



New Gas utility uses outsourced testing service to help launch quickly

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Wales & West Utilities was successfully created and launched in just 8 months. They outsourced the testing to Acutest, who used an accelerated business-driven testing approach to enable them to meet the demanding schedule.

PR9.NET September 07, 2005 - Independent testing consultancy Acutest has helped new regulated gas distribution business Wales & West Utilities (WWU) successfully launch its operation from a standing start in just eight months. WWU outsourced responsibility for its technical and business testing to Acutest in order to validate its ability to start trading without major risk and disruption. The project involved testing the business processes; the core systems, such as the SAP implementation and the Ingenuity HR system; ancillary and support systems; systems integration with third parties; and the technical infrastructure.

The timeframe for defining the business processes and implementing the new systems and technical infrastructure concurrently was very compressed. Acutest was chosen for its proven ability to test effectively in these circumstances. Their approach combines focusing testing on the areas with the greatest likelihood and business impact of failure, finding problems early and building small collaborative testing units that include specialist testers, business users and staff from third party suppliers.

A regulated gas distribution business, WWU has 34,000km of pipelines serving a catchment area of 7.4 million people throughout Wales and the South West of England. The WWU network was purchased from National Grid Transco in August 2004. Industry regulator Ofgem imposed a strict deadline of the 1st June for completion of the sale. From day one the processes and systems needed to be capable of supporting the business operation with approximately 1,200 staff.

"The WWU business went live on 1st June 2005 and was able to fulfil its regulatory requirements. Post go-live, the systems have run very successfully," explains Ian Graham, CIO and Programme Manager, Wales & West Utilities. "Acutest's testing approach was the key to verifying our systems and processes, and giving us the confidence to go-live. I'm a strong believer that small expert teams using lean project processes will achieve goals more quickly. Acutest's approach and people fitted effectively into this structure. Despite the speed we moved at they still managed to leave us with a lasting asset: a full test suite that we can use when we test future enhancements and releases."

Barry Varley, CEO, Acutest commented: "Acutest was accountable for validating WWU's ability to go live without exposure to major risk. Test results provided the programme and business management team with valuable information and the clarity to make key programme decisions. We only had eight months, so it was impossible to test everything, but the fact that the systems and processes are performing so well is testament to the effectiveness of this approach."

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About Acutest

Acutest is an, independent consultancy specialising in testing software, IT and technology-centred change. Acutest provides a full portfolio of outsourced software testing services , primarily to blue chip organisations. The principal aim of all these services is to substantially increase the value businesses can derive from testing by reducing the elapsed time spent testing, reducing the cost of testing and reducing the risks to launching new organisations, products and services.

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