



Mercury Companies Reaps Rewards of Lawson System Foundation 9.0 Customer Certification Program

After realizing it was time to migrate to Lawson System Foundation 9.0, Mercury Companies examined their options for managing the change, and decided certification was the best choice.

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Bevan Bryan, HRIS manager, Mercury Companies



Mercury Companies, Inc.

Since its inception in 1947, Mercury Companies, Inc. has grown to become among the United States' leading independent title agency enterprises. Its nearly 6,000 employees throughout 546 offices specialize in providing title, escrow, real estate, and mortgage services, along with mortgage document preparation.

The company invests heavily in developing a sound infrastructure, personnel, technologies, brand development, and new services and goods. As a result, Mercury Companies has generated more than \$1 billion in total revenue, and earned nearly three times as much national market share as its nearest comparative competitor.

The System

A Lawson customer since 2004, Mercury Companies operates Lawson Human Resources and Payroll on clustered application/SQL servers with three load-balanced remote Web servers in a Windows platform. They run Lawson on a Microsoft SQLServer 2005 database. They have created three System Foundation environments; one for testing, another for development, and a third for production that is used by the HR staff on a day-to-day basis.

The company's level of customization is moderate, with 16 modified-base Lawson programs, 250 custom reports and programs, 13 process flows, and 20 custom Perl/.bat scripts.

Choosing Among Migration Methods

In 2007, the time came for Mercury Companies to step up from its Lawson 8.0.3 environment to System Foundation. "We called Lawson Professional Services to find out what our options were and learned that either they, one of their business partners, or we could perform the migration," explains Bevan Bryan, HRIS manager, Mercury Companies.

Lawson presented the Customer Certification Program to Mercury Companies, and, being techies — the self-service migration option appealed to both Bryan and his colleague, Keith Thompson, system administrator and developer, Mercury Companies.

"We wanted to perform the migration, rather than share all the fun with Lawson or anyone," Bryan laughs. "So we tilted the scales a bit to management, explaining how much money they'd save by performing the upgrade ourselves with the Customer Certification Program."

Certification Process

Designed to make enterprise software easier to buy and own, the Lawson System Foundation 9.0 Customer Certification Program ensures customers have the technical competency to plan, install, and migrate to System Foundation with less reliance on Lawson consulting resources.



Certification candidates must satisfy prerequisites before taking the migration class, which is currently available for Unix and Windows. In addition, they are required to attend a System Foundation customer migration training course and pass a proctored exam before starting their technical migration and receiving support from Lawson Professional Services.

Bryan recalls that he and Thompson were among the first Lawson customers to sign up for the program, so there were only a few people in their class. "The small class size gave us a great, hands-on experience, with an excellent instructor, who went through a System Foundation installation and system migration with us in class, within a week."

He continues, "When we'd run into a problem in class, the instructor would sit down with us and figure it out. So I'd say the class was 25 percent lecture and 75 percent hands-on. For me, being a technical person, letting me do the work with someone there in case I got in trouble was an ideal instruction approach," says Bryan.

Performing the Migration

Equipped with the certification instruction experience, Bryan says, "I had all the confidence in the world that I had the knowledge to start the migration."

He and Thompson began the migration process by installing their required Lawson 8.0.3 Application Maintenance Service Pack and Windows technology upgrades before migrating from the old to the new environment – all within just a month.

"We kept on expecting complicated problems to come up during the migration process, but the step-by-step instructions in the Lawson manuals were so well laid out, the migration was unbelievably smooth," says Bryan.

He adds, "With the 40-hour block of support that we got from Lawson, we were never on our own. Yet, during our weekly call with Lawson, which was designated for discussing problems, all we'd usually have to say is, 'Things are good here. How's the weather up there?'"

A Successful Outcome

Upon undergoing the certification program and completing the migration, Bryan says, "I'm so much more in tune with the system, I can just go right in and fix problems as they arise. However, the environment is so stable, it has made my job boring. I sit around going, 'Come on, something break,' he laughs.

Even during heavy use periods, such as the company's 401(k) and health insurance open-enrollment period that previously triggered slow system response times, the new system performs impeccably. The first time the company had hundreds of users on the system at the same time, going after the same resources, Bryan explains, "Users were really impressed, because they didn't experience any problems."

He adds that the Lawson System Foundation 9.0 Customer Certification Program has resulted in a plethora of savings for Mercury Companies. "If you have technical abilities and the right background, this program is a great opportunity, a fun learning experience, and well worth the time."



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About Mercury Companies

Tracing our history back to 1947 and the founding of Security Title Guaranty Co., Mercury Companies began doing business as a title and abstracting company operating out of a small office in the foothills of Colorado.

Today, we employ close to 6,000 individuals in over 500 offices located throughout the continental United States. We take pride in our company and the people we have invited to join our company because we know that true success cannot be measured by the business we build, but rather by the company we keep.