

CAST Forum on Application Intelligence

Accenture at Edgar Consolidated Stores Ltd

CASE STUDY

Context

The Edgars Consolidated Stores Ltd (Edcon) is Southern Africa's dominant fashion retailer selling a broad range of clothing, footwear, textiles and accessories through approximately 600 outlets. Additionally, Edcon Financial Services provides credit facilities and financial services products to the Group's 3.5 million active account customers. They have over 20,000 employees.

In 1998, Edcon turned to Accenture to support its large network of stores and brands.

Sincethen, an Accenture team of 250 people at its peak has managed all application system development and maintenance activity as part of a 7-year IT application outsourcing contract.

The Problem

With a strong focus on CRM (Customer Relationship Management) and SCM (Supply Chain Management), the group invested in a new suite of supply chain systems based mainly on Retek (Oracle Retail) and other software packages. Their ultimate goal was to create an efficient and consistent groupwide merchandise management and supply chain solution which could help them:

- Improve operating efficiencies
- Increase stock turns and in-stock position
- Minimize the long-term costs of building and running the solution
- Ultimately reduce markdowns

The Solution

Many enhancements had to be made to the original system for it to meet the group's complex requirements: The system was extended and more modules were added over time (for Demand Forecasting and Price Management for instance). Integration with Edcon's custom-built data warehouse, store

back-office and Point-Of-Sale system were also included in the scope of the project, making it that much more difficult to change and understand the system in its entirety. Since 2003, Accenture has been using the CAST Application Intelligence Platform on Retek to facilitate rapid adaptation to Edcon's specific needs. Today, as much as 30% of the Retek baseline application has been modified and Accenture is fully responsible for maintaining the Retek system on their own – without the help of Oracle's Retail organization who provides upgrades and support for Retek - while seamlessly incorporating the most recent modules from Retek when they need to.

Indeed CAST's unique capabilities get to the heart of what efficient customization, integration and upgrade of complex application software is all about. CAST continues to provide Accenture with:

- Complete technical documentation of the Retek baseline application structure, which Oracle Retail does not deliver
- Complete visibility of inter-dependencies between baseline and custom code extensions and other applications in the portfolio, allowing rapid acquisition and sharing of in-depth knowledge about applications by Accenture's pool of rotating staff
- Extensive change impact analysis capabilities, allowing precise scoping of impact mitigation work by project management and huge time savings in change analysis and implementation as well as testing work. This has been used for functional changes as well as implementation of patches to the base line application
- Automated detection of changes between versions, allowing improved management of patches and upgrades

Out of the current Accenture team totaling 150, 20 people are involved in technical work on Retek and are using CAST.

The Result

While evaluating CAST, Accenture figured out that it could help improve both responsiveness to business demands and quality delivered, yielding benefits both for themselves and their customer. Indeed both parties experienced great value in using CAST to provide enhanced visibility and transparency to the work been delivered. According to Accenture, an Edcon executive at a Retek User Conference commented that the success of their IT system had significantly contributed to the company's performance driving the stock price from 17 to 300 Rands. CAST Application Intelligence Platform has greatly facilitated the adaptation of the Oracle Retail Retek application to Edcon's needs: According to Dipak Patel – Technical Manager Development on the project – “65% of the time of the 20-person technical staff on Retek is devoted to application analysis prior to making changes. Of that, CAST has saved over 60%”. Further more testing time is significantly reduced as a result of precise identification of impacts. “All in all, impressive gains resulted from using CAST. On the adaptation of the Retek Warehouse Management System, technical work - initially planned to last 18 months - was actually delivered in 6 months, thanks to all of the savings in application analysis, development and integration testing work”.

Conclusion

Building on this success, Accenture is now planning to implement the CAST Application Development Governance Dashboard, thus enabling IT Management to:

- Monitor and control the quantity and quality of work delivered by development teams

- Check the compliance of coding and architecture rules agreed upon with Edcon
- Drill-down capability - not just monitoring, but the ability for project leaders to actively drill down and share technical information with the development team, ensuring speedy delivery and remediation

Furthermore, Accenture plans to extend the use of CAST to the entire Information System, covering Oracle Financial, as well as Microsoft-based Business Intelligence applications.



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About CAST

CAST is the software intelligence category leader. CAST technology can see inside custom applications with MRI-like precision, automatically generating intelligence about their inner workings - composition, architecture, transaction flows, cloud readiness, structural flaws, legal and security risks. It's becoming essential for faster modernization for cloud, raising the speed and efficiency of Software Engineering, better open source risk control, and accurate technical due diligence. CAST operates globally with offices in North America, Europe, India, China.

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