

Success WITH CA

AllFusion™

Intelligent Finance reaps the benefits of CA's AllFusion™ Harvest Change Manager

CA's AllFusion Harvest Change Manager enables Intelligent Finance to speed up time-to-market for new and enhanced products, deliver development projects on time and on budget and improve quality by automating change and configuration management.

Intelligent Finance provides customers with telephone and internet banking services and is a division of Halifax Plc, the UK's largest mortgage lender. This, in turn, is part of HBOS Plc, which was formed in September 2001 following the merger of the Halifax with the Bank of Scotland.

The division, which handles about 750,000 customer accounts in the UK, offers five key services ranging from current and savings accounts to credit cards, mortgages and loans. It differentiates itself from its rivals by offsetting customer credit balances in savings or current accounts against debit balances on mortgages, credit cards or personal loans to ensure they make the most of their money.

Intelligent Finance was fully launched in November 2000 and now employs 2,500 staff.

The Challenge

The division operates in a fast-moving, competitive world, which requires it to bring new and enhanced products to market regularly and quickly. As a result, a key aim of the IT department, which comprises 250 employees, is to introduce any new or modified applications with a minimum of disruption to existing systems. These provide the business with a single view of the customer no matter which service they use or how they contact the company.

Intelligent Finance's systems are based on a three tier IT infrastructure, which consists of Microsoft's Windows NT and 2000 to handle front-end presentation to online customers, Sun Microsystems' Unix servers at the mid-tier, where the main business logic resides, and an IBM mainframe at the back-end. This mainframe runs the firm's core applications that underpin its five key services. Because Intelligent Finance needs to manage and track continual changes to its application source code across all three tiers during the development

process, it has used Computer Associates (CA) International Inc's AllFusion Harvest Change Manager for the front and mid-tier and AllFusion Endeavor Change Manager for the back-end since early 2000.

Both products are repository-based change and configuration management tools that enable customers to manage the application development process from end-to-end and provide them with a means of tracking any changes they wish to make to application code no matter where it sits in the enterprise and no matter which platform it resides on.

This reduces the risk of failure by enabling customers to maintain tight control of their application-related documentation and software upgrades, keep development schedules on track and ensure that team members always have access to the most up-to-date information and code.

As a result, staff productivity is optimised, development costs are reduced and application quality improves. Using AllFusion Harvest Change Manager also ensured that Intelligent Finance would fulfil the audit regulatory requirements that are laid down by industry watchdog, the Financial Services Authority.

In the past, the company had used the AllFusion Harvest Change Manager and AllFusion Endeavor Change Manager tools separately on each of its individual platforms, but it decided there were benefits to be had from introducing a tool that could handle all three at once. The goal was to co-ordinate application changes between platforms and to reduce the need for manual intervention, which is not only time-consuming, but also leads to a higher risk of system downtime.

Customer AT A GLANCE

Company Name:

Halifax Plc's Intelligent Finance Division (part of HBOS Plc)

Industry:

Financial Services

Geographic Location:

UK

CA Solution(s) Used:

Version 5.11 of CA's AllFusion Harvest Change Manager

Biggest ROI:

Being able to save one day of development time for each of the four testing phases involved in getting a new or modified product to market.



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Success WITH CA

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”**

Mike Gannon, Head of
Applications, Intelligent Finance



Computer Associates®

The Solution

As a result, Intelligent Finance decided to upgrade from version 4.0 of AllFusion Harvest Change Manager to release 5.11, which provides a co-ordinated view of configuration management across all three tiers of the firm's computing infrastructure.

The organisation decided to stay with its original choice of tool because, according to Mike Gannon, head of applications at Intelligent Finance: "We were very happy with its performance and ease-of-use and the way it allowed us to manage the business. We also liked the way Harvest worked co-operatively with Endeavor and the new version met all our requirements without having to switch out the fundamental toolset, which would have meant major disruption for us."

Intelligent Finance started the project in March 2002 and completed it in three months with the help of Trinem, a preferred supplier for CA, which provided up to two staff to assist the two Intelligent Finance staff involved full-time in the project.

Gannon explained: "We needed to plan the conversion very carefully because the data structures of Harvest 4.0 and 5.11 are architecturally so different. The process was very smooth and not technically challenging, but did need to be carefully co-ordinated to ensure there was no disruption to our services - lack of disruption was an important measure of success in this project."

He added that CA and Trinem worked well together as a team and the few issues that came up were handled quickly and efficiently. "We have a good working relationship with CA, which provides a broad range of integrated software. The advantage with that is that you don't have to integrate it yourself," Gannon said.

Another technical benefit of version 5.11 of Harvest is the new 'Harvest Agent' technology. Harvest Agents enable users to execute commands or applications on different platforms from the one that AllFusion Harvest Change Manager resides on. For example, the IT team could write a new script to run on the mainframe, but invoke it on their Sun Solaris machine. This, said Gannon, "removes the need for a lot of telephone and email conversations to co-ordinate upgrades, which saves us between 20 and 30 minutes each time a change hits a product".

The company issues about 12 new releases per year, every one of which has to go through four testing phases.

"We've established that for each testing phase of each project, we can save about one day using Harvest 5.11. This will greatly reduce the time-to-market of new projects, which brings benefits to us and our customers," Gannon said.

"It also enables us to increase the volume of change in our infrastructure so we can introduce new innovation in the form of new and enhanced products more swiftly. By allowing technology to do the job, it enables us to serve the business far more sensitively," he added.

"Another important advantage of upgrading has been the increased avoidance of risk as we go through the development and implementation process because it removes the need for human intervention. This, in turn, decreases the threat of application downtime," Gannon explained.

Over time, Intelligent Finance also expects to use functionality in AllFusion Harvest Change Manager 5.11 to automate quality checks, for example, by generating emails to send to key stakeholders so they can sign off on quality issues at various stages of the development lifecycle.

Gannon concluded: "We're delighted with the tool and its capability. It's fundamental to us - we couldn't run our business without this sort of product. We have literally thousands of software components running across disparate hardware platforms and without AllFusion Harvest Change Manager, the management of change would be, if not impossible, then heavily manual and laden with risk."

For more information on CA visit:
ca.com