



Cognos Gains Competitive Advantage with Montera's Application Management Services

Being a world leader in the software business means constantly staying on top of your game. No company knows this better than Cognos. With a distinguished track record of success and an enviable customer list, Cognos has been a consistent top performer in a dynamic and challenging industry. To maintain dominance in the market, Cognos has successfully leveraged its information technology resources to gain competitive advantage. When Cognos experienced performance and support issues with its mission-critical applications, they turned to Montera Corporation, the Application Management Specialists.

CLIENT PROFILE- COGNOS INC.

Setting the bar by which all others are measured, Cognos is the world leader in business intelligence (BI) and performance planning software for the enterprise. With an established customer base of over 22,000 in 135 countries, Cognos solutions allow companies to improve and direct corporate performance by enabling all of the key steps in the management cycle—from planning and budgeting, measuring and monitoring performance, to reporting and analysis. Founded in 1969 and headquartered in Ottawa, Canada, Cognos employs a global work force of 2,900 people

It's completeness of offering and ability to deliver all the essential components of Corporate Performance Management (CPM)- enterprise planning, score carding, and business intelligence have set Cognos apart in the marketplace. Customers choose Cognos software as both a point solution to address key operational requirements, or as an enterprise solution to better manage their business and to understand, monitor, and drive corporate performance. Cognos serves customers in many different industry categories including automotive, banking and insurance, energy and natural resources, government, healthcare, manufacturing, and pharmaceuticals.

THE BUSINESS CHALLENGE AND OBJECTIVES:

With a distributed sales force worldwide, working in different time zones, staying on top of sales forecasting and software maintenance renewals is essential for Cognos. The company utilizes multiple, mission critical applications to report revenue projections, provide corporate guidance to the market and ultimately drive projections and spending. Sales Forecasting is supported by a custom application, while Support Renewal Maintenance (SRM) is based-on an Onyx platform. Both these applications are essential to maintaining an intimate view of corporate performance.

Supporting the Cognos user base and providing the necessary level of service and support for the applications had become cumbersome. Because of the inherent importance of the applications, significant resources were being dedicated to supporting users and maintaining health and performance at an adequate level. With a disproportionate share of resources allocated to these applications, new development was being put off, and employee morale and job satisfaction were suffering. Specifically, Cognos were looking to solve some key operational and performance issues including:

- Key personnel needed to be liberated and re-allocated to work on new applications and other IT projects and priorities
- The backlog of support and open trouble tickets was growing and had to be proactively dealt with
- There were significant performance issues with two key components of the Support Renewal Maintenance Application (SRM), *Task Manager* and *Quote Generator*. Both are essential components of the application and latency, time-outs and functionality were having a direct impact on the user base.

Cognos turned to Montera to address these key operational issues.

"We view this as a strategic relationship with Montera that will allow Cognos to optimize service delivery, performance and profitability."

Rob Collins
Chief Information Officer
Cognos Inc.

"As the Project Manager for both support of existing critical production applications and development of new applications, we had tremendous challenges committing to deadlines with our current resources. With Montera focusing on the day-to-day activities, it allows our team to focus on the new applications for us to manage our support costs. Montera has shown that they are committed to providing THE best level of application support to our customers, Cognos employees."

Albert Boudreau
Project Manager
Cognos



THE MONTERA SOLUTION

Liberating Resources and Delivering Results

Leveraging years of operational experience and a history of successful service delivery, Montera initiated a comprehensive analysis of Cognos requirements and took direct aim at addressing the issues. Through an intimate understanding of Cognos objectives and goals for the sales forecasting application, the Montera team set to work and prepared a logical and comprehensive engagement model and outsourcing plan that met the Cognos requirement head on.

Resource Allocation

Montera initiated a resource allocation plan that allowed Cognos to liberate three key IT employees within two weeks of take-over and ultimately the equivalent of eleven full time resources.

Data Integrity and Reliability

Through a comprehensive analysis of the SRM program, Montera was able to streamline the application to allow Cognos to have a more efficient, consistent, and reliable mechanism to notify, bill and collect support renewal revenue. Through Montera's diligence and expertise, Cognos was able to realize immediate, and significant revenue benefits.

Support Issues and Backlog

Zeroing in on the support issues that had become a burden for Cognos, Montera reduced the open and unresolved trouble tickets from 133 at the time of engagement to less than 70 in two weeks and to 30 by the end of the second month.

The bar in service delivery was raised for Cognos through Montera's 24/7 Call Centre and Help Desk. Regardless of time zone or geography, Cognos employees worldwide now have access to qualified and trained support staff to meet their needs. Cognos will also benefit from Montera's Panorama Customer Portal, which provides detailed tracking, support, and self-service capabilities for users. This enhanced level of user support has had a direct impact on the ease of use and path to resolution for Cognos users.

Procedural Plan

A procedural plan was initiated to enhance the problem resolution process and ensure that users were better informed and serviced. Montera also implemented a structured Incident Tracking System that allows for better issue awareness, notification, resolution, and measures performance against a comprehensive Service Level Agreement.

Application Maintenance and Enhancements

As an integral part of Montera's service to Cognos, the Montera Team efficiently handles routine maintenance, enhancements and new software version releases and updates on the applications.

Application Performance and Optimization

Cognos was experiencing application performance issues on two portions of the SRM application that were having direct effect on productivity and reporting.

Code and Performance Optimization- Task Manager

With the Task Manager component of the SRM, response time was averaging an unacceptable two minutes, locking out users and causing time-outs and ultimately frustration for the user base. Montera recognized the operational impact this was having on Cognos and through optimizing the code of the application and removal of blocking limitations, was able to deliver a streamlined application with a significantly improved response times.

Code and Performance Optimization-Quote Generator

The Quote Generator tool was limited in its functionality to delivering only 2 to 3 quotes at a time, a constraint that was deemed unacceptable. In addition, the performance of the application was sub-standard with only a single-threaded capability and slow response times. It too suffered from response and time-out issues.

The Montera Application Team acknowledged the limitations the software had and how it affected the performance for Cognos users. A comprehensive reengineer and optimization of the code by Montera resulted in a tool that is now capable of delivering 50 quotes simultaneously and a response time well within an acceptable threshold. Performance is predictable, reliable and the application is significantly more functional.

CONCLUSION

With Montera's Application Management Service in place, Cognos now benefits from the ability to re-allocate and liberate resources to work on new applications and improve IT performance. There is an overall sense of stronger focus on core business requirements and the sales-force enjoys an improved level of service and support. Senior Management gains additional levels of flexibility and control over infrastructure and applications, and is able to maximize the value of legacy and new applications. Through this partnership Cognos has been able to measurably improve and optimize performance, operational efficiencies and profitability.

ABOUT MONTERA:

Montera is the leader in delivering IT outsourcing services that enable organizations to maximize performance through technology. We provide the expertise and resources that allow you to focus on strategic IT initiatives, reduce operational costs and leverage the power of technology for competitive advantage.

Through an Application Management service offering that is both innovative and flexible, Montera delivers industry leading operational and technical expertise through complete or selective outsourcing.

Montera's Application Management Services encompass the full application lifecycle from development, management, maintenance, to support and governance and are applied to a wide range of application types including ERP, CRM and Financials.

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