

ODC for a PPM Product Company

Client: Provider of Enterprise PPM Solutions
Location: USA

Client Description

The client is a leading provider of project and portfolio management software that enables Fortune 1000 companies to efficiently manage, source and deliver professional services for major projects and initiatives.

The client had introduced a program management product in 1987 to help Aerospace & Defense (A&D) organizations manage complex programs. The product quickly established itself as the industry leading program management solution and is now used by global companies such as Lockheed Martin, Boeing, Raytheon, Hughes, General Dynamics, and Northrop Grumman.

The product has a comprehensive Work Breakdown Structure (WBS)-based client-server system for integrating proposals, cost estimating, and program management. It meets all government proposal/reporting requirements and enables an organization to respond to the most complex RFPs quickly and effectively. It allows overall management of multiple programs from start to finish. It is flexible enough to perform efficiently as a single-user system or on a multi-user network.

Business Need

The flagship product was a DOS-based product. Due to technology changes, the customers using this product were demanding a Windows-based product. In order to retain its installed base, the client decided to initiate a major product renovation initiative and re-engineer the product to newer technologies. This would require a pool of engineers proficient in these technologies and made available within a short time frame.

Solution Offered

Blue Star Infotech (BSI), at that juncture, was offering consulting services to the client. After understanding their needs and based on the product's future directions and market potential, BSI recommended setting up of a dedicated Offshore Development Center that would:

- Be set up based on the client's needs
- Be staffed with the required technical and domain capabilities
- Leverage BSI's cross-platform skills and process maturity
- Provide flexible resource capacities

The ODC first re-engineered the product to a Windows platform. Subsequently, it has worked on various releases, provided customization, localization

implementation, re-engineering and migration services, been responsible for multiple releases, provided independent testing services, been engaged in new product development and provided innovative technology solutions to ensure that the product would retain its position amongst competing products. The client is currently positioned as a Visionary in Gartner's Magic Quadrant.

The ODC and the client's team have tailored BSI's quality processes to form custom processes. The ODC teams operate such that there is an overlap with the client team and ensure that interoperability issues are kept to the minimum.

Product development is undertaken from 3 locations spread in US and India. To achieve greater co-ordination, the ODC initiated the use of Source Offsite for remote configuration management.

The ODC team had to have specific development expertise using the MS Office and MS Project interfaces as this product integrated with these MS products. BSI, at its cost, trained the ODC team members comprehensively on these technologies.

Re-engineering:

This was carried out in a collaborative mode. Key members from the ODC were deputed to the client's development center to work on the architecture and key modules. Following phases formed part of the Version 2.0 release:

- Re-engineering the user interface using Visual C++ 5.0
- Object Oriented Design and Development
- Porting the Reports, Import/Export and Process modules to Visual Basic 5.0
- Creating Active X DLLs of the above modules to be called from the Visual C++ interface
- Formatting the Report modules for presenting in a customized Report Viewer

Maintenance & enhancements:

The ODC carried out the proposed enhancements for Version 2.2. Following phases formed part of this release:

- New feature development using OOAD principles
- Replication of reported defects and fixing
- Regression testing using an Automation Tool-SQA Robot
- Certification testing on WIN 95/98 and NT operating systems

Regression Testing and Benchmarking:

The ODC carries out regression testing, stabilization and product benchmarking for almost all the releases of the product. Testing is performed using SQA Robot. A common benchmark repository is maintained between the onsite and offshore teams so that there are no redundancies in the testing process. BSI carries out regression testing in case of defect fixes done by offshore as well as onsite teams.

New Product Development:

In keeping pace with the new and evolving technologies, the client decided that the next version of the product would be using the .Net technology. The ODC team worked with the client product team in developing the new architecture as well as in designing the first version of the Smart client product.

The development methodologies included traditional, Iterative and Scrum. Within Scrum, the sprints are 30-day cycles.

The ODC has to access machines that are present in the client's network domain. This is mainly for the following purposes:

- All offshore teams check in the source code, which is located and maintained at client's end, using Subversion and Source Offsite.
- The offshore Quality Control team performs the testing on test servers set up at the client end.
- The stabilization team needs to analyze critical customer issues on end customer's datasets, which are very huge.

The ODC accesses machines in the client's network domain using 'Firepass' VPN client. BSI has a high-speed broadband setup at its offshore facilities so as to ensure continuous and high-speed connectivity for the offshore team. This has ensured uninterrupted access for the ODC and ensured zero loss of productivity.

BSI has implemented policies and measures to ensure information security in the ODC and IPR protection. Since its inception in 1997, there has not been a single concern raised by the client related to security and leakage of data/information.

TECHNOLOGY

- Windows 95/98/2K/XP/NT/2000
- VC++ 5.0 /COM, C#, VB.NET, VC++, VB, ASP, HTML/DHTML, XML/XSLT, SQL Server 2000, Oracle 8i/9i, MS Analysis Services, SOAP, Web Services Extensions, Microsoft Application Blocks
- Cognos, OLAP, Active Reports, Crystal Reports
- Microsoft Project 98/2000, Microsoft Project Server 2000/2003, Microsoft Excel, Microsoft PowerPoint
- Microsoft Visual SourceSafe, Source Offsite, Subversion
- Btrieve 6.5, Sybase, SQL*Server, Oracle

Benefits to Client

- Reduced time-to-market for every product release
- Constant improvement in quality processes resulting in fewer number of defects and rework effort
- Leverage provided by the time zone differences
- 42% of tasks delivered ahead of schedule
- 95% utilization on an average
- Significantly lower costs of development and support
- Flexible capacity model

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