Progress Application Support

Client: Anonymous
Business Size: SME
Industry: Manufacturing
Country: UK
Technology: Progress 4GL, MS Access

Objective: Provision of Application Support Services

The Brief

OCS was drafted in to provide lightweight support and development for a Progress application, a MS Access database, and a Linux back-end, due to the departure of the existing in-house resource.

We received a brief handover from the in-house resource covering the basic requirements, but subsequently conducted a full-service establishment, resulting in the creation of a comprehensive 278-page document.

Background

Our company was engaged in late 2021 to support a Progress-based application, with knowledge transfer provided by the departing developer.

Initial focus areas included:

- Familiarisation with incident and issue management, problem resolution, and planned development.
- Performing routine checks on critical services and executing instructions for restarts if services failed.
- Guidance on database and server checks, including restart procedures where necessary.
- Understanding of the application's complex and dynamic codebase, which made record-level issue resolution time-consuming.
- Overview of the code release mechanism, which auto-updated clients with the latest version.

OCS was also introduced to:

- An annual task involving the update of shift calendar records, which tracks machine and shift assignments.

- A second annual activity involving installation and configuration updates, carried out in collaboration with a client employee.
- Procedures for managing scheduling issues, which could require urgent fixes.

Challenges and Methodology

As support activities progressed, OCS implemented several key operational improvements and routine practices:

- A monthly system restart was recommended and subsequently adopted by the client's helpdesk.
- ODBC connectivity issues that occasionally triggered errors in MS Access were resolved through the implementation of a specific restart procedure.
- Shift calendar creation, which had historically been a manual task, was partially automated through the development of a custom utility.
- Recurring performance issues, caused by poorly indexed tables, were mitigated by adopting a regular re-indexing task.

Consultant Contribution

We delivered stable support and developed reliable solutions for the client until the application was eventually replaced by an off-the-shelf third-party system.