

Die Mobiliar

Die Mobiliar improves quality with Agile software development via Micro Focus® Agile Manager.

Overview

Multi-line insurer Die Mobiliar employs around 4,350 people and had premium volumes of 3,474 billion Swiss Francs as of 31 December 2014. Its 78 general agencies across 160 offices have their own claims services and underwrite policies for close to 1.7 million customers.

Challenge

In Switzerland, one third of households and more than one in three businesses hold insurance policies with Die Mobiliar, the country's oldest private insurer. This amounts to nearly 1.7 million customers putting their trust in the company each day. It provides a comprehensive

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CHRISTIAN THOMAS

Test Specialist
Die Mobiliar

range of insurance and pension solutions as well as consultation and other services. Short processing times are key when it comes to dealing with claims.

“For us, it is incredibly important that the software applications we provide to our employees internally, and increasingly to our customers over the internet, always work smoothly. Ensuring that these applications are of the highest quality is therefore enormously important,” explains Christian Thomas, test specialist at Die Mobiliar.

And the pressure on the company's software developers is increasing: the business requires new applications, functionalities, updates and patches to be released in ever shorter cycles. “We are currently accelerating the rate at which we introduce products throughout the entire company – the only way we can do this is with Agile software development, which is why it is now standard here,” says Elisabeth Marbacher, test specialist, Die Mobiliar. “Our objective in the test management area is to implement software updates quickly and securely while spending less time on testing.”

Die Mobiliar has been using Agile software development methodologies for individual projects for some time. However, tests were often managed using Excel tables and handwritten notes on task boards. Although some project managers were using software tools for certain projects, there was no consistency.



Die Mobiliar
Versicherungen & Vorsorge

At a Glance

■ Industry

Financial Services

■ Location

Switzerland

■ Challenge

Ensure software applications for employees internally, and increasingly to customers always work smoothly.

■ Solution

Introduced Agile Manager, a standard tool for Agile software development and quality assurance.

■ Results

- + Ease of use enables employees to quickly adapt to new Agile software development and testing methods.
- + Integration of Agile methodology provides a high level of software development transparency.
- + New applications, functionalities, updates and patches are released faster.
- + Complete overview of projects enables IT resources to be assigned more efficiently during testing.

Neither of these solutions were suitable for use on a company-wide basis as, according to the two test specialists, there was a distinct lack of transparency regarding the quality of the software and the status of the individual projects.

Solution

Die Mobiliar decided to introduce a standard tool for Agile software development and quality assurance. The insurer took a number of tools into consideration and pilot projects were launched to assess them. The final decision was eventually made in favour of Micro Focus Agile Manager.

"The thing that clinched it for Agile Manager was that we were able to integrate the software seamlessly with Micro Focus Application Lifecycle Management (ALM) software, which we had been using successfully for many years," explains Thomas. "This means that we can synchronize the requirements management section including test coverage, implementation status and error management records, from ALM, with Agile Manager. This gives us a very high level of transparency."

Another benefit was that Agile Manager could be installed on site at the company. A cloud-based solution was not appropriate for Die Mobiliar due to its strict security policies. "The final reason behind our decision was the excellent support provided by Professional Services during the introduction of Agile Manager," says Thomas. "At the time, the tool was relatively new to the market, and we had only just begun working with Agile testing methods. So the help we received from the Professional Services team was invaluable."

This goes for both the feedback and the requests that Die Mobiliar made of the Agile Manager developers: "I suppose you could say that our relationship with Hewlett Packard Enterprise (now part of Micro Focus) has been very Agile," says Marbacher, happily. "We always get a quick, clear response as to how a function we request is coming along and they can often tell us if it will be included in the next release."

Nearly all of Die Mobiliar's software development projects are now using Agile Manager. Regardless of whether the team are carrying out load, performance, integration, system or release tests, it brings all of the data together.

Results

Within just a few months, the number of users has grown from 20 to 250. Marbacher and Thomas predict that considerably more users will be working with the software in future as part of the conversion to concurrent user licenses, and the fact that more and more departments within the company are moving towards Agile methods of working. As well as the testers and people in normal Agile roles, this also includes project managers who monitor the Agile software projects with Agile Manager.

"The pensions department has already set itself the ambitious target of developing 100% of its projects using Agile methodologies within two years," says Thomas. "Agile Manager helps our colleagues who are not yet familiar using the Agile methodology to carry out their tests in a more structured way," he continues.

"And those who are already comfortable working like this have told us that they are now spending less time on testing thanks to Agile Manager, whilst also ensuring higher levels of transparency. For us, the main advantage is that every manager can track the progress of testing activities within software development projects at any time," explains Thomas.

"Agile Manager answers questions like: Which tasks have been completed? Which are still ongoing? Where have new challenges appeared that will require more testing and additional resources?"

In the next few months, Die Mobiliar not only wants to further increase the number of Agile Manager users, it also wants to increase the efficiency of working with the software. To do this, it needs to connect it to its current development environments such as Eclipse, IntellyJ and Microsoft Visual Studio, so that software testers can see all of the tasks assigned to them in a single tool.

"There will definitely be more optimisations like this in the future. Agile Manager and ALM have opened up a lot more options for us," explains Thomas.

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