

OptimalJ and Professional Services Get the Job—and Get It Done Right

CUSTOMER

Ohio Unemployment Compensation
Review Commission

INDUSTRY

Government

CHALLENGE

The Unemployment Compensation Review Commission (UCRC) of Ohio was seeking ways to upgrade its old and outdated Case Management System (CMS). The Commission's small data processing staff hired an outside software vendor to create the new system using a J2EE application architecture. However, the vendor's software and service quickly turned out to be a failure, leaving UCRC in need of a new vendor—fast.

COMPUWARE ANSWER

After reviewing OptimalJ, Compuware's product for distributed J2EE application development, UCRC was quickly convinced it was the tool for the job. UCRC also brought in Compuware professional service developers to create the application on time—and for half the cost the original vendor quoted.

Compuware Answer

- **OptimalJ**
- **Professional services**

When a software vendor failed to deliver a vital Java-based application to the State of Ohio's Unemployment Compensation Review Commission, Data Processing Manager Vince Cavo and his IT staff of two found themselves in a tight situation—until they learned about OptimalJ, from Compuware.

J2EE applications represent both a promise and a challenge to IT professionals seeking to build large enterprise applications. The promise: more flexible and scalable n-tier applications that meet end users' business needs. The challenge, however, is often just getting J2EE applications delivered on time. Increased complexity, and a general shortage of experienced Java developers, can hamper even the best-planned development projects. Compuware's OptimalJ addresses these challenges, while delivering on the promise of J2EE.

For Vince Cavo, data processing manager for the State of Ohio's Unemployment Compensation Review Commission (UCRC), the promises and challenges of Java development were all too apparent. Cavo and his small staff had been maintaining the Commission's decade-old Case Management System (CMS), which handles more than 20,000 unemployment appeals cases annually. Massive upgrades to the system were needed, and with such a small IT staff, Cavo had to find an outside vendor who could develop their new system using J2EE—on time and on budget.

Time for a Whole New System

"CMS was originally created in 1991, written in COBOL, to replace an even older application written in ICL," says Cavo. "At the time, it took a team of developers from the state government's Administrative Services three years to develop CMS. Since then, my team and I have been managing and maintaining CMS, keeping it updated with required changes.



"Nearly three years ago, we began looking at rewriting the application, eventually choosing to move CMS to a J2EE application architecture. The COBOL application is costly and time-consuming to update and maintain, and we're frequently facing changes to the system due to new unemployment legislation. Any change to CMS takes three or four months for us to complete, if not longer. It simply became outdated; we needed to add significant new features to it."

Cavo thought he'd found a vendor to do it. But, after several months of struggling with J2EE in a code-centric development environment, Cavo concluded the vendor could not deliver on its original promises.

Compuware and OptimalJ Get the Job

Facing looming deadlines, Cavo received a call from a Compuware programmer who had worked with him during Y2K testing years earlier. "I told him about what was going on here and the troubles we were having with the vendor," says Cavo. "He wasn't working with OptimalJ, but he gave me a call back a couple of days later and said, 'Why don't you meet a couple of other people from Compuware who can tell you about OptimalJ—I think we can help you with your project.'"

Three days later, Cavo chose OptimalJ and Compuware's professional services to finish the job of creating CMS and deploying it successfully.

OptimalJ helps organizations accelerate J2EE development by generating working applications directly from visual models. Using patterns and model-driven application design, OptimalJ decreases the need for extensive coding and design skills, and delivers high productivity and consistency.

"After the broken promises from the previous vendor, I wasn't sure at first that OptimalJ and Compuware could do the job," says Cavo. "Further, when the other vendor walked out, so did much of the information on the application's design. I knew Compuware would have to start from scratch. But within three days they'd proven to me that OptimalJ could do the job."

"The prior vendor's proposal ... quoted a price range of \$800,000 to \$1.2 million, with another \$120,000 for necessary enhancements.

With OptimalJ and Compuware's help, we're doing this project, including the enhancements, for under \$600,000."

Vince Cavo
Data Processing Manager
Ohio Unemployment Compensation
Review Commission

Once Compuware professional services staff worked out the data model, Compuware brought in OptimalJ developers to begin coding the new CMS application. And as the new application is nearing completion, Cavo and his team are already seeing the benefits gained by using OptimalJ.

"Not only is the development proceeding quickly, but we can see that, by using OptimalJ, this will be a much easier application to maintain," says Cavo. "What took three years to develop in COBOL is taking less than a year to develop using OptimalJ—and that's a tremendous savings."

One of the new features of CMS is the ability to handle "mass appeals"—large numbers of redeterminations due to a strike at a factory, for example. Its addition to CMS was initially an extra cost quoted by the previous vendor, but OptimalJ and Compuware have saved time and money on that feature as well. "The prior vendor's proposal for redesigning CMS quoted a price range of \$800,000 to \$1.2 million, with another \$120,000 for necessary enhancements," notes Cavo. "With OptimalJ and Compuware's help, we're doing this project for under \$600,000, including the mass appeals capability. Simply put, there's a great benefit to using OptimalJ to develop applications in a timely fashion, and at a greatly reduced cost."

UCRC Key Facts

- provides independent tribunals on unemployment claims for employees, employers and their representatives
- composed of three members appointed by the governor, a staff of attorney/hearing officers, and support staff
- reviews Ohio Department of Job and Family Services unemployment compensation decisions and may affirm, reverse or modify these decisions
- Case Management System (CMS) handles 20,000 cases annually.

OptimalJ Benefits

- accelerates J2EE development
- generates working applications directly from visual models
- uses patterns and model-driven application design
- reduces need for extensive coding and design skills
- increases developer productivity and consistency
- delivers significant savings on development costs.

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