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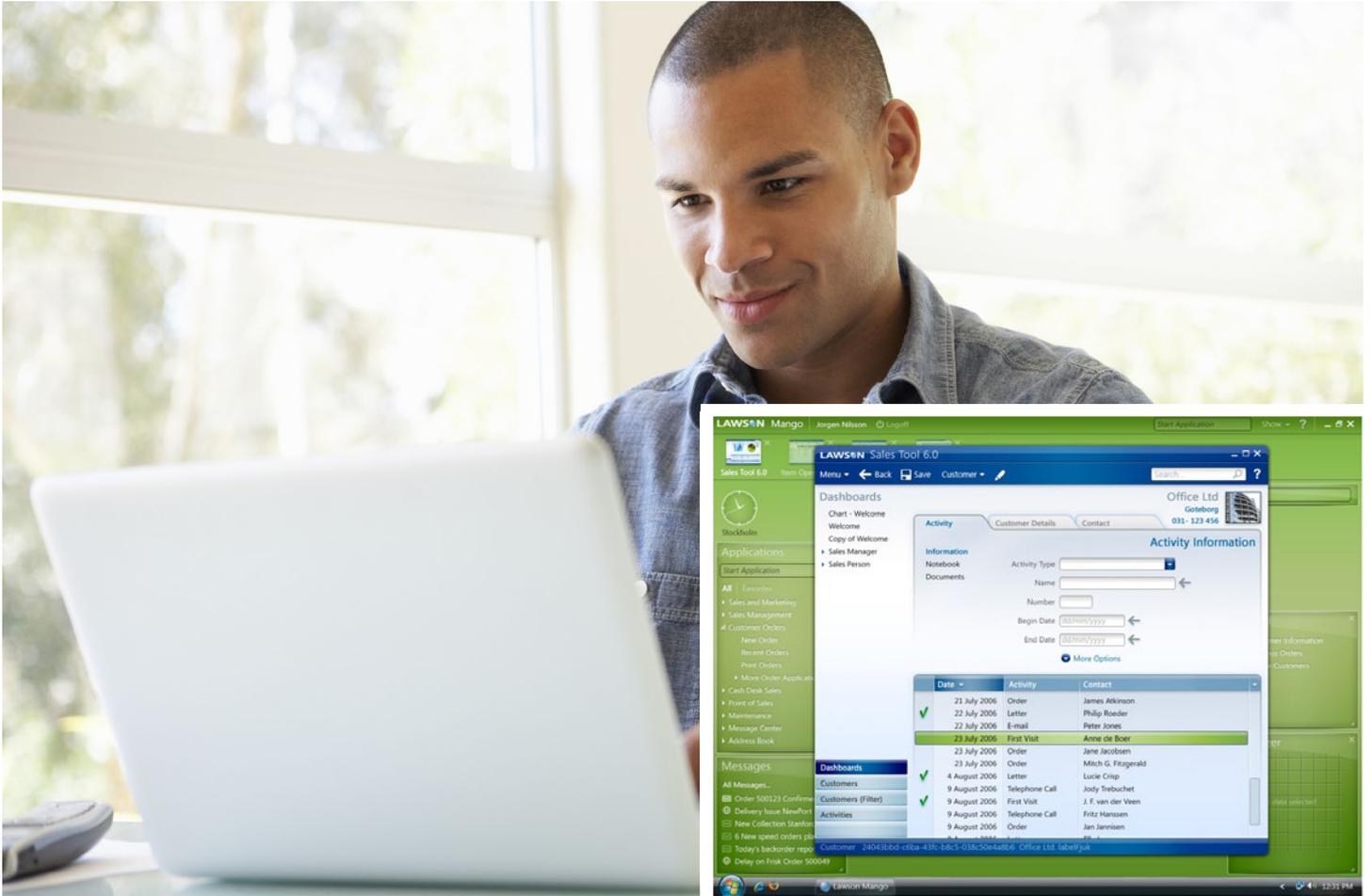
eggPlant quality assurance tool helps Lawson redefine testing processes

Industry:	Information Technology	Revenue:	$750 million
Employees:	3,500	Technology:	eggPlant

"The products we used to use simply didn't support the new future operating systems Lawson was developing for. We figured that if these vendors weren't able to keep ahead of the curve, we'd find a software company that was – that's why we work with TestPlant. It's easy to use and flexible enough to change with development, which is perfect before code cut-off, yet stable enough for automated testing. "

LAWSON™ Mark Frazer, Senior Quality Analyst, Research and Development

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Profile

Lawson is one of the top three enterprise resource planning (ERP) software and solutions providers in the world, serving more than 4,500 customers across 68 countries. It specializes in providing simple, efficient, industry software solutions that meet specific challenges, rather than developing overly complex 'one-size-fits-all' solutions.

By honing industry-focused software, Lawson believes it is able to reduce costs for end-customers, make change management less of an obstacle, and deliver more value. In order to achieve these goals, Lawson must make its software and processes simple, innovative, and accurate, which is why QA automation and software testing has always played a major role in its product development.

Challenges

For Lawson the stability of the products it sends through its doors is of paramount importance. Software packages have consistently been tested as far back as the company's formation in 1975.

Mark Frazer is a Senior Quality Analyst, Research and Development on the Landmark technology development side of Lawson Software. His team of three full-time QA professionals, as well as QA and software testing teams works across the application development side of the business.

"My team is involved with developing future products for Lawson. This means we're always aware of compatibility, interoperability and integrations with new and emerging operating systems, applications and mobile devices many of which are still in Beta themselves," says Frazer. "We needed a powerful software testing solution that comprehensively supported these cutting edge products, yet was mobile enough to turn on a dime."

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Understandably, the ability to test in conjunction with Beta software from major vendors was an important criterion in the company's search for a replacement solution. Until he learned about eggPlant, Frazer had used a range of other software testing tools including IBM's Rational Functional Tester, as well as Mercury QTP, which is now known as HP QuickTest Professional.

"The products we used to use simply didn't support the new operating systems Lawson was developing for," Frazer explains. "We figured that if these vendors weren't able to keep ahead of the curve, we'd find a software company that was - that's why we work with TestPlant."

Ease of use was another major consideration for the various teams at Lawson who would be working with the new software testing product on a daily basis. Frazer adds: "We couldn't adopt something that would prove to be so complex that our testing teams would be afraid to touch it because they felt it would just create more headaches for them than solutions."
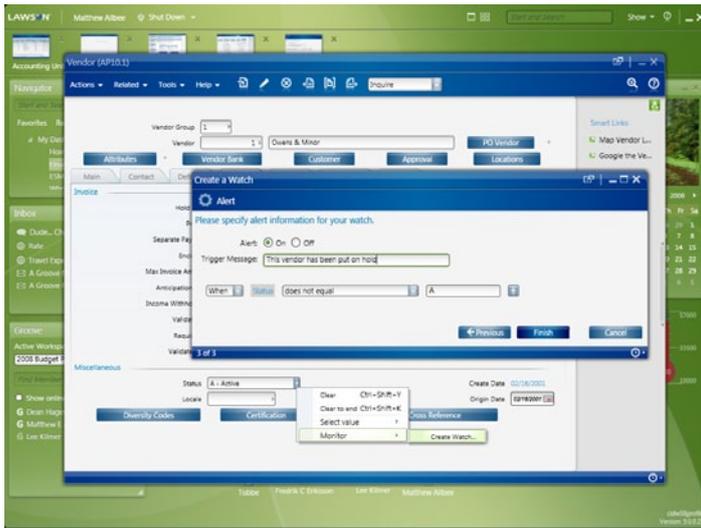

Solutions

Frazer's department at Lawson - Landmark Development - adopted eggPlant as its core QA automation and software testing tool just over two years ago. Frazer was researching a number of potential new products online when he first encountered eggPlant. TestPlant's GUI automation and software testing product was designed specifically for professional software application testers looking for a simpler, more intuitive approach. Other available products can take a long time to learn and aren't sufficiently flexible to adapt to the fast-moving software development requirements of a firm like Lawson. eggPlant's popularity has since spread out from Landmark Development into application departments, and they are also looking to add more licenses. It is not only the QAs who are benefitting from eggPlant; Lawson's developers and architects are starting to see the value that eggPlant provides too, which is a significant achievement.

"Although it was of key importance to us, I discovered that a lot of the best known testing software out there still didn't support Beta products. That would have been an impossible situation for us because, for example, when Microsoft announces its intention to launch a new operating system, we cannot rely on a vendor that doesn't support the early versions of such an important OS," Frazer says. "In contrast, eggPlant proved to be smart and flexible enough to cope with any versions of any operating system we needed to test with."

Frazer tested several competing products on 30-day trials before selecting eggPlant. When TestPlant's solution worked seamlessly with the software Frazer's team had in development at that time, he quickly decided to stick with it as a winning solution.

"It does what we need it to do simply and efficiently. The scripting that TestPlant has used is particularly nice. The products we used in the past kicked out the information they produced into a spread sheet which we then had to pass over to another team to decipher. With eggPlant the script is easy to read, to understand and to follow. It tells us what to click, which fields to fill in and so on, in an intuitive, step-by-step way. This makes it so much easier for us to hand-off scripts for others to follow without further guidance."

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Results

Alongside its in-house unit tests, Lawson Landmark Development now relies on eggPlant as the primary User Interface testing package to ensure the quality of its entire range of ERP applications. Teams in a variety of departments responsible for applications focused on HR, Finance, Requisitions, Retail, Procurement, and the other key areas of enterprise resource planning are all at various stages of eggPlant adoption. TestPlant is also relied upon in the testing of the four major graphical interfaces that sit above the comprehensive Lawson Software ERP suite.

"We support all four major Web browsers for our Web UI, both Java and .NET rich client UIs, plus the iPad as well as the major mobile devices, all of which are now run with eggPlant," explains Frazer.

Frazer also confirmed that he and his team are really enjoying working with eggPlant on a daily basis.

"It's just a really easy product to use. We've integrated eggPlant into our in-house automated testing program, so we have tests running 24/7 in my department alone, as well as across the application development side of the business."

eggPlant is now being adopted steadily across Lawson, with multiple licenses recently being bought by teams focused on Procurement, Financial and Human Capital Management applications.

Conclusion

Lawson knows that eggPlant is working well for the company because development teams like Mark Frazer's and now the application teams too, are now able to create a larger number of tests out of the box, and achieve and maintain a greater volume of automated tests with minimal overheads. Ultimately, increased automation allows Lawson's people to be in other places and to do more with less.

As a result, Frazer and his team are enthusiastic about continuing to use eggPlant in the future as well as adopting some of TestPlant's emerging functionality, particularly the optical recognition functionality introduced in eggPlant version 11: "This will prove a huge success if we can have our test automatically generate tickets for our developers when failures occur. Our game plan is to have this in place within the next few weeks using OCR," says Frazer.

"We're excited to see any new features which could revolutionise key areas of software testing and open new doors for our teams here at Lawson. In the future we'd also like to see scripts that can run across multiple clients without any tweaks at all. A regular user conference with training sessions on new products and plenty of opportunities for informal networking would also be great."

"I'm really happy with our choice of eggPlant and the phenomenal support we receive from TestPlant. I also think that eggPlant's support group is by far the best software support group I've ever dealt with, so they deserve a huge pat on the back" Frazer concludes. "I can see people here at Lawson using this technology for many years to come."

About TestPlant
TestPlant is the developer of eggPlant, the leading image based test automation tool. eggPlant tests any system, validates any platform, and automates any process.

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