Ameritas

Silk Test eliminates manual testing effort and increases testing coverage from 35 to 80 percent, delivering higher quality software.

Overview
Ameritas continuously strives to help customers enjoy life at its very best by reducing uncertainty, helping grow assets, and protecting what is most cherished. Backed by a foundation of financial strength, Ameritas offers a competitive array of insurance, employee benefits and financial products and services.

Challenge
Between 5,000 and 7,000 field agents throughout the USA, use Ameritas illustration software to promote and sell one of 60+ Ameritas life insurance products. With at least four releases per year for each product, the Ameritas Quality Assurance (QA) team has to stay on top of the software testing associated with this. Jack Williams, Software Analyst with the QA team, explains the challenge further: "Our software testing was a primarily manual effort. Every product will have between 70 and 150 test cases. With that amount of input, it took our team of four up to three days to test and validate the system. We often just do not have the time for this and end up just testing the new changes. On average, we cover approximately 35 percent of the application with our testing processes, due to time constraints and the complexity of the system."

As a result of this limited testing effort, things would inevitably go wrong and field agents regularly reported system errors that should have been picked up during application testing. Regression testing was a real issue and the Ameritas support team would receive fault reports for items that had not posed a problem before some other changes were made. Regression testing would have given them early warning on these so that they can be fixed before they affect field agents. It became clear to Ameritas that automated testing support could really make a difference in the quality of the software they deliver to field agents.

"A full regression test includes 4-5,000 test cases. It was just impossible for us to do this manually. With our Silk Test structured testing framework we now cover 80 percent of our solution, instead of just 35 percent that we were covering before."

JACK WILLIAMS
Software Analyst
Ameritas

At a Glance

■ **Industry**
Financial Services

■ **Location**
United States

■ **Challenge**
Eliminate the manual testing effort that was covering approximately 35 percent of a life insurance illustration solution. The process was time-consuming and error-prone, and full regression testing was needed to ensure a higher quality solution.

■ **Products and Services**
Micro Focus Silk Test

■ **Results**
+ Improved application test coverage from 35 to 80 percent
+ Automated test case entry means testing is executed in three hours instead of three days
+ Higher quality solution – reduced number of issues and complaints
+ Full regression testing included in automated testing framework

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Solution

Eliminating the speed and quality compromise, Micro Focus Silk Test enables customers to maintain rigorous quality standards while accelerating application testing. Williams was familiar with Silk Test, and included it in an evaluation of other available automated testing solutions. The quality of the Micro Focus online support and customer forums soon won the team over and meant that getting up to speed with Silk Test was easy. It became a key part of the Ameritas software development lifecycle.

Williams comments on the day-to-day use of the solution: "We're creating tests scripts that will test previous changes to the system, in the context of any new changes. Whereas the manual process to enter 100 test cases with over 100 inputs each would take us up to three days, using Silk Test to automate the test case entry process, it now takes us a couple of hours."

With the time saved, the QA team can do additional testing on other aspects of the system. Silk Test Workbench allows automation testing on a visual level as well as using .NET as scripting language and Williams appreciates how versatile this makes Silk Test: "I like using the coding aspect of Silk Test. I can easily create object maps within our application and discover how Silk Test interacts with our application code, using the .NET modules."

Results

The software release cycle has not changed, but because application testing is so much quicker, Ameritas can now test far more robustly and with greater depth and breadth, across the desktop and web application estate. Williams elaborates: "A full regression test includes 4-5,000 test cases. It was just impossible for us to do this manually. With our Silk Test structured testing framework we now cover 80 percent of our solution, instead of just 35 percent that we were covering before. The more we test, the more we are able to identify and fix any issues before we release the solution intro production. This means a higher quality software product for our field agents and sales teams to work with."

He concludes: "The time we save with manual testing is now spent on testing all aspects of our system, including comprehensive and full regression testing. Although we do not track this specifically, since our Silk Test implementation, I have personally noticed a marked reduction in support cases and complaints from our field agents. Our end users are happy with our solution and we are very pleased with the support received from Micro Focus on this journey."

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