

LV 1871

LV 1871 can now use the latest technologies in a future-proof configuration, leveraging proven COBOL logic to modernize and port business services to Java.

Overview

Insurer Lebensversicherung von 1871 a. G. München (LV 1871) offers a range of life, disability, income protection and pension insurance policies. With an annual premium income of €610 million, the mutual insurance association employs 450 people and works with more than 9,000 partners.

Challenge

LV 1871 manages over 670,000 insurance policies and found it increasingly challenging to offer clerks and developers modern, intuitive tools quickly and cost-efficiently.

“[Micro Focus™] Visual COBOL for Eclipse has helped us reduce technical debt and increase flexibility, preparing us for future business challenges. Today, we use, maintain and update fewer tools, helping developers to increase productivity and deliver state-of-the-art services to staff.”

RAINER MIDDERHOFF

Head of Application Development & IT Security Officer
LV 1871

Rainer Midderhoff, Head of Application Development & IT Security Officer at LV 1871, explains: “We were unable to provide lean workflows for efficient software development easily with our existing COBOL setup.”

To increase developer productivity, the company needed to optimize its tooling and IT management processes. Rainer Midderhoff says: “Without integrated workflows, improving the experience for staff was time-consuming. Technical limitations locked us into outdated solutions running out of support, posing a potential business risk that we wanted to eliminate to improve resiliency.”

Solution

LV 1871 relies on its central life insurance inventory management system to keep track of all contracts. Rainer Midderhoff elaborates: “We’ve refined the system over many years, and the COBOL business logic works extremely well. Our goal was to increase flexibility and use the data in new ways, especially with a Java environment, so we could improve internal functionalities and enrich the user experience.”

The company decided to migrate the life insurance inventory from IBM VSE running on an IBM System z mainframe to a more cost-efficient platform, and completely redesign the frontend of the application using Java.



At a Glance

■ Industry

Financial Services

■ Location

Munich, Germany

■ Challenge

To keep up with the pace of digitization, LV 1871 wanted to remove technical restrictions to improve services.

■ Products and Services

Micro Focus Visual COBOL for Eclipse
Distributed Edition
Micro Focus Visual COBOL Server

■ Success Highlights

- + Leveraged decades' worth of proven, mission-critical COBOL business logic for deployment in cutting-edge Java server environments
- + Enabled faster, more agile development of new services
- + Offered a competitive advantage by ensuring that LV 1871 can make use of the latest technologies

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Rainer Midderhoff comments: “Rewriting over 900 programs wasn’t an option—we needed a quick, easy and inexpensive way of leveraging the COBOL logic we’d optimized over the decades in newly-developed Java applications.”

To increase productivity, LV 1871 replaced its outdated IBM VisualAge development environment with a modern, future-proof solution: Micro Focus™ Visual COBOL for Eclipse Distribution Edition by OpenText™ with Micro Focus™ Visual COBOL Server by OpenText™. “Micro Focus (now part of OpenText™) has long been a market leader in this area,” says Rainer Midderhoff. “Not only did Micro Focus Visual COBOL for Eclipse meet all our technical requirements, it also offered the widest range of features.”

By compiling COBOL code to Java bytecode, the solution enables developers to re-use valuable business logic in a Java environment, and write features and web services in Java—without sacrificing the stability and reliability of the original COBOL code.

Results

With Micro Focus™ Visual COBOL for Eclipse by OpenText™, LV 1871 is much better equipped to deliver new features and services.

Rainer Midderhoff comments: “Working with [Micro Focus™] Visual COBOL for Eclipse, developers can extend the functionality of existing applications gradually and smoothly integrate them with new Java technology—which was difficult before.

“We gained a future-proof solution to take advantage of new Java technologies while refactoring business-critical COBOL logic. This protects our investments in COBOL code while providing all the benefits of a modern development environment. The solution allows us to leverage decades’ worth of proven COBOL logic and move to new Java-based services faster.”

Developers can use advanced features in a comprehensive Integrated Development Environment, helping them focus on business problems. They can take advantage of features such as OpenText™ SmartLinkage to reduce the effort of integrating COBOL and Java code even further, automating routine tasks to save valuable time.

Dr. Peter Baetz, Project Manager and Developer at LV 1871, adds: “Previously, colleagues would print out code to navigate large files more easily. With Micro Focus Visual COBOL for Eclipse, they benefit from all the handy tools of a modern development environment, including advanced search across many files. The integrated debugging capability helps us to work seamlessly across COBOL and Java code.”

LV 1871 has also minimized business risk with the OpenText™ solution. Rainer Midderhoff remarks: “By modernizing our application stack, we streamlined operations and can take advantage of the most current features, releases and security patches.”

He concludes: “[Micro Focus™] Visual COBOL for Eclipse has helped us reduce technical debt

and increase flexibility, preparing us for future business challenges. Today, we use, maintain and update fewer different tools, helping our developers to increase productivity and deliver state-of-the-art services to staff.

“We can wrap COBOL code in RESTful web services. Formerly monolithic applications now expose data and functionality through interfaces—this is how we get COBOL cloud-ready. It’s just a shame that there aren’t more aspiring young developers who want to go down that road with us.”

Learn more at

www.microfocus.com/opentext