

Marston's smooths the path for SAP upgrades

Marston's deploys Original Software solutions to reduce the time and cost of ensuring a high quality, low risk SAP upgrade.

Marston's was facing a tricky upgrade of SAP. It would be the responsibility of Judy Doust, Marston's test manager, to ensure the system worked.

The company had a complex SAP environment – comprising the finance, sales, production planning and warehouse management modules – and a mountain of custom development.

But Marston's had no test scripts and IT didn't have a full understanding of how the business used the applications. Faced with this challenging scenario, Judy wondered how she would successfully manage all the testing for this mission critical upgrade in a demanding timescale.



“ I would recommend this as great way to accelerate an upgrade. It keeps costs down, enables business and project people to spend less time in manual validation, and focuses effort on areas of change. It has reduced risk for Marston's.

Phil Court, Head of Information Systems, Marston's



Marston's Story

Marston's PLC, is an independent brewing and retailing business with around 2,100 pubs and bars across Great Britain.

The Challenge

To automate the capture of business processes needed to create high quality tests and provide a test management framework to reduce the risk during SAP upgrades.

Our Solutions

- > Qualify
- > TestDrive-Assist
- > TestDrive

The Benefits

- ✓ Reduced project cost
- ✓ Reduced project time
- ✓ Critical defects eliminated
- ✓ SAP productivity increased
- ✓ Project deadlines met

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Capturing information

Certainly she knew the traditional way of capturing the information needed to create test scripts would be inadequate. To deploy analysts across Marston's sites to record the business processes by taking screen shots and typing up descriptions in Word would simply be too expensive, time consuming and disruptive to users.

It was clear the company needed software solutions to help it **manage and control the testing function**. Having purchased Original Software as the chosen vendor to help satisfy the new Quality Strategy for Marston's back in late 2009, Judy recognised that Original Software was the answer.

No programming

"I'd worked with one of the industry's leading software testing systems before," she explains. "But the problem with most test systems is that you have to employ specialist programmers, which we just couldn't justify. I wanted a solution that was easy to deploy and use."

At an exhibition Judy came across Original Software. After talking to its experts she liked what she saw - the way the software worked and the costs. So Original Software arranged to carry out a proof of concept for SAP. The application under test was Marston's telesales system. **The project was a great success.**

Quick and easy

"Both myself and the colleagues I brought in to evaluate the proof of concept were extremely impressed with Original Software's test management software, Qualify," says Judy. "It's extremely quick and easy to map project methodologies into the system. It's intuitive to use and the ability to hold all documents in a single area is a major benefit. It was exactly what we needed to manage our testing effectively."

However, it was **Original Software's TestDrive-Assist product that was to help Judy with capturing SAP business processes**. "As part of the proof of concept, the consultants from Original Software showed us how we could automatically record transactions and processes from our SAP software. For the SAP Upgrade project, because we had no formal test scripts and were starting from scratch, we could see it would be an extremely powerful way of building a test library."

Recording the users

Capita was contracted to provide and execute a regression pack to test the impending SAP ECC6 upgrade. Judy needed to provide Capita with details of the transactions to be tested, so she immediately set to work using the recording capabilities of TestDrive-Assist.

She carefully chose 100 users to help her capture all the day-to-day, period-end and year-end processes that Marston's used. She remotely installed the software on each user's PC overnight.

"Being able to roll the software out automatically was a major benefit and, as you can imagine, saved a lot of time," says Judy. "With a self-help online demonstration of how to use the software provided to the users, the software

proved very easy for them to understand and use. **Out of 100 users I think I only had about six calls for help.**"

The recordings made by the users were automatically logged in Qualify, where Marston's and Capita were able to see all the screens, inputs and sequences.

“ *The whole exercise went incredibly smoothly. At this stage 60% automation is good, but we actually expect it to be closer to 80% at the conclusion of the project.*

Judy Doust, Test Manager, Marston's PLC

Prepping the scripts

Ben Williams, senior test manager, Capita, picks up the story. "Marston's had over 1,000 transactions fully recorded and ready for when Capita joined the project. Consequently, we could prep the scripts and data in a much more efficient way, because we could see a step by step guide of how the business was using SAP and had screen shots of all the customized screens. It took a lot of ambiguity out of writing the test cases. It also meant we had a data set ready to go."

Capita has now built over 900 test scripts and, significantly, has been able to automate around 60% of them. "The whole exercise went incredibly smoothly," comments Judy. "At this stage 60% automation is good, but we actually expect it to be closer to 80% at the conclusion of the project. The Qualify product gives us real-time visibility on Capita's progress."

Cost reduction

Phil Court, Head of Information Systems, Marston's said: "I would recommend this as a great way to do a technical upgrade." It keeps costs down and allows business and project people to see what was happening before the upgrade and compare it to what is happening after the upgrade.

"This is where Original Software comes into its own as it records SAP transactions and allows you to customize how much of the process is recorded, as well as what is happening on screen and in the background. The result is a more detailed testing of SAP."

Raising quality standards

When the project is complete Judy expects to have a regression pack that can be run every month. "Running the regression pack will help us to ensure the integrity of Marston's SAP systems and lower the risk of business disruption," she says.

However, this is not the only area where Original Software's systems are helping Marston's. "Using Qualify we are building a robust test strategy," explains Judy. "The tools are helping us focus on test evidence and put the quality strategy in place, which will ultimately lead to higher quality standards."

At Marston's at least, the huge cost and disruption of keeping core applications stable and up-to-date has now been dramatically reduced. IT can better support the business, and the business can focus on delivering results.

