URL:        www.zucchetti.it
Industry:   IT
Country:    Italy

# Zucchetti Group

## Visual COBOL enables Zucchetti to deliver its client-server applications as Software-as-a-Service, on Linux and the cloud

### Challenge

To satisfy customer demand Zucchetti needed to make key business applications into web-accessible solutions without losing functionality, impacting usability, or having to do time consuming and costly re-writes.

### Solution

> Micro Focus Visual COBOL™

### Zucchetti Group

Founded in 1978, Zucchetti Group offers across-the-board software and hardware solutions that directly contribute to its clients' competitive advantage and success. As one of Italy's leading application software companies, half of the group's 2,000 employees are dedicated to research and development. From its headquarters in Lodi, Zucchetti focuses on providing software solutions to over 85,000 companies of all sizes and across all industries; including banks, insurance companies, professional services, professional associations, CAF (Centri di Assistenza Fiscale), tax advice centers and public administration. Zucchetti's network comprises over 1,000 partners in Italy as well as in over 50 other countries, who are dedicated to product marketing, pre- and post-sales services, and training and retraining solutions.

### Technology's role in Zucchetti's success

The group's competitive advantage lies in the innovation, quality and reliability of its products, as well as excellent client relations. The group's reputation is the result of its focus on delivering excellence in every solution it develops for each target market, and it aims to continuously improve existing solutions and create new ones that provide clients with the competitive edge required for success.

As part of this commitment to improve and extend its solutions, Zucchetti embraces new technologies and integrates their capabilities into its comprehensive product ranges. The group offers multi-language, multi-platform solutions for HR, security, automation and business software. Over time, exploiting the opportunities offered by new technologies has inevitably meant changes to the software powering the applications, and Zucchetti has adapted its solutions to meet these new trends, as Zucchetti Vice-President Domenico Uggeri, explains, "We created HR Infinity, an integrated platform that brings together our software solutions using web-based and open source technologies while maintaining

### Highlights

> Deployed business critical COBOL applications in .NET and JVM platforms using existing code

> Created SaaS version of key applications without impacting usability or reliability

> Saved considerable time and cost while improving customer satisfaction

> Maximized customer choice by offering client server and web versions of applications with common data management and processing

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**Ivano Rainò,**
Head of Development, Zucchetti

full compatibility with the most-used commercial databases and operating systems, creating a single, modular suite."

## Taking COBOL applications to the web

Many of Zucchetti's applications were created in the 1980s and were originally written in COBOL. One particularly successful application is Gestione Presenze e Assenze – the group's attendance and absence management solution - used in over 5,000 companies and containing over 20 years' development work. Integrating this dedicated attendance record application into HR Infinity was essential. Ivano Rainò, Head of Development at Zucchetti explains, "The software was developed in COBOL which is always up-to-date thanks to Micro Focus. When we looked to make the move from a client-server model to a web-based model, it was important for us to be able to develop our application without having to rewrite it or change key functionality."

The aim was to implement change without impacting users, so that clients could continue to use it as they always had while benefiting from a new improved interface. Rainò explains, "Our network of partners and clients are very familiar with the absence and attendance management system so we did not want to revolutionize the product completely." As Zucchetti wanted to maintain its client-server version to meet the needs of existing customers, it was essential to use the single calculation engine for the data management and processing that underpin the HR suite's dedicated payroll applications. A way had to be found to retain the existing code, while making the solution available as a web-based service.

## Micro Focus Visual COBOL provides the solution

Zucchetti's developers have extensive expertise and experience in COBOL, and had used Micro Focus NetExpress with .NET extensively to enhance the absence and attendance system. Adopting Micro Focus Visual COBOL was the natural approach to take to create a Software-as-a Service (SaaS) delivery of the system. By enabling users to deploy COBOL applications in the Java Virtual Machine (JVM) environment as well as on Microsoft .NET, Visual COBOL ensured that the attendance management component could be made available on different platforms without having to rewrite the software for each new use.

"Micro Focus Visual COBOL enabled us to tailor the application to the new platform, linking it to a front-end designed using our tools," explains Rainò. "Using it we could create a genuine bridge between the supplied attendance and absence module and the cross-platform

version, ready for integration into the HR Infinity environment." The evolution of the COBOL language made it possible for Zucchetti's developers to retain the application's original code and structure, while moving it to alternative platforms. Using Visual COBOL has ensured that the application could be integrated with the HR Infinity suite without the need for code changes, particularly the central calculation engine, and importantly without affecting the user experience. The story does not end there, however. "We wanted to retain our client-server version for the benefit of our clients," explains Rainò. "Micro Focus Visual COBOL enables us to reuse the same code across the client-server and web versions of our applications, in both .NET and JVM platforms. This offers huge advantages in terms of maintenance and costs and gives us the ability to quickly and easily take our applications into the cloud."

## Improving customer satisfaction and delivering cost benefits

Rewriting the Attendance and Absence application to give customers a web-based service would have been prohibitively expensive in terms of both time and money. It also would have introduced the potential risk of losing valuable functionality and competitive advantage built into the system over years. Any change to procedures and functionally also risked disappointing many of the 5,000 companies using the new version within the HR Infinity platform. Fortunately, Visual COBOL eliminated these risks and enabled Zucchetti to reuse valuable code and deliver a quick time to results.

Zucchetti Group has also realized key back-end benefits. As Ivano Rainò explains, "Because Micro Focus Visual COBOL enables cross-platform runtime modality, we can use it to offer different types of delivery for our applications, including Linux as well as SaaS and cloud." By selecting a technology partner capable of tailoring solutions to changing development environments, the Zucchetti Group is protecting the intellectual property of applications which have evolved to take advantage of new trends in technology. Visual COBOL will help Zucchetti extend their reach further by taking the application into the cloud – reducing costs and delivering key benefits to its customers and improving overall customer satisfaction.

The flexibility that Visual COBOL offers is a direct reflection of Zucchetti Group's customer ethos: to offer clients maximum freedom of choice with no restriction on how the software is used. The Attendance and Absence users have the flexibility to determine if and when to migrate to the HR Infinity platform to access the new staff management solutions and services.

**Using Visual COBOL to take applications into the future**

According to Uggeri, Micro Focus Visual COBOL will play a key role in future releases of other Zucchetti products. "Although some of our clients will choose to continue using the client-server version, we must ensure total integration between all versions of our products. We are confident that there will be widespread evolutionary migration among our clients, as many understand the importance of using a web-based service from a SaaS perspective.With Micro Focus as a technology partner, Zucchetti will be up to the challenge."

**About Micro Focus**

Micro Focus, a member of the FTSE 250, provides innovative software that allows companies to dramatically improve the business value of their enterprise applications. Micro Focus Enterprise Application Modernization, Testing and Management software enables customers' business applications to respond rapidly to market changes and embrace modern architectures with reduced cost and risk.