

FLEXIBILITY EQUALS SUCCESS

Flexible testing resource allows HML to realise £200,000 a month cost savings ahead of schedule

HML

Summary

For HML, its ability to quickly and reliably meet the outsourcing needs of its major financial services clients is a significant differentiator in a highly competitive market. With a major migration testing project under-way, the firm struggled to recruit skilled migration and testing staff as its workload rapidly increased.

After turning to Sogeti for help, HML was able to meet tight deadlines on major projects while keeping a lean internal testing team. It now has the ability to quickly scale up its staffing levels to meet short duration, high intensity projects, without having to retain expensive staff during lulls in activity.

The partnership with Sogeti has become fundamental to how the business delivers projects quickly and is extending into other areas, including application development testing.

The Client

HML works for over 30 UK and Irish lenders and has over 45,000 different financial products on its system, ranging from straightforward loans through to complex niche products such as equity release. HML operates a high availability service from locations across the UK, including Skipton, Glasgow, Padiham and Londonderry. It provides core mortgage administration services, account management, call centre facilities, management information, portfolio trading and standby services. HML has over 20 years' experience in financial services and manages more than £40bn of mortgage assets.

The Challenge

A major source of HML's success in the last 10 years was through the expansion of the specialist lending sector. By utilising HML's outsourced servicing, numerous new entrants were able to come to market quickly, thanks to a scalable servicing solution provided at variable cost.



"Trying to recruit, train and manage testers was an increasing challenge as project demands increased. Sogeti allows us to access a resource pool of well trained testers, matching skill sets to our requirements, making it an easy way to increase capacity and support our core test teams."

Richard Smith, IT Support Manager, HML

Speed to market has always been a key attribute of HML and streamlined processes enable its lender partners to bring new product categories to market in as little as six weeks.

Through a multi-million pound investment, HML has focused on making further improvements to its service quality, re-engineering its business according to Lean techniques, delivering a more consistent and wider range of services, and future-proofing its IT systems.

The firm has a core application framework based on JADE, which administers over 400,000 mortgage accounts and processes in excess of 800,000 system transactions every day. The platform is developed in-house and is constantly evolving, especially as HML adds new clients.

The process of testing how accounts worth billions of pounds map from a clients existing platform on to the HML platform is a complex one.

When HML's parent company, Skipton Building Society, merged with Scarborough Building Society, the new group was left with the financial burden of maintaining the Scarborough Mortgage Services (SMS) and HML platform.

The project involved the migration of £2.6bn of mortgage assets from SMS, and a number of asset transfers and securitisations with existing clients. It generated a surge in demand for migration and testing teams at HML, which did not have the inhouse staff to meet its needs.

Selecting Sogeti

After initially consulting Sogeti about using HP testing tools, the conversation progressed to how Sogeti could support HML with a Rightshore and Flexible resourcing model.

IT staff from HML met with senior managers from Sogeti and explained the project. In the short term, with a major milestone looming, HML required a small team on site to help them deliver on schedule. It also allowed HML to try out the capability of Sogeti to deliver skilled testing staff and knowledge transfer.

Based on the success of the trial, HML decided Sogeti offered a more flexible and cost effective model than increasing the size of its own in-house testing and migration team. It committed to using Sogeti to scale up its staffing levels to cover the migration project.

The Solution

Sogeti initially provided a core team of experienced testers to understand the systems and processes at HML. The aim was to learn and pass on their knowledge to the next wave of onshore and offshore teams who would be working on the project. The core team spent several weeks onsite to gain a full understanding of the client's expectations along with the product, processes and technical aspects of the project. A series of knowledge transfer on-boarding packs were created to act as part of the training material when the consultants returned offshore. The training program, which was mandatory for all those working on the project, lasted a total of five days and included domain training, technical training and project specific training.

The Sogeti team also began designing the test automation and scripting tools that would be needed for the project. The HML team were assigned expert leader roles to help the Sogeti team test the migrated systems. At the peak of the Scarborough project, Sogeti provided 10 onshore and 16 offshore staff to meet the demand.

The Benefits

The migration project was successfully completed in a year and saved £200,000 a month by utilising a single infrastructure. By using Sogeti to provide skilled staff for the duration of the project, HML avoided having to recruit more in-house staff that would have been surplus to requirements at the end of the project.



"The calibre and expertise of the Sogeti team was very impressive and they quickly got up to speed. We would never have delivered that first project on time without their help and the staffing model has proven so effective that it prompted us to move to a permanent relationship with Sogeti to help us scale our testing capability in line with demand."

Richard Smith, IT Support Manager, HML

The success of the project prompted HML to evaluate its testing and migration staffing requirements and begin a long-term relationship with Sogeti. One of the core differentiators of the HML offering is its ability to quickly and accurately board large clients onto its systems in just a few weeks. This requires huge peaks in testers, depending on the complexity of the systems that need to be created or modified. As Sogeti maintains a key team with a deep understanding of the HML environment, the firm is able to scale up to 40 testers for just a few months, and guarantee the staff are able to hit the ground running.

The offshore element is also far less expensive than UK contractor rates and HML does not need to get involved in recruitment, training or finding cover for sickness or annual leave.

HML now uses the experienced Sogeti team members as a true extension of its in-house team, involving them in the initial planning stage with clients to streamline migration and testing. This level of trust is indicative of how important the relationship has become. As a result, HML is now able to board clients faster because it can scale up its migration and testing resources by calling on a substantial pool of trained staff from Sogeti.

Conclusion

The success of the relationship with Sogeti has been recognised at a senior level within HML and it is now looking at ways Sogeti can help in other areas, such as application development testing. As HML grows its range of products and services, and takes on new clients, the ability to quickly and cost effectively add professional testers to its team is a capability that helps differentiate it from its competitors.

Contact Sogeti UK

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