

AFLAC migrates data to scalable, open standards-based DB2.

Overview

■ **Application**

Migration of billing information to IBM DB2® Universal Database™ and COBOL from NATURAL/ADABAS information management environment

■ **Business Benefits**

Projected increase in employee and agent productivity and improved customer service due to use of real-time customer information; increase in DBA productivity from use of automated tools; ability to leverage widely

■ **Software**

IBM DB2 Universal Database for z/OS®; IBM DB2 Administration Tool for z/OS; IBM DB2 Object Comparison Tool for z/OS; IBM DB2 Automation Tool for z/OS; IBM DB2 Log Analysis Tool for z/OS; IBM DB2 High Performance Unload for z/OS

■ **Hardware**

IBM @server® zSeries®

■ **Business Partner**

Modern Software Technologies Ltd. (MOST)



Due to its growing base of customers demanding supplementary health insurance, AFLAC had to reengineer its database platform with open standards-based technology from IBM.

Thanks to a duck that quacks the company's name, AFLAC has become a household word. Behind the attention-grabbing television commercials is a Fortune 500 insurer that provides guaranteed-renewable accident, disability and other coverage to 40 million people worldwide and is the largest insurance company in Japan.

Based in Columbus, Georgia, AFLAC (which stands for American Family Life Assurance Company of Columbus) has more than 60,000 agents and nearly 4,200 employees. AFLAC specializes in providing insurance

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—Gerald Shields, Vice President, AFLAC

coverage that helps to fill the gaps created by co-payments, deductibles, loss of income and various out-of-pocket expenses not addressed by major medical plans.

AFLAC continues to grow at a fast clip, creating new challenges for its IT group. Above all, its IT professionals strive to streamline operations to serve the company's burgeoning customer base while maintaining consistent staffing levels. But in certain instances, this has become increasingly difficult to do given the increasing demands on its IT infrastructure. For instance, success has put millions of customer and payroll records in the company's billing database. However, IT professionals with the specialized ADABAS skills to power this mission-critical database proved scarce. Similarly, few programmers were available

that knew the Natural programming language, which is required to write queries and applications for ADABAS. As a result, it was difficult for AFLAC to integrate its enterprise applications with its billing database and keep up the pace of progress in automating and streamlining its systems.

"We needed to increase integration to support, underwriting workflow processes, Web front ends for customers and employees, and a host of other enterprise systems," says Gerald Shields, vice president, AFLAC.

"We wanted to be more responsive to our employees and customers by integrating these applications with our ADABAS and NATURAL platform." To keep productivity rising, the company needed to replace its legacy database with a standardized, open infrastructure featuring components that could be easily integrated across multiple vendors' platforms and different applications.

Migrating towards higher productivity

The solution to AFLAC's problem began to come together when it learned of an IBM Business Partner whose practice it is to help companies migrate from ADABAS to IBM DB2 Universal Database. Modern Software Technologies, Ltd. (MOST) is headquartered in Tel Aviv, Israel (with offices in Atlanta, Georgia) but has a worldwide customer base of companies that have faced database migration challenges and other major reengineering tasks.

"DB2 is becoming one of AFLAC's software standards because it has low maintenance requirements, which helps us provide scalability without adding to our overhead," says Shields. Working side by side with AFLAC's IT staff in Georgia, MOST, through its automated OnTarget technology, partnered with AFLAC staff to design and implement the new database on an IBM **@server** zSeries mainframe.

The full migration is due to be completed within the coming year. In the meantime, AFLAC has decided to acquire a set of IBM DB2 database administration tools to optimize the performance of its newly designed database and automate routine maintenance tasks to keep productivity high in the data center.

"IBM DB2 Tools are excellent in terms of value, performance and the way they work together as an integrated suite."

—Gerald Shields

AFLAC is now in a better position to integrate its enterprise systems with its billing database and make many of its business processes—from enrollment to claims settlement—faster and more efficient. “A major goal within our IT organization is to keep up with growth while providing access to real-time data,” says Shields. “With DB2 and the assistance of MOST, we will be able to provide real-time information and quickly develop productivity-enhancing applications that will enable us to handle more business.”

Momentous transition undetectable to users

Until now, the extensive NATURAL code-based application environment that AFLAC had built to run its billing operations had slowed migration efforts. To accelerate the development of the DB2 solution, MOST separated these applications from the database by working with AFLAC to develop a three-tier architecture consisting of presentation, business logic and data layers. Through MOST’s OnTarget technology, the NATURAL code-based billing applications were transformed to a highly structured COBOL code that is easier to maintain and integrate. To lessen the risk involved and to avoid disruption



With its new solution based on DB2 software from IBM, AFLAC will be able to provide real-time customer data on its Web site.

to customers, MOST also designed a four-stage process for the actual application and data migration. This was accomplished through the design and development of interim technologies to allow co-existence between converted and non-converted code, and migrated and non-migrated data.

“It was important for us to enable the company to continue its normal daily operations while we were carrying out the migration,” says Shields. “In fact, we weren’t looking to change the screens our employees used, or train anyone on unfamiliar systems.

We wanted a seamless migration, without any loss in the performance of our applications, and that’s exactly what MOST delivered with DB2 and COBOL.”

Fine-tuning for maximum performance

To keep its DB2 database in optimum condition and take advantage of its outstanding performance, AFLAC deployed IBM DB2 database administration and recovery tools. “IBM DB2 Tools are excellent in terms of value, performance and the way they work together as an integrated suite,” says Shields.

AFLAC uses a suite of IBM DB2 Tools, including:

- *IBM DB2 Administration Tool for z/OS to facilitate changes in the structure of the database.*
- *IBM DB2 Object Comparison Tool to enable IT staff to maintain separate production and test environments and keep them synchronized, quickly and easily.*
- *IBM DB2 Automation Tool to enable database administrators (DBAs) to automate maintenance tasks to optimize database performance.*
- *IBM DB2 Log Analysis Tool to enable DBAs to minimize downtime while eliminating unwanted changes, helping to ensure data integrity.*
- *IBM DB2 High Performance Unload to unload and extract data for movement across enterprise systems or for reorganization in-place.*

“Making database maintenance more efficient by using automated processes is another important way we can generate productivity gains,” says Shields. “IBM is committed to reducing manual workloads with solutions such as the DB2 Tools, helping us gain a more efficient data center.”

In other areas of the company, AFLAC has used IBM WebSphere Application Server and IBM WebSphere MQ to develop Web front ends that are integrated with legacy systems. “AFLAC’s plans are to develop Web self-service applications or other applications that support internal efficiencies,” says Shields.

For more information

Please contact your IBM marketing representative, IBM Business Partner or IBM Direct at: 1 800 IBM-CALL.

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