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X-Analysis Provides System Understanding, Greater Efficiency and Easier Onboarding for Komeri's IBM i Developers

"Recently, the number of development projects has increased rapidly, and improvement in development productivity and efficiency is required, so we thought it was an urgent task to solve by introducing X-Analysis."

— Tadashi Kobayashi, Managing Director of Bit A, the IT subsidiary of Komeri

Background

Operating chain stores in every part of Japan, Komeri is one of the country's premier retailers. Their core product line-up consists of building materials, hardware and tools, gardening supplies and agricultural products, which are sold through their Hard & Green, Home Center and Power chain stores. Komeri is growing rapidly, with 1,193 stores nationwide. Bit A, an IT subsidiary of Komeri, is responsible for IT development and operations throughout the entire Komeri Group. It is also expanding its service provision to customers outside the group, leveraging its accumulated distribution know-how, such as POS, logistics, online shopping systems and Web EDI.

Bit A maintains a decentralized IBM i-based system that includes a total of 19 Power servers—one at each Komeri distribution center with others used for backup. With critical internal systems in the Komeri Group and at outside clients as well, Bit A employs a Power System diversification strategy to minimize the risk of downtime. Sixty engineers with an average age of 35 are in charge of IBM i development in the system and maintain code that is 70% COBOL and 30% RPG.

Challenge

Komeri is growing quickly, and with a large group of developers, many of whom are young and not entirely comfortable with languages such as COBOL and RPG, Bit A needed a method that would ensure system understanding throughout the department. Future development, system stability, efficiency and ultimately, business growth, would all depend on developer agility and the capacity to quickly and confidently plan, develop and roll out IT modifications. Needless to say, Bit A needed to keep a close watch on cost, whatever the solution.

Solution

Bit A tried several solutions intended to enhance program understanding. X-Analysis Advisor by Fresche Solutions was clearly the most powerful, providing the functionality necessary to:

- Understand data flows
- Display a graphical view of program structures
- Find all variations of a field throughout the system
- Click through to source code to pinpoint the precise areas for change.

Bit A worked closely with GRSolutions (GRS), a leading IBM i modernization solution provider, to acquire 12 licenses of X-Analysis Advisor. As Fresche Solutions' master distributor in Japan, and a long-time member of the Fresche Power Partner Program, GRS has the product knowledge and service capability to help IBM i customers like Komeri. With licenses on their Power servers, all 60 developers at Bit A now have access to X-Analysis Advisor functionality.

X-Analysis Advisor provides Bit A with...

| IBM i analysis and documentation for better environment understanding | Easier onboarding for younger programmers who are not as familiar with RPG and COBOL | Stability in a complex, diversified IT system that requires agility to support expanding business |

Result

X-Analysis Advisor has been well received by developers for its depth of functionality, and has resulted in a significant increase in development efficiency. The graphical documentation produced by X-Analysis "makes it possible to grasp overall system structure at a glance in hierarchical structure charts," says Taeko Urabe, Deputy Manager of the System Integration Service Group at Bit A, "so it is welcomed by young engineers who are in charge of development for the first time."

In fact, X-Analysis Advisor arrived at Bit A just in time. As Tadashi Kobayashi, Managing Director of IT says: "Young developers who are still lacking in experience can miss things and make mistakes, leading to rework and poor program quality. Recently, the number of development projects has increased rapidly, and improvement in development productivity and efficiency is required, so we thought it was an urgent task to solve by introducing tools."

About Fresche Solutions

Fresche is the leading provider of application modernization and management solutions that enable digital transformation for companies that rely on IBM i Systems. Through the power of automated tools and experienced professionals, Fresche delivers innovative solutions that bring clients the best, boldest ways to modernize and better manage their business and IT.

With over 400 digitally connected colleagues around the world and an extensive network of over 200 business partners, Fresche combines fresh thinking with technology and business expertise to help fuel transformation and growth for clients and their own customers.

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> *- Taeko Urabe, Deputy Manager, System Integration Service Group, Solution Systems Department, Bit A*

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