



Research Report

The New Compuware: Agile and Innovative

Executive Summary

Compuware has become a textbook example of how to return a company to its former glory. Over the past year, Compuware, a maker of mainframe application development and performance optimization solutions, has:

- Returned from public ownership to private ownership;
- Brought in new, innovative management;
- Changed its software development model from waterfall to agile;
- Spun off its application performance management division and is now a company that is wholly focused on mainframe software development;
- Structured relationships with other software firms (including competitors) to enrich its product offerings;
- Fostered creative internal research and development; and,
- Changed its application delivery model, bringing new functionality to market every quarter.

It is now fair to say that Compuware is a new company – one with a bright future ahead.

Under New Leadership

I've written about the company's CEO, Chris O'Malley, before – years ago in an article for Mainframe Executive Management that detailed Chris' Mainframe 2.0 program at CA Technologies, and more recently in this [blog](#) that describes Compuware's strategic relationship with BMC. Chris is a highly competent executive who understands the mainframe marketplace, has long established relationships with many of the world's largest mainframe users – and has become a strong corporate leader.

Since O'Malley arrived at Compuware, I've seen a distinct change in corporate culture. I used to consider Compuware a slow, stodgy maker of mainframe tools. I now see Compuware as a maker of highly innovative mainframe application development and performance optimization solutions. My change in thinking is driven by three factors: 1) its willingness to work with other vendors to enrich and expand the Compuware software portfolio; 2) the unheard-of pace of delivering new and valuable software functionality every quarter; and 3) the arrival of innovative (dare I say “exciting”) new mainframe products.

In the above mentioned blog, I described Compuware's strategic relationship with BMC. In short, this software partnership enables enterprises to manage mainframe resource usage to better control monthly licensing costs (MLCs). Compuware had one piece of the puzzle needed to determine application behavior and costs on the mainframe; while BMC offered

programs that could identify wasteful MSU (mainframe service unit) consumption in real-time and analyze costs, as well as forecast future MLC usage.

Importantly, these unified products expand each company's portfolio and open up new revenue opportunities. The good news for mainframe customers is that more of these types of strategic relationships are in-the-works at Compuware. Stay tuned.

Innovation

I've also been impressed by Compuware's "innovation". Consider Compuware's new Topaz suite, which is comprised of Topaz for Enterprise Data, Topaz for Program Analysis and Topaz for Java Performance. Enterprise Data enables developers to visualize and edit both mainframe and non-mainframe data regardless of where it is in the enterprise. Program Analysis expands on those visualization capabilities by intelligently analyzing mainframe programs and presenting the results of that analysis in a visually intuitive manner. Java Performance can help developers tune Java applications in z/OS and UNIX environments using deep performance analysis tools.

But the most exciting element in the Topaz suite for me is its Runtime Visualizer, part of Topaz for Program Analysis. Runtime Visualizer enables developers to quickly understand, update and troubleshoot complex and unfamiliar applications faster. It's the brainchild of one of Compuware's developers who wanted to help mainframe application developers better understand application behavior. This developer brought his idea to the management team, took it through peer review, and Compuware started development just over two weeks after the developer originally floated his idea. This is remarkably fast for any software development company – and serves as a good example of the new spirit of innovation at Compuware.

Imagine being able to see how an application performs; all of its dependencies, how many calls it is making to databases and other applications, and other complex program interactions in real time as they execute, with no source code required. This real-time visualizer can be used in conjunction with static analysis tools (also in Topaz for Program Analysis) to further dissect application design and behavior – enabling developers to repair, improve and extend mainframe-based programs.

Now, think about what this program visualization and associated static analysis tool can mean to a developer. Developers can easily figure out what changes can/should be made; and how to construct a change. In the real development world, developers can also benefit as follows:

- In some cases, code is not documented or is poorly documented. The Runtime Visualizer enables developers to replay a sequence of events in order to help isolate a problem – paving the way for programs to be debugged. Additional data provided by the Visualizer provides attributes of the programs that are running, including language, compile date/time and the load library from which it was run.
- Developers can better scope and estimate the cost and time needed to develop new applications such as mobile/mainframe applications that require mainframe data. And this can be done with personnel who don't necessarily understand the structure of mainframe applications.

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- Developers can gain insight into complex calling structures, and with that insight they can filter through multiple programs, learning which programs using I/O, which programs are called and how often, and so on. With this information, applications can be better tuned.
- Developers can use the Runtime Visualizer to discover unknown intricacies in legacy applications that can lead to unforeseen problems in application development (problems that might not be identified until an application fails in production).

Summary Observations

In short, Compuware said it best when demonstrating its runtime visualization and static analysis environments to me: “these products enable developers to follow the breadcrumbs to institute changes in code more efficiently and effectively.”

It should also be noted that Compuware also offers “Online Projects”, a program that allows programmers to create Java-like projects—logical collections of source members regardless of dataset origin—without having to move the code off the mainframe, thus saving time and increasing efficiency. In other words, developers can create and test new Java or COBOL code in the environment in which it will ultimately be deployed without having to move code between mainframe and distributed environments.

It is refreshing to see innovation being driven on a grand scale at Compuware. Since Chris O’Malley’s arrival, new products are arriving and new functionalities are being brought to market every quarter across all of Compuware’s product lines. The company has moved from a “waterfall” serial application development methodology to a more modern and efficient agile development environment – speeding the pace at which applications can be developed and make their way to market.

Compuware’s culture has changed, leading to new strategic relationships that expand the company’s software portfolio, while also introducing innovative new solutions that also expand the company’s software portfolio. In the end, these solutions deliver new and real value to mainframe customers everywhere – all driven Compuware’s textbook makeover.

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