

## CASE STUDY

## Focus on Quality



### Who?

Danish publishing house, since 1770. Based in Copenhagen. Fiction, nonfiction, traditional and digital formats. Net turnover (2013) DKK 858 million. 500 employees.

### The Background

We had been working for a few years as a team extension of our client's internal IT department, building software solutions together to a constantly evolving enterprise system.

The enterprise system included several web shops, backend, order processing, authentication, B2B and CRM systems, along with content creation, publication and management systems. Many applications were legacy systems with very limited documentation.

### The Challenge

Our client had an in-house, first level, non-technical customer support function, but no separately structured process for analysing, prioritizing and solving incidents and problems. As a consequence, most incoming tickets were han-

dled according to immediate urgency, by the first available developer, who could be pulled from his planned work on projects.

This, of course, meant that immediate (but not always lasting) solutions were found to urgent tickets, but it also meant frequent disruptions of planned and perhaps critical development project work. No one was dedicated to do second level support and maintenance, so incidents were often recurring, because no one was focusing on root causes and proper problem management. Needless to say, this was creating frustration with the end customers, as well as for the developers and the project managers.

### The Solution

Synergy-IT suggested a new setup where a dedicated team of developers handled all second-level support for development tasks. This way, we would be able to create a calm and undistruptive environment for everyone working on projects and have certainty that the necessary attention was given to solving tickets and analysing root causes in order to prevent recurring incidents.

We named the department Q&S (Quality & Support) and gave the team sufficient power to also be the company watchdog, meaning that they are equally responsible for new systems and able to demand maintenance tasks done on running systems, if they find issues in need of fixing.

We went into this knowing that we would have to build a substantial level of knowledge, within relatively short time, to be able to succeed. We wanted to ensure a continuously improved quality of performance, an increase of predictability in projects and a link between development projects and operations that safeguarded the change and deploy processes.

We decided to start by isolating one major product under the department and grow our portfolio coverage systematically. The steps we took to kick start the department included:

- We defined KPIs to determine our progress.
- We invested in training.
- We gradually increased portfolio coverage.
- We increased manpower when we were ready and able to fulfill business needs.
- We developed productivity tools in order to become even more efficient.
- We developed productivity tools in order to become even more effective.

## The Result

Over the course of the next 6 months, we noted a significant change in how the flow of tickets developed, and in the stability of the developers working environment:

- 95% of tickets were resolved by Q&S, without involving developers from project teams.
- Less than 5 tickets per month still went to the development department.
- We gained insight into the data through the development of an extensive dashboard, enabling us to report progress to our customer.
- We launched a training program in which each employee spends time every month, subjects based upon emerging Q&S needs and purpose to improve knowledge and performance.
- Incident analytics were set up to provide project managers and developers with knowledge of problematic areas, to be considered in future projects or maintenance releases.
- The Q&S team proved an active partner in providing input on good product design and concerns about potential issues embedded in upcoming implementations.
- The Q&S team proved an innovative partner in the overall goal to reduce tickets by creating new tools for tracing problems within the systems. ■