Heineken: Work in progress

Heineken chooses to use TD/OMS for reliability and service

Planning is great, but sometimes things change quicker than expected. Or much slower. However, business must go on, even during "construction". At Heineken, the dedication and flexibility of Remain has contributed to continuation of the processes. Whatever the circumstances.

Hans Huttinga is the engineer for infrastructure at Heineken's head office in Zoeterwoude. He is responsible for the technical management of the iSeries. In addition to this he offers solicited and unsolicited help and advice to the application managers. Huttinga: "We have been using the iSeries since 1991, then named AS400. At that time twelve colleagues worked on programming customized software. They provided the commercial organization and a part of the supply chain with software that fitted their specific needs."

The ultimate proof
The object management system of Remain, TD/OMS was implemented in 1992. Huttinga remembers the resistance there against this change. "Programmers had to follow procedures. That took some adjusting to. But the benefits of TD/OMS quickly became clear. Messing around wasn't possible anymore. The system simply disallows you doing things that disturb your colleagues. The ultimate proof was provided a few years later at the Y2K-conversion and the currency change to the Euro. These happened almost simultaneously. A gigantic job that, with the help of TD/OMS, ran smoothly."

Colleague Richard Ober, application-manager, is also impressed by Remain's solution. "The first word that comes to mind is robust", he says. "The solution does what you expect. It shows malfunctions and mistakes before the items are in production and can lead to any consequences. Besides this, Remain is an organization that handles support questions adequately and thinks with you."

New situations, same demands
Huttinga shares the opinion of Ober: "Remain stands head and shoulders above others. The solution is extremely reliable and the service is excellent." It isn't surprising that the object management solution of Remain is still being used to our satisfaction. True, it being in a different situation than the first years. "The number of programmers has been reduced and for years there have been plans to completely phase out the iSeries and replace them by Window-servers", explains Huttinga, a little melancholic. "That doesn't take away the fact that essential applications, in the meantime, are still running on this aging iSeries, under an outdated OS400 system. However, these applications must keep running while we secure its functionality. Besides, regular maintenance is needed to adapt the software to new legal standards, or made useful for distribution to the outside world. A good example of this is the wish to synchronize sales and CRM systems with laptops and PDAs."

So the need for support by the TD/OMS is still present. This has brought trouble for Huttinga. The outdated version of the OS400 operating system was no longer supported by Remain. And the hardware was so dated that the newer version of the OS400 system could no longer function on it. The last obstacle was that Heineken didn't want to invest in new hard or software for the iSeries, considering the phasing out path they were on. "Luckily Remain turned out to be very cooperative and flexible again", Huttinga explains relieved. "In one day they compiled all objects of 240 programs under the old version. And one day later, I and someone from Remain realized the upgrade of a version 3.0 to a version 5.0. For this, two steps were needed to convert the data correctly. We worked on this from ten in the morning until four o'clock in the afternoon non-stop. But the job was done."

Attracting new functionality
With the upgrade Huttinga and his colleagues did not only have the old functionality at their expense, but of course, also the new options. To get used to this, they held a training day, after which TD/OMS could be used again in the daily routine.

Ober is very proud of the new version of TD/OMS. He sums up a few improvements: "There are new options concerning the area of monitoring, since transfer between the different iSeries-systems is now easier. The way in which relations between objects are handled has been expanded and improved. With one look at a chart you can now see the related objects of a fix. And the options that TD/OMS offers for object managing on other platforms also sounds very useful. In short, all functionality that makes object management even more reliable and easier.

Heineken
Heineken is one of the largest brewery groups in the world and is active in over 170 countries. Carrying brands such as Heineken and Amstel and in addition to that, approximately 120 local and regional brands In America, Heineken is the second largest imported brand and in Europe the largest beer brand.

In addition to the premium beers, the Heineken group carries a few brands from the lower segment, special beers and light and alcohol-free beers. For some markets Heineken also produces soft drinks.