

Knowledge Management Project Prepares Leading Wealth Reporting Software and Services Provider for Strategic Application Development

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Background

The leading provider of Web-based Wealth Management data aggregation and Wealth Reporting services had achieved rapid business growth and dominant market share in the Independent Broker Dealer and Registered Investment Advisor space. Continued business growth would require expansion into the National Full Service / Regional Brokerage market. Significant strategic application development effort, within tight time and cost constraints, would be needed to provide the additional features and functionality required.

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Business Challenge

A tight time window of opportunity existed to bring the enhanced product to market ahead of the competition.

Project estimates indicated that the client's in-house Applications Development and Quality Assurance groups would have to very rapidly increase to between two and three times its current size to complete the required new capabilities in the available time frame.

Client work space to house an expanded team was limited, as was the ability to quickly find large numbers of new development resources knowledgeable in Wealth Management and Wealth Reporting applications and the client's technical environment in the local market.

The current approach for training new team members would not scale for the larger number of new developers required. While existing application documentation was extensive, it was very detailed, technical and module specific. Nothing was available to serve as training materials which would explain the entire application its architecture and functionality and then each of its components in a structured, "top down", layered fashion.

Even small numbers of new team members would require too much time and hand holding by the limited number of in-house application experts and would take them away from critical development tasks.

Solution

IGI assembled a team of subject matter and technical experts experienced in Wealth Management and Wealth Reporting and skilled in the client's technical environment to rapidly create structured, "top down" documentation and training materials.

IGI subject matter experts and business analysts interviewed key client team members in order to capture their application knowledge in a "system overview" and in sub-system functional and architectural documentation.

An IGI data architect reviewed the client application's complex Oracle database structure and a high-level logical data model, more suitable for training and orientation of new developers, was prepared.

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IGI technical specialists skilled in Oracle PL/SQL employed automated application code analysis and flow charting tools to expedite preparation of linked application module, procedure and function hierarchy charts in electronic format. These were further linked with electronic format code flow charts. In some cases, fully understanding the application's business rules required reverse engineering of application code. IGI business analysts and technical specialists reviewed these results with key client team members, translating the application code into a summary of each component's business logic.

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A training plan using the new materials was developed and training in the client's application was effectively delivered to all new team members prior to their starting work on the strategic new development. The training was delivered to an expanded team consisting of client and IGI developers at the client site and to an extended IGI development team offshore.

Business Benefits

The time required for new developers to become fully oriented and effective was reduced from three to four weeks to one week, greatly reducing the impact and risks to a tight new development project schedule.

The dependency on key client staff was greatly reduced, freeing them for critical development tasks.

The rapid creation of an extended IGI dual-shore team, trained in the client application and skilled in the client's technical environment, allowed the new development to proceed "around the clock", expediting delivery of the new application functionality within tight project timeframes.

An extended IGI team offshore also resolved client needs to rapidly increase project team size while meeting cost constraints and reducing workspace requirements at the client site.

The new documentation will continue to be a valuable training tool for new team members in the future and now also serves as the top levels of an overall client application "Knowledge Base".