DG Technology Consulting Program

Optimizing Your Mainframe Investments to Unleash Value

Mainframes remain stalwarts of business

The mainframe that you used to know has been replaced by something far more powerful. To capitalize on its potential, you need to first unleash its value. The latest mainframe, IBM z13™, is the world's fastest commercial computer with massive pipes for handling data and 10 terabytes of memory. While supporting real-time transactions, the mainframe simultaneously performs predictive analytics for fraud alerts, offers buying recommendations, provides health diagnoses, and more. The mainframe continues to run most of the world's IT infrastructure. And beyond heavy duty transaction processing, the mainframe is now the enterprise backbone, combining structured data with unstructured data and delivering greater business intelligence.

The logic and data on mainframes are strategic assets, and IT leaders are taking notice. Mainframes here to stay, and IT leaders need to think carefully about their approach to IT strategy planning. They also need to consider ongoing economics if they want to continue to deliver the innovation demanded by today's agile and application-oriented businesses. But with shrinking budgets pervasive across all aspects of IT, leaders are challenged to reduce IT spending in order to free up financial resources for big data, analytics, the Internet of Things (IoT), and other initiatives that will move the business forward.

Maintaining legacy systems vs. developing new capabilities

Among IT leaders, there is a perception that the mainframe is expensive. It's a perception that is perpetuated by a history of inflexible pricing and licensing models, redundant tools and a lack of relevant skill sets. Not surprisingly, cost center owners are under pressure to reduce the costs of the mainframe portfolio. Some are accomplishing this by enabling resource flexibility using external skill sets to provide necessary maintenance and support services. Others are consolidating systems and software to reduce licensing and maintenance costs. While these and other strategies can help lower costs, the scope, cost and most effective prioritization may not be obvious in the absence of an up-front assessment that provides an accurate view of the existing environment.

DG TECHNOLOGY

However, the challenge doesn't end with cost reduction. Instead, the savings must be reinvested in order to future-proof the IT infrastructure by developing new capabilities that meet the evolving requirements of businesses and their customers. This is known as mainframe modernization, and there are a number of strategies that vary greatly in complexity, time requirements and costs. It's not always apparent what strategy is best, particularly in the absence of a methodology that enables stakeholders to make an informed decision. But with an effective methodology, it is possible to choose a strategy that balances an organization's short- and long-term business goals enabling technology innovation balanced by cost-savings optimization.

Tackle both challenges head on

"Imagine a machine where removing parts doesn't affect performance but instead creates greater efficiencies. The Core Systems Consulting Program makes the dream a reality."

— VP Operations, Leading Financial Services Company

It is time for IT leaders responsible for the mainframe to tackle both challenges head on. The first step in the journey is to identify tools and processes and find where to eliminate unnecessary expenses. The second is to fuel innovations from the gain in these new operational efficiencies. Of course, orchestrating such a change must involve a holistic enterprise-wide approach in the context of overall data center strategies.

Consider that multiple tools from different vendors — some at risk of going out of business — often result in software change management dependencies, negative production impacts, vendor time management disruptions, and more. Putting aside the obvious operational headache, when enterprises are already trying to get COBOL and Java® developers to speak the same language, such a diverse tool set is a logistical nightmare.

These days, it seems just about anyone can make a recommendation to replace products in an enterprise's portfolio. However, most lack the ability to quickly spotlight inefficiencies and the simple awareness of just how big a change it is and the impact it can have. It's not a quick and easy proposition. It takes time and a whole team effort, and there are risks and potential costs to the business during the transition that must be balanced when executing.

IT leaders need a partner they can rely on — one who understands their challenges and has developed the means to help them through this change, and one with seasoned expertise and automated conversion and migration technologies. That's why top IT leaders turn to the Core Systems Consulting Program.

About the Core Systems Consulting Program

The Core Systems Consulting Program was created through the combined 30+ years of consultative pricing and predictive analytics experience of vendor, channel and, mainframe software experts. Together, they have established an innovative rationalization program that is designed to delight the CFO, as well as meet the rigorous demands of the technical user. This program is available at no cost to all our Mainframe software customers — and the time investment is minimal — which is made possible given a structured and repeatable four-step approach, including the following.

Step One–Initial Analysis

The Core Systems Consulting Program employs predictive logic to reduce large customer software portfolios into a refined prioritized list of potential cost-saving opportunities. This Initial Analysis process provides summarized information based on overall environmental impact, functional overlap via levels of comparability estimates, associated levels of effort, actual replacement effort estimates, as well as the ability to provide an initial highly comprehensive business case depicting before and after savings potential.

Step Two–Refinement Discovery

The program employs the use of a product-specific discovery capability designed to locate and determine usage variables, such as step-level executions, JCL and batch volumes. This is a non-invasive technology that reduces and assesses Systems Management Facilities data records. The results provide an in-depth assessment of the change required, enabling DG Technology experts to select the appropriate conversion/migration utilities and determine the change-associated scope.

Step Three–Conversion/Migration

A suite of repeatable migration tools then automates the migration process from the existing mainframe to a CA solution. This reduces the risk of keying errors while accelerating time-to-value. What's more, the Core Systems Consulting Program simplifies the conversion execution of a vast number of jobs, definitions, JCL, etc., which helps ensure a successful transition. And the program augments the existing staff with experts sourced from DG Technology's internal team of highly trained professionals, and those from 35 partners.

Step Four–Follow-up

Auditing tools provide visibility into the current status of the environment — using the results as confirmation of completion. DG Technology tracks first-year progress to ensure everything is running optimally and clients are completely satisfied.

The results are clear

To date, the Core Systems Consulting Program has helped 400+ customers and demonstrated a 24 percent portfolio reduction with an associated 14 percent vendor reduction. In total, the program has helped customers achieve an average $1.4 million in reduced annual OPEX spend.

DG Technology approaches software portfolio rationalization as a strategic partner. Identifying where to reduce complexity and eliminate redundancy is just the first step. Our approach envisions a strategic future-state approach, taking into consideration not just technology costs, but also your overall IT OPEX, personnel costs against evolving business and organizational requirements and creates a plan to reach that outcome.

Contact your DG Technology sales or services representative today for additional information on how you can unleash the value of your mainframe or to receive a free assessment of your environment and the potential optimization savings.

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