

Case Study: State Agency Makes the Big IMS-to-Db2 Move

Challenge

It was a risky proposition for one state agency in the U.S. They were looking at the wholesale conversion of their IMS data to Db2. Like other IMS shops, they knew they needed to get off IMS but they had several reasons to be wary.

Why so risky?

At one time their IT team had experimented with a manual conversion. It involved only a very small portion of their data, but it took six months to do. Meanwhile the daily updates on the department's client-management system, which recorded details on the activities and needs of a quarter million people, kept piling up. At some point their IMS system could conceivably just stop working, which of course is unacceptable for any agency, especially for one in a large, high-growth state.

Meanwhile the maintenance and licensing of IMS was costing the department \$800,000 annually. It was also becoming more and more unwieldy to make the legislatively mandated changes in the department's client-management software system. "Rewriting application code is extremely difficult and extremely risky," said one of the department's database administrators. They knew they would eventually have to eliminate IMS altogether and consolidate onto a single Db2 system. But how? Based on that earlier experiment, they knew they would be in trouble unless they could get an unusually powerful set of specialized tools and services to make the switch without crippling their operations and busting their budget.

Solution

Finding a vendor with both IMS and Db2 mainframe expertise was an interesting exercise, especially a vendor that had a record of specific IMS-to-Db2 conversion services and multiple reference cases to validate that they can do this very specialized job.

They found those tools in a Precisley solutions package called Syncsort Optimize IMS, as well as hands-on help from the Syncsort Optimize IMS services team. After an efficient due-diligence drill and the selection of Syncsort Optimize IMS, there was urgency to get started, as time was of the essence.

A key part of the implementation involved re-engineering and transformation of data involving more than 1,200 different IMS data fields. Supported by the unique Syncsort Optimize IMS solution and Precisley's IMS and Db2-savvy services team, the customer's database administrators worked closely with Precisley to map and migrate the IMS segments to Db2 tables and transition their database environment to Db2.

As the conversion proceeded and as the Db2 replacement system was being built and maintained, the customer's day-to-day IMS operations worked normally. The cutover to the production Db2 system worked successfully and transparently. The hard- and soft-dollar cost savings and operational benefits from the migration include the following.

Result

- Application development and enhancements now and in the future are SQL-based, able to make program changes easily, and able to take advantage quickly of new developments.
- Significant reduction in long-term software licensing and support costs.
- Ability to take advantage of Db2's functionality for improved decision-support-style processing.
- Elimination of cumbersome data replication processes.

