Remain Software's TD/OMS makes software development manageable for Yamaha Motor Europe

Yamaha Motor Europe

"Yamaha offers state-of-the-art technology for the ultimate experience in land and water pleasure!" It is a clear description of the company from Yamaha's president on the company website. Yamaha Motor Co, Ltd. was founded in Japan in July 1955. It was a relative late comer in a market where no less than 150 motorcycle manufacturers fight to survive. Yamaha Motor Europe NV (YME), the European head office of the Yamaha Motor Company in Europe, located in Schiphol-Rijk in The Netherlands, was founded in 1968.

YME is responsible for coordinating the marketing and sales activities of Yamaha Motor products in the European market, in particular Yamaha motorcycles and scooters, marine outboard motors, WaveRunner water vehicles, 4-wheel all terrain vehicles (ATVs), golf cars, snow mobiles and generators. This partly takes place at the main location at Schiphol-Rijk where, along with the logistics center for spares and accessories, Yamaha Motor Nederland and Yamaha Motor Middle Europe are also located.

Picture "Courtesy of Yamaha" http://www.yamaha-motor.eu

IT support for the business

The YME IS Division supports the business in the head office at Schiphol-Rijk. The division consists of the Infrastructure Group, the Application Support Group, and the Application Maintenance Group. Seven people are engaged with development on a daily basis. "On the one hand we are busy with RPG development to further expand the existing application with additional functionality – such as banking interfaces, a spool file manager, ftp communication – but also with additional functionality

within the application itself. Consider, for instance, specific Yamaha company procedures that we incorporate into the application.

We have various warehouses throughout Europe for which we have written special functionality that allows us to manage them", says Kees Trommel, IS division manager at YME. "We provide maintenance for the WAN, the LAN and our ERP application. In addition, we provide management of the ERP application for a large number of distributors from this location. We also provide IT services for the smaller countries within the YME organization."

YMPACT

The YME ERP application is based on BPCS, which was implemented in 1995. To provide optimal support of the Yamaha business, internal developments on the application commenced at the end of the 1990s. Kees Trommel: "The core and main functionality are still recognizable as BPCS, but we have modified and added a great deal in and around this core. That's why we have even given the application its own name, YMPACT." The YMPACT ERP application runs on IBM Power Systems. Consequently development in the application takes place in RPG and, for a small part, in Free-Format RPG. The Power System makes use of Logical Partitioning (LPAR), by which the system can be divided into different partitions. "Our Power System has two LPARs", Nico Meijer, iSeries System Manager at YME, explains. "The development and test environments run on one LPAR, and production runs on the other. The sources and objects are then transferred to a number of remote systems within Europe, where they sometimes also undergo local development."

Picture "Courtesy Yamaha" http://www.yamaha-motor.eu

"We also maintain our Internet-based dealer application, better known as YMPULSE", says Trommel. "Using this application, dealers can order products, register guarantees, enter claims, and perform other matters. The dealers that we support in the YMPACT ERP application also make use of YMPULSE." The YMPULSE application runs on a Windows machine on which development takes place in Java.

Choice for Remain Software and TD/OMS

The maintenance of YMPACT is managed with TD/OMS, the Software Change Management application from Remain Software. Trommel: "The reason to acquire TD/OMS from Remain Software was the need for a secure procedure for the transfer of development work to a test and production environment. We were also looking for an accepted solution for auditing purposes to make certain that everything that is in production has correctly passed through the development process. We need to be sure that objects and sources belong to each other and have not been placed there incorrectly outside the control of the system."

Furthermore, according to Trommel, the possibilities for the distribution of all the sources to the various locations were an important factor when considering whether or not to start working with TD/OMS. "In principle, when we started development we already had our own software factory, but we also had five remote countries that carried out in-house development. Every development that we carried out on our system was distributed to the countries each night. These countries have their own local TD/OMS implementations with which they can receive the fixes."

Automatic distribution

Rob de Vries, Development Manager at YME, says the situation at the distributors to which the software was distributed became unmanageable at a certain point. "We no longer knew for sure what was implemented, whether the source fields belonged to each other, etc. Everything that now goes into production is distributed automatically. We now know for certain that it has arrived. Furthermore, it's a lot faster. There is a flow at each external location, which is determined via TD/OMS, to implement the software fixes in production."

The use of TD/OMS in this flow from request to fix is essential for YME. De Vries: "We don't work with version control. We register every modification in the system as a ticket number or request number. We write a specification for each request. The development is then prepared, carried out and tested within that request. Finally, the complete request is put into production and sent to the remote locations. In addition, the request is provided with documentation and possibly with instructions for installation. If we didn't have TD/OMS, we would have to distribute the fixes manually, requiring discipline and strict procedure, with all the problems that it would entail. The benefit that we now have through the use of TD/OMS is that within one request we can link both the core software as well as the local software (specifically for one distributor) to the request. It is even possible to link with the Java-based YMPULSE software. TD/OMS allows us to work across multiple platforms."

Main benefits

The YME IT employees unanimously state clarity as one of the major benefits of TD/OMS. "Through the use of TD/OMS, in contrast with manual processing, what we implement is always the same, including settings," says De Vries. "The authorization of new objects is always correct. The file sizes of the new objects are always set up. Moreover, the programmers can see in real-time where the objects are located; are they in development or in the test phase? TD/OMS also provides a certain amount of documentation within the procedures that we apply. For example, object history. We can see when an object has been modified and what has been modified; the entire history of fixes can be reviewed." The secure storage of old sources is also stated as an important benefit. TD/OMS ensures that the last ten versions of the source can be referenced, which is of special interest to IT auditors.

All in all, the TD/OMS solution from Remain is very highly rated, and the same applies for the offered support. Even though YME has had little reason to make use of it, they find that on the odd occasion when it was necessary the support from Remain was very good. "Remain almost always responds the same day with an answer and they quickly offer help with the resolution of our questions. The use of TD/OMS is actually a trouble-free story. This also applies for the Power Systems platform. You set it up once, and it then continues to run and do what it is supposed to do," Trommel concludes.