

General Services Administration (GSA)

_experience the commitment

Integrating the newest version of CGI's Momentum[®] with its IT services improves GSA's ability to provide comprehensive, cost-effective, technologically progressive customer solutions



Government

Upgrading GSA's core financial system, Pegasys, to Momentum version 6.1.2 improved the delivery of timely, accurate, useful information to financial and program managers.

GSA 2006 PAR (Financial Section introduction)

"The success of this effort was the direct result of the great teamwork between GSA and CGI."

Kathleen M. Turco, Chief Financial Officer
U.S. General Services Administration (GSA)

As the U.S. federal government's central administrator and landlord, GSA helps federal agencies better serve the public by offering best value workplace and acquisition management policies and services. GSA is a catalyst for nearly \$66 billion in federal spending—more than one-fourth of the U.S. government's total procurement dollars. GSA manages federal assets valued at nearly \$500 billion, including more than 8,300 government buildings, a 170,000-vehicle fleet, and technology programs and products ranging from laptop computers to \$100M systems. Ninety-nine percent of GSA's operating costs are not appropriated, but recovered through provided products and services.

GSA provides a full range of back office (e.g., financial, payroll, and accounting) services for its own in-house operations as well as to other federal agencies. Since 1998 GSA and CGI have partnered to support GSA's internal financial operations and to provide financial services to a client base of more than 47 independent agencies and presidential commissions. GSA employs CGI's Momentum software suite as one of its primary tools to maintain its 18-year track record of exceptional customer service and reliability - internally and with its customers.

The Challenge

Momentum—called "Pegasys" as implemented at GSA—has served as GSA's official book of record since 2002. GSA originally selected Momentum for its comprehensive, integrated functionality and Joint Financial Management Improvement Program (JFMIP) compliance. Momentum's strong focus on workflow and standardized data that could be implemented on an agency-wide technical architecture allowed GSA to better support its customers.

Why CGI

- Extensive large-scale federal government project experience, including prior success at GSA
- Long-standing cross-servicing partnership provides strong foundation for GSA's FMLOB COE services
- Single accountable provider with depth of expertise to provide IT infrastructure, application management, COTS software, and SI services
- Strong, experienced team dedicated to project best practices and GSA success

The Results

- Major software upgrade and migration of software hosting accomplished simultaneously in ten months
- Increased efficiency in use of government funds
- Single accountable organization for operational success
- Improved communication resulting in increased customer service and satisfaction
- Operational under SLA governance for improved service levels

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GSA initially implemented Momentum version 3.4 and successfully upgraded to Momentum v5.1 in 2004. GSA's policy to upgrade Pegasys every two years meant that an upgrade from v5.1 to Momentum v6 was in the works for 2006.

As described in GSA's 2006 Performance and Accountability Report (PAR), "this effort took significant planning, development (database conversion, interfaces), testing (systems acceptance, regression, and performance), training (change management), and implementation support."

Pegasys connects data from 17 other financial systems, as well as financial portions of program and administrative systems. Over 3,600 users - regional and central office staff, supply/service customers, cross-served customers, employees, and vendors - access the system from geographically dispersed locations throughout the U.S. Pegasys processes more than 20 million transactions worth approximately \$24 billion each fiscal year.

GSA's users were interested in the new version of Momentum for its fully Web-enabled user interface. This feature was important enough that GSA highlighted it in its 2006 PAR. In addition, GSA had recently been selected as a Center of Excellence (COE), and a Web-enabled Pegasys would better position GSA for expansion of its Financial Management Line of Business (FMLoB). This change in the underlying Momentum technology, while highly beneficial to both users and support staff alike, required a corresponding change in the underlying Pegasys technical architecture. GSA would need to upgrade its hardware to modern, Microsoft Windows-based servers to support the changing processing requirements.

At the same time, initiatives to add functionality to Pegasys were already underway, and GSA didn't want to defer their implementation. The planned functional expansion included Momentum's Cost Allocation and Vendor Self-Service (VSS) capabilities and integration of GSA's eTravel solution. These enhancements would improve GSA's customer service capabilities and operational efficiency. For example, the integrated cost allocation functionality would reduce processing times and eliminate manual posting processes. VSS capabilities would allow GSA's vendors to electronically submit invoices and check payment status online.

Another important consideration was hosting. GSA was looking for improved service levels and additional cost savings with a new contract. Additionally, FMLoB guidance called for government-wide transition to a shared service provider (SSP) model, including private/public partnerships that incorporated service-level agreements (SLA) to define processing standards. GSA hoped to capitalize on the new SSP model to further improve customer service while decreasing overall operational costs.

This convergence of requirements provided the "perfect storm" to upgrade all aspects of GSA's financial services—software, hardware, and hosting. The challenge? To take these major initiatives from start to finish concurrently in less than a year's time.

The Strategy

One of CGI's key operating principles is sharing in clients' challenges and delivering quality services to solve them. Trying to upgrade Pegasys without a stable hosting environment would be a real challenge since hosting is the foundation of systems operations. Or as CGI Project Manager Mike Baker explains, "It's like trying to build the house and move in at the same time."

As CGI and GSA tackled the converging upgrade, enhancement, and hosting requirements, the idea of having a single organization responsible for all these Pegasys-related initiatives surfaced. GSA explored the possibility of migrating to CGI's U.S.-based Data Center for hosting services in conjunction with the Pegasys upgrade. This single accountable provider approach would provide the necessary linkage and coordination between the software upgrade, commercial-off-the-shelf (COTS) software product, and hosting services, improving overall efficiency and communications. Along with simplified accountability and anticipated cost savings, migration to a large-scale data center would eliminate the need for GSA to procure new servers. They could be included in the



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offered hosting services, further reducing GSA's required outlays. CGI could coordinate the entire process, including timelines and dependencies, staff, and the COTS product itself, simplifying GSA's oversight requirements and accelerating implementation timeframes.

Once GSA gave the go-ahead, CGI had ten months to accomplish the upgrade and data center migration. Fortunately, GSA staff knew exactly what they wanted in the upgrade and hosted services. Their defined expectations and clear scope reduced the risk of schedule slippage from organizational confusion or scope creep, the usual culprits in troubled systems projects. This was important since GSA would be the first large federal agency to migrate to CGI's Data Center.

CGI applied its Client Partnership Management Framework (CPMF) to the planning and complicated logistics required to achieve the upgrade, functional enhancements, and hosting migration within a tightly orchestrated schedule and defined budget. A critical component to successful execution was the assembly of focused project teams. Separate teams for the upgrade and hosting initiatives, along with teams focusing specifically on functional enhancements, ensured accountability for the key components of the overall effort. A technical team cut across organizational task areas to maximize consistent support. And direct access to the Momentum product development team, managed under the same roof, accelerated migration time while simplifying accountability.

"Though these concurrent initiatives included multiple activities and a lot of planning and close coordination," says CGI's Mike Baker, "we didn't do anything we wouldn't do on other Momentum projects. We applied careful planning and scheduling using CPMF tools. Most importantly, we pulled together the best people we could find and kept them talking to each other so GSA could stay focused on mission-critical operations."

The CPMF planning process includes anticipation of significant challenges (risks) and how they will be met, minimizing the downstream impact of potential "surprises" that can impact costs and timelines. For example, a significant portion of the upgrade was CGI's ability to successfully convert and migrate the upgraded software to the new data center. Conversion and migration are typically high risk areas in systems projects.

The data migration strategy called for shipping a 600+ gigabyte copy of GSA's production database to the data center a week prior to conversion and applying daily updates until cutover. CGI staff built and stood up the Pegasys database within 30 hours of receipt. They also performed many data and data file verifications to ensure data integrity. As a result, the data center and production databases matched perfectly when Pegasys was brought offline, allowing the next steps to proceed on schedule.

The schedule allowed for five days downtime for migration and called for three well-scripted dry runs prior to the actual cutover. The team fell behind schedule due to some unexpected challenges but was able to complete the actual migration with time to spare. In this case, the single accountable provider approach proved particularly effective, allowing CGI to adjust the schedule and staffing to keep the overall delivery schedule intact.

"CGI completed the Pegasys upgrade, including full migration to the CGI Data Center and data conversion to Momentum v6.1.2, in just over four calendar days with only two business days of downtime. Finishing the migration ahead of schedule allowed more time for verification," says conversion lead Mike O'Leary.

The conversion included over 31 million documents, 42 million accounting journal records, 65 million transaction journal records, 12 million reference information records, and millions of other records such as purchasing accounting details. The CGI team also built GSA's replica reporting database and turned on the Shareplex replication tool within 24 hours.

Since Pegasys processes over 20 million transactions every year, it's critical that the software handle large transaction volumes within acceptable timeframes. Load testing is a key part of every Pegasys release, and the upgrade was no different. GSA needed assurance that the system would perform adequately under stress (i.e., with high user volumes performing concurrent activities). GSA staff developed rigorous testing methodologies and procedures for all functional and technical areas to ensure a smooth transition. CGI worked with GSA to determine appropriate scenario samples and configured them using the Silk load performance tool. CGI then ran



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stress tests for 250 and 750 user scenarios and configured Pegasys based on the results. The load tests provided added confidence that Pegasys would be up to the demands of GSA's customers in the new environment.

A significant part of migrating to the CGI Data Center involved the security strategy and demonstrating the Center's ability to comply with federal security guidelines such as the Federal Information Security Management Act (FISMA) and the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) security standards. CGI combined leading security industry practices with layered security control design to build a functional security framework for Pegasys' major system elements. The team applied a Defense-in-Depth security architecture to maximize protection of GSA's network infrastructure, system infrastructure, and Pegasys application layers. CGI then tested server security and access in a process called "hardening."

"Hardening is like performing a home inspection before you move into a new house," explains CGI's Mike Baker. "You may find some surprises, but knowing them in advance lets you address them before you move in."

GSA employed an independent third party vendor for Pegasys Certification and Accreditation (C&A) at the CGI Data Center. The vendor independently conducted tests to determine whether or not embedded security controls and procedures could be penetrated. Pegasys met all security requirements for a hosted solution during the penetration test.

"Systems security and configuration management procedures have...improved, as well as has technical support of the Pegasys 6.1.2 application," indicates GSA's 2006 PAR in its financial section.

CGI also handled end user training for the Pegasys upgrade. Training took place in a two-month window, finishing six weeks before the July 2006 go-live date.

"We employed a two-phased approach to training," says CGI training lead Amanda Singer, "beginning with key functional personnel. CGI trained over 50 Pegasys functional coordinators, service representatives, and hotline personnel during a three-week period using "bootcamp" sessions. The bootcamps served dual purposes: training key Pegasys personnel and obtaining feedback on the training materials so they could be improved before training Pegasys end users."

Shortly after the conclusion of the bootcamps, CGI trained over 1500 GSA end-users in 11 regional sites, the central office, and other key locations. End user training included Roadshow overviews along with lab sessions to allow users hands-on experience.

The Technology

- Application: CGI's Momentum Enterprise Solution 6.1
- Server Operating Systems: Windows, including more than 50 CPUs for the production environment
- Databases: Oracle
- Networks: Cisco
- Programming Languages: J2EE, VB, C++

The Results

GSA successfully upgraded to Momentum® v6.1 and migrated to CGI's U.S. Data Center in the allotted ten-month window with no adverse impact to Pegasys production operations. GSA is now operating on the latest release of Momentum, maintaining Financial Systems Integration Office (FSIO) compliance while providing the latest and most robust financial management software available to the federal government today for use by its customers. As a designated public Shared Service Provider (SSP) for the FMLoB, GSA's implementation at CGI's Data Center includes 47 federal agencies for which GSA provides financial management services.

"As a public-private partnership, GSA's move to CGI's Data Center signifies both GSA and CGI's commitment to federal financial management excellence, providing the best services and software available to the federal



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government while enabling economies of scale and expertise for future FMLoB clients,” says Donna Ryan, Vice-President, CGI.

The successful completion of the concurrent hosting and upgrade initiatives saves GSA money without cutting GSA staff. GSA and CGI share operational responsibilities for Pegasys. These lines of responsibility are clearly documented for efficient and effective operations. With the infrastructure now in place and the addition of performance measures and monitoring mechanisms, GSA is well positioned to migrate other systems and prospective new clients for its LoB work.

According to GSA (as described in the 2006 PAR), the upgrade of Pegasys allows GSA to “continue to support its mission of offering comprehensive and technologically progressive practices in federal financial management;” while relocating the Pegasys hardware platform to CGI’s data center “provides a more secure, stable, reliable and cost-effective infrastructure platform that not only supports the Pegasys 6.1.2 upgrade, but enhances GSA’s ability to be a credible SSP in the FMLoB marketplace.”

Under the partnership arrangement, GSA provides business process services, customer service, and overall service management. CGI supports GSA through technology and application management, and as a COTS solution provider and systems integrator. This public/private partnership allows GSA to take advantage of commercial best practices for their back office so they can focus on serving their customers. GSA also gains increased accountability and predictable costs. CGI’s contract with GSA includes a service level agreement and long-term firm fixed prices.

The single accountable provider model now in place simplifies GSA’s delivery and management model. The GSA/CGI partnership provides a strong package of services to bring the best solutions to federal customers. GSA offers a full suite of capabilities including core financials, contract management, performance budgeting, and business intelligence using state-of-the-art, web-based, interoperable software.

For more information

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Addendum in bullet points for PowerPoint presentation

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