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The Smith Group

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The Smith Group

Mainframe Modernization and Cost Reduction

One of the newest members of IBM's mainframe partner community, The Smith Group is dedicated to helping their customers modernize as well as reducing or even eliminating many of the high costs associated with maintaining their mainframe platforms.

M. Lane Smith,
Founder and CEO

"Being a young company allows us to take a fresh look at issues and offer more creative solutions" says M. Lane Smith, Founder and CEO of The Smith Group. "We are the only Tier 1 IBM Business Partner that focuses only on mainframe software and services, where the biggest advances in the industry are occurring".

The Smith Group is a network of like-minded companies that include many boutique firms that have been delivering high value solutions for decades. These firms primarily operate through word of mouth. Therefore, many mainframe customers may not be aware of them. Access to these resources is a big differentiator for The Smith Group and for its customers.

Case in point: A state government was required by the IRS to archive seven years of their SMF records which were stored on reems of tape. The Smith Group introduced the state to a small company that specializes in manipulating SMF records and that company delivered a solution to archive those records directly to the cloud with less than a week of billable work.

There is an acute skills shortage that is negatively affecting mainframe shop productivity. To address this issue, The Smith Group offers highly skilled and experienced DBAs, systems programmers, and application developers for staff augmentation and project work. These individuals can be critical for IBM mainframe customers struggling from the retirement of their previously stable workforce.

Another emerging trend in the industry is a burgeoning youth movement, replacing decades of experience. The Smith Group is addressing this problem by offering over 400 classes of formal education, including boot camps and badging, all built around a mainframe curriculum, helping to take the new hires to the next level quicker and more efficiently.

The Smith Group has emerged as a frontrunner in ISV replacements, saving their customers 50% or more on their annual software maintenance fees. From Mr. Smith: "Mainframe tools have commoditized with little difference between the vendor products. However, certain vendors have an outsized opinion of their product's value. And years of compounded price increases reflect that opinion. A fresh start with new, highly discounted IBM products combined with fixed out-year maintenance pricing can prove to be a big win for our customers".

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Another industry trend is the modernization of monolithic legacy applications. The aging green screen interface is being replaced by modern IDEs such as open-source Eclipse and Microsoft's VS Code. Platform dependent SCMs are being replaced by platform independent GIT. And with the introduction of Watson X Code Assist from IBM, the code itself can be optimized, refactored, or even replaced by Java. The Smith Group is carving out a specialty in this area and offers their customers long term solutions as opposed to short term fixes.

The Smith Group is aware that their customers have many choices with whom to partner with. According to Mr. Smith "We just hope to be a part of the equation and we are confident that we can bring unique solutions to our customers unique challenges". **CR**