

## R.J. O'BRIEN

By Mark Nelson and Erik Brown

### **ANALYZING AND FINE-TUNING PERFORMANCE OF A CRITICAL TRADING SYSTEM HELPS R.J. O'BRIEN ENSURE ITS ABILITY TO HANDLE ITS GROWING VOLUME.**

With its key markets growing and trading volumes increasing, R.J. O'Brien wanted to make sure its core order routing system was operating at peak efficiency. Using a blend of custom-built and vendor-provided monitoring tools, West Monroe Partners identified and addressed areas of inefficiency—allowing R.J. O'Brien to double its volume with no processing delays.

#### **R.J. O'BRIEN.**

R.J. O'Brien is a privately owned, diversified Futures Commission Merchant with client assets exceeding \$2 billion. One of the oldest and best-known independent futures brokerage firms in the industry, it is a founding member of the Chicago Mercantile Exchange (CME), Commodity Exchange of New York, and the New York Board of Trade.

R.J. O'Brien offers the latest in order-entry technology, coupled with 24-hour execution and clearing on every futures exchange worldwide. It services a nationwide network of more than 270 introducing brokers and some of the world's largest financial, industrial, and agricultural institutions. Its market position is unique in that it offers clients a trading platform that facilitates futures trading on all electronic and pit-traded markets.

#### **PREPARING NOW FOR GROWTH IN VOLUME.**

With its key markets growing and trading volumes continuing to increase, R.J. O'Brien wanted to ensure that its core order routing system—the business-critical application that accepts orders from customers and exchanges—was operating at peak efficiency and capable of handling the company's expected future growth.

For assistance with analyzing and enhancing system performance, R.J. O'Brien turned to West Monroe Partners. West Monroe Partners offered in-depth knowledge of the trading industry, as well as R.J. O'Brien's operations from past work with the company. Its team members also have extensive experience analyzing and improving system and application performance.

#### **ISOLATING AND ADDRESSING INEFFICIENCY.**

To assess performance and efficiency of R.J. O'Brien's order routing system, West Monroe Partners developed a simple application monitoring utility that measured the speed with which the application processed all major transactions. Based on the utility's output, the team categorized all types of transaction elements—for example, reading a message, writing a message, executing a database transaction, etc. Then, using a customized performance analytics tool, the team was able to identify which elements required the most processing time during periods of peak volume. By isolating these elements and addressing them, the team was able to focus on increasing performance and scalability of R.J. O'Brien's overall trading platform—for example, by making certain queries or elements of code more efficient.

#### **DOUBLING THE TRADING VOLUME, WITH NO DELAYS.**

West Monroe Partners and R.J. O'Brien worked together to implement targeted changes—improvements that paid off within a matter of weeks, when industry events prompted a significant increase in trading volume. Even as the company's volume level broke internal records and nearly doubled that of a year earlier, R.J. O'Brien's trading platform handled the increase without issue.

In addition to enhancing system performance, the work has had an additional benefit. It has provided R.J. O'Brien with a proven software engineering methodology that is enabling the company to better manage quality in its development processes—including documenting, tracking, and managing new releases to internal and external users—while continuing to adapt quickly to market needs.

West Monroe Partners is an international, full-service business and technology consulting firm focused on guiding organizations through projects that fundamentally transform their business. With the experience to create the most ambitious visions as well as the skills to implement the smallest details of our clients' most critical projects, West Monroe Partners is a proven provider of growth and efficiency to large enterprises, as well as more nimble middle-market organizations. Our more than 300 consulting professionals drive better business results by harnessing our collective experience across a range of industries, serving clients out of offices across the United States and Canada.