Telesis
QA & Software Testing Solutions

AGILE DEVELOPMENT CASE STUDY

Narragansett Bay Insurance Company (NBIC), headquartered in Pawtucket, Rhode Island, is a leading specialty underwriter of homeowners' insurance products and services on the Eastern Seaboard, offered through an extensive network of independent agents. In early 2010, CIO Michael Anselmo launched a major technology modernization initiative, called APEX.

In choosing a SaaS platform for APEX, Anselmo explained, "We use leading edge insurance carrier technology to make certain our partners and clients receive the best web-based, self-service portal and agency management integrated insurance processing platform available. APEX provides agents a 360° view of the customer – policy, billing and claims – allowing them to rate, quote and issue policies all within a SaaS environment." Anselmo chose the paperless, web browser-based technology offered by Exigen Insurance Solutions (policy writing, billing and distribution), and BlueWave Technology (claims processing), for their ease-of-use integration, advanced product configurability, and light IT footprint.

Both Exigen and BlueWave use the agile software development process. As NBIC required specialized changes made to the applications to accommodate its state-of-the-art, time-sensitive initiative, Exigen and BlueWave needed to deliver numerous agile sprint versions to accommodate the changes.

In April, 2010, NBIC selected Telesis to be its strategic testing partner – to provide overall line of business test management services, test execution, and automation implementation services – for the Exigen and BlueWave software applications. Telesis was given only three and a half months to complete its work to meet Anselmo's aggressive August 1 go-live date.

Telesis used its TARS proprietary methodology (Telesis Automated Regression Solution) to automate regression testing for both Exigen's and BlueWave's agile user acceptance test environments. With TARS, Telesis designed, configured, and built a turnkey automated regression test solution unique to each application, and delivered each one in less than 8 weeks.

Telesis began by identifying the critical, most used, end-to-end business transaction pathways within the enterprise portfolio for the underwriting, billing and claims applications. The analysis was for the states supported on day one, for all day one transaction types (e.g. quote, new business, etc.) and the coverage types supported (HO3, HO4 etc). Telesis prioritized the business scenarios from an end user's (i.e. independent agent's) standpoint and then NBIC approved and signed off.

The testing scenarios were prioritized using an enterprise risk perspective to (1) assure that the most important, high risk business scenarios were tested prior to production

release, and (2) accomplish as much testing as possible, within the project timelines, so that NBIC could be assured that the major functionalities used by the majority of their book of business were adequately tested. While Telesis built the business scenarios, NBIC's business analysts validated the results.

Telesis then created an automation test architecture using its existing functional test tool licenses, and its proprietary BT3 test management tool. TARS supported the automated test script processing, while minimizing test script coding and significantly reducing future maintenance costs. Durable and reusable automated test scripts were built and reused consistently within the agile development process for both software vendor products. According to John Rafferty, NBIC's SVP of Underwriting, "I have never seen anything like Telesis's regression tools in the industry. They were the key differentiator in the decision to hire Telesis."

In partnership with NBIC, Telesis developed test case templates for use with both the Exigen and BlueWave application automation. Telesis also identified the key fields to be varied to use data parameterization. By minimizing test script volumes, Telesis lowered future test automation maintenance costs. With Telesis's deep insurance expertise, minimal time was required from NBIC's employees, as well.

In the Claims area, for example, Telesis's Director of Automation, Jason LaForte, met with Bob Khosropur, NBIC's Chief Claims Officer, at the outset of the project. Jason interviewed Mr. Khosropur about the BlueWave PipelineClaims testing and data migration requirements. Telesis then developed a test strategy utilizing unique testing tools for NBIC. Additionally, Telesis identified a data migration solution based on the tool set. Mr. Khosropur stated, "LaForte and his team were able to quickly learn the necessary elements of PipelineClaims, then design and execute on the quality assurance testing, as well as full data migration from our legacy system. I am very impressed with the team, the technology and the results."

The last steps were to (1) build/automate as many of the end-to-end test transactions for the Exigen and BlueWave applications as possible, within the tight user acceptance testing (UAT) schedules, (2) execute the test scripts (automated test cases) during UAT, (3) report defects to NBIC, and (4) maintain a testing status dashboard for project status results. NBIC also used Telesis's reports to make acceptance decisions regarding the vendor software packages.

Telesis' automated regression test facility (RTF) was delivered on time, and within budget, including all agile development changes and hot fix deliveries. As more code was added, previously existing objects were regression tested, and changes did not affect their TARS architecture. Meanwhile, Telesis automated the new objects, to make them re-usable as well. Test script volume and coding were kept to a minimum, saving NBIC future maintenance costs. According to Mike Anselmo, NBIC's Chief Information

Officer, "The successful testing of our APEX Initiative depended on Telesis's ability to provide reusable and reliable automation, as well as their thorough understanding of NBIC's business requirements. The Telesis team was very responsive to our needs and easy to work with, as well."

Since the APEX go-live date, NBIC has continued to use Telesis' lab services to expand and enhance the RTF base, and test Exigen and BlueWave version releases for any regression impact from the implementation of new business initiatives (e.g. NBIC adding a new state), policy growth, or the testing of new product enhancements. In addition, Telesis maintains the library of automated test scripts that it created for, and that is owned by, NBIC. Telesis also provides continued design and architecture services, as well as test defect and test status management services. Telesis coordinates its test execution runs to accommodate vendor release schedules and NBIC UAT schedules.

According to Dennis Steckler, a consultant from STA Group that advised NBIC on the APEX project, "Telesis provided thought leadership throughout the engagement. What was surprising to the APEX teams and this consultant was how quickly Patty and Jason and their team were able to pick up the knowledge transfer on day one. Normally, consultants need to digest the client differences for a while before they are able to become effective with the assignment. Not so with Telesis. Within a couple of days, their team was able to determine which automated tool to use for our assignment and began configuring the tool and developing and testing claim scripts within two weeks. This probably saved us a month or more of internal work, and it would not have been nearly as accurate, or as efficient, as Telesis made it for us."