Client Case Study

Defect Prevention

Introduction

The provision of Fund Accounting Administration services is very competitive. Winning new mandates means meeting aggressive timescales and providing enhanced functionality. All this requires streamlined and effective testing which can almost be guaranteed to come under time pressure.

In this case study we look at how SQA assisted a major Provider who had won a new Fund Manager mandate and had committed to delivering a wide range of complex new functionality in a very short timeframe.

The Provider and Fund Manager had been working closely for the previous 8 months agreeing functionality and negotiating the overall terms. Key elements of the contract were that the bulk of the functionality had to be implemented and the funds transitioned over in only a few months. This target presented a steep challenge to the SQA team which would demand an efficient approach.

According to the National Institute of Standards and Technology, between 40% and 50% of a software development budget is spent on avoidable rework that can be traced back to the requirements. At SQA we are very aware of these statistics and look for opportunities to identify such issues early when working with a client. In this project we realised that defect prevention would be a central plank even though development work had started before our arrival on the project.

We initially deployed a couple of our experienced consultants to survey the current state. They discovered BRDs without acceptance criteria and draft test scripts which lacked sufficient detail. The Fund Manager was looking for progress from the Provider and there was a real risk that by the time mobilisation had taken place the target end date would be unattainable

If you would like to discuss this case study please email kenny.laing@sqa-consulting.com

How SQA assisted

Our approach was one of *Defect Prevention* and first we performed static testing of the requirements. Our Fund Accounting SME Consultant was able to analyse the Provider's Business Requirements Documents (BRDs) and identify many omissions, inconsistencies and errors. This undoubtedly avoided much IT rework and retesting effort later on in the project.

Next we decomposed the BRDs into distinct test cases with inputs and expected results. A key element of this activity was the identification of dependencies and reusable test blocks. This analysis significantly reduced testing times as it eliminated duplication and waiting times. The end product was a versatile set of test scripts that was fit for purpose.

Close co-operation with both the Fund Manager and Provider was essential to success. We split our team across both the Fund Manager's and Provider's locations and this ensured good open lines of communication. We agreed with the Fund Manager what their Joint UAT responsibilities would be and ensured that the infrastructure would be there to support it. SQA had the vision to lead from the front which would prove to be pivotal.

During our test planning we set up an estimation model that took into such factors as complexity, environment, and size. From this we were able to identify probable resource requirements and a resource profile for the duration of the test phase. This was essential in order to know when to start the on-boarding process for new testing resources.

Everything was now in place, IT were delivering their developments, SQA had won over the confidence of both the Fund Manager and Provider. Test execution commenced.

Having available the consultants that set up the test plan and test scripts ensured continuity throughout the test phase and this kept delivery on track. Some re-planning was inevitable but the core of the plan remained constant and we were able to on-board additional test resources in line with the plan. The testing phase was delivered on time, within budget and to the desired quality.