

DeRisk IT Provides Testing Team for Major Retail Chain

✓ Background

DeRisk IT Inc. was founded in 1998 as a cost-effective testing solution aimed at the corporate level. DeRisk IT's primary goal is to help corporate organizations forecast and plan for the most efficient IT projects with respect to risk avoidance and assist the implementation of appropriate testing solutions in order to achieve a common goal. DeRisk IT has strategic partnerships with the world's leading QA software companies and has assisted in both on-site consulting and onshore, offsite testing with many companies, always delivering a custom approach to quality assurance.

As 1 of only 2 major testing teams in the QA consulting arena, DeRisk IT was approached by the retail chain to assist in implementing a total testing solution and methodology they had purchased from Compuware called CARS. DeRisk IT was brought on board to implement this tool and convert all manual testing efforts to automation.

✓ The Need For A Testing Solution vs. ROI

During the implementation and conversion of two divisions of their retail chain, it became apparent to the client the return on investment did not warrant automated testing to continue. The retail chain then determined:

1. Manual testing was more cost-effective than the maintenance on the testing tool and salaries of automated testers
2. The testing solution purchased did not fully support and deliver all functionality to warrant the costs associated.

A compromise therefore, needed to be found between a cost-effective testing approach and quality services. The retail chain at that time determined DeRisk IT would continue to perform testing on all their ongoing and future projects using a manual approach.

✓ The Testing Approach

DeRisk IT spent a total of five years working on various projects within the retail chain. For the first three years all projects consisted of on-site consultation and testing efforts. Many of these projects occurred in both divisions of the chain and the average number of testers utilized was 17-21 at any given time. The applications tested ranged from mainframe to web-based, and the projects varied between purchasing, reporting, and allocation among others. To better meet the demand of this unique client DeRisk IT offered offsite testing for the remaining two years. The remote testing was done using Citrix access, and all testers were still available for any on-site visits as needed and attended all defect and project meetings.

✓ Project Problems

During the course of 5 years many problems arose during the multiple projects. DeRisk IT paired with the retail chain, faced the problem that many project testers had never worked together before and many of the contractors also came from different geographical backgrounds. Not only was this challenge on a social level but it was also made communication difficult at times.

During many of the projects multiple testers were involved outside of DeRisk IT testers. With so many people working on the longer projects, often new testers and contractors would be hired by the retail chain and become a part of the team mid-way through the project. This led to many difficulties as far as getting others up to speed on the technical aspects and the inner-workings of the project. Also, due to the multitude of people on one singular project often it was hard to coordinate successful meetings and get a clear answer when questions arose about the project.

✓ The Solutions

DeRisk IT sought to remedy the project problems the retail client and so many other clients were facing with multiple testers and contractors doing onsite testing. Many clients were also contacting DeRisk IT with space and budgeting issues which were creating obstacles during projects. DeRisk IT created an “On Shore, Offsite, Integrating Testing Approach” which provided the optimal solution. DeRisk IT and the retail chain developed a working partnership which allowed the retail chain to retain complete control over the testing process, but let DeRisk IT conduct a large majority of its manual testing.

Over the course of 2 years, DeRisk IT eliminated a lot of the inherent issues that had previously plagued the retail chain when working with onsite contractors and testers as well as delivered double the work load for a lower price point. The offsite testers continued to attend weekly and daily conference calls as requested, created test plans, and executed all manual test cases assigned by the retail chain’s project manager.