

CASE STUDY

Tele Columbus Standardizes and Speeds the Software Development Process

Industry

Telecommunications

Challenge

The company's rapid growth made it impractical to continue to manage complex software development processes manually

Results

- Accelerated software development by a factor of 10 in one year
- Standardized and centralized change management
- Automated tracking and documentation for audit compliance

Products

- Rocket® Aldon Lifecycle Manager (IBM i Edition)
- Rocket® Aldon Lifecycle Manager (Enterprise Edition)
- Rocket® Aldon Community Manager

Application

- Software Change Management
- IT Services Management
- IT Compliance

Company

Tele Columbus is a leader in the German cable industry. Since its founding in 1985, the Berlin-based company has grown to become the third-largest cable network operator in Germany, Europe's biggest cable market. Tele Columbus and its sister companies serve a total of approximately 3.7 million connected households through a high-performance network. Customers throughout the country rely on Tele Columbus for a range of products including analog and digital television, high-speed internet, and broadband telephone service.

Challenge

The development team of more than 30 programmers traditionally relied on manual processes for the organization's software development efforts. Initially, these methods were satisfactory, if somewhat time- and labor-intensive. However, the company's success led to extremely rapid growth over a fairly short period of time. This growth included steadily increasing acquisitions, staff, and deployment of new platforms.

As their computing environment became more complex, the demand on programming resources increased accordingly. Development took longer, and it was harder for the group to meet scheduling needs. Activities became more difficult to track, let alone document. These slowdowns created new barriers to meeting audit and compliance requirements.

Frustration peaked when IT team members found that despite their best efforts, the process was inherently flawed and the potential quality risks had become too high.

The programmers were not alone in recognizing these issues. Company executives identified an urgent requirement for a centralized change management system. To address this objective, they initiated a cable, media, and logistics project code-named "Camelot." The project's goal was to standardize all Tele Columbus Group sister companies under a central IT department.



Solution

After exploring the available options, Tele Columbus chose Rocket® Aldon Lifecycle Manager (IBM i Edition) and Rocket® Aldon Lifecycle Manager (Enterprise Edition) to standardize its development processes. They also implemented Rocket® Aldon Community Manager (CM) as their incident-tracking system to manage and track their requirements throughout the development lifecycle.

Results

By using Rocket Application Lifecycle Management (ALM) solutions to automate development, Tele Columbus immediately increased developer productivity, improved reliability, and gained visibility and control over the entire process. Implementation was extremely rapid, and both solutions were up and running in less than a week. "Rocket's products are very secure and easy to use," stated Sven Lorenzen, the technical director for Tele Columbus.

The company today relies on Aldon Lifecycle Manager on the IBM i platform (LMI) and the enterprise version of Aldon Lifecycle Manager (LME) to manage its client server software comprising 3.7 million customer accounts. Together, Camelot and the Rocket ALM products manage every aspect of customer interaction—from contracts, to billing, to installment, to customer support. More than 600 Tele Columbus employees easily access the information in the system for their day-to-day work. The company also standardized on LMI and LME for six of its sister companies.

IT staff implemented CM as an incident-tracking system to bridge the gap between all products. CM acted as a central platform for team members to use to capture, prioritize, and track requirements, and to log fixes and escalations. One of the biggest benefits the team was able to document was increased reliability.

"Before, our software development process was time-consuming, and inconsistent," Lorenzen explained. "Now, the Rocket ALM solution makes it very difficult to make a mistake."

The Rocket ALM solution also gave the IT team at Tele Columbus a simple, effective way to track and document processes and changes for regulatory compliance. The company was able to leverage that information to successfully pass its financial audits, and realized dramatic reductions in the preparation time for audits compared to previous years.

There's no question that Rocket ALM products accelerated Tele Columbus development. Despite the company's significant growth and increasingly complex environment, the programming team documented that their software development process became 10 times faster than it had been just one year earlier. These advantages expedited bringing new services to market while delivering a better customer experience.

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Sven Lorenzen
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