Lotus Notes to Microsoft migration
The business challenge

Accenture adopted Lotus Notes ("Notes") in 1991, becoming one of Lotus' first, enterprise-scale customers. This decision was driven by Accenture's desire for a visionary and innovative knowledge management approach. At that time, Notes was the only platform that would allow knowledge sharing on the global scale required. Notes quickly became one of the company's most significant IT platforms supporting both communications and knowledge sharing requirements. Over time, Accenture developed a series of sophisticated Notes-based applications supporting every activity from performance management to finance. The company also became a major user of Notes-based e-mail.

By 2002, Accenture had evolved. As a high performance business, Accenture foresaw a shift in the global business environment—increased collaboration, a need for a robust messaging and collaboration platform, and increased reliance on converged mobile technology such personal data assistants and cell phones. Accenture needed an IT infrastructure that would allow it to collaborate internally as well as with third parties including clients, alliance partners and suppliers. The proprietary nature of the Notes software, however, made it difficult to support this level of teamwork. Additionally, Lotus announced its intention to re-architect the Notes messaging and collaboration platform. The new architecture would require most customers to undertake costly re-architecting and redesign.

Accenture wanted a better solution—one that would be less costly and allow for increased collaboration. Accenture chose to migrate to the Microsoft Exchange Server messaging and collaboration platform. Although the transition would be complex, the solution allowed Accenture to work more effectively and offered significant savings in capital and operating costs. Additionally, Accenture could leverage its investments in the Windows operating systems, Microsoft Office applications and Active Directory already deployed to its personnel.

Managing the migration

Once the decision was made to migrate, Accenture moved swiftly, working with alliance partners Avanade and Microsoft to design, test, build and deploy the solution.

"With our people spread all over the globe at client sites and office locations, Accenture relies on e-mail as a communications and work tool, so it was critical to keep it operational," said Porter. "Making the transition from Lotus Notes to Microsoft Exchange was a massive challenge. The migration could not interfere with business operations, so we had to first make the two platforms work in tandem."

Transitioning to the Microsoft platform involved changing two fundamental elements—e-mail and Notes-based applications. Accenture planned a staged migration that spanned three years, beginning with the modification of mail-dependant applications in 2003. This first step involved altering mail-dependant applications to function equally well with both Lotus Notes and Microsoft Exchange. This cleared the way for step two, the rapid migration of nearly 80,000 e-mail users in 48 countries.

At the height of the migration up to 1,000 e-mail users were being transferred per day. Given Accenture employees' long experience with Notes, the move to a new platform required a huge change management effort. Consequently, the company undertook an aggressive education program, much of it computer-based self-study, supported by frequent and relevant communication. The program also empowered end-users to make their own transition and preserve whatever personal data necessary.

To complete the last phase—the transition of applications from Lotus Notes to the Microsoft platform—Accenture will remediate, replace or retire applications in which Notes serves as the fundamental architecture. The team also plans to create a new knowledge management platform that is better tailored to the information and business needs of Accenture’s people.
Accenture began this phase by focusing attention on the governance of databases and other Notes-based applications. "We had 16,000 Notes databases and literally thousands of applications," said Frank Modruson, chief information officer for Accenture. "We decided the only way to manage this issue was through market economics."

Remarkably, Accenture has planned the migration to be entirely self-funding. The consolidation of Notes-architected databases and applications, alone, translated into a positive return on investment in the first year. Under the market economic model that Accenture introduced, the company is charging sponsors to host databases and applications. Together with aggressive server, storage and data center consolidation, this governance exercise has cut the cost of maintaining e-mail and Notes databases and applications by nearly 40 percent. Because sponsors recognize that many of the Notes databases they were hosting are either redundant or underutilized, those databases are being retired. To minimize costs even further, Accenture is leveraging its lower-cost offshore delivery capability in India to remediate many of the remaining databases and applications. "It's essential to have a clear vision from the outset and access to skilled resources," said Porter.

"If a company has Microsoft-centric applications and IT strategies, then the migration makes both financial and operational sense."
—Chuck Porter, chief technology officer of Accenture Technology Infrastructure Services

What is the half-life of your applications?

In the competitive market, information and applications can be said to have a half-life. The half-life of a Notes database at Accenture is about six months, so every six months about 50 percent become redundant. For us, this meant that if a migration is planned over two years, we will only need to remediate approximately 12 percent of the databases with which it started, lowering overall costs. For other companies, their mileage may vary. But the concept of the half-life of information is an important consideration.
—Chuck Porter, chief technology officer of Accenture Technology Infrastructure Services
High Performance Delivered

Accenture's Lotus Notes to Microsoft transition is one of the largest, fastest and most successful migrations attempted to date. While the journey is still in progress, the changes to date and the changes to come not only strengthen and better integrate Accenture’s IT capabilities, enabling individuals to achieve higher performance, but also reduce Accenture’s long term operating costs, allowing the company to operate more effectively.

Transitioning from Lotus Notes to Microsoft Exchange and Outlook is estimated to lower annual operating costs by 35 percent. Beyond the financial implications, however, Accenture also achieves its strategic goals. The migration improves Accenture’s performance ensuring that it can better collaborate internally as well as externally with alliance partners, suppliers and clients to help them achieve high performance.

Teaming with Avanade and Microsoft gives Accenture access to the tools and technologies necessary to effectively make the transition. In addition, Accenture’s innovative approach will make the operation completely self-funded. Accenture’s offshore Delivery Center Network also is proving to add considerable value and providing the right resources at minimal cost. “Given the scale, scope and importance of this conversion, the teams’ efforts have been nothing short of tremendous and truly convey High Performance Delivered,” said Joe Forehand, Accenture chairman & CEO.

Accenture, Avanade and Microsoft have packaged the approach, assets, and experience gained from this engagement, as well as others, into a solution for clients which facilitates mail migrations from Notes to Exchange and Outlook, and addresses the challenges of moving from the Notes application environment to the Microsoft platform.

Mick Slattery, Vice President—Solution at Avanade says, “By applying our solution, clients will be able to more quickly and cost effectively address their unique Lotus Notes migration challenges.”

Modruson agrees, “We can now use these tools, in conjunction with the processes for managing ongoing operations and hosting, to help our clients drive economies and improve their business performance.”

About Avanade

Avanade is the premier global technology integrator for Microsoft solutions and a joint venture between Microsoft and Accenture. Avanade’s certified technologists help customers use Microsoft technology to realize a lower total cost of ownership for their infrastructure and application investments. Additional information can be found at www.avanade.com

About Microsoft

Founded in 1975, Microsoft (Nasdaq "MSFT") is the worldwide leader in software, services and Internet technologies for personal and business computing. The company offers a wide range of products and services designed to empower people through great software — any time, any place and on any device.

For further information on services and solutions available from the Accenture, Avanade and Microsoft alliance, visit our websites at:
http://www.accenture.com
http://www.avanade.com
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