

COMPANY

Fonteva

INDUSTRY

Business Software

TESTING TYPES

Functional | Mobile Apps

APP TYPES

Website

CHALLENGES

Located in an area where talent is in high demand, Fonteva was unable to find the right people to ensure their QA would be exceptional

Required consistent product quality for frequent cloud releases and upgrades

Needed thorough testing without the cost of a full QA team

RESULTS

For the first time ever, Fonteva resolved more bugs in their software than were reported by customers

Drove down the cost per issue dramatically from \$2,111 to \$190

Fast, flexible on-demand testing means QA is no longer a bottleneck that delays releases

CASE STUDY**Fonteva****C****USTOMER**

The Epilepsy Foundation of America, The National Head Start Association, and the NICSA may serve different missions but they all have one thing in common. Every one of those organizations and many more that range from 10 to 10,000+ members rely on a small, Arlington, VA based company to serve their members and advance their mission.

Fonteva, founded in 2010, specializes in building Association Management Cloud Software. Their solution is purpose-built on the Salesforce platform with features to empower member-based organizations to nurture relationships with and serve their members. In the highly competitive Association Management Software space Fonteva separates itself by giving customers three free upgrades per year, taking care of all product maintenance, and offering the most configurable solution on the market.

Additionally, by building on the Salesforce platform Fonteva uniquely provides their customers with an exceptional commerce transaction engine on top of a world-class CRM. This has clearly been a successful approach. In 2015 and 2016 Fonteva was named to INC.'s 5000 fastest growing companies.

CHALLENGES

Fonteva has a suite of seven cloud-based products for membership organizations and other corporate verticals, each of which is continuously being upgraded. This means it is not just important to catch bugs early, it is critical. Providing customers with faulty software each time an upgrade comes out could not only impact Fonteva's reputation, it could bring their customer's operations to a screeching halt

One metric Mac Anderson, co-founder and CTO of Fonteva, pays close attention to is cost-per-resolution. He defines this as the time it takes for his team to fix bugs. "This metric is heavily influenced by the ability to identify problems early." Mac states. "We were spending so much time trying to resolve bugs, by the time we fixed one, two or three more would be reported." This coincides with another important metric to Mac,

customer-known issues. Mac defines customer-known issues as bugs that are reported by customers post-release. The goal is to have the ratio of fixed bugs to reported bugs trend downward over time. Unfortunately, prior to working with Applause, Mac found that over a period, this ratio was consistently in the positive, meaning more issues were being reported than being fixed.

With Fonteva growing as fast as it is, Mac knew he would need to find a scalable and affordable QA solution. However, this was easier said than done. Hiring an in-house team, aside from being expensive, proved challenging from a recruitment perspective. Mac explains “We ran into several challenges while recruiting QA resources - the talent near Washington D.C. is in high demand and often best suited Government applications. Trying to find the right people was a huge issue.”

The second challenge was the episodic nature of their release schedule – while the need for QA was intense at times, the need wasn’t continuous enough to justify hiring a team of the size and expertise that he needed. “We just don’t need someone at all times. We really would only need testing at the end of a build, and how much testing we need can vary considerably.”

In the face of these challenges, Mac took a different approach, looking outside Fonteva to seek QA help.

SOLUTION

Over the last few years, Fonteva has tried a few approaches to solve their QA needs including attempts to hire full-time help, relying on self-service QA tools, and working with a third party vendor to help increase their internal bug discovery before releasing product to customers. Unfortunately, none of these were able to keep pace with their aggressive development release schedules.

When Mac saw that his customer-known issues had climbed, he knew he needed a better solution. He turned to Applause, a Boston-based firm who is the worldwide leader in application testing for digital experience. “It really is the perfect solution for us,” Mac says. “Applause can bring subject matter expertise without requiring us to recruit, hire and train staff.”

Working with Applause allows Fonteva to dedicate hiring dollars in other parts of the organization. They leverage the Applause community for on-demand testing, knowing that their testers will provide quick and professional feedback at an affordable price point.

With an agile development team constantly building software, and in-sprint testing every two weeks, Fonteva needs to ensure their QA solution will not impact their tight deadlines or worse, delay releases.

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CTO of Fonteva



Mac explains, “We need QA to test through package discrepancies, which is difficult in our environment. Applause provides a unique, on-demand way to get a clean break in testing code, which we have never had before.”

“What makes this partnership so successful is that we don’t feel like there is a difference between our Applause testers and our own staff.” Mac says. “Just like a staff member, I can ping our Applause test team lead, we can work together, and quickly come up with a resolution.” This collaborative approach is what separates Applause from any other solution.

RESULTS

Mac relies on his metrics to determine the health and wellness of the product and his organization. In the month Fonteva first partnered with Applause, the metrics showed fewer customer reported issues than the actual number of bugs Fonteva fixed. This was a huge improvement on past performance. This trend followed suit the next month, and by the third month the ratio was down to zero customer reported:known issues. “This metric is an amazing victory for us.” Mac excitedly continues, “Not having any unknown, customer reported bugs is a really wonderful position to be in.”

Not only did their bug count diminish, Mac has also been able to quantify real cost savings as a result. “Cost per issue is just as it sounds.” Mac says, “How much money does Fonteva spend on QA per issue?” Fonteva’s average cost per issue prior to Applause was \$2,111. After switching to Applause, their cost per issue dropped dramatically to \$190 and continues to decline. The final metric, cost per resolution, which is how much time his team spends fixing these bugs also showed extreme improvement. Mac explains “The old cost per resolution was 2.3 times the cost we see with Applause. This means that we could spend \$1 million dollars with Applause and Fonteva would get a \$2.3 million dollar benefit.”

In the software industry bugs are not uncommon and most customers understand this. Fonteva has been able to garner a great reputation with their customers by finding these bugs early and defining a resolution process. In Mac’s words, “It’s music to customers’ ears. They want to have confidence in our product and the only way you can achieve that is through QA.”

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**ABOUT APPLAUSE**

Applause empowers companies of all sizes to deliver great digital experiences (DX) – across web, mobile and IoT as well as brick-and-mortar – spanning every customer touchpoint.

Applause delivers unmatched in-the-wild testing, user feedback and research solutions by utilizing its DX platform to manage communities around the world. This provides brands with the real-world insights they need to achieve omni-channel success across demographics, locations, devices and operating systems that match their user base.

Thousands of companies – including Google, FOX, Best Buy, BMW, PayPal and Runkeeper – rely on Applause to ensure great digital experiences for their customers. Learn more at www.applause.com.