

# Ensuring IT Continuity for an Outdoor Retailer

This client is a renowned outdoor lifestyle brand, specializing in high-quality casual sportswear and accessories. They conduct business throughout multiple channels, becoming a preferred choice for outdoor enthusiasts that appreciate high-quality and functional products that last the test of time.

As a legacy brand with a rich history, the client had built and transitioned across multiple extensive systems, often relying on older, customized or home-built solutions. Resource availability constraints have limited their ability to document these system changes. The lack of concise documentation created significant risks for the client, particularly in the face of resource turnover or system changes.

Without a singular source of accurate mainframe information, knowledge about system interactions often resides primarily with individual subject matter experts. This fragmented understanding can hinder the business's ability to innovate and maintain IT continuity, potentially leading to disruptive impacts across the organization.

To address this risk, the client engaged Clarkston to document their complex mainframe environment, which supports critical business functions across the various systems. This effort aimed to derisk the challenges associated with an overdependence on a singular resource and ensure their documentation remains resilient and adaptable to future changes.

# Retail Case Study

## PROJECT OVERVIEW



### INDUSTRY:



Retail

### PRODUCT AND SERVICES:



Apparel and Footwear

### PRIMARY OBJECTIVES:

- Conduct comprehensive review of historical documentation and develop high-level technical documents covering both functional and technical aspects of mainframe functionality and jobs
- Consolidate scattered information to identify gaps and create a centralized knowledge base
- Implement a structured developer interview process to validate and refine the compiled documentation
- Leverage the collective expertise of the development team to ensure accuracy and completeness of the technical documents
- Develop a long-term plan to guide the maintenance and updates of mainframe documentation
- Ensure that documentation remains current and relevant to support future organizational changes and system updates

### SOLUTION:

- Established a template for system documents to standardize documentation across the client's mainframe team
- Conducted preliminary analysis on historical system information to reduce resource load in later interview phases
- Compiled findings into comprehensive documents, providing a foundation for detailed system analysis and documentation

### KEY BENEFITS:

- Critical knowledge is no longer concentrated in a few individuals, reducing the risk of disruptions due to resource turnover
- Increased overall understanding of the system through detailed job information, reducing the likelihood of errors and downtime
- Identified and documented legacy systems no longer used for business purpose, reducing the operational risk of veteran resource turnover
- Future efficiency improvements by establishing a process for documentation maintenance and reinforced change control processes

### KPIs

- Consolidated over 200 historical documents into 7 comprehensive documents, providing a structured framework for understanding their mainframe environment and finding desired information quickly
- Mitigated the risk of knowledge loss associated with the departure of an IT lead with over 35 years of experience
- Established sustainable documentation framework and structured process to ensure system and job information remains current and accurate over time

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