

Utilia S.p.A.

Micro Focus® Visual COBOL delivers business agility three times faster than anticipated by unlocking business-critical application ready for cloud delivery and mobile access.

Overview

Utilia S.p.A. is a multi platform software house and an IT service and integration company, owned by "Gruppo Società Gas Rimini", focused on the utilities industry with specific skills in support services and process know-how. GiadaEVO is the solution to manage the core business of energy and utilities companies, the leading element in the suite of Utilia products to manage the whole utilities life cycle. GiadaEVO is used on a daily basis by utilities companies for the billing and metring requirements of over 500,000 end-customers.

Challenge

GiadaAGE, the previous generation of GiadaEVO, was COBOL-developed over 20 years ago and used Micro Focus Server Express and

Server for COBOL as its development and deployment platforms. The growing complexity in the energy and utilities market has increased competition among the main players at a time when compliance requirements have tightened as well. The application is used by partners and customers and needed a more flexible architecture to meet ever-changing requirements.

Enrico Vernocchi, CEO of Utilia, decided to redefine and reorganize the core software solution, as he explains: "Over the years different application modules have been developed to feed into GiadaEVO, such as supply procedures, billing, services ticketing, communication with the supply chain partners etc. However, we really needed to streamline this integration. We also wanted to respond quicker to business requests for new functionalities."

Utilia wanted to leverage existing skills and reuse business logic, and needed a strong integration between Java and HTML through a Web services-oriented solution. It looked at a refactoring of the GiadaEVO solution, but found this would be too expensive and time-consuming, not meeting the time-to-market requirements. Commercial solutions were explored as well but the complex and specialized GiadaEVO functionality could not be matched.

Solution

A thorough analysis resulted in a detailed and customized list of new functionality and system integration requirements, with internal and



At a Glance

■ Industry

Energy and Utilities

■ Location

Italy

■ Challenge

Strict regulations and business requests for new functionality require a faster response in a more productive development environment.

■ Solution

Micro Focus Visual COBOL for Eclipse is deployed to protect the existing asset investment and provide a path to modernization and scalability.

■ Results

- + Improved time-to-market with guaranteed business continuity
- + Project completed with less effort than anticipated
- + Good system integration via web services with other Utilia and customer applications, achieved faster than anticipated
- + Improved development efficiency

"We decided to follow the evolution of the Micro Focus COBOL platform because we are convinced of the new potential offered by Visual Cobol, and to achieve full interoperability between the COBOL layer of GiadaEVO and the Java layer of our suite of services and products dedicated to the energy world!"

ENRICO VERNOCCHI

CEO
Utilia

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external solutions. It was clear that a new technology platform could help evolve GiadaEVO into a more flexible solution with Micro Focus Visual COBOL as standard UNIX-based development platform.

Vernocchi comments: “We saw a clear opportunity to use Visual COBOL because it enables us to recompile our application logic to Java byte code, providing coexistence between our COBOL and Java applications and enabling better business integration.”

Micro Focus’s support for COBOL deployment to the Java Virtual Machine (JVM) meant that Utilia could compile its COBOL programs directly to Java byte code, simplifying integration between the GiadaEVO application and other systems. Moving to managed code using the Visual COBOL JVM solution delivered simpler code reuse and easier business systems integration. Additionally, the modern Eclipse-based development toolset brought Java and COBOL teams together to support ongoing application maintenance and development.

Results

Visual COBOL’s capabilities enabled the development of a modern user interface ensuring that the GiadaEVO application is cloud and mobile ready. Workflows between different systems have been automated with full systems integration at its core. Effective load balancing provides the scalability Utilia needed. GiadaEVO is now a Web-accessed solution with full integration to all related systems. The close Java integration aligns with the corporate application strategy and COBOL can now support the future application strategy of Utilia.

Vernocchi concludes: “We decided to follow the evolution of the Micro Focus COBOL platform because we are convinced of the new potential offered by Visual Cobol, and to achieve full interoperability between the COBOL layer of GiadaEVO and the Java layer of our suite of services and products dedicated to the energy world.”



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