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CASE STUDY

The Bon-Ton Stores

Replacement of ASG-Zeke with
Universal Automation Center



The American operator of 256 stores sought a modern automation solution to replace their legacy job scheduler.



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 Manager of Computer Operations,
 The Bon-Ton Stores, Inc.

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Background

The Bon-Ton Stores Inc., is an American department store chain with corporate headquarters in both York, Pennsylvania and Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

The company operates 256 stores, which includes nine furniture galleries and four clearance centers, in 23 states across the Northeast, Midwest and upper Great Plains under the Bon-Ton, Boston Store, Bergner's, Carson's, Elder-Beerman, Herberger's and Youngers nameplates.

Challenges

The Bon-Ton Stores Inc. was utilizing a legacy mainframe job scheduler known as ASG-Zeke. ASG-Zeke was unable to handle tasks running on platforms other than z/OS. Jobs being run with z/OS tasks then had to be moved to a different server to return the COND parameter. This was deemed inefficient and therefore unacceptable.

"We wanted an enterprise scheduler that would enable us to easily schedule tasks on our multiple platforms," says Charlie Dorner, Manager of Computer Operations at The Bon-Ton Stores Inc. "It was time for us to implement a modern workload automation solution."

RESULTS

- Improved functionality
- Superior ease of use
- Seamless conversion from ASG-Zeke job scheduler
- Enhanced flexibility
- Convenient dashboards and fully customizable reports

Modern workload automation solutions support multiple business applications and workflows, including cross-system dependencies. It automates entire business systems, including heterogeneous server environments, considering planned activities and information.

There is a rapid shift in the business world from traditional batch-based automation towards real-time workload automation, as well as the orchestration of an intelligent decision making process for IT automation.

Solution

After conducting a thorough review of available automation solutions on the market, The Bon-Ton Stores, Inc. chose Stonebranch's Universal Automation Center (UAC) as their new workload automation solution.

"We chose Stonebranch because they had better features and were a true Enterprise Job Scheduler and an excellent value," says Dorner. "In addition to having superior functionality, Universal Automation Center was easy to learn and incredibly versatile. It was a truly graphical user interface with convenient widgets on a modern dashboard."

This made the end users' daily tasks much easier. They could now see where they were in a jobstream or application, simply by looking at a workflow and their fully customizable reports within UAC.

Although The Bon-Ton Stores Inc. still operates an IBM mainframe, their IT services are now better able to support their initiatives to optimize the company's digital customer experience.

Universal Automation Center complemented this mix of operational environments by providing great support and integrations for both legacy products and cutting edge applications and services. Replacing an old-school job scheduling tool with a modern workload automation solution also had additional benefits. As users with

legacy mainframe skill-sets are becoming harder to find, new operations staff hires that do not have mainframe expertise were able to be easily trained to operate both legacy and distributed application workloads with Universal Automation Center.

Since making the switch, Dorner notes that: "we have seen a steady stream of new features and capabilities added to Universal Automation Center. This is key, and validates our choice of Stonebranch as vendor, solution provider, and partner. Knowing that we have a product in place that is keeping pace with the technology we need to support makes life in operations so much easier."

Results: Return on Automation*

Following a successful implementation of Stonebranch's Universal Automation Center, all tasks on all platforms are now simple to integrate.

"Stonebranch has greatly improved our ability to handle tasks on the servers and achieve enterprise scheduling with all of our interdependencies between servers and the mainframe. It is now much simpler to handle this type of task."

Dorner raved about Stonebranch's support during the conversion from ASG-Zeke to Universal Automation Center. "The Stonebranch services team proved themselves to be experts when it came time to migrate the data from ASG-Zeke. The implementation was greatly aided by their vast knowledge and experience," he added.

"We are a big fiscal calendar organization and that presented the need for special calendar creation. Stonebranch support from the entire services team was outstanding. I strongly encourage ASG-Zeke users to make the switch to Stonebranch."

*** Return on Automation (RoA):** the investment in automation and the right automation tool pays off in a short time and returns many benefits. These include higher efficiency, faster processes, greater process reliability, higher data throughput, seamless integration, and higher production. The overall result is an increase in profits.

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ABOUT STONEBRANCH

Stonebranch builds dynamic IT automation solutions that transform business IT environments from simple IT task automation into sophisticated, real-time business service automation, helping organizations achieve the highest possible Return on Automation.

Using Stonebranch's simple, modern and secure IT automation platform, enterprises can seamlessly orchestrate workloads and data across technology stacks and ecosystems.



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