



BUSINESS CHALLENGE

To align with two of its corporate goals, British Airways sought to increase cost effectiveness and introduce leaner, more efficient ways of working. At the same time it was essential to meet strict service level agreements for mainframe uptime and performance to keep BA's business-critical applications running smoothly.

TRANSFORMATION

British Airways selected Macro 4's systems management solutions to support two z/OS mainframes that host several business-critical applications, including financial software and crew scheduling. The Macro 4 solutions are designed to increase the operational efficiency of the z/OS environment, ensure the reliability of mission-critical systems and generate significant cost savings. The move to Macro 4 provided clear commercial benefits to BA, as well as delivering high service levels and excellent support.



Macro 4 was responsive to our commercial needs and we were able to make a long-term commitment for Macro 4's solutions along with support and upgrades.

If I had to sum up our decision to introduce Macro 4's systems management offering, it would be that they have made the whole experience extremely easy for us.

Dave Smith,
Infrastructure Software Team,
British Airways



BRITISH AIRWAYS: SUPPORTING CRITICAL MAINFRAME APPLICATIONS

British Airways is the UK's largest international scheduled airline, flying to over 550 destinations. Two of BA's corporate goals relate to driving greater cost efficiency and simplification in all areas of the business.

These objectives are always considered when the company is assessing the potential of any new supplier relationship. They were among the key considerations when the Infrastructure Software team, part of BA's company wide Information Management department, was approached by Macro 4 with a view to replacing the systems management tools that support the performance and availability of two z/OS mainframe systems running applications critical to BA's business.

BUSINESS BENEFITS

BENEFICIAL COMMERCIAL TERMS

and a strong business case for moving to Macro 4

A SMOOTH TRANSITION

from the tools previously used, with excellent pre-sales and post-sales support

HIGH SERVICE LEVELS MAINTAINED

Macro 4 has provided a responsive service, delivering developer assistance as required, and running workshops to understand user requirements

THE CHALLENGE

“In all aspects of what we do, we’re always looking to become more cost efficient. It’s one of the primary ways in which we can contribute to improving profitability,” said Dave Smith of the Infrastructure Software team, which has central responsibility for managing the lifecycle of operating systems, middleware and systems management software tools that support applications running on a variety of IT hardware platforms.

“Similarly we’re always looking to eliminate unnecessary complexity – whether it’s in IT or how we manage check-in – because by simplifying processes and bringing in leaner, more efficient ways of working, we hope to reduce costs over the longer term,” continued Dave Smith.

The two z/OS systems host several business-critical applications. These include financial software and crew scheduling. “Crew scheduling is an extremely important function. If the application is down for any length of time, it becomes difficult for the company to oversee the tasks associated with making crews available for our flights,” explained Dave Smith.

One of the important financial systems residing on the mainframes is the passenger revenue reconciliation software. This supports the process of cross charging with BA’s partner and alliance airlines.

“We have to meet strict service level agreements (SLAs) for the uptime and performance of the mainframe environment on which these key applications are running, so when Macro 4 suggested that we consider moving to its mainframe systems management solutions, it was a pretty important decision. We already had a set of tools in place and one of our major concerns was that we did not lose any functionality that our users were already benefiting from. The quality of support, together with overall service levels and price, also had to be right for us,” said Dave Smith.



Both the pre-sales and post-sales support from Macro 4, including the vital changeover period, was excellent.

Dave Smith,
Infrastructure Software Team,
British Airways



THE SOLUTION

Macro 4's systems management solutions are a range of technical software tools that are designed to increase the operational efficiency of IBM's z/OS environment. They help to deliver significant cost savings and assure the reliability of mission-critical systems in thousands of IT departments globally.

At BA there are approximately one hundred users of the systems management tools within the z/OS mainframe environment. As the first step in evaluating Macro 4's offering, the Infrastructure Software team organized a working group of around ten users from the application support and development teams to whom Macro 4 provided a technical product overview.

This was followed by a paper exercise in which the two companies checklisted BA's specific requirements against the functionality and features that Macro 4 could provide. Finally, a proof of concept workshop was delivered by Macro 4 which allowed users to test the effectiveness of its tools within BA's environment.

"When you get under the covers there's a fair bit of complexity because of the various subsystems and applications we use," said Dave Smith. "This meant there was necessarily some tweaking and reconfiguring of interfaces to ensure compatibility and smooth running within our environment. Macro 4 responded very effectively throughout this process and we were fast becoming confident that its solutions and service would fit what we wanted."

The in-depth evaluation and proof of concept, combined with a strong supporting business case, which included the overall cost of changing solutions, convinced BA that a move towards Macro 4 would provide clear benefits and be in line with corporate objectives. "Macro 4 was responsive to our commercial needs and we were able to make a long-term commitment for Macro 4's solutions along with support and upgrades," explained Dave Smith.

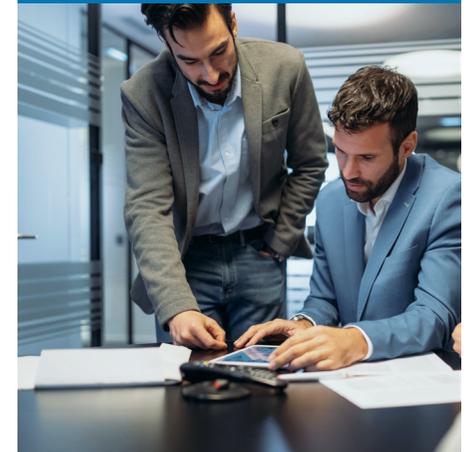


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IMPLEMENTATION AND RESULTS

The next challenge was ensuring that the changeover to the new solution would be painless and risk free. Macro 4 has performed similar systems management solution replacements for many customers and the company has delivered a tried-and-tested process.

One of the key elements that aided the transition was an up-front on-site training program designed to ensure users were already happy with the new tools and their functionality before the new solution went live. Specific users, who were assigned the status of 'champions' for the new solution, received more intensive training, which allowed them to provide assistance to other members of the user community during the changeover period.

A phased migration plan for the changeover meant that BA kept its previous systems management tools running for a couple of months in parallel with the Macro 4 solution to eliminate any risk. And the Macro 4 support team was on hand to provide assistance throughout the period.

"It was a well planned, well executed transition with no disruption to our services," said Dave Smith. "Both the pre-sales and post-sales support from Macro 4, including the vital changeover period, was excellent. And it was reassuring to see the end-user community very quickly forgetting about the previous tools they had been using – even though they had grown accustomed to them over several years."

Since the introduction of the new solution, BA has found the service provided from Macro 4 to be very responsive, including the provision of fixes when required and delivering developer assistance relating to how specific jobs need to be tackled using the tools.

"They've taken the time to share their own product development plans with us, running workshops to understand our users' requirements so we can actively influence the evolution of their solutions. If I had to sum up our decision to introduce Macro 4's systems management offering, it would be that they have made the whole experience extremely easy for us," concluded Dave Smith.



THE NEXT STEP

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