

# How Midcounties strengthened product differentiation and customer service

The **Midcounties Co-operative**

## Original Software helps improve the quality and speed to market of customer-facing software

Back in Jan 2012, The Midcounties Co-operative had a goal: 100% test coverage on all current business systems and all future software developments. This posed a challenge for QA manager, Alan Massingham. Without a new approach, he estimated that this would require 10 new full-time employees.

### A new way to keep up with rapid growth

The Midcounties Co-operative provides services from childcare to funeral care and in recent years has experienced rapid success and growth. The Energy division, for example, by offering competitive pricing and transparent tariffs, has grown sales 544% over the last year.

But QA manager, Alan Massingham, needed to support growth in any of the organization's various divisions. What's more, it was critical to do so in an efficient and uniform manner. He needed QA technology that would enable Midcounties to implement software faster and with fewer errors, ultimately differentiating Midcounties' products and offering better service to customers.

With Original Software in place, testing productivity has increased 200%.



## The Midcounties Co-operative Story

Largest independent co-operative in the UK. Sales in excess of £1 billion, almost 10,000 employees and 439,000 members.

### The Challenge

As a growing and diversifying co-operative, Midcounties needed to be ready to test in a standard and efficient way for any business line in order to ensure quality, visibility and good communication both within the company and externally.

### Our Solutions

- > Qualify (Test Management)
- > TestDrive Assist (Manual Testing)
- > TestDrive (Test Automation)

### The Benefits

- ✓ Stronger competitive advantage and customer service
- ✓ Software quality right first time, projects delivered on time
- ✓ Improved confidence of business stakeholders
- ✓ More responsive to regulatory authorities

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**Productivity has increased 200%**



## Up and running in 8 weeks

**“Midcounties has driven down costs on QA**

Deployment was smooth with Original Software's people helping out with set-up and training for each of the products: Qualify, the test management solution, and TestDrive-Assist, the manual testing solution. In eight weeks they were up and running.

“One of the main reasons we chose it was because it's a non-technical piece of software. After a few training sessions, everyone felt comfortable using it”, says Massingham.

## The result? Approximately 50 per cent more systems tested

“We've gone from paper and spreadsheet to an automated system. Our people no longer have to sit down in front of a screen and create test cases for each version manually. Nor do they have to reproduce errors manually because the entire session is recorded.”

The result is that Midcounties has driven down costs on QA and is able to test 50% more software than previously.

## A methodology geared for business benefits

Original Software has also helped Midcounties implement a new and more effective way of working.

Previously, Midcounties used a waterfall methodology where the product was delivered at the end of the development process. Now they are moving towards testing in iterations. This has allowed Midcounties to be more responsive to the market and to meet regulatory authorities' demands for traceability.

“The Original Software products are very easy to manipulate to the way you want to work,” Massingham says. “This has allowed us to comply with ISO guidelines, and deliver products to both internal and external customers faster.

For example, one of our T&A systems previously took 10 days to test manually. Now using TestDrive and TestDrive-Assist this can be accomplished in three days.”

**“A new, more effective way of working**

## Confidence in the quality

Original Software's automated regression testing capabilities have enabled Midcounties to lift the quality of their company's business applications.

“Regression testing was key for us because without it you can never be sure there aren't defects,” Massingham says. “There has definitely been an improvement in quality since Original Software. One way we see this is in the decline in incident calls to our service desk for systems exclusively tested using Original”.

With 40% of regression testing now automated, processes have become much more efficient.

**“Decline in incident calls to our service desk**

## Better communications with stakeholders

Now, not only is quality assured, but Midcounties have the visibility they previously lacked. This makes it easier to demonstrate results to project managers and external auditors.

“We work closely with project managers throughout the business software development lifecycle. It's important for us to be able to keep the sponsor of a project up-to-date on how the testing is going -- what percentage is complete, how many defects and so on”, Massingham says.

Original Software makes it easy for Massingham to tailor the reports by audience.

## A path to the future

Whether a one-day task or a three-month project, Midcounties now uses Original Software for all testing - expected to be 24 projects over the coming year. In the future, Massingham plans to use more of the available functionality to make his team even more efficient. The next feature to adopt is resource management.

“Resource management gives us an overview that helps us plan ahead and identify shortfalls of resources - it's a massive advantage.

We chose the Original Software products because they had the flexibility and efficiency we needed. But also because Original Software showed us a path to the future.”

