

SYNON *case study*

'Building strategic systems under time constraints'

Aspiration to be a market leader in the business of providing financial services to a wide variety of customers in all sectors of the world economy clearly sets the direction for MGICA Ltd., a wholly-owned subsidiary of one of Australia's largest insurance companies, AMP.

MGICA currently managed information on more than 500,000 borrowers, firms and trading companies in Australia and New Zealand and is supported by an international network of companies operating similar information banks relevant to their own economy.

With an established corporate objective of being recognized as an organization which is flexible, innovative and adaptive to change, MGICA has set a strategy which demands its MIS department must be a dynamic business operation.

From Wang to AS/400

Around two years ago, MGICA's MIS group reviewed its existing environment in light of the company's corporate strategic CASE development tool and a complementary partner to the new hardware.

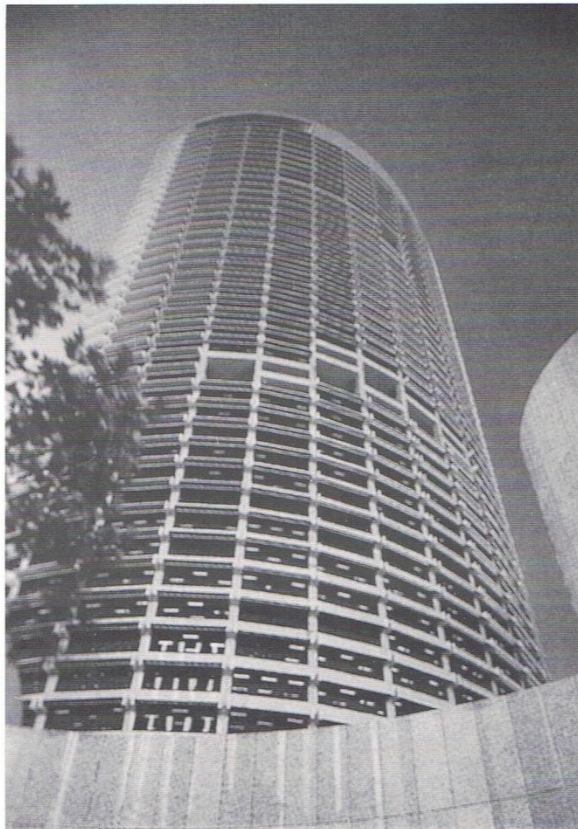
Peter Large, MGICA's Business Analyst at that time, spearheaded the development of systems in this new environment. Reflecting on the past 16 months, Large says: 'Results have been outstanding. The successful completion of two major systems has been quite an achievement.'

The major system Large tackled was the Credit Insurance System, incorporating three major projects, and integrating five subsystems.

The Credit Insurance Division of MGICA needs systems which can provide fast turnaround of credit line information, flexible quotation techniques and management of 'tailor-made' policies.

The pressure to deliver

The original estimate for this system was six person years but MIS was under pressure to deliver.



Facing a learning curve - involving a new machine, a new operating system and new development environment - MGICA engaged the services of Synon consultants to guide the implementation and to provide the skills transfer.

Meeting the business need

By choosing this approach, MGICA has been able to implement application systems which support the organization's unique requirements and will be flexible enough to be adapted to future changes.

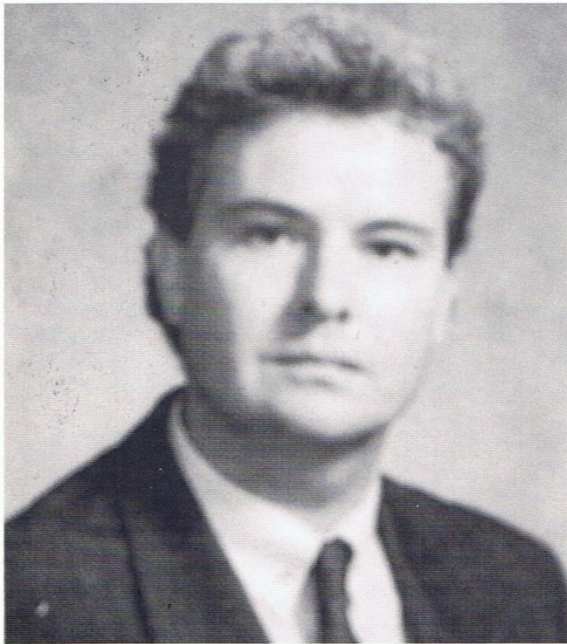
Having reached the end of its first CASE project, the MIS group realized a range of benefits which had helped them meet the new 'challenge'. The group can now see the benefits of the inherent control mechanisms which facilitate systems and project management.

MGICA Ltd's
headquarters
in Sydney,
Australia.
Serving over
half a million
borrowers.

Learning a totally new environment was also assisted tremendously through Synon productivity tools, which assimilated the group to the AS/400's Operating System, OS/400, in a friendly way.

'To be leaders in the provision of financial services, we knew we had to lead the way in information management,' Large declares, adding: 'We are winning on both counts through Synon's CASE products.'

The development process was totally different to conventional methods. Large realized the time spent on the modeling stage (analysis and design) was longer than in traditional methods but integral to the long-term success of the system. They found the work up front shortened the coding time and enabled the CASE product to take over the generation of the system.



Peter Large,
Business Analyst

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Following the completion of the modeling stage, the first major project, Credit Insurance Accounts Receivable, was delivered to the users in less than three months.

According to Large: 'Through Synon's English representation of data relationships and prototype utilities the users sat down with us and examined the models as they were being created. This allowed us to evolve the business solution, rather than just creating the best guess system.'

Half the original time estimates

The total time taken for the entire Credit Insurance project was half of the original estimate. The system was significant in technical terms with 561 executable programs using 114 physical files in one model.

'After what seemed to be a slow start, the Credit Insurance System is a great success,' Large commented. 'The system is robust, of high quality, is flexible and will stand the test of time.'

The standardization built into Synon and its application of IBM's SAA Common User Access (CUA) provides confidence in the software's future.

The Credit Insurance System requirements are growing and changing. With CASE, MGICA has been able to benefit from one of the major strengths - a flexible, and manageable, path for change.

More fundamentally, the CASE products have enabled MGICA to develop and implement cost-effective applications in time frames which would not have been possible using third-generation languages within the traditional development life cycle.