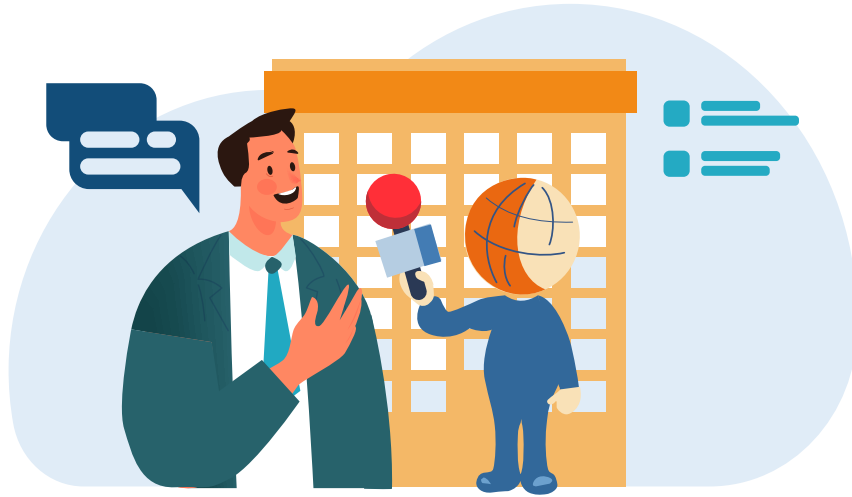


CASE STUDY



Dutel saves 30% in application maintenance, by converting CA 2E Synon to RPG Free



The Customer

Created in 1937 by Jean and Marcel Dutel, Dutel S.A.S. is a world leader in Jacquard weaving. Designs are created from its head office near Lyon in eastern France, then woven in the Loire to be delivered nationally or exported to more than 70 countries around the world.

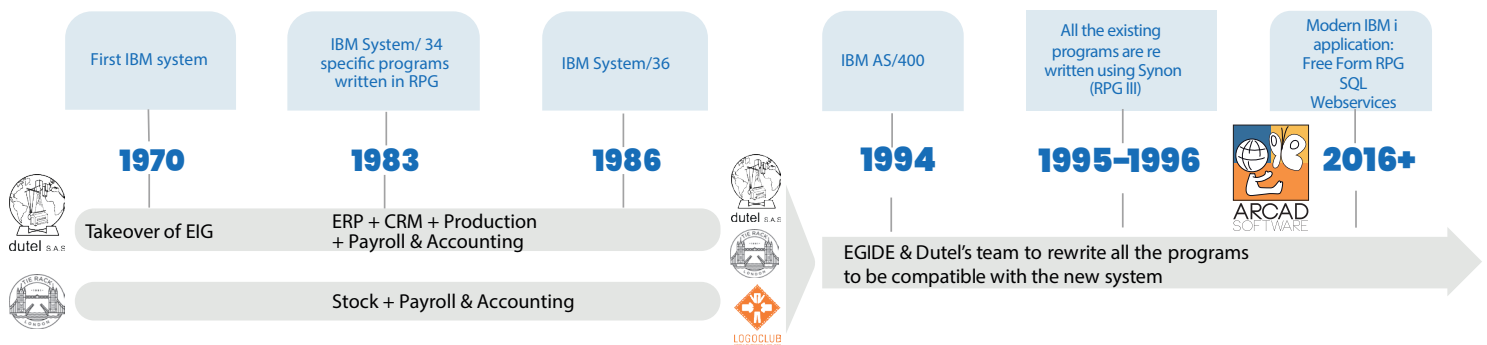
The Dutel Group owns high street brands such as the UK-originated Tie Rack, with outlets in most major cities, malls and airports. Dutel is probably best known for its custom manufacture, founding LogoClub in 1992 to specialize in corporate wear, equipping an international clientele such as EuroTunnel and the Olympic Committee.

IT Background

Dutel have been an "IBM shop" since as early as 1970. In 1983 they developed in-house business applications in RPG to run on IBM System/34. These ERP, CRM, Production Management, Payroll & Accounting applications were migrated to System/36 and then to AS/400 a few years later.

In 1996, Dutel sought the help of an external software company, EGIDE, to re-write all of their applications using the Synon CASE Tool (now CA 2E).

By using the Synon IDE to define a custom data model and rules, the team could generate RPG code very efficiently without developer intervention. Since 1997, all applications in the group have been developed exclusively using Synon over DDS.



"What I liked about the ARCAD solution is they guarantee the non-regression of the converted system."

Jean-Christophe Dutel, Managing Director

The Challenge

A turning point came in 2015 with two key developers reaching retirement age and Synon skills in increasingly short supply. The Dutel team were facing three main challenges:

- future cost of upgrading Synon to the newest version
- imminent retirement of key staff
- lack of Synon skills for ongoing maintenance of the system.

Jean-Christophe Dutel, Managing Director, explained their IT strategy around IBM i:

"The IBM i is key to our business and we wanted to get maximum benefit from our custom applications and investment. All our systems need to be up 24/7. The factory runs overnight and if you want to avoid a weaver calling you in the middle of night because the system is down, you need the reliability of an IBM i system. Our business cannot take the risk of having a factory offline due to IT. The cost of downtime in the middle of the Christmas sales, or a system breach when you are about to deliver 5000 jackets to a customer, are risks we just have to factor out".

To resolve the situation, the team considered several alternatives: a complete application re-write, migration to a standard package, or a conversion of the existing applications to a modern language.

"We did not want to take the risk of rewriting our code. It would be long and costly, and we would lose some functionality in the process. Our systems are a competitive advantage for us and it makes business sense to retain them", explained Dutel.

The Solution

"ARCAD approached us with their Modernization as a Service (MaaS) offering, which automates the conversion of an existing Synon application into Free Form RPG and SQL. Free Form is like the languages taught today in IT schools. With this conversion, it will be far easier to recruit young developers as part of our team", added Dutel.

"We seized the opportunity of migrating our IBM i applications and set up a strategy which will allow us to maintain and improve our systems for the next 15 / 20 years".

ARCAD Modernization as a Service (MaaS) is provided by ARCAD Software and certified partners. It consists of an integrated set of solutions and key project phases:

- Audit and Analysis of the existing system
- Implementation of a DevOps framework to allow concurrent maintenance and modernization
- Recording of test scenarios on existing applications
- Automated conversion from CA 2E Synon to Free Form RPG, and DDS to DDL
- Re-run of test scenarios to detect regressions and correct
- Merge of maintenance and modernization branches, re-test, validate
- Deployment to production

"What I liked about the ARCAD solution is they guarantee the non-regression of the converted system", added Dutel. *"They can offer this guarantee because they use their own tool, ARCAD-Verifier, to compare system behaviour before and after the conversion. The comparison is reliable because it is performed down at the data level".*

Starting first on the Tie Rack application, the conversion was deployed successfully in 2017.

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Benefits

Dutel testifies to the benefits of a low-risk and high-return approach offered by ARCAD MaaS:

- Conversion of the entire system to a modern language on IBM i
- Guaranteed non-regression of the system
- Custom business rules are maintained
- Reduction in 30% of software maintenance costs

Dutel concluded: **"With ARCAD's conversion, we were able to keep our custom business rules from Synon and generate clear, understandable source code which we can now easily maintain and improve".**

