Leading Furniture Corporation Refines Testing with Zephyr for JIRA

Software development and testing are becoming a critical need for organizations spanning numerous industries. Regardless of the sector a company belongs to, chances are it will need to retain personnel to write code for projects such as creating mobile apps or webpages. This software must be thoroughly tested to ensure that there are no lingering defects that may prevent users from navigating the program or website. For organizations both large and small, these efforts can be greatly enhanced by incorporating a sophisticated test management system.

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For over 100 years, Badcock Home Furnishings has supplied high-quality furniture to residents in the southeastern United States. Today, the W.S. Badcock Corporation has more than 300 stores spanning eight states and serving a vast number of customers. With an operation of that scale, ensuring that everything from consumer-facing websites to ERP and supply chain management software functions properly is absolutely critical to maintaining a healthy business. In Badcock's case, the organization's in-house, back-end Web applications ran the gamut from accounting and legal to advertising. A major part of that effort was running a reliable software quality assurance team with the ability to identify defects and help correct them without delay.

Spreadsheets present test management challenges

Considering that the Badcock had a rapid release schedule, where the project teams released new updates for as many as a dozen applications every two weeks, they began to feel the growing pains of using a combination of spreadsheets and docs to manage multiple projects in parallel. According to Badcock business analyst Brock Fleming, the organization relied on an Excel spreadsheet to track various aspects of the testing process, including tracking test results. This spreadsheet-based method made it difficult for members across the company to stay in sync on QA progress. Fleming noted that individual analysts and testers often had their own spreadsheets set up, which resulted in various employees viewing different versions of QA activity, files being misplaced and constant searching for testing history.

Transitioning to a more sophisticated solution

To streamline QA efforts and provide greater oversight across the entire software development and testing process, Badcock chose to implement a sophisticated test management system. When searching for the right solution, the company placed a great deal of focus on ease-of-use. An unwieldy platform would not simplify QA processes, only complicate them. Because Badcock already had JIRA in place to support testers, a solution that integrated seamlessly with the software was ideal. Upon running a free 30 day evaluation of Zephyr for JIRA, Badcock officials had found their solution. Going beyond simply integrating with JIRA, Zephyr for JIRA actually runs within the program, offering the exact same look and feel. According to Fleming, the combination of Zephyr for JIRA's integration capabilities, easy-to-use interface and competitive pricing plan added up to an obvious solution.

With Zephyr for JIRA, every relevant member of the QA process, from testers to managers, can view the progress of a given project in the same terms. Misplaced files, multiple versions of the truth and endlessly searching for test assets were eliminated.

"[W]ith Zephyr, it allowed us to have all the stuff in one place," Fleming said. "Now we have an archived version. … [I]t makes searching for old test cases a lot easier. It makes duplicating test cases a lot easier, or coding it. … It pretty much brought organization to an unorganized process."

The advantages of switching to Zephyr for JIRA

Overall, by switching from an unresponsive spreadsheet to a sophisticated test management system, Badcock was able to eliminate many of the issues that frustrated its project team and enhanced and simplified the entire testing process. Fleming noted that the ease-of-use offered by Zephyr for JIRA has freed up a great deal of time for testers that would have otherwise been spent managing spreadsheets. Furthermore, communication and collaboration between developers and testers have been streamlined, reducing the frequency of back-and-forth emails between teams. Ultimately, Zephyr for JIRA has proven to be a major facilitator of saved time and resources for the company, as it has helped address the issues that prevented QA teams from reaching their full potential.

"That saves so much time, just being able to have everything in one place," Fleming said. He added, "[Zephyr for JIRA] makes it a lot easier for us to know when things are ready, to find things, and to overall just organize things a lot better than we previously ever could have."