



WIM MILDER, MANAGING DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE SERVICES OF THE BROEKMAN GROUP IN ROTTERDAM:

‘A SATISFIED CUSTOMER OF ASYSKO AND AMT-LION USER FOR YEARS’

You could certainly call the relationship between the Broekman Group and Asysco ‘long-term’. For almost thirty years, the Rotterdam transport company has been using Asysco’s knowledge, people and software, says Wim Milder, managing director of corporate services at Broekman. ‘For years now, thanks to AMT-LION, our mainframe applications have been running just as stable on Windows servers as on the old Unisys systems, while half of our mission-critical applications are maintained by Asysco employees and are still being expanded.’

‘The Broekman Group was a classic mainframe user for years’, says Wim Milder, managing director of corporate services of the Broekman Group. ‘This company has been using Burroughs mainframes since the middle of the nineteen-seventies: B1700s, B1900s, B95s and later a number of Unisys A-series models. For the transport business, we were fairly quick to introduce large-scale computerisation even though this was mostly for book-keeping in the early years. It was in those years that we got to know Asysco, which was newly established. We were looking for people to help us build and maintain mainframe applications. They had the people with these skills. One of the first big projects that Asysco carried out for us was to implement data-exchange worldwide using the Geisco network. A major customer asked for this at the beginning of the nineteen-eighties and Asysco helped us realise it.’

Although, as far as applications are concerned, the company has never felt the need to abandon mainframe technology. The transport firm saw the end of this technology approaching. ‘We looked at a host of alternatives but, to be honest, we didn’t like any of them. It was particularly the robustness of the mainframe, its excellent availability and also its processing capacity that we liked.’

This is why Milder was so interested when Asysco proposed AMT-LION to him. With Asysco’s LION technology, users of Unisys mainframes can transfer their applications to the Windows platform while retaining the robustness and excellent availability of these applications. Just as attractive is the fact that this is not done using a ‘rip & replace’ approach but in a way that fully safeguards the customer’s investment. The existing programme code, not to mention all the business logic in which a customer has often invested millions over the years, can be transferred to the open system platform without any problems.

‘We were very attracted by this combination of low costs and a robust and reliable system environment,’ says Milder. ‘Once we had resolved the millennium problem in our applications, we transferred to AMT-LION on Windows servers in the year 2000. Naturally Asysco helped us with this. They conducted the prior investigation into the conversion and then looked after the actual migration to AMT-LION.’



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Milder finds it hard to use the term 'legacy' when referring to his Unisys applications. 'We run four big mainframe applications on AMT-LION, to our complete satisfaction. As supporting hardware, we use a cluster of Windows servers that were supplied by IBM. This environment has been extremely stable for many years now.'

'ASYSCO KNOWS HOW THE TRANSPORT SECTOR WORKS AND ALSO KNOWS THE AMT-LION PLATFORM, WHICH IS SO ATTRACTIVE FOR US, BETTER THAN ANYONE ELSE'

Moreover, it is untrue that these are old applications that are no longer updated. 'All four applications are always thoroughly updated and provided with new functionality. That's only logical because the transport sector is developing rapidly. For instance, we have recently added a fifth business unit to the Broekman Group. This means that we have to deal with new business processes that have to be supported by new ICT functionality.'

But has Broekman never toyed with the idea of replacing all the legacy applications with new standard packages? 'Of course we look at these fairly regularly,' says Milder. 'The point is that competition is very fierce in this sector. Because of this, we are strongly dependent on the information that our computers can generate. However, there are almost no standard packages that match our activities. Added to which, our own people and the Asysco employees know exactly how our current applications work. If you add to this the relatively low cost of the Windows platform, it's clear that the combination of AMT-LION and Windows is ideal for us.' Moreover, the functionality of the old Unisys applications is so up-to-date and of such high quality that Broekman's ICT department now has a number of other companies in the Rijnmond area as customers.

Asysco fulfils a double role at Broekman: as a supplier of the AMT-LION technology and as a software house that is brought in to update and maintain existing applications.

However, companies often shift from one supplier to another after a few years, so has Milder ever considered that? 'Of course it can sometimes be very handy if someone casts a fresh look on a project or system. However, for us that would certainly not outweigh the disadvantages. The Asysco employees know our applications very well. They understand how the transport sector works and they know the AMT-LION platform, which is so attractive for us, better than anyone else. As far as we're concerned, Asysco are real experts.'

CUSTOMER	Broekman Group
SECTOR	Logistics
PROBLEM	Mission-critical applications on expensive Unisys mainframes that Broekman would rather not replace with new applications but would like to expand and update.
SOLUTION	A drastic reduction in infrastructure costs could be achieved by migrating the mainframe applications to Asysco's AMT-LION environment. Because Asysco is able to keep the business logic of mainframe applications fully intact in a migration, Broekman's investment in business rules, etc. remains completely protected. Moreover, cooperation with Asysco TMS (Tailor-Made Services) makes it possible for Broekman to add new functionality to its mainframe applications in a relatively inexpensive way right up to today.

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