

Migrating from a mainframe to open systems very quickly leads to financial and technical benefits

Coevorden, 8 December 2008 – The ROI for migrating from a mainframe to an open environment is achieved within a year by approximately sixty percent of organizations. This is one of the results of a survey carried out by the Dutch company Asysco – the specialist in mainframe migrations. Most of the companies that took part in the survey said that the cost of maintaining a mainframe is so high that the investment in migration is soon recouped.

Asysco carried out the survey among IT managers in Europe. Almost ninety percent of them had the Unisys A Series platform. The remaining ten percent were using the Unisys OS 2200 operating environment. When asked what their main reason was for migrating the mainframe, ninety percent of the managers said that this was the cost of maintaining the mainframe. Thirty percent said that they wanted to provide end-users with a better interface and wanted a better connection to web applications and the Internet. Other reasons mentioned were the cost of administration (twenty percent), better performance for the future (nineteen percent), a better connection to other platforms (seventeen percent), hardware independence (fifteen percent) and insufficient knowledge of mainframes (ten percent).

The survey also showed that one third of the organizations had looked at alternatives such as rebuilding applications. Twenty percent had also considered keeping the mainframe and migrating to Unix. Only ten percent looked at legacy modernizing or web enablement or a switch to standard applications.

The survey also showed that IT managers had nevertheless had certain objections to migrating to a platform like Windows. For example, forty percent of the respondents were afraid of incurring continuity risks in migrating business-critical applications and thirty percent were afraid that Windows would not be sufficiently stable as a platform. Other objections were insufficient performance in the number of transactions or batch processes needed, the security of the new platform, lack of familiarity with building applications on the new platform and the cost of migration. However, the survey also indicated that more than three quarters of the organizations had not encountered these problems at all either during or after the migration.

In spite of the fact that migrations have a reputation for being expensive, fourteen percent said that they had recouped the investment in less than a year. For almost forty-five percent of the organizations, this took between six months and one year, while the remaining forty-one percent needed between one and two years.

‘Migrations often look very time-consuming, expensive and risky,’ says Erik van Rikxoort, CEO of Asysco. ‘Because we fully automate the migration process, a migration using our LION technology is completed within a few months. Then the high costs associated with a mainframe are earned back very quickly.’

It is worth noting that a number of organizations used an escrow agreement for migrations. Almost three quarters of the organizations deposited the source code and documentation for the migration tools in independent escrow, so that the software and applications can be delivered at any time, irrespective of the supplier’s financial position. According to the survey, organizations are opting for this because sometimes it’s a requirement, it reduces risk and it protects the investment.