Partnering for success

The internationally recognised expertise of IBA Group is available right here in South Africa

IBA South Africa was established in 2014 in Johannesburg to bring the IBA Group's services closer to South African customers. A global alliance of IT companies, the IBA Group has a history spanning 23 years. Created as a joint venture with IBM, it eventually became an independent software developer. "We retain good working relations with IBM and our customer base includes large-scale companies, such as Goodyear, Fujitsu Technology Solutions, Rockwell Automation, and Hapag-Lloyd," says Dimitri Denissiouk, Managing Director of IBA South Africa. "IBA Group employs almost 3 000 people and has offices in 11 countries."

Customers come from North America, Europe, Asia, CIS countries, Australia, and South Africa. They operate in such fields as banking and finance, logistics and transportation, telecommunications, manufacturing, healthcare, IT, energy, and government.

IBA Group's headquarters and main development labs are located in Eastern Europe, which makes it possible to provide excellent services and solutions at competitive rates. IBA South Africa's key function is to act as the front office in South Africa. "The local presence is important, as customers usually prefer to have a local contact to communicate with," Denissiouk explains.

Solutions provided to date include such complex projects as automatic teller application maintenance, correcting errors that occurred more than 30 000 times a week, and developing a new version of an Internet retail banking application, with functions including account statements, inter-account transfers, beneficiary payments, and online lendings and payments. In both cases the client was a leading South Africa bank.

Global accolades

Given the scope of such projects, it is no surprise that IBA takes quality issues very seriously, taking a proactive approach to addressing them. This has resulted in a series of global accolades. "In October 2003, IBA achieved the Software Engineering Institute's CMMI® Maturity Level 4," Denissiouk relates. "The appraisal was conducted by experts of Gartner Group and TeraQuest Metrics. In addition, IBA holds various ISO 9001 certificates for design, development, production, and maintenance of computer software and for maintenance and support of hardware and banking systems. IBA was a winner of the CIS Quality Award 2011 in the category Services."

Moreover, many IBA-developed solutions have become finalists and winners of international contests. For example, in 2014, the Group's solution for IBM won in the category ERP/Supply Chain Management Solution of the Year in the European IT & Software Excellence Awards; in 2015 the automated fare collection system that IBA implemented for the public transport system of Minsk, the capital of Belarus, received an award in the category Vertical Solution of the Year.

Continual innovation

In its quest to consistently deliver quality, innovation and best value, IBA benefits from a combination of many factors. "IBA Group has highly qualified developers who are trained at the educational centers of world IT leaders, including IBM, Microsoft, and SAP, as well as at the IBA Training Center," says Denissiouk. "They have university education in IT, physics, mathematics or related fields and therefore are able to apply a more grounded approach to tasks."

Even when conditions change, Denissiouk emphasises that IBA Group always fulfils its obligations to the customer. "Profit is not our primary motivation. We strive to build long-term partner relations with our customers. In some cases, we may offer a solution that differs from what the customer initially wanted, because from our experience we see that it will bring better results to the customer in the long run."

Long-term partnerships

As one might expect from a company that began as a joint venture, IBA's preferred working model is one of partnership. This provides many benefits. "For example, it allows for more efficient communication, as there are good connections between IBA and customer's departments and also personal connections between people," comments Denissiouk. "Our joint teams do not need to go through so-called forming and storming phases. They have already made it from the beginning and then work in a performing phase."

Partnership also gives the customer confidence and certainty when executing projects and planning a roadmap. "In some cases, we work together on a project for a third party, which neither our client nor IBA could undertake alone," he adds.

"IBA is a responsible partner. We develop not just according to specs, but with a broader look on the overall solution, raising concerns and suggestions at early project phases. IBA Group has stable teams. Our attrition rate is low, enabling us to keep the expertise within company. We have a wide portfolio of technologies and tools and therefore can propose the most appropriate solution from an architectural and technical perspective in contrast to a less relevant solution that a company offers only because it has such skills. Our consistent project management is based on PMP practice.

"We welcome new clients to visit us, to find out more about what we can do for them, and eventually become partners."

A full cycle of services

IBA products go through a full cycle of analysis, design, development, implementation, maintenance, and support.

An acknowledged expert in complex multiplatform projects, mainframe software, and legacy systems migration, IBA has a special focus on enterprise applications, including portals, mainframe systems and applications, SAP enterprise resource planning systems, Cloud and Smarter Infrastructure services and solutions, FileNet enterprise content management, and IBM Notes technologies.

Mobility solutions are also developed for smartphone applications running on iOS, Android, and WP operating systems.

"In terms of business intelligence (BI)," says Denissiouk, "We offer development of unified corporate data warehouses, tools to extract, transform, and load data (ETL) in the warehouse, analytical tools for interactive data analysis, dashboards, systems of managerial and prudential reporting, and intelligent and statistical data analysis. Big Data is another area related to BI. IBA Group applies open source technologies for Big Data, including Hadoop, Oozie and Hbase."

IBA also has massive experience in Java EE, .NET, and other enterprise technologies, its first Java project having been implemented in 1996. Denissiouk expands on the benefits: "Java is a cross-platform, which means it can run on different hardware and operating systems. JavaEE supports multiple standards, is easily integrated with many formats and protocols, and contains architecture that incorporates best practices for enterprise applications. These are clusters, distributed transactions, security, and other.

"IBA Group started with JDK 1.0 in 1996. In 1999, a joint team of IBM and IBA developers created the JavaBeans Component Library that won JavaWorld Editor Choice Award. Currently, the IBA's enterprise and web-based systems successfully operate at customers' sites in the United States, Canada, South Africa, Sweden, and Great Britain," concludes Denissiouk.

Greg Penfold