



### Remain's TD/OMS allows the Accell Group to modernize more consistently

Remain Software implemented TD/OMS at Accell IT Services. This subsidiary of the Accell Group is the IT department of the largest bicycle manufacturer in the Netherlands. The well-known brands of Batavus, Koga Miyata and Sparta all fall under the Accell flag. TD/OMS from Remain ensures that software updates at Accell are less labour intensive. TD/OMS also make the updates a lot more consistent. At Accell, IT director Menno Bokslag and software manager Erik Lok were responsible for the implementation.



The Accell Group with its head office in Heerenveen, is a spin-off from ATAG, which nowadays is called ATAG ETNA Pelgrim Home Products (AEP Home Products). Up until 1998 both businesses belonged to the same concern. Menno Bokslag, director of Accell IT Services: "The two companies were comparable with each other with regard to their business processes. Steel products were produced in both the home products division and in the bicycle division. The production of the two divisions ran according to an identical process and the sales of both products took place via dealers." Focus on the core activities finally resulted in the split of the company into two independent parts.

#### IT and ERP under our own control

"At Accell we very much wanted to handle IT for ourselves", says Bokslag. According to the director retaining responsibility for IT is the best way to keep control of the business processes. Accell has a long history of developing business applications for itself. It has its own ERP system, called Ace. "We have been working with Ace since 2001, with what in effect is a continued development of the system that we already inherited from ATAG in 1986. The continued development and modifying of

those systems, with a growing team, meant that we had an increasingly greater need for a Software Change Management solution such as TD/OMS, as supplied by Remain.”

The Accell Group has 31 employees for IT system management. The 31 employees have the task of providing the development of software and hardware for all companies within the Accell Group. The fast business development of the supplier of cycles, cycle components and fitness equipment created the requirement to work towards just one system that would also have to be more modern than the old ERP environment. A start was made with this modernization process in 2001. Lok: “In 2001 we worked for all businesses on one IBM System i (AS/400) system. All changes we made were immediately implemented. This naturally created a lot of risks. We wanted a separate development machine, a separate production machine and an environment with Windows and RPG objects. However, a system such as TD/OMS was required to be able to manage all this correctly and efficiently.”

TD/OMS was known to Lok from a previous employer. “We already worked with it at Nuon; they were also operating a self-developed ERP system, which was already being managed with TD/OMS. From that role I already had five years experience with the solution and when I joined Accell I knew immediately that this solution from Remain would also be a good investment for us.” Despite the need for more consistency in the modernization process, Remain’s TD/OMS was not used by the bicycle manufacturer until 2006. Before then there was still too much, far too much according to the IT people, transferred and modified by hand. Bokslag: “At a certain point it was no longer manageable without the help of an IT tool.”

TD/OMS was implemented by Remain at Accell IT Services in the autumn of 2006. The first step in this process was a preliminary analysis in which Remain, in dialogue with Accell, defined the relevant environments, libraries, machines and such like. Subsequently Remain took care of the TD/OMS set-up, after which training was given and the transfer of the delivered environment to the Accell system administrators and users took place. Finally, in the spring of 2007 a few things were fine tuned. In total it took between 10 and 15 days to get TD/OMS operational.

### **Development machines**

The situation at Accell was and still is complex. Certainly when it comes to the development of software for use within all companies in the group. Accell IT Services has a development machine and a development environment. These environments generate programs. “And we then transfer them to a test environment. After that we test it on the development machine and it is then transferred to the acceptance machine. Incidentally, the users test the programs on the test machine, not on the acceptance machine. Our idea of the future is that later on we will have one acceptance environment to which the users will also have access”, says Bokslag. According to him, the present acceptance environment must not be seen as a sort of training environment, but more as an additional production environment. Bokslag: “A sort of production phase after which the program goes into production.”

The role of Remain's TD/OMS in this is to take care of the distribution of the software to the various environments. For both the RPG and IBM System i objects as well as for Windows objects. TD/OMS transfers them from the development environment to the test environment and from the acceptance environment into production. Bokslag: "It is very pleasing that you can so clearly define all the steps in TD/OMS." Lok adds to this: "Whenever we want to transfer things, we know for certain that all the programs are the same, despite the fact that they all make use of their own databases. This last point is again due to the reasonable independence of our subsidiaries." TD/OMS ensures that all modifications are carried out in all databases if there are conversions piling up. "It is an indispensable tool to carry out all modifications neatly in the desired manner." TD/OMS also proved to be indispensable during the expansion of the Accell Group to Seattle in the United States. All employees and departments in Europe work on servers that are located in Heerenveen. Accell installed separate servers in the USA, since otherwise there would have been performance problems due to network delays. Lok: "So we now need to ensure that everything that we put into production also runs on the machine over there. Including the four language versions that we maintain here. They also have to be installed at the correct location on the machines."

### Insisting on change

The changes that have been carried out in recent years at Accell and the changes that are still taking place are incidentally grist to the mill of the company accountants. According to Lok, these accountants have been insisting for some time that we work on a separate test, acceptance and production machine. "That would bring the advantage that it becomes visible when something has gone into production and also which object has been promoted by whom." Incidentally, the modifications within Accell IT Services initially had the consequence that users saw fewer green functions. Bokslag: "They thought that the IBM System i was disappearing. In reality nothing is farther from the truth." Another change is the deployment of a second machine, as a mirror machine, at the Batavus subsidiary.





Through the implementation of Remain's TD/OMS it is now unthinkable at Accell that there are multiple versions of applications within the company. If two users are testing within the same application component, they receive a message about that. The modernisation process did not stop at the bicycle manufacturer with the roll out of the Ace ERP and TD/OMS. Bokslag: "We have also transferred the fitness division to the newest software." Lok adds to this: "The fitness division requested us to integrate a work order module into the ERP system with which they could control the engineers. It is our task to develop that module in such a way that the other companies in the group can also make use of it. Therefore direct links between the solutions are required. And as long as we take account of that, we can then keep the following steps consistent via TD/OMS."

### **The benefits of TD/OMS for Accell:**

- Being able to correctly and clearly manage the software environments.
- More certainty, mainly through consistency in the operations.
- It now costs the Accell Group far less effort to test everything than it did previously. Previously it was occasionally forgotten to also apply modifications in the test environment. This is now a thing of the past, since all steps are registered in TD/OMS.
- Generating test environments is now no longer a problem. It used to take a great deal of time to generate test environments, but that is now past history. Accell now has a test environment for each company and TD/OMS registers who is working with what.