

84.51°

84.51°: From Zero to 100 with Automic in 90 Days

84.51° is devoted to helping its partners develop, nurture, and embrace customer-driven relationships. They use a sophisticated suite of tools and technology, to navigate the complex data landscape to reveal relevant customer patterns. Through its clients 84.51° is in contact with over 60 million US household through 2750+ stores in 35 states. The company was formed when Kroger acquired the North American subsidiary of UK customer science company dunnhumby, including the rights to continue using dunnhumby's technology assets. 84.51° is a wholly owned subsidiary of the supermarket chain.

Business Challenges

As 84.51° divested itself from dunnhumby, it needed to revise the number of separate and distinct environments it operated. This included a review all of the existing software licenses. For the previous eight years, Redwood's Cronacle tool had been used to automate the core business solutions used by their clients including:

- All data movement, both internally and externally
- ETL processing
- 84.51° products, including all customer facing applications

"We are no longer missing SLAs that we were missing in the past, so that makes our business provide much better deliverables to our end clients in a much more reliable way".

Jeff Schmidt,
Senior Automation Engineer at 84.51

BUSINESS CHALLENGES

- Replace existing automation tool in <90 days
- Simplify control of multiple client environments
- Reduce software license overheads
- Extend use of automation within 84.51°

AUTOMIC SOLUTION

- Multi-tenancy
- Unified automation platform
- Automated migration tools
- Professional services team

84.51° BENEFITS

- >90% reduction in SLA breaches
- Enhanced return on software investments
- Less maintenance managing 16 instead of 88 environments
- Fewer outages and faster recovery times

There remained several internal business applications that had not been automated:

- Finance and accounting
- Human Resources
- Business analytics

84.51° decided to explore the pros and cons of continuing to use the same automation tool versus switching to an alternate. Staying with what they had would allow them to leverage in-house knowledge it had accumulated. However, periodic outages combined with ongoing maintenance proving costly and time consuming, with a separate automation platform required for each client instance of an 84.51° solution.

Automatic Solution

Having evaluated other third party tools as well as the incumbent tool, 84.51° decided to replace all installations of its legacy automation platform with Automatic on new infrastructure and hardware. All active 84.51° products and workloads needed to be migrated. Dev and test Automatic environments would need to be established. A cutover approach would be required to allow 84.51° to decommission all of the legacy environments it would no longer operate.

Jeff Schmidt, Senior Automation Engineer, 84.51° takes up the story, “We were reevaluating our IT stack to determine what stays and what goes. Our goal was to become more strategic, making choices instead of staying with the status quo. We wanted to focus on how automation could improve our business processes. Our challenge was that whatever we did, we needed to act fast. Other vendors estimated conversion would be a 6-9 month project. Automatic promised they would do it in 90 days.”

Together 84.51° and Automatic developed a detailed schedule that would cover discovery, installation, training, migration, cutover and final go-live. A divide and conquer approach was adopted, starting with the migration of small workflows. Daily deliverables were set and there would be stand-up meetings where barriers would be identified and knocked down each day.

“Automatic provided an estimated project timeline and made the commitment to 84.51° to meet that date,” commented Schmidt. “When it became apparent that we needed more resource from Automatic, they were there and met us half-way. Automatic provided true value-add by identifying issues with our solution then assisting us to resolve them. The bottom line is that they did what they said they were going to do and delivered on every promise.”

Taking advantage of Automatic’s multi-tenancy capability allowed 84.51° to slash the number of automation environments from 88 down to 16, ensuring client data remained separate and secure. They also achieve the throughput required to process very high volumes of client data using a platform that integrates with and automates their Exadata environment.

84.51° Benefits

Working with Automatic, 84.51° successfully migrated all of its legacy automation workflows on to a more robust and reliable platform that was up and running in production within 90 days. In addition to simplifying management of multiple client systems, there has been a reduction in the number of SLA breaches and outages.

Previously, 84.51° would miss their SLAs two to three times a week with a direct knock-on business impact. With Automatic, SLA breaches are down by over 90%. Following an outage, it would take

6-8 hours for 84.51° to recover their legacy automation tool. Today, normal service is restored within one hour.

“We went from zero to 100 in 87 days. This was amazing given the magnitude of the change,” said Schmidt. “We have delivered a more robust and reliable automation solution evidenced by the reduced the number of outages and SLA breaches we were seeing with our legacy system. We are providing an enterprise automation platform to our analysts – an entire business unit that previously was not included in our legacy automation platform.”

In partnership with Automatic 84.51° is continually moving forward seeking out new opportunities where automation can bring extra business value. Currently in it is implementing Automatic Release Automation to speed delivery of application updates and new releases and also has plans to replace their existing cron scripts.

Final words from Schmidt, “We’ve been on an incredible journey with Automatic. I’ve been doing this for 30 years and I have NEVER worked with a vendor company that shows the kind of energy, talent, desire to win and desire to please the customer that Automatic showed us.”

“When we needed to step things up, Automatic was there stepping right up with us from professional services to getting the right people in at the right time. I’ve worked in the IT industry for more than 30 years and I’ve never seen a client come to the table the way that Automatic came to the table.”

Jeff Schmidt,
Senior Automation Engineer at 84.51°

For more information or product demonstration please visit www.automic.com