

Raven Industries

Atlas and Silk Central prove a winning combination to improve team collaboration and product quality.

Overview

Raven was founded in 1956 as a manufacturer of high-altitude research balloons for the American space program to help solve a great challenge in space exploration. Today, working in different business segments, Raven Applied Technology is focused on feeding a growing population by improving agricultural efficiency around the world.

Challenge

Raven Applied Technology products consist of a hardware and software element, each requiring extensive testing before market release. Although hardware testing is crucial, it's the software testing that is time-intensive. Raven follows an agile development process, which includes a continuous testing cycle. New

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Software Test Manager
Raven Applied Technology

features or fixes are born out of requirements from within Raven and its customer base. They are developed and then tested before release.

Ellen Arens, Software Test Manager for Raven Applied Technology, explains how requirements were captured: "It was a bit of a nightmare really; requirements could come in via email, instant message, captured in Word or Excel documents, and saved onto any of the several drives which were in use in the organization. It was clear to us that this situation was not sustainable and we looked for an intuitive and easy to use tool so that we wouldn't need to spend much time on training. We also wanted a maintenance-light solution which would be flexible enough to tailor to our needs."

Solution

When Micro Focus came in to discuss Atlas and Silk Central, it was like a lightbulb went on. Silk Central is an open platform that facilitates collaboration and establishes traceability by integrating requirements with test case automation. Atlas simplifies requirements capture, management, and tracking so teams can respond with agility to shifting business priorities. Arens: "Silk Central was an immediate 'must-have' for us. We could see so much potential to improve and when we realized Atlas and Silk Central were closely integrated, our decision was made."



At a Glance

- **Industry**
Manufacturing
- **Location**
USA
- **Challenge**
Facilitate a better way of capturing and tracking requirements through an agile development and testing cycle. Raven wanted to collaborate more efficiently and take advantage of test case reuse to cover common product functionality in different projects.
- **Products and Services**
Micro Focus Atlas
Micro Focus Silk Central
- **Success Highlights**
 - + Improved collaboration between development and test teams
 - + Shortened development time
 - + Improved final product quality
 - + Saved time through test case reuse

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Soon, requirements were captured, prioritized, and tracked through development in Atlas, before moving to Silk Central to be included in test cases before general release. Arens explains how this process saves time: “With Silk Central we can easily pick and choose test cases which are relevant to the code changes we’ve made. We don’t always need to run full regression tests but instead can focus on the specific code items which are affected by new features we’ve introduced or bugs which have been fixed. We can pull a customized test plan together in five minutes.”

Due to the nature of Raven’s business, test case reuse within Silk Central is proving very useful too. Many of Raven’s products have the same base functionality, but are developed slightly different for different customers and OEMs. Some features may change and the look-and-feel may be different. By synchronizing requirements and reusing test cases across these projects, the 90 percent common functionality can all be covered by the same test cases, thus ensuring consistent quality, in line with ‘the Raven way’. The remaining unique functionality is covered and carefully documented in Atlas and Silk Central.

Results

The integration between the solutions has improved collaboration between development

and the test teams and has meant that testing is now incorporated early on in the development cycle, delivering a higher quality product as a result. Arens: “We shorten development time by creating bugs in Silk Central which gives our developers full context on how they were reported. This helps them recreate and fix them much faster than we could before.”

With geographically dispersed development teams, the combination of Atlas and Silk Central has given Raven an effective central communication and collaboration solution. Anyone can search for requirement titles or find out which projects are affected by requirements, which is a tremendous asset. The discussion tab feature aids collaboration as well, as it tracks exactly what needs to be done, and gives a historic context too.

Raven management like the solution: “The high level visibility of test results in Silk Central has given us a true decision-making support tool.”

Arens has been very impressed by the support received: “The Micro Focus SupportLine is the best I’ve ever used. Not just satisfied with a patch solution, they go the extra mile to find the root cause of any issue we’ve encountered. Their responsive attitude has given us confidence in the products and all the plans we have to move forward with the solutions.”