MKS

MKS Integrity Solution In Use At Home Shopping Europe AG

"Primarily, MKS impressed us with its high technical standards. MKS's solution was installed within five days, and during the initial year, the entire expense of administration and the implementation of the MKS Solution for approximately 30 users was below 5 percent of the annual workload of our project manager. This resulted in a very positive price-performance ratio for our total costs."

Stephen Riehm, Project Manager, Home Shopping Europe AG

Company Overview

Every year the Home Shopping Europe shopping experience convinces more and more customers of its benefits. In 2001, 1.7 million active customers ordered goods with a net value of 275.6 million Euros. Shopping conveniently at home with knowledgeable service, round the clock shopping hours, and no worries about overcrowded malls, are attractive benefits to customers.

Since its initial broadcast in 1995, Home Shopping Europe (HSE) is the market leader in home shopping broadcasting. Now, over 30 million households in Germany, Austria, and Switzerland can receive it either through cable or satellite.

The Challenge

The goal of Home Shopping Europe AG is to establish itself as the premier multimedia shopping experience in German-speaking Europe. It is therefore necessary to establish its presence in various electronic media, such as classic analog TV broadcasting, the Internet, and interactive TV (ITV) technology. With the upgrading of HSE's software development practices, the importance of integrating their external partners into the change process became apparent. This meant keeping careful track of the changes made to their online applications.

Their previous change management system did not allow them to determine who made changes, what the changes were, or when they were made. The traceability of changes was not guaranteed, and often users could not tell why a particular code change had occurred.

Vice President IT/E-Commerce of Home Shopping Europe AG, Helge Melzig, is responsible for the operation and development of the Online-Shops and its infrastructure, including other projects in the eCommerce environment. Mr. Melzig explaines, "establishing software supported processes was very important for us. This way we could guarantee an integrated and qualitative software development that creates synergy between our partners and reduces costs."

HSE Objectives

> Integrate external partners in the change process to reduce costs and increase partner synergies

> Make all software changes traceable to a specific developer and time

> Implement repeatable processes to guarantee a high level of software quality

Case Study

Home Shopping Europe

The Solution

One of the most attractive aspects to working with MKS was their hands on, technical approach to solving their business needs. Stephen Riehm, Project Coordinator for Home Shopping Europe AG, is responsible for all MKS applications, including administration and operating the Workflow Designer in MKS Integrity. He said, "MKS impressed us the most technically."

Being heavily involved in the implementation phase, Stephen also got a first hand look at how MKS responded to their needs. "We noticed that during the initial phase, MKS is very active," Stephen said. "Every couple of months, there was new functionality and improvements to our solution."

Benefits:

- Better project control and project planning
- Improved software quality
- Higher security standards
- Improved collaboration among development teams/projects
- Reduced costs

Home Shopping Europe AG began using MKS Integrity when they started to develop the new online shops. "We operate with the complete client-server solution consisting of MKS Integrity for Software Change and Configuration Management and MKS Integrity for Change Management.

Only through the integration of both products were we able to fully utilize the synergies offered by the solution," says Helge Melzig.

The implementation went very quickly and smoothly, according to Stephen Riehm. "Within only five days the complete solution was installed including workflows, and users were trained in a matter of hours," he said.

One of the most critical parts of the implementation was defining their processes and inputing them into MKS Integrity for automated workflow. Riehm explained: "Early on, we agreed upon the appearance of each process and defined two workflows: the first allows us to use 'change packages' to make sure that all changes are controlled and traceable; the second allows us to eliminate false functionalities, or defects."

The Results

As an example, Riehm explains how they deal with change requests from partners. First, partners submit change requests using MKS Integrity's web-based client. When the request is received at HSE, "all participants in the workflow are notified through e-mail according to previously defined rules. By estalishing an integrated workflow, we are able to change the source code in a particular status only when a client has requested it and a change package is present."

"We achieved a level of quality which otherwise we would not have achieved."

This close connection between a change request and the affected code, as captured in a Change Package, is one of the key advantages of MKS Integrity for maintaining traceability of changes.

Overall, HSE is happy with MKS Integrity and the service they receive from their MKS representatives. "MKS Integrity is the core of our software development and of our entire development process in eCommerce. We wholeheartedly accept it and we run an extremely stable and efficient system because of it," says Stephen Riehm.

Commenting on the support they receive from MKS, Riehm notes, "We are happy with the (user) support. We have always received satisfactory answers and the communication is always proactive."

Stephen Riehm concludes by saying: "We finished the MKS implementation on time without prolonging the projects. Now, releases are much more controlled than in the past and we have a higher level of security. Collaboration with our partners has improved considerably. At any time, we are aware of the project's status. Projects are completed within the alloted time frame and quality has improved considerably. Everything became more controlable and planable."

Helge Melzig strikes another balance: "With MKS Integrity,we are continually able to trace our software development. We benefit from the complete solution and within a year we earned a positive return on our investment and reduced our costs.

"Primarily, MKS impressed us with its high technical standards."

The MKS price-performance ratio was very good. We also achieved a level of quality which otherwise we would not have achieved (without MKS)." In conclusion, Helge Melzig says their goal is to "use MKS Integrity in our entire operation. We believe that we are on the right track and we see the advantages."

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