



Technology



Substantial savings through Test Process Improvement

Company Background

The client is a leading systems integrator providing innovative solutions to assist organizations operating in many industries globally including media, healthcare and the environment. The UK division of the company is divided into business units with a prominent department specializing in digital production and delivery. This division has a world renowned news and media client.

Business Challenge

The news and media company provides rich media to its global customers over different platforms. They had a long term contract with the third party systems integrator to deliver this service, using a combination of the existing IT team and their own staff. During the program of work, the client was experiencing serious issues with delivery into production. The quality of the applications implemented was poor with constant delays.

An internal audit identified the testing function as an area needing major improvement. The internal diagnosis was to double the size of the test team but this would significantly increase costs. The client wanted to understand where they stood in terms of their testing practices and fully assess what improvements could be made first. They believed an independent testing organization would be able to offer this advice and make recommendations to improve the quality and delivery issues.

Solution

The client appointed AppLabs to gauge the maturity of the existing testing processes and advise on improvements with minimal investment. AppLabs were chosen due to their understanding of business issues and the subsequent definition of test processes and solutions that effectively resolve the issues.

AppLabs conducted a Test Process Review, interviewing both business and IT stakeholders on; test organization, organizational test strategy, organizational test process, project test process and methodology, test and environment management and testing review and optimization. The baseline for measurement is AppLabs' Delivery Method, which covers a complete end to end testing process.

The level of testing maturity within the overall program was 11% - a good target score would be in the region of 75%. Once the baseline had been taken, AppLabs proposed a series of improvements to resolve the issues. The client

approved the recommended changes, employing AppLabs to implement them. 3 of the key recommendations were;

- ▶ Restructuring the test team and their responsibilities; the test manager began to really focus on the management of testing, working closely with business and IT leaders;
- ▶ Implementing tighter scheduling of test packs; test packs were assessed to understand the duration of execution. The overall test schedule then incorporated them with project milestones, and deliverables were attached to them;
- ▶ Introducing Risk Based testing; AppLabs implemented a risk-based approach to the order in which test plans were executed. Areas with most risk were focused on so severity one defects were identified earlier.

AppLabs devised a comprehensive 2 month implementation plan, whilst still focusing on program delivery. Excellent relationship management ensured a successful roll out of the plan, that the program delivered on-time and the quality issues were eradicated.

Key Benefits

AppLabs conducted a second review 6 months after the first to assess the improvements that had been realized. Below are some of the successes:

- ▶ There was a four fold improvement in testing practices – testing maturity of the program was now 47% compared to 11% and further recommendations continue to be implemented;
- ▶ AppLabs delivered all improvements within budgetary constraints; the proposed 100% increase in team size was unnecessary due to improved efficiency – a projected saving of £145,000 over 2 months;
- ▶ A review of the change management processes led to clear distinction between code change management and environment change management. For example, AppLabs put the developers' PCs under change control, reducing the number of instances of builds failing on site from 3 to zero;
- ▶ The time to complete each test cycle was reduced from 180 working days to 54 – a 70% reduction. The team was downsized post implementation meaning actual cost savings of around £55,000 per test cycle.