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Case Study

US restaurant giant achieves $50,000 in time-savings in first year of test automation with eggPlant Functional

Quick service operator automates 2,000 manual testing hours to drive software quality improvements

Profile

TestPlant's customer is one of the United States' leading quick service restaurants. The company and its more than 350 franchise organizations have 6,000 restaurants across the United States that serve more than 40 million customers every week.

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In recent years, the technology landscape in the restaurant sector has grown increasingly more complex. The addition of new hardware and software solutions means it is becoming more challenging for large companies like this to ensure software quality across their organizations, especially as digital transformation takes hold across the industry.

By differentiating on digital services and delivering better user experience (UX), restaurants are looking to stand out from their competitors to increase profitability and market-share. Implementing new technology is part of this, but equally important are the tools and processes needed to support those technologies – whether it involves adopting Agile or DevOps development methodologies or performance and functional testing tools.

Automation identified as key
We spoke to a senior IT manager at the restaurant operator, with responsibility for quality. Until 2015, his team conducted a purely manual software testing program across the company's various IT systems.

"New technologies have quickly taken hold in our business, ranging from hardware systems like self-service point-of-sale kiosks through to our new mobile ordering and payment application," said the IT manager. "In addition, as our technology infrastructure is increasingly being placed in the hands of our users through self-service options and mobile devices, then quality and user experience becomes progressively more important."

"All of this added a significant burden to our manual testing workload, so we decided to explore test automation options that would help us achieve productivity efficiencies in our quality program."

The quality team conducted an extensive review process, looking at several of the leading functional software test automation tools on the market, including eggPlant Functional, Perfecto Mobile, Sikuli, Appium, UFT and Test Complete.

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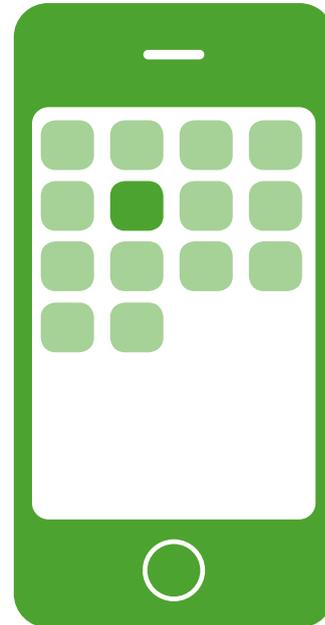
"We were looking for a tool that we could use to conduct end-to-end testing across all our platforms, ranging from iOS and Android testing through to our legacy POS platform," said the IT manager. "Our POS presented a key challenge because it runs on a locked-down version of Windows that does not provide access to object properties that are typically required by automation tools."

eggPlant comes out on top

On completion of its review, the restaurant firm chose eggPlant Functional as the only tool that met all of its testing requirements. eggPlant Functional is TestPlant's functional test automation tool, which uses a patented image-based approach to UI testing that allows it to interact with any device by looking at the screen, in the same way a user does.

"The unique image-recognition engine that allows eggPlant to test any user interface was a key factor, as it meant that we could test everything from our POS terminals to our mobile app using the same tool," said the IT manager. "This set it apart from the other tools in our review."

Implementation

Following its decision to adopt eggPlant Functional as its automation platform, the IT division moved quickly to implement the tool. An initial trial period allowed the quality team to start using the tool to set up some basic scripts, working closely with the support team at TestPlant.

"The service that we have received from our support contacts at TestPlant has been exemplary, and it's been a real differentiator for us to see that their engineering team is genuinely interested in our success," said the IT manager. "My team has found it easy to get up to speed using eggPlant, which is very helpful when it comes to on-boarding, and we've also found the flexibility of the tool to be beneficial in our day to day work."

Results

The restaurant giant has adopted a phased approach to its automation rollout, initially focusing on its mobile pre-ordering and payment app, followed by its back-of-house systems, then its POS terminals and finally the website application. After all of these are completed, the quality team will then automate complete end-to-end testing across all platforms used in a customer journey.

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"To date we have completed our test automation goals for our mobile ordering and payment app, and are currently in the process of automating our back-of-house systems," said the IT manager. "So in less than a year we have already reached around 20% of our planned automation scope."

The impact of test automation has been impressive.

"We have tracked that test automation relating to our mobile app has already saved us about 2,000 man-hours of testing in the first year of using eggPlant," said the IT manager. "This equates to a financial saving of around $50,000. More importantly, this has actually had the benefit of allowing us to spend more time doing exploratory testing, increasing test coverage and improving quality."

As the automation program continues, the restaurant firm expects to see significant savings going forward.

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"We are actually looking to increase the speed of our automation rollout through more eggPlant licenses," said the IT manager. "This will enable us to achieve even better results more quickly, helping improve our time-to-market"

About TestPlant

TestPlant is an international software business based in London. It has development centers in the USA and the UK with sales and support centers in the USA, the UK, Germany, China and Japan as well as an extensive network of business partners. TestPlant's products are used in over 40 countries by well over 350 enterprise customers in sectors which include Financial Services, Automotive, Healthcare and Life Sciences, Media and Entertainment, Retail and Defense and Aerospace. The eggPlant range is a set of tools which supports the design, development, test and management of software applications for mainframe, desktop and mobile use in any technology platform environment. The tools are relevant in agile, mobile, web and DevOps deployments. eggPlant use improves and reports on the quality and responsiveness of software systems, reduces time to market and lowers costs by introducing process automation. The eggPlant tools have been granted patents in the USA and in Europe. TestPlant is a Red Herring Global Top 100 company, a Deloitte UK Technology Fast 50 and EMEA 500 business, a member of the Sunday Times Hiscox Tech Track 100 and is the recipient of three Queen's Awards for Enterprise. The Carlyle Group is a major investor in the company.

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