

"I believe the key to success with off shore testing or development is the constant communication and getting issues resolved as soon as they occur." James Wang, VP Engineering, TriActive



Rapid Feedback Ensures Offshore Success

Challenges

- Insufficient QA resources
- Development teams growing faster than the QA team
- Major bugs getting through to customers

Solution

- Immediate risk analysis
- Long-term regression testing
- Effective communication from offshore team

Benefits

- Regression management reduced to 15 minutes a day
- Full regression test suite and documentation
- Time to focus on the new product features

Situation

TriActive, a leader in hosted system management applications faced a common challenge. Their development team was stretching QA resources to the limit. Without adequate testing time, undetected bugs in their software were being reported by their customers.

Problem

TriActive's service and development teams were growing, but the QA department was collapsing under a 1:10 developer to QA ratio. Marni Wilhite, the sole QA Engineer, grappled with testing an entire application with expanding new features.

"Even though we kept adding on more developers there was just me as the QA Engineer for the whole system. One person and ten developers doesn't leave much time to write test cases or do any regression testing," she noted.

Pressed for time, Marni abandoned regression testing. Bugs then flew through to her customers' desktops.

"Most of the time we were just doing exploratory testing. It really became a problem. We were having large issues go into production that could have been caught if we had the manpower."

Decision

The TriActive team knew they needed to bring some QA help. A poor experience with a previous outsourced provider made them wary of the risk of working with another offshore team.

"We were hesitant to go with an offshore team. We had done some outsourcing before and it hadn't gone well. The biggest fear was quality and communication. I knew that they were going to be on a different hourly schedule than me."

Marni would not condone diminished product quality. The team that she chose would have to show up with established systems. "We wanted a regression test suite and wanted someone who could provide a long-term approach," she stated.

Solution

TESTCo rapidly defined the top priority TriActive test cases.

"Because we didn't have a regression test suite, we relied on TESTCo to do a risk analysis—They asked a series of focused questions, then quickly narrowed the most important areas for us."

During the project ramp up, Marni coached the offshore team through the learning curve. "At this point it was taking an hour a day to field all of their questions. When reviewing the amount of time it took them to run some of the test cases it appeared to be a bit slower than I would expect even for someone that had not used our service before."

But with the local QA Manager, the offshore team mastered TriActive's application. They returned her feedback with results. By the next day she would see changes based on her requests.

"We provided feedback to our local QA Manager. They were quick to respond to our changes and requests."

Benefits

Marni's investment in time paid off. After the project ramp up, Marni spent less and less time on regression testing.

"The daily process isn't much for me anymore. I get a summary email about the test cases. I go in and spend fifteen minutes a day. Now I can focus on the features for each release. I've incorporated the offshore team's method for writing test cases into what I'm doing as well."

Marni commented on her final assessment. "The offshore team surpassed my expectations. Communication has never been issue."

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