

CASE STUDY

Big 5 Sporting Goods Streamlines Development and Satisfies Compliance Requirements

Industry

Retail

Challenge

Rapid growth and an IPO resulted in new, complex regulatory requirements

Results

- Simplified regulatory compliance
- Increased productivity and streamlined development processes
- Gained new visibility into key corporate areas
- Delivered a better customer experience

Products

- Rocket® Aldon Lifecycle Manager (IBM i Edition)
- Rocket® Aldon Deployment Manager

Application

- Software Change Management
- IT Compliance
- IT Business Management

Company

Big 5 Sporting Goods is one of America's top retailers of name brand sporting goods and accessories. Its automated, state-of-the-art distribution center in Riverside, California, serves 434 stores throughout the western United States. Founded in 1955, the company offers a full line of merchandise, including athletic shoes, apparel, and accessories, as well as outdoor and athletic equipment for team sports, fitness, camping, hunting, fishing, tennis, golf, snowboarding, and in-line skating.

Challenge

In recent years, Big 5 experienced rapid growth on both the financial and operations side. After the company completed an initial public offering, it faced an array of new regulatory requirements, including Sarbanes-Oxley (SOX) compliance. In addition, Big 5 opened 85 new stores in just five years. While both developments were good for the company's business, they also added new layers of complexity to the organization.

The IPO forced Big 5 to take a step back and look more closely at its operations from both a business and IT process perspective. The company was not accustomed to auditing processes involving both its IT and business units. It needed to ensure that its IT systems were properly equipped to not only support regulatory compliance, but also deliver operational efficiency, providing a foundation for future growth.

The combination of rapid growth and new store openings resulted in the need for constant changes to the company's core business applications. Prior to working with Rocket, Big 5 relied on an informal, manual documentation process to track and control its business application development. This proved time consuming and prone to errors, and left its developers with no effective way to control and document the software modifications they made. Even simple application changes became complex.

Solution

The IT organization required automated, repeatable, and traceable processes to streamline application development and to track the software development lifecycle



to address regulatory compliance requirements. Big 5's search for a process-driven change management solution from a reliable and trusted vendor led them to Rocket Software.

Results

Once the Big 5 team implemented Rocket® Aldon Lifecycle Manager (IBM i Edition), they could view a complete audit trail to satisfy the new regulatory requirements. With a single keystroke, the company could deliver a comprehensive history of every action performed on any given object. Achieving compliance with SOX and other relevant laws and regulations became much less challenging.

The IBM i version of Aldon Lifecycle Manager (LMi) also made it significantly easier for Big 5 to develop, deploy, and manage its most important corporate applications. The company streamlined and gained newfound control of its billing and payment system, order processing, inventory management, databases, and pricing.

Using LMi, programmers could define the development lifecycle at implementation. The software automated the movement of objects between environments based on user ID and object definitions, and simplified development by freeing the team from having to specify target environments. The solution also increased productivity by helping ensure that management tasks were offloaded to management personnel, so programmers could focus on development of quality software.

The development team gained tight version control of software throughout the application lifecycle, using LMi to ensure that consistent object authority was enforced from start to finish. Object distribution technology made it simple to track the location of every object and maintain control at every point. LMi automated the movement of objects between environments based on user ID and object definitions. Rather than searching for particular objects, or ensuring that the correct version of an object was selected, employees could devote time and effort to key development tasks.

Big 5 benefited from using LMi at multiple points across the business and IT departments. Ease of use, automated documentation, and object distribution became essential elements of the company's development process, as well as its day-to-day procedures.

Business lines gained new levels of visibility into key corporate assets, with improved procedures, traceability, and control throughout the application lifecycle. IT management benefited from complete visibility into development processes, with developers having a clear view of next steps and tasks already completed by other team members. Overall, Big 5 increased productivity and streamlined processes, making it easier to meet deadlines, improve software quality, and deliver it on time for an enhanced customer experience.

“ *The Rocket Software solution not only solves our SOX requirements, it improves and automates IT processes from A to Z. It has gone well beyond our expectations. When the SOX auditors heard we had Rocket Aldon Lifecycle Manager in place, they checked off the first 10 boxes, knowing we were already in accordance. I think that says it all.* **”**

Glen Thompson
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