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BMC Software

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Introduction

BMC Software: The Story of An American Company chronicles the rise, evolution, and contemporary significance of a major player in the global information technology sector. Founded in Houston, Texas, at the dawn of the 1980s by three former Shell Oil employees, BMC Software has journeyed from its early, focused roots in mainframe optimization to its role today as a provider of sophisticated, AI-driven IT solutions for enterprises around the world. Over four decades, BMC's journey has mirrored the technological revolutions and market transformations that have shaped the IT industry itself.

In these pages, you will encounter the visionaries who saw opportunity in the inefficiencies of large-scale computing, the entrepreneurs who risked careers and capital to start something new, and the leaders who navigated through cycles of massive change—both inside the company and in the markets it serves. Early success came through a single product, but true staying power required constant innovation and adaptation. From a rapid ascent via the 3270 Optimizer to public markets and global expansion, BMC's history is one of both bold moves and calculated pivots.

But this book's story is not only about milestones and innovations. It is equally about the company's resilience—through leadership changes, industry downturns, and intense competition from giants like IBM and ServiceNow. Strategic acquisitions became central to the company's growth, expanding BMC's offerings and reshaping its culture. Like the broader technology sector, BMC's identity has been forged in the crucible of disruption, requiring reinvention in the face of cloud computing, automation, and artificial intelligence.

Private equity investment introduced a new chapter and new ambitions, as BMC shifted from public scrutiny to private strategy, then back to the brink of IPO consideration. The company's portfolio has broadened dramatically, from mainframe management to cloud-native platforms and robust AI/automation suites. Products like Control-M and BMC Helix now enable enterprises to orchestrate complex digital operations and move at the speed demanded by the modern economy.

Crucially, BMC's story remains unfinished. As it splits into two independent companies and explores future directions—be it another major sale, a return to public markets, or new technological frontiers—the company offers a lens into the challenges and opportunities faced by global IT firms in the 21st century. Its commitment to innovation is matched by an evolving corporate culture that prizes diversity, sustainability, and customer-centricity.

This book explores not only how BMC has survived, but how it has shaped and been shaped by an ever-changing industry. By tracing its history, examining its financial strategies and market presence, and reflecting on its ongoing transformation, we come to understand why BMC Software endures—and why its story matters to the future of technology itself.

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CHAPTER ONE: The Genesis of BMC: Founders and Early Vision

The founding of BMC Software in September 1980 was less a grand pronouncement and more a quiet, calculated move by three individuals who saw an unmet need in the burgeoning world of corporate computing. Scott Boulette, John J. Moores, and Dan Cloer, all having honed their skills at Shell Oil, recognized a significant opportunity amidst the sprawling, often inefficient landscape of IBM mainframe systems that dominated businesses and government at the time. The very name of the company, "BMC," was a direct nod to their collective surnames, a simple and practical choice reflecting their collaborative origin.

John Moores, at 36 years old, stepped into the role of the company's first CEO. His journey to this pivotal moment was rooted in his experiences as a programmer at Shell Oil. During his time there, Moores, who had previously worked as a programmer for IBM and earned degrees from the University of Houston, gained firsthand insight into the bottlenecks and limitations inherent in the software designed for the ubiquitous IBM mainframes. These powerful machines were the workhorses of large organizations, handling immense volumes of data and critical operations. However, the software that ran on them often left much to be desired in terms of efficiency and speed.

Moores's keen eye for these inefficiencies was the spark that ignited BMC Software. He envisioned creating software that could optimize the performance of these mainframe systems, making them run faster and more effectively. This wasn't merely about incremental improvements; it was about addressing fundamental flaws that, if resolved, could translate into significant gains for major corporations. The idea was to compress data streams, thereby accelerating data transmission—a seemingly technical detail that held immense practical value for businesses reliant on these colossal computing systems.

While the initial focus was on mainframe optimization, the broader vision for BMC Software was to become a significant player in the IT management landscape. In its nascent stages, the company operated as a software consulting firm, offering its expertise to the growing IT industry. However, the founders quickly realized that a more impactful path lay in developing their own proprietary software products. This strategic shift from consulting to product development marked a crucial turning point in BMC's early history, setting the stage for its future growth and impact.

The environment in which BMC was founded was ripe for disruption. The late 1970s

and early 1980s saw IBM mainframes at the pinnacle of corporate IT, but even then, there were murmurs of change. The personal computer revolution was on the horizon, threatening to shift the paradigm of computing. Yet, for the time being, mainframes remained indispensable, and any software that could enhance their performance was a valuable commodity. BMC's founders understood this critical juncture, positioning their company to address immediate, pressing needs while laying the groundwork for future adaptability.

The collective experience of Boulette, Moores, and Cloer from Shell Oil was invaluable. They understood the technical intricacies of large enterprise IT environments and the specific challenges faced by companies like Shell. This insider perspective allowed them to pinpoint precise areas where software innovation could make a tangible difference. Their combined backgrounds provided not only the technical acumen but also the business insight necessary to launch a company in a specialized and demanding market.

The decision to base BMC Software in Houston, Texas, was a natural one, given the founders' roots and the city's burgeoning energy industry. Houston, already a hub for oil and gas, was becoming increasingly reliant on sophisticated computing systems, making it an ideal proving ground for a company focused on IT optimization. The founders' familiarity with the energy sector also provided a ready-made initial client base, offering a strategic advantage in their early market penetration.

The early 1980s, therefore, represented a period of quiet but intense activity for BMC Software. It was a time of building—not just software, but a foundation for a company that would eventually span the globe. The vision, born from a programmer's frustration with inefficiency, was clear: to create powerful, effective software solutions that would streamline operations and unlock the full potential of enterprise computing systems. This initial clarity of purpose, coupled with the founders' expertise and the opportune market conditions, set BMC Software on a trajectory for remarkable growth and influence.

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