



Associations

ver.di

Vereinte Dienstleistungsgewerkschaft

Five become one – The formation of the multi-service trade union ver.di was backed by software quality assurance

Background

With around three million members on its books, the trade union ver.di is the largest single such organisation in the free world. It was formed in July 2001 from the amalgamation of five trade unions: the Deutsche Angestellten-Gewerkschaft (DAG) (salaried employees), the Deutsche Postgewerkschaft (DPG) (postal workers), the Gewerkschaft Handel, Banken und Versicherungen (HBV) (trade, banks and insurances), the Industriegewerkschaft Medien (IG Medien) (media) and the Gewerkschaft Öffentliche Dienste, Transport und Verkehr (ÖTV) (public services, transport and traffic). Ver.di provides services for employees in over one thousand occupations and in 69 of the 99 economic sectors in Germany.

The Challenge

The fusion of five separate trade unions to become ver.di presented their IT chiefs with a quite unusual problem: the process of unification was to be supported and promoted by a new, unified member information and support system, known as MIBS. The planning and implementation of the IT fusion had to take account of the particular parameters surrounding a merger: the synchronisation of five differently structured and evolved legacy systems, still-to-be-appointed or chosen decision-makers, and incompletely defined structures right up until shortly before ver.di was founded.



The Solution

The fulcrum of the fusion (of the IT systems) was the member system MIBS, which at the same time serves as an administration, information and support system. The trade union derives the justification for its existence and its political influence through the members supported by this system. This was why ver.di invested heavily in software quality assurance.

Working in collaboration with consultants from SQS Software Quality Systems AG, the IT experts from ver.di primarily implemented the following measures:

- Introduction of a systematic test methodology
- Supplementation of staff resources at ver.di with SQS experts for test case specification and test performance
- Prioritisation of test objects through systematic 'ABC analyses'
- Transfer of the test results to the technical committees in order to complete the technical concepts
- Support for test case specification and test performance by the SQS-TEST® tool

The Benefits

- The MIBS entered service largely without a hitch and with only a minor delay.
- The investment in systematic, method-based and tool-assisted testing paid off by shortening the length of time needed for test preparation and performance.
- Risks were systematically minimised.
- Potential problems were identified in advance of system start-up, thus enabling them to be rectified at an early juncture.
- Thanks to the assignment of SQS test experts, the IT staff at ver.di were able to concentrate more closely on their core tasks and on building trust in the new system.
- The SQS employees were effectively 'independent third parties', bringing methodological certainty and calm to the unsettled and potentially conflict-laden environment of the merger.

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