



Customer Success Story: ATOS Origin

Overview

Atos Origin is an international information technology services company. Its business is turning client vision into results through the application of consulting, systems integration and managed operations. Atos Origin has 47,000 employees in 40 countries with revenues of \$6.5 billion.

Challenge

Reducing change-based defects at a major consumer products company

Enterprise agility and the ability to rapidly adapt to change are integral in today's dynamic business environment. So when one of the world's largest consumer products companies experienced significant defects when modifications were made to its SAP application, experts from the Cincinnati-based Atos Origin consulting and systems integration team were called in to help.

The process in question was accounts payable — a global process comprising many regional deployments, each with variations due to issues such as compliance and cultural differences. Lacking a comprehensive user and systems integration testing methodology, the company did not have an effective way to analyze the potential impact of application changes. As a result, making a change to one region's process ran the risk of adversely impacting another region. For example, an employee in Costa Rica might have added information to the accounts payable system in a field he thought was unused, but in reality that field might have been used in Poland. The change made in Costa Rica would then wreak havoc on the Poland group's accounts payable data.

Andrew Kopp, practice director for Business Process Lifecycle Management at Atos Origin, said the situation his client experienced was similar to those faced by many global organizations. "Businesses frequently struggle with the model of off shoring and the effects of distributing their knowledge base.

Highlights

Business Services,
Consumer Products Manufacturing

Challenge:

- To reduce change-based defects in a SAP implementation for one of the world's largest consumer products companies

Customer Benefits & Results:

- Completely eliminated change-based defects due to insufficient business scenario testing
- Reduced solution delivery life-cycle requirements phase by 30-40%
- Created a comprehensive process asset
- Enabled reuse, facilitated knowledge transfer and empowered process visibility

It's hard to understand a process by reverse engineering your ERP implementation," he said.

After listening to the customer's concerns, Kopp and his team determined the first step in reducing the defects was to understand the business processes. Previously the customer had no central repository for its business processes. Any knowledge and information was scattered across hard drives, in different formats, and was often out of date.

Atos Origin set out to create a true process asset for the customer using the Metastorm ProVision® enterprise modeling software.

"Our vision for our practice was to create a single, integrated enterprise model for everything from company strategy down to function and process and drill down into use case level detail," Kopp said. "When we talk to clients about creating a business process asset, it's not just to fulfill a one time, compelling event. As long as you're performing documentation for a specific event, such as a merger and acquisition or ERP implementation, you should do so in a way to ensure the long-term care of the asset and leverage it going forward in different ways."

Solution

Creating a Process Asset with Metastorm ProVision

Kopp originally selected Metastorm ProVision in 2002 while working for a global technology company. At the time he evaluated several leading enterprise architecture and business

process analysis tools. Metastorm ProVision stood out among its competitors, and after years of success with it, Kopp brought the tool along with him when he moved to Atos Origin. Kopp said the Atos Origin group had used Visio to draw diagrams in the past, but Metastorm ProVision is their first true enterprise modeling tool.

Metastorm ProVision is now an integral component for Kopp's team in providing service to its customers. The software's rich graphical and narrative capabilities enable Atos Origin consultants to clearly communicate important business information. And its ease of use is a critical differentiator, too. "We're consultants, so we don't have time to send people to extensive software training. With Metastorm ProVision, we just attended two days of classes and were then up and running, confidently using the software in the field," he stated.

At the consumer products customer, Atos Origin consultants went to work using business process modeling to define a catalog of over 1,400 test scenarios, each with multiple test cases. The process model is then leveraged to conduct an impact analysis for proposed changes, identifying the subset of scenarios required to comprehensively test a proposed change, without needing to execute the entire test catalog.

This effort involved all accounts payable processes, from invoice to receipt to payment. It took a three-person team about four months to build the model.

"We could not have undertaken such a substantial project without a tool like Metastorm ProVision," Kopp said. "The reality is that when you do modeling, you capture so much more information than you ever could with a drawing tool. Using a less robust solution would translate to a significantly longer development time, and you would end up with documentation that would be almost impossible to manage."

Results

Eliminating Business Case Defects and Reducing the Solution Delivery Life-Cycle

The goal of this Atos Origin project was to reduce the customer's defect after change metric, and it's been an undeniable success.

"Prior to our work, 60% of the change defects were attributable to insufficient business testing. The customer is now experiencing zero after change defects that are attributable to this problem. We've eliminated them completely," Kopp said.

The company also expects to eliminate 30-40% of time required to define requirements in its solution delivery life-cycle

by using this process asset. According to Kopp, they can refer to the knowledge base and review current process definitions, rather than rely on information obtained from individuals in meetings, thus saving valuable time.

Going into this engagement, the team was so certain they would achieve their goal that they allowed for payment of a portion of Atos Origin's fee to be contingent on their ability to demonstrate a positive influence. This great success has been a key driver in the customer's desire to implement similar change management efforts in other areas of financial services (including to date General Ledger, Banking Services, and Electronic Invoicing)—applying the method and tool to create more process assets and perform testing to drive significant results.

As the process is deployed across the customer site, Atos Origin is also using the Metastorm Knowledge Exchange web-based server application to manage its business models and objects in a collaborative environment across the internet.

Kopp said it all comes down to understanding and modeling business processes.

"If I had to sum up three key benefits of creating a process asset, the first would be reuse. The time and energy that many companies expend to re-acquire process knowledge is disturbing. A knowledge repository allows them to efficiently reuse information," he stated.

"The second benefit is knowledge transfer. In this global village we all work in, companies must be agile and repurpose employees as the business changes, but their knowledge must not be lost," he continued. "Finally, the third benefit is the visibility and discovery we experience when we shine the light into an organization's white space. It always leads to someone saying, 'Hey, I didn't know you did that.'"

As the deployment of Metastorm solutions at Atos Origin expands, Kopp expects the alliance between the two companies to flourish, as well.

"Our partnership with Metastorm is a solid one, and we have leveraged its products and services on several successful client engagements," he said. "We look forward to further collaborating with the Metastorm team and growing our relationship well into the future."

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