical Solution

Having inherited a COBOL-based payroll solution in one of its early acquisitions, CGI implemented OpenText™ Net Express to continue developing and innovating the solution. Relied on by clients around the world, the blended HR and payroll solution offers a portfolio of services including employee life cycle management, recruitment, learning administration, benefits management, HR analytics, time and attendance, and payroll processing.

“Although the stability of the Net Express environment was never in question, by upgrading to [Micro Focus] Visual COBOL we feel we extended the horizon of a business-critical solution by several decades, while modernizing our development processes for more business agility.”

CARL GERHARDSSON
Development Manager
CGI

Carl Gerhardsson, Development Manager with CGI, explains further: “Over almost 40 years the solution has grown into 700 COBOL programs, with a complex mix of SQL and Web integrations. We feel the secret to our success is to have salary and payroll experts work directly on the development of the solution. They have the domain expertise and are familiar with the rules and regulations we need to comply with. As several of our senior COBOL developers were reaching retirement age, this was a good opportunity to introduce new development talent to ensure the long-term future of this successful commercial application. It was also the right time to move to next-generation COBOL with Micro Focus Visual COBOL so that we remain fully supported and can take advantage of new features, such as a modern interface for our developers.”



At a Glance

- **Industry**
Technology
- **Location**
Sweden
- **Challenge**
Ensure a business-critical solution remains fully supported and prepare it for future cloud deployment
- **Products and Services**
Micro Focus Visual COBOL for Visual Studio
Micro Focus COBOL Analyzer
- **Success Highlights**
 - + Delivers fully-supported version-current development environment for peace of mind
 - + Attracts new talent with modern and intuitive development interface
 - + Future-proofs solution for potential move to the cloud
 - + Streamlines development for more agile response to the business

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Development Manager
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COBOL Analyzer Eases Developer Onboarding

CGI had to be certain the existing application could be recompiled and upgraded using Micro Focus™ Visual COBOL by OpenText™ while presenting minimal risk to business continuity. The team set up a Micro Focus Visual COBOL test environment in parallel to its Net Express environment. Once the code had been recompiled automatically, reusing valuable business logic, this allowed them to verify all the complex calculations over a sustained period and ensure consistent results without risking the production environment.

CGI also took the opportunity to implement Micro Focus™ COBOL Analyzer by OpenText™. This gives developers deep application code insight, very important in this scenario, according to Gerhardsson: "The Intellectual Property (IP) of our solution has grown over decades. One of our developers tried to map and document the inner workings and correlations of the key COBOL programs and ended up with nearly 30 sheets of paper on his wall. This was clearly not going to be a scalable solution and we recognized that Micro Focus COBOL Analyzer could be a really powerful solution in our toolbox. By understanding the code and the impact of seemingly small changes across the different programs, our developers can be up and running much faster and start to make design and architectural decisions to improve the solution."

Micro Focus COBOL Analyzer also effectively identifies all code that is affected by a planned code change event. Developers can

then easily investigate and take the next steps safely. The CGI solution is currently based around one main COBOL program with many others feeding into it. A deeper code insight through Micro Focus COBOL Analyzer can enable the CGI development team to eventually divide the code into more manageable portions which will ease the ongoing development effort. Micro Focus COBOL Analyzer is built on an industry standard, relational database management system (RDBMS) for centralized storage of application information and artifacts, making version control much easier. Micro Focus Visual COBOL also integrates with GitHub for distribution version control and CGI takes full advantage of this. Another reason for the upgrade to Micro Focus Visual COBOL is to prepare for a future where CGI may decide to cloud-enable the solution.

Streamlined and Transparent Development with a Clear Path to the Future

Gerhardsson can already see the benefits of the move: "We have onboarded a couple of new developers in line with our corporate diversity and inclusion goals. Supported by the intuitive Visual Studio environment, we can see them analyzing code and contributing to active development within weeks of joining. [Micro Focus] Visual COBOL has opened the door to [Micro Focus] COBOL Analyzer and it has allowed us to future-proof the solution for potential future cloud deployment. We feel better aligned with our corporate Microsoft strategy and we can see development efficiencies. [Micro Focus] Visual COBOL enables concurrent development, supporting a more

streamlined and transparent development effort, whereas Net Express operates a check-in system whereby only one developer can work on a particular program at a time."

He concludes: "Although the stability of the Net Express environment was never in question, by upgrading to [Micro Focus] Visual COBOL we feel we extended the horizon of a business-critical solution by several decades, while modernizing our development processes for more business agility."

Learn more at
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