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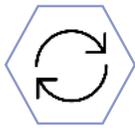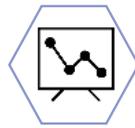
# PACIFIC COAST BUILDS SAP TEST AUTOMATION STRATEGY

TEST AUTOMATION

## AUTOMATION
Effecta accelerator automates data extraction, testing, and verification

## EFFICIENCY
Weeks worth of manual testing tasks have been eliminated

## SAVINGS
Testing team size requirements reduced by up to 70%

## Overcoming Complex Integration Challenges

Pacific Coast Building Products is a family-owned company that specializes in manufacturing, distributing, and installing building materials. What began as a single lumber shop has grown over the past half century into over 75 locations in the Western U.S. and Canada.

The company is a leader in the industry and operates through four major subsidiaries, including distribution, concrete and clay, contracting, asphalt, and roofing divisions. Pacific Coast Companies, Inc. (PCCI) is the centralized shared services organization that provides support services to its sister companies in the Pacific Coast family, with services including accounting, internal auditing, human resources, legal services, and technology support and solutions.

Pacific Coast has a complex IT infrastructure that relies on SAP for its critical manufacturing and distribution lines. With so much of the business running on SAP, including human resources, supply chain management, financials, and business intelligence, it's essential that the data and processes making up these applications are accurate.

Over the years, Pacific Coast has evolved and customized its SAP environment to meet specific business requirements. Many of the SAP applications span the enterprise and integrate with POS systems as well as with a number of specialized applications and systems.

As a result, any change that Pacific Coast makes to its infrastructure can significantly affect a number of intertwined IT systems.

To deliver new functionality and improve user experience, SAP releases enhancement packs on their major applications twice a year. With such a highly customized and integrated environment, the applications face the risk of breaking each time SAP updates were applied. The amount of effort that goes into applying these enhancement packs resulted in Pacific Coast occasionally delaying or skipping them altogether to avoid issues that may potentially disrupt their business.

Hoping to minimize the risks involved when applying these updates, Pacific Coast saw a need to adopt a formal test methodology designed to increase productivity, expand test coverage and, most importantly, identify issues before they reached production. Additionally, when faced with greater demand for services, Pacific Coast had limited resources solely focused on QA. By eliminating many of the time-consuming manual processes involved with testing, crucial resources could be reallocated to more business-critical positions.

Pacific Coast first looked into test automation years earlier when rolling out SAP to the company's subsidiaries. However, while building automated scripts, it quickly became clear that simply running the tests without a way to validate the data results was misleading, potentially risky, and did not provide enough of a return on the investment.

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## About the Company

- ► *Specializes in manufacturing, distributing, and installing building materials*
- ► *75 locations in the Western U.S. and Canada*
- ► *Operates through four major subsidiaries, with a centralized shared services organization that provides support and solutions to the other companies in the Pacific Coast family*

## Business Challenges

- ► *Complex IT infrastructure that relies on SAP for critical manufacturing and distribution lines*
- ► *Highly customized, integrated environment makes applying updates difficult*
- ► *Needed to adopt a formal test methodology to increase productivity, expand test coverage, and identify issues before they reach production*

## Solution

- ► *Provides test automation scripts and detailed data validation capabilities*
- ► *Test scripts can be run with minimal manual effort and involvement from business analysts and the test team*
- ► *Improved manageability and maintainability of the SAP environment streamlines key processes and better manages risks*
- ► *Solution includes the Prolifics Effecta test automation accelerator and HP QuickTest Professional*

## Constructing an Automated Testing Environment

With such an extensive SAP environment, Pacific Coast made it clear that any testing provider needed to be well-versed in the system. Prolifics' testing division was brought in to build all scripts for test automation and provide detailed data validation capabilities. With skilled testing experts and years of experience working with SAP, Prolifics was able to build and execute all scripts with minimal involvement from the company's team.

What most impressed the Pacific Coast team, however, was the solution for data validation, a capability it had never had before. Prolifics' Effecta testing accelerator includes a Validation Engine which automatically extracts data, executes the test, and verifies test results by comparing them with expected results. Prolifics' testing experts worked closely with Pacific Coast to show how the Effecta Test Suite, leveraged with HP QuickTest Professional, enables the company to automatically record and run scripts and test outputs, eliminating the need for custom coding. In addition, Pacific Coast benefits from the pre-built components in Effecta designed for SAP, which map to common SAP business processes such as the SAP sales order process.

Prolifics has dramatically reduced the effort involved in testing by running scripts each quarter and maintaining the test environment, allowing Pacific Coast to stay up-to-date with enhancement packs and upgrades. The solution saves Pacific Coast's developers two weeks of manual tasks previously spent testing applications, helping to increase overall productivity and allowing them to focus on more important tasks. Running test scripts can now be completed with minimal involvement from business analysts and with a much smaller team, which has reduced testing team size by nearly 70%.

Pacific Coast is able to quickly find and fix most major bugs in the test environment in an automated fashion with less cost. To ensure the highest quality, Pacific Coast supplements its test automation strategy with a unique model that includes on-demand testing resources. This flexible and cost-effective approach allows the company to outsource to a professional team of Prolifics testers when necessary, eliminating the need to invest in a larger in-house staff.

With a comprehensive test automation solution in place, Prolifics' testing division has helped Pacific Coast improve the manageability and maintainability of its SAP environment, enabling the company to streamline key processes and better manage risks that could potentially impact the business. By working closely with Prolifics, Pacific Coast has successfully reduced the time and effort spent running tests while keeping their business analysts focused on strategic business initiatives.

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