Hewlett Packard Enterprise

Case Study

Grupo Romero

Grupo Romero improves applications with HPE ALM solution

Peruvian conglomerate uses HPE solutions to transform its quality control practices

Objective
Raise the quality of testing standards and guarantee the efficacy of in-house business applications

Approach
Implement HPE's Application Lifecycle Management (ALM) software to build a central, unified source of information, standardize processes, and reduce error rates

IT Matters
- Almost 1,200 detected defects, of which 454 are critical (impact on business) and 98 are blockers (hinder other business processes)
- Critical application failures and number of support tickets reduced by approximately 5 percent
- Time it takes to resolve a defect reduced by 20 percent
- Duration of quality testing process reduced by 15 percent

Business Matters
- Software design, development, testing, and deployment all facilitated in a cohesive environment
- New system is a model for transforming the entire application lifecycle management and testing environment that supports the group's business strategy
- Central repository of intellectual capital reduces redundancies and frees up resources
- Workflows accelerated across the enterprise, increasing efficiency and adding business value
- End-user satisfaction guaranteed and business continuity ensured in a context of ongoing global expansion

Grupo Romero is a transnational, multi-sector conglomerate operating across the Americas. Founded in 1874, the company is Peru's largest family-owned group, with revenues of US $5.3 billion in 2013—close to 3 percent of the country's gross domestic product for the same year. Grupo Romero adopted HPE Application Lifecycle Management (ALM) software to improve application quality, standardize and automate testing processes, aid in the early detection of defects, and safeguard mission-critical applications while supporting business growth.

Challenge

Grupo Romero comprises many parent companies with specialized operations in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, and parts of Central America. Each of the companies include multiple branches, subsidiaries, partners, and joint ventures, all focused on different industries.

"We stopped solving problems as they came and started thinking in terms of long-term and enterprise-wide solutions. We went from reactively solving a specific department's problem at a specific moment in time to proactively ideating and structuring the solutions that we know best fit the group's business objectives."

– Fidel Medina-Guevara, Head of the Software Quality Control Practice, Corporate Technology Division, Grupo Romero

Among the most important of these parent companies are Alicorp (agrifood and consumer goods), Primax (oil and gas), Caña Brava (biofuels), and Ransa (transport and logistics).

Improving and rationalizing processes
Growth and transformation are driving characteristics of Grupo Romero. Every time it brings a new entity into the fold, new IT challenges arise—the absorbed systems must be dismantled and rearranged to conform to the operational standards used throughout the conglomerate. Similarly, every time the group adds a new industry to its range of activities, new software solutions must be designed so teams can operate as quickly and efficiently as possible.

The Corporate Technology Division is in charge of developing and implementing these and many other shared services across Grupo Romero. More than 500 people ensure shared services—including servers, networks, and databases—remain uninterrupted throughout the business. Fidel Medina-Guevara leads the Software Quality Control Practice within the division, a team of 20 software engineers responsible for maintaining 127 internal applications and around 400 technology projects a year, including new applications developed from scratch as well as improvements to previous iterations.

"The quality control process we had in place was largely manual and far from being optimized for such a large and complex group," recalls Medina-Guevara. "Especially considering the fact that the volume of projects and the pace at which they need to be completed will only keep on growing. It was urgent for us to find a tool that would rationalize, standardize, and automate the process."

Solution

Choosing the right solution for the right job
In May 2014, when the Software Quality Control Practice was only two months old, Medina-Guevara worked with Tsoft, a long-time HPE partner in Latin America, to determine which of HPE's available application lifecycle management solutions would best fit his team's requirements.

We are a highly solicited team within the group, and as such we are expected to constantly adapt our capacities to the group's many objectives and priorities," Medina-Guevara emphasizes. To achieve this, Medina-Guevara envisioned a centralized quality control system that could reassess and reorganize its processes every six months, to make sure it was still in line with evolving business demands.

"After many discussions with Fidel, I knew that the ALM solution corresponded exactly to what he was looking for," says Raul Blas-Alva, Product and Delivery Manager at Tsoft. "It has all the robust features that meet Grupo Romero's current needs, and at the same time is flexible enough to evolve along with future projects, no matter how big or complex they may become."

Empowering the team through tailor-made training
Although this adaptability was paramount, Medina-Guevara also needed a cost-efficient solution that would allow him to take full control of the new and improved processes. "My long-term vision required much more than just flexibility," he explains. "I also wanted the solution to make the team as autonomous as possible, to not tie it down with vendors and providers who charge extra for features or tweaks, and in the end are much more expensive than intended."

Tsoft created a tailor-made implementation plan that included thorough training and capacity-building sessions. "HPE was the only solution that allowed the entire Software Quality Control Practice to become highly proficient in using ALM's features," says Medina-Guevara. "We were empowered in more ways than expected. We are not only capable of modifying features and components on our own, we can also train new members of the team ourselves, making our entire division faster, more efficient, and much more responsive than before."

Supported by Tsoft, in August 2014 the Software Quality Control Practice completed its four-month implementation journey with HPE ALM version 11, and was quickly able to start tackling current challenges and designing future strategies.

Benefits

Benefiting from localized support
One of the first benefits the ALM solution brought to Medina-Guevara's team was HPE's solid network of product specialists in Peru. "I explored many other options, such as New Zealand's Enterprise Tester, but they did not have much of a local presence," he says. "I was looking for more than just a provider. I wanted a strategic partner that would help us grow in a direction that we defined together, which meant having someone just around the corner."

The importance of a local presence able to deliver quick, around-the-clock support was immediately felt in the initial stages of the ALM implementation process. "We embarked on this transformation journey with many doubts and questions," notes Medina-Guevara. "It was important for us to know that we could count on a partner that had a reliable local presence and reputable global expertise on quality control solutions."

Standardizing the development process
The implementation also consolidated the essential role of the Software Quality Control Practice in the software development process. "Before ALM, our team was not part of any internal conversations," Medina-Guevara says. "Other departments called us and told us what they wanted fixed or created, but they never shared why they wanted it done, or asked if there was a better way to reach the same goal. We were basically fixing other people's errors and following inefficient processes that tied up our limited resources."

By implementing an application lifecycle management system that is capable of rationalizing each and every step of the software development process based on specific needs, schedules, and objectives, the Software Quality Control Practice has made it standard procedure for its software specialists to be involved in the software development process from the outset.

"This may not seem like an important benefit, but ALM's standardized and streamlined processes helped us take charge of our area of expertise," notes Medina-Guevara. "We stopped solving problems as they came and started thinking in terms of long-term and enterprise-wide solutions. We went from reactively solving a specific department's problem at a specific moment in time to proactively ideating and structuring the solutions that we know best fit the group's business objectives."

Medina-Guevara estimates that his team is now involved in more than 80 percent of all application development processes, a figure that is set to reach 100 percent in early 2016 as internal stakeholders see the value of a more business-oriented development process.

Improving products and reducing errors
Another key benefit is a significant reduction of the number of errors and defects reported back to Medina-Guevara's team. He estimates that the number of support tickets has decreased by approximately 5 percent, and that his team can find the root cause of errors 20 percent faster than before.

Case study
Grupo Romero

Industry
Diversified conglomerate

Customer at a glance

Software
- HPE Application Lifecycle Management

This is because ALM archives, indexes, and centralizes the various quality tests that applications undergo before they can be finalized and sent to users. "Before ALM, we did things the old-fashioned way," Medina-Guevara explains. "We had no way of properly keeping track of the many changes, updates, or iterations that an application had gone through over the years. There was no way of knowing if we were making unnecessary tweaks or redundant enhancements, or if there was a better way of doing them."

Today, the team can keep track of every single change along the way. This allows them to spend time and resources on more innovative or business-critical tasks, while guaranteeing that end-users receive a product that has passed a rigorous and meticulous quality-testing process.

"Before, the quality tests were conducted with a number of worst-case scenarios in mind, which led us to rely largely on the experience of the development analyst," says Medina-Guevara. "But now each component goes through an evidence-based testing process that measures the actual efficiency of a feature against its functional specifications. The control we have gained over our processes allows me to personally vouch for the quality of the product we deliver and the process that led to its creation."

Building a central repository of intellectual capital

The ALM solution also helped the Software Quality Control Practice consolidate its knowledge base into a usable source of information. "Before ALM, we were leaking valuable knowledge," adds Medina-Guevara. "No matter how efficient we tried to be, the tests and improvements we made on applications were seen by a very limited number of people, perhaps five people within a department or even just the designated project manager. So whenever teams and departments went through internal changes, we lost critical information."

Thanks to ALM, the Software Quality Control Practice can now keep track of applications, including previous versions and intended business functions. Most importantly, this knowledge is archived and indexed independently of changes that may occur in other departments within the group.

"Even better, we now have the ability to effortlessly duplicate successful applications and recreate their success by adapting them to other purposes in other areas," says Medina-Guevara. By his estimate, some 30 percent of the archived materials are being reused in newer applications, a figure that will increase as the group's activities expand globally.

Preparing for growth

Grupo Romero is set to extend its operations into Mexico, Puerto Rico, Thailand, and beyond. Medina-Guevara is confident that his team will be able to handle the transformations brought about by these expansion plans.

"Thanks to quality control now being a priority in all business areas, my team will be able to grow to 35 permanent members in 2016," he says. "The only reason this will be possible is the fact that the improvements brought on by the ALM solution these past three years have allowed us to take part in many more projects and processes across the group."

Medina-Guevara will also look for a way to automate his team's current quality control processes, to further accelerate testing mechanisms, and reduce time-to-market. "I am currently studying the various features and advantages of HPE Business Process Monitor (BPM), HPE Business Process Testing (BPT), and HPE LoadRunner, to keep on growing my planning, testing, and implementation capabilities."

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