

A Challenging Mainframe Release Upgrade Project

THE PROBLEM: Retrofit over 1,000 mods and catch up to six years of releases

Penn Mutual Life, a prominent Northeastern insurance company, needed to apply six years of accumulated release upgrades to their mainframe Life administration system, and integrate 1,000 custom modifications in a compressed timeframe with no room for project slippage. Complicating the project, some mods required retrofits to work on the final release which necessitated extensive testing. They had run the release upgrade programs and now needed staff augmentation to perform retrofits, code review, regression and model office testing. The environment was complicated in that the mods were in Assembler. While some UDT tables were changed to transactions, which eliminated some of the modifications, the transactions still had to go through testing.

The schedule was aggressive and resources were constrained. It was imperative they leverage their limited business and technical resources and expertise on the release upgrades to meet this schedule.

THE SOLUTION: A joint task force including UCT experts and a dedicated in-house team

Universal Conversion Technologies (UCT) and Penn Mutual Life (PML) worked together to complete the release upgrades, modification retrofits and testing on schedule. UCT provided senior Programmer Analysts to work with the IM&T department. They were highly knowledgeable on the Life system and had participated in release upgrades in previous projects. A two-week on-site training and work review was followed by 10 months of UCT working remotely with the PML team to complete the project.

PML's approach for this release upgrade project:

- The in-house team ran the release upgrade programs on the Life administration system, going from release 2004 to 2010.
- Their in-house resources retrofitted the 1,000 modifications to the final release of the system, including changing around 200 UDT tables to transactions.
- The UCT Programmers performed code review on the retrofit modifications and corrected errors found.

- Jointly, UCT and the in-house team ran regression testing and model office testing using a jointly executed process under the PMO with a concerted focus on meeting the project schedules.

The UCT involvement in the project began in May 2011 and was completed at the end of March 2012.

THE RESULT: A successful upgrade delivered on time

The project was completed on time and the Life administration system was successfully upgraded with all modifications retrofitted.

THE FEEDBACK:

Greg Engler, AVP, I.T. Product Development & Maintenance, was pleased to have the project done in a timely and cost-effective manner. He said that "UCT's staff was a great asset during the assignment and played important roles in its success."