FRESCHE SOLUTIONS

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Case Study

Lamps Plus

Products

WebSmart
X-Analysis
TDOMS

Lamps Plus Modernizes IBM Power Systems with Integrated Solutions from Fresche and Remain Software

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- Clark Linstone, Chief Financial Officer, Lamps Plus

Background

Family-owned and operated, Lamps Plus has been a leader in the retail lighting industry for over 40 years. Established in 1976 and headquartered in Los Angeles, the company is the nation's largest specialty lighting retailer, operating a thriving e-commerce business, along with more than three dozen stores in the western United States. Lamps Plus carries a full range of lighting and home furnishings, including exclusive patented designs and artisan-made customizable shades and lamps that offer comfort and value. To assist consumers, their American Lighting Association-trained staff provides expert advice.

Challenge

Lamps Plus has become the nation's largest specialty lighting retailer. All of the organization's business back-end systems feed data to their IBM i Power Systems. This includes warehouse management for order fulfillment, order management and a point of sale system. The organization's IBM i systems and partitions all reside behind a firewall. "Our IBM i is the hub of our company's business systems," said Clark Linstone, Chief Financial Officer, Lamps Plus.

Over a decade ago, Lamps Plus recognized that it needed to modernize its IT infrastructure in a low-risk way that would allow the company to invest at its own pace and meet critical business demands. "We wanted to build an IT infrastructure that would meet the needs of the company's

future endeavors," said Linstone. "This meant leveraging our existing investment in our systems by modernizing instead of replacing our systems." Like other large organizations, modernization means more than deploying browser-based applications. Lamps Plus used Fresche's WebSmart to create IBM i browser applications that replaced some of their most utilized green screen applications. These WebSmart applications are used internally within the network for corporate and store employees. "We wanted to make sure that we had a forward-looking direction to see new, modern browser-based applications – not green screens."

Solution

Today, Lamps Plus uses an integrated suite of solutions from IBM, Fresche and Remain Software to go beyond the green screen and for their entire IBM i application lifecycle. The company develops new strategic IBM i browser applications with RDi and Fresche's WebSmart, and analyzes and documents applications with Fresche's X-Analysis. Remain Software's TDOMS is fully integrated with both Fresche solutions, providing a comprehensive change management experience for developers.

"We look at Fresche and Remain as strategic partners that help us grow as our business needs evolve," said Linstone. "We've presented unique situations and they've been able to provide solutions while also being easily accessible and responsive to our needs." A big part of the company's success has been moving to browser-based applications. With over 2,000 programs written in WebSmart's RPG ILE over the past 16 years, Lamps Plus has recently started working with PHP.

Lamps Plus also needed to upgrade the management of its resourcing and application documentation so the information could be more easily transferred to new developers that joined the programming team. To solve that challenge, Lamps Plus uses Fresche's X-Analysis to document its new and existing applications. "X-Analysis has been significant in onboarding new developers and making us more efficient," Linstone said. "A new developer can run X-Analysis and come up with a flow of how the program works in conjunction with the others. Developers are up and running within a few weeks."

Linstone continued: "TDOMS, our change management tool, integrates seamlessly with WebSmart and X-Analysis to support all of our software development requirements. It's a powerful solution that allows us to work collaboratively and share information at all stages of development."

Hiring and educating new talent that is unfamiliar with IBM i proved to be a successful resourcing strategy for Lamps Plus. Today, the company's IBM i department has 20 programmers from entry to senior level. "We have invested in the hiring of recent college graduates to teach them IBM i. They are able to provide a valuable combination of skillsets with our experienced IBM i programmers," said Linstone.

Looking Ahead

In addition to these new development and integration initiatives, Lamps Plus is working on a significant field resizing project. With thousands of SKUs, the company was facing a significant manual effort to increase the five-digit SKU field size.

After researching the solutions available, Lamps Plus chose Fresche's X-Resize solution to take an automated approach, significantly reducing the effort of this project. Linstone said: "We are much better positioned going forward. Fresche has been a key partner in helping us find new ways to innovate and grow our business, and we are excited about the future of IT at Lamps Plus."

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About Fresche Solutions

Companies running RPG, COBOL, CA 2E Synon and Java applications rely on Fresche for comprehensive, automated solutions that optimize IBM i systems and help take advantage of Web, Mobile and Cloud solutions on IBM i to help with digital transformation. Our complete portfolio includes solutions in the following areas:

- GUI, Web & Mobile
- Analysis & Productivity
- Staff Augmentation
- Code & Database Modernization
- IT Strategy & Planning
- Reporting & Document Distribution