



# SYSPRO

Embracing innovation with Rocket® Visual COBOL® delivers a modern and agile development environment, boosting productivity and performance by 30%.

(Formerly a MicroFocus® product)



SYSPRO ERP software is designed to address industry-specific challenges for manufacturers and distributors. With a history of nearly 40 years, SYSPRO has a 98% customer-retention rate, one of the highest in the industry, with its 15,000 global customers.

## Challenge

Since the mid-1980s, SYSPRO has relied on COBOL for the development and deployment of its ERP solution. The product and its user interface underwent continual improvement and from the late 1990s, SYSPRO used Rocket® Net Express™ to deploy its product to the global customer base.

Russell Hollick, Chief Software Architect for SYSPRO, explains the need for a more modern development environment: “Net Express served us extremely well, but we are conscious that a new generation of developers does not perceive COBOL as modern and cutting-edge. At SYSPRO we have a development internship and so every year young people join our team of 110 developers and software testers. It’s important for us to remain relevant, and a modern development environment is a crucial part of that. So, when we heard about Rocket Visual COBOL, we were very interested to understand what it might offer us.”

This coincided with SYSPRO wanting to offer 64-bit support within its ERP solution. Installation of licenses and application setup was regularly a challenge across their customer base and SYSPRO were looking to simplify the overall installation process for their customers.



Rocket Visual COBOL has enabled us to bridge the skills gap and engage with a younger generation of developers, who are now excited about COBOL and view it as a career development opportunity.”

**RUSSELL HOLLICK**  
Chief Software Architect, SYSPRO

## At a Glance

**Industry:** Software and Technology

**Location:** South Africa

**Challenge:** SYSPRO needed to ensure they could attract new developer talent to support the future of their market leading ERP solution. They were looking to use industry standard tooling to complement agile software development practices and help on-board new developers unfamiliar with COBOL more easily.

**Products and services:** Rocket Visual COBOL for Visual Studio, Rocket COBOL ServerNet Express, Rocket Visual Server for COBOL.

### Results

- Up to 30% improvement in development productivity.
- Ability to on-board new developers more quickly and easily.
- 30% improvement in application performance.
- Simplified application install and setup for customers.



We couldn't believe how quickly everyone picked up on the Visual COBOL potential. Even our Microsoft .NET developers were able to use Rocket Visual COBOL within a matter of days as it integrates into their existing development tools. And the time it takes to on-board new development interns went from many months to just a few weeks."

**RUSSELL HOLLICK**

Chief Software Architect, SYSPRO

## Solution

An in-depth look at a Rocket Visual COBOL-hosted workshop gave SYSPRO the confidence it needed, as Hollick comments: "The Rocket Visual COBOL IDE was so good that we decided to change our development processes and start using Rocket Visual COBOL as a code editor while still using Net Express to deploy our product to customers. It was a real game changer when we took all 10.5 million lines of code and compiled it with Visual COBOL. Having run it through our automated testing system, used to test our core business logic, we needed to change about 50 lines of code."

SYSPRO also stress tested the Rocket Visual COBOL compiled application under high load, using a benchmarking application in a multi-threaded environment. The tests went very well and showed a 30% throughput and performance improvement overall which will be welcomed by SYSPRO customers when the new version goes into general release.

Introducing Rocket Visual COBOL into an established development team was a pleasant surprise for Hollick: "We couldn't believe how quickly everyone picked up on the Rocket Visual COBOL potential. Even our Microsoft .NET developers were able to use Rocket Visual COBOL within a matter of days as it integrates into their existing development tools. And the time it takes to on-board new development interns went from many months to just a few weeks."

This gave SYSPRO the opportunity to implement a hybrid development and project management model, leveraging lots of agile elements. This enables the team to be more responsive to changing business requirements and deliver new features up to 30 percent faster. SYSPRO also likes that Rocket Visual COBOL offers additional integration opportunities, such as with Microsoft® TFS, which serves as their source code control solution. Finally, deployment is made easier as Rocket Visual COBOL is embedded into the SYSPRO® product, simplifying the install process and saving on support and services.

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