City of Miami

IT modernization helps City of Miami reduce EMS response times and halve IT costs.

Overview
Recognized worldwide as an international hub, the City of Miami is the largest municipality in Miami-Dade County known for its diverse culture and ethnicities. It has a population of around 400,000 that swells to over a million during the business day. The City of Miami Fire Rescue Department’s mission is to serve the citizens of Miami in a professional manner by providing rapid emergency response and other services to save lives and protect property.

“The primary goal for our IT modernization project is to make the City of Miami a safer place by protecting the lives of our citizens and making it easier for our emergency workers to do their jobs effectively.”

KEVIN BURNS
Information Systems Manager
City of Miami Fire-Rescue Department

Challenge
The City of Miami’s Fire Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) system was state-of-the-art when it was installed more than 20 years ago. Over time, and strained by the demands of an increasing population, it was no longer able to integrate smoothly with new systems and functionality. This mainframe-based emergency fire and medical dispatch system became increasingly difficult and costly to maintain. The City of Miami had to decide between modernization or rewriting all 80 applications and 180,000 lines of code for a modern platform. The rewrite would have taken between two and three years with an estimated cost more than double that of rehosting the applications on a new platform. The selected modernization route enabled City of Miami to move the system in six months at a fraction of the cost.

Solution
The modernization project, implemented by Micro Focus and Astadia, was designed to improve the speed and efficiency of City of Miami’s CAD system while ensuring its capability to meet the needs of a growing population.

At a Glance
- **Industry**: Government-State
- **Location**: United States
- **Challenge**: To move off a dated mainframe, the City of Miami had to decide between migrating or rewriting all 80 applications and 180,000 lines of code for a modern platform.
- **Solution**: Use Micro Focus Enterprise Edition to convert proprietary Unisys COBOL code to Micro Focus COBOL, which runs on Windows Server and the .NET Framework.
- **Results**:
  + 50% reduction in IT operations costs
  + Improved uptime and disaster recovery
  + Flexible system and faster response times

Customer Success Story
Enterprise Developer
Enterprise Server®

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Idea Integration implemented the full modernization using Micro Focus® Enterprise Developer®. The City’s proprietary Unisys COBOL code was converted to Micro Focus COBOL that runs on Windows Server and the .NET Framework. This project also included moving the DMSII hierarchical database to a relational database in Microsoft SQL Server 2005 data management software.

“The City of Miami is a good example of customer benefits that can be realized by choosing application and platform modernization. If your current application meets most of your business needs, projects that start with application reuse reduce the cost and risk of IT modernization,” says Bob Ellsworth, Director Platform Modernization, Microsoft. “In addition to realizing significant cost reduction, the City of Miami was able to create a solution that improves the well-being of its citizens. Microsoft is focused on helping customers save money in a time where IT budgets are being stretched. It is rewarding to work with our partners, Micro Focus and Astadia, on helping customers save money while they modernize their existing COBOL system by utilizing the cost benefits of the Microsoft Application Platform.”

The move from mainframe-based applications to a Windows environment has reduced the City of Miami’s mainframe costs by over 50%, saving at least $900,000 per year. At the same time, the modernization has enabled the City to eliminate scheduled downtime for maintenance (up to four hours per month previously), improve disaster recovery by eliminating the single point of failure, and update the system more quickly to meet changing needs. Now it’s also easier to integrate with other applications to enhance customer service.

As Kevin Burns says, “We do a better job of saving lives because we moved our system to .NET. The modernization enables us to not only improve our current processes and performance, but will be used in the future for emergency services including automatic vehicle location, global positioning and emergency dispatch systems. To do all of this without adding costs to the overburdened taxpayers has made the project an unmitigated success.”

The move to a Windows environment has resulted in faster, more efficient emergency services for citizens while saving tax dollars.

Results

The project has enabled City of Miami to not only improve current processes and performance, but will also be used to improve future emergency services, including automatic vehicle location, global positioning and emergency dispatch systems.