

customer case study

COAMO

Uniface Helps Largest Agricultural Cooperative in Latin America Stay Ahead in a Dynamic Economy



From local farming cooperative to one of Brazil's largest companies

Established in 1970, Coamo is currently the largest agricultural cooperative in Latin America and one of the largest Brazilian companies among all sectors. It supports a body of more than 25,000 farmers by means of around 115 service centers, with 5,800 direct employees and 1,500 subcontractors. Responsible for receiving 3.4% of the national production of grains and fibers, its 2012 turnover was R\$7.15 billion (equivalent to 3.5 billion US dollars).

Coamo's mission is to improve its members' socio-economic situation and to contribute to the development of the country. Each year, cooperative members sell around 5.64 million tons of raw materials to Coamo, which processes 32% in its own factories, selling the rest on the domestic and foreign markets. Industrialized products intended for food, such as margarine, refined soy oil and packaged coffee are sold on the domestic market, and semi-finished industrialized products such as soy bran, crude degummed soy oil and vegetable fats are sold on both the domestic and foreign markets.

Coamo assists its cooperative members in several other ways, for example: making available a skilled team of agronomic engineers who provide members with technical agronomic assistance, helping them take full advantage of the soil, using the most modern technologies available; holding training workshops and providing seeds, machines and materials. It also operates a credit bank, Credicoamo. <

Mission-critical business processes automated

IT plays a fundamental role in making these activities viable and coordinating Coamo's business processes. An internal team develops and maintains systems for all areas, including administrative, financial, commercial, industrial, logistical, operational and technical. Only a few specialist systems are outsourced.

Until the end of the 1990s, Coamo developed its applications exclusively in a fourth-generation language and executed them in a mainframe. The management appreciated the control and security offered by the mainframe, but felt it was necessary to be able to evolve and adapt the software more quickly to face changes in local and international law and with constantly changing market conditions.

In 1997, when Credicoamo urgently needed a new application, Coamo realized that it would not be able to meet the request sufficiently quickly with the tools it currently used and went to look for a new development environment.

This was also an opportunity to begin to change to an open platform, but the management needed to maintain the same level of control and security as with the mainframe. And, because this was needed urgently, the environment also had to be easy to learn. <

Customer



Sector Agriculture



Country Brazil



Challenge

To develop, maintain and support a large variety of business-critical applications with speed and efficiency, keeping the applications standardized and secure

Results

- An IT team of 102 is able to maintain more than 240 applications and provide support to thousands of users
- Security is guaranteed in a complex and distributed operational environment
- Development guided by models and based on repositories, together with the reuse of essential components, provides standardized, high quality code
- Applications are able to evolve rapidly, allowing for swift response to business opportunities of a dynamic market place

"Uniface takes care of the technical aspects of our mission-critical processes, which means that our staff can concentrate on the expansion and updating of applications so that we can respond quickly to new business opportunities."

Ailton Almeida Queiroz, CIO,
Coamo

Uniface Benefits

- 1 Productivity
- 2 Reliability & Security
- 3 Enterprise Scalability
- 4 Technology Independence
- 5 Technology Innovation
- 6 Integration & Reuse
- 7 Collaboration & Results
- 8 User Community
- 9 PartnersUnited Program
- 10 Powerful Development Environment

Enterprise Application Development

Productivity significant factor in choosing Uniface

Because of its reputation for productivity and ease of use, Coamo chose Uniface for the urgent - and demanding - Credicoamo project. Working together with Elosoft, Uniface's distribution partner, the Coamo team was able to learn Uniface quickly and build the application within the required deadline.

The team also realized that Uniface would allow them to maintain central control of development, ensuring quality and consistency in all its applications. This is the case largely because development with Uniface is based on a data model and a central repository. The ability to reuse components and logic makes Uniface a great environment in terms of code standardization, as well as productivity. For example, it is possible to define rules to validate a field such as "type of coffee grain" once and, later, reuse those rules whenever this validation is necessary. The use of models makes the developers even more productive and the applications even more consistent and easy to maintain.

Today, Uniface's productivity is such that an IT team of 102 (of whom only half are developers) is able to take care of these applications internally. The team's work includes providing support to 2,800 end users, of whom around 2,000 could be online concurrently. <

Technology independence key for a complex IT infrastructure

Coamo was impressed with the results and with Uniface as a development environment. Together with the phenomenal productivity, the Coamo team was amazed the way that applications created with Uniface could be executed in practically any operating system or database.

The team continues to consolidate its partnership of success with Uniface and Elosoft. It takes full advantage of the versatility and independence of the Uniface platform and is, for example, close to launching web-based applications. Elosoft continues to assist Coamo with training, support and marketing related to Uniface, as it has done for the last 15 years. <

"We have an excellent relationship with Compuware. We have access to key people who give us advice and listen to our requests for improvements. We are satisfied with the way Uniface improved the capacity of our IT systems to react to changes in business and, consequently, the flexibility of our organization as a whole."

Ailton Almeida Queiroz, CIO,
Coamo

Scalability allows for flexibility and meeting market demands

Today, all Coamo's business-critical systems have been developed or rewritten in Uniface, as well as the billing, human resources and banking systems. This represents a total of 243 applications in Uniface, with more than 30,000 components.

As planned, Uniface has allowed Coamo to respond flexibly to changes in business and is often merely a question of altering the model. Ailton Almeida Queiroz, CIO of Coamo, says that Uniface allows the cooperative to obtain maximum return on its investments in people. "Uniface takes care of the technical aspects of our mission-critical processes, which means that our staff can concentrate on the expansion and updating of applications so that we can respond quickly to new business opportunities." <

Developing applications in Uniface

One of the related benefits is that programmers can learn Uniface quickly no matter what their training. For example, the data access layer does not require any knowledge of SQL programming.

Ailton Almeida Queiroz believes that Uniface is ideal for any organization that needs to coordinate a large variety of development activities in distributed environments and with several teams. "Uniface is an excellent choice when you centrally manage a large development team and need to be sure that code is standardized and secure."

After experiencing these benefits, Coamo has been a long-term Uniface customer as it has met the requirements of all its main systems. Elosoft continues to provide support and training, working with Coamo technicians on important development projects. <