



CASE STUDY: INTERNATIONAL BANK

RSM Partners: reconfiguring ChangeMan and helping improve mainframe operations

Summary

Expert support from RSM Partners helped this international bank reconfigure their Micro Focus ChangeMan installation as part of a best-practice mainframe segregation project, better supporting the bank's App Dev community and helping the Platform Operations team to make further improvements.

“Segregating our mainframe meant we had to reconfigure ChangeMan—a complex project requiring expert support. It was also an opportunity to check how we were using the tool and to make improvements. This was about buying in expertise we didn't have in the bank, drawing on RSM's experience,”

Manager - Platform Operations, Technology & Operations



Background

ChangeMan ZMF from Micro Focus is a popular software change, configuration and release management tool for z/OS. This commercial bank, a longstanding RSM Partners client, required additional support during a period of change. Underpinned by mainframes, the bank offers a full range of personal and corporate banking services, international banking and treasury operations, and insurance, with operations in multiple European countries.

“We have a mainframe-only installation of ChangeMan with several hundred users, configured in the usual way. Systems programmers don't use ChangeMan but our App Dev people do. ChangeMan came into the bank 20 years ago and while we've increased our usage, it has remained pretty much the same set-up over the years.”

Challenges

The bank has two routes into production: Remedy tickets and ChangeMan, with the latter used for generally low-category changes i.e. most of them. At the end of 2017, the bank decided to make a significant change: segregating its mainframe in line with best practice. To support its users and established working practices, the new environment would require reconfiguration of ChangeMan. However, highly knowledgeable and responsive ChangeMan support is often difficult for organizations in the UK and Ireland to secure.

“Our bank has been on the mainframe since the late 1970s, with everything shared, across development, test

and production. Our people had 30 years' experience of doing things one way, with all data available to ChangeMan and able to be seen in all areas. So this change would have a big impact on our large Application Delivery Management (ADM) community. We wanted to make the transition as smooth as possible, dealing with roadblocks and minimizing impacts on our ADMs.”

“So we had two main requirements: addressing the challenges involved in reconfiguring ChangeMan, and also taking a general look at the tool, giving it a proper healthcheck.”

Solution

“We already had a relationship with RSM Partners. We engaged them for this in March 2018, and were soon gaining the support we required, via phone and email. A member of the team also flew over and worked side-by-side with our ChangeMan lead for two days. That really helped us to work faster and get more done.”

Crucially, the support provided via RSM Partners is from former developers of the ChangeMan product that have over 30 years' experience working with the tool.

Support is managed and delivered through a fixed-price 12-month contract that was extended by a further six months, billed in 20-hour blocks and used in 30-minute increments over a three-month fixed period. Each block of time is paid before the next one commences. Coverage includes 20 hours of support with an assigned subject matter expert (SME), dedicated support mailbox, and the SME specifically assigned to the bank.

Outcomes

“We achieved the logical separation of the mainframe. The project was successful, we separated test and production, and nothing broke: there were no service outings, which is great. Everything is kept in sync and up-to-date while giving our ADM community what they need. The necessary changes imposed by the segregation are largely invisible to them.”

“For example, ADMs were used to testing code before production, against production data. With the segregation, they'd need to access code in production; that would have meant more work. So we needed a ChangeMan way to do this: facilitating a copy of the production code in test, while ensuring that code stayed in

sync on the App Dev side. We did that using ChangeMan. Of course, not everything is invisible to the ADMs but we have reduced the effort required from them significantly.”

“Meanwhile, the ChangeMan 'healthcheck' helped us to be sure we were using it properly, looking at changes to consider, including a report with recommendations and suggested actions.”

“We knew what we were doing in terms of the mainframe segregation, we knew what ChangeMan could do, and we knew RSM could help us: so we drew on their expertise, to gain an assurance of what we were doing and to help improve performance in terms of ChangeMan configuration. We also had an opportunity to tidy up a few other bits and pieces, such as making sure libraries were in sync and gaining assurances around that.”

To find out more, email info@rsmpartners.com or visit www.rsmpartners.com

