

Finance

Santander Direkt Bank

Introduction of "finance portal"

Background

Santander Direkt Bank is the German subsidiary of Santander Central Hispano (SCH), one of the leading financial institutes in Spain and Europe with headquarters in Madrid, Spain. Santander Direkt Bank AG in Germany offers its customers a range of specialised financial services, such as credit cards (private and commercial) and various consumer loans. Via its Patagon branch, the bank also offers brokerage services, investment funds and other financial investments both in Euros and in 13 foreign currencies, as well as mortgage and insurance services. Santander Direkt positions itself as a multi-channel bank with Internet, phone, fax and letter as communication media. Santander is a typical second bank for customers who have their normal account at another (principal) bank but who choose Santander for special services. Having successfully installed the Patagon branch, the company's strategic focus is now on continuing its strong growth.

The Challenge

Santander Direkt's German website has been online since 1996 and historically focused on information delivery with only a few interactive functions. Since Santander's customers welcome new technologies more than the average customer, the company decided to expand its Internet presence. The objective was to develop a completely new finance portal, offering customers a broad range of interactive functions in addition to information. Now, customers are able to access the bank's backend systems from home via the Internet. The 'finance portal' project was scheduled to be completed within a timeframe of 8 months, which meant the system was due to go on-line in December 2000 (project start: end of April 2000).

As well as concentrating on specialised financial services, Santander's IT strategy is to use its lean structure to deal with core tasks only. This was the reason why Santander decided to outsource most of the project tasks to external partners. Santander's primary role was to co-ordinate the overall development process. Based on good results with the Y2K and Euro projects on which SQS Software Quality Systems AG comprehensively supported the quality management process, Santander again chose SQS to be its preferred quality-solution provider.



The Solution

For this project, Santander and SQS took a completely new course. The bank outsourced all of the software testing to the SQS TestLAB in Cologne, which had just been opened. The entire testing project took 300 person days of effort, which was carried out within 3 months. The project was based on a test plan, developed jointly by Santander and SQS, in which the scope of testing was defined.

The solution

- Priority A items - systematic testing
- Priority B items - checklist approach
- Priority C items - ad-hoc approach

A complete test infrastructure was already in place in the SQS TestLAB in Cologne. As an additional measure the infrastructure had to be integrated with Santander's Frankfurt back-office applications and the external development partner's development environment. This was essential for the test project and hence was subject to special attention.

SQS carried out the following tests in the SQS TestLAB in Cologne

- Functional tests · Link tests
- Integration tests · Security tests
- GUI tests · Performance and stress tests

The Benefits

One critical success factor was TestLAB's ongoing reporting, which kept all partners up-to-date. The SQS test team reported on the project progress and on any bugs found. The status of bugs was documented in a bug management system, to which everyone had access. The external development team was thus also able to fix bugs within a very short space of time. Besides the regular reports, efficient communication processes were another important factor. All partners helped to make the processes open and efficient.

Santander's strategy is to concentrate on the core processes both in Banking and IT. That's why it outsourced the testing of its new Internet portal. With SQS, the bank had the right partner, able to provide fully scalable testing facilities.

By working with SQS as an external testing-service provider, Santander

saved time and money - in the short and long term - while assuring high software quality.

- Santander did not have to set up its own test environment.
- Santander did not have to hire and train new employees for this critical task.
- The SQS TestLAB team provided comprehensive and methodology-driven testing experience that helped to carry out the testing systematically and efficiently.
- By focusing on software quality as a separate factor, the new Internet presence strengthened Santander's image as a direct bank and supplier of specialised financial services.
- Finally, Santander's new finance portal went live only one month after the planned date. This was seen as just in time and as a big success in comparison with many other e-business projects which either went on line several months later than planned or which were delayed to such an extent that they were not used at all.

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