



Transforming QBE's application lifecycle management

Solutions currently in use

- ◆ Jira Software
- ◆ Confluence

About QBE

Headquartered in Sydney, Australia, QBE Insurance Group is one of the world's leading insurance providers, operating across a range of markets in 38 countries. The company's European Operations division is based in London, operating in the UK, Dubai and Canada and across numerous key European markets.



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Stephen Renouf | Release and Deployment Manager

Getting outsourced projects under control

In 2009 QBE Europe made the decision to outsource its release management function to contractors. The aim of this was to enhance development activity and improve service levels across the organisation. With a range of projects running simultaneously, however, it soon became apparent that there was an urgent need for improved communication and transparency between the contractors working on tasks and the internal teams responsible for each project.

At the time, QBE was using Excel spreadsheets to document project activity – a method which often rendered projects disorganised and left teams with a lack of information into the status of individual projects. What's more, the fact that teams weren't always seeing a live view of each project often resulted in a lack of reactivity.

“Using spreadsheets to manage multiple projects became increasingly problematic for us” says project lead Stephen Renouf, Release and Deployment Manager at QBE Insurance.

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Stephen was seeking what he describes as a ***“single source of truth”*** to help QBE's teams better understand and track work in progress with one tool. In addition to supporting release pipeline management by making it clearer who was accountable for individual tasks within a project, this would also help streamline and simplify work allocation, billing and reporting between QBE and its contractors.

Having worked with Atlassian tools before, Stephen was confident that Jira Software had the capabilities to do the job. What's more, Stephen had previously worked with Valiantys on a roll-out with another company that had exceeded his expectations. So while other providers were considered, Valiantys was the natural choice to lead the implementation.

He explains: ***“In my previous experience Valiantys had got moving very quickly, and the solution they delivered was hugely powerful. I was confident the team could come in and repeat that success – and I was right.”***

Configured for optimal performance

Stephen says that Valiantys was able to grasp QBE's requirements with speed and ease, and implementation of Confluence as a knowledge base and Jira Software for application lifecycle management was underway quickly.

These tools were implemented around the SAFe methodology, an Agile framework covering end-to-end lifecycle through pipeline delivery and warranty.

The Jira Software instance was also integrated with:

- ◆ The Tempo Timesheet app, to clearly define what each contractor was working on, with estimated time and actual time spent
- ◆ The Tempo Planner app, to define resource planning and ensure contractors were not overbooked with multiple projects
- ◆ The Tempo Folio app, to manage costs around contractors and projects
- ◆ The EazyBI app, to support more efficient and accurate reporting

The Valiantys-created app Exocet was also used to enable different contractors to simultaneously work on the same task without complex workflows.

In fact, Stephen describes this as the cornerstone of the implementation, saying **“Exocet has really helped underpin what we're trying to do with this project... it's an incredibly powerful tool.”**

A key point of difference Valiantys brought to the table, Stephen continues, was its approach of challenging ideas: **“It's not just about the tools – the extent of consultants' knowledge means they can question your way of doing things, enabling you to create better processes. Getting the benefit of that experience with myriad other customers is a huge value-add.”**

As part of the project Valiantys also hosts QBE's Atlassian instance, including both the development environment and production environment.





More transparency and faster market releases

While the implementation wasn't free from its challenges, with Stephen describing the process of moving people from Excel spreadsheets to the new Atlassian tools as a **“steep learning curve”**, the results have had a great impact on how projects are managed across the board.

The team has now been using Jira Software for a year, and today QBE has in place what Stephen describes as **“an ordered and controlled environment to manage our software application development”**.

Creating a standardised process has enabled teams to boost efficiency and productivity when working with contractors, ultimately getting products to market quicker.

As the team had hoped, this has also facilitated greater transparency into the status of projects. For example, teams can now align project issues with individual contractors and allocate work more accurately thanks to improved visibility of contractor workloads.

“Our release management teams are now fully aware of the cost of each project, as well as how it is being managed and which contractor teams are working on it at any given time”, Stephen explains.

“In fact QBE’s delivery capabilities have been transformed across the board thanks to clearer process and a single source of truth.”

Logical approach, global scale

Having witnessed the success of QBE Europe's Atlassian deployment and its impact on ALM, other business units decided to follow suit.

As a result, this deployment has been rolled out across several of QBE's biggest markets, and today Jira Software and Confluence are being used across the UK, US, Australia and India as a 24 hour platform.

Moving forward, Valiantys is working to integrate the Jira Software instance with QBE's service desk platform, and is planning a move to Atlassian Bamboo to support better automated process around releases.

"Implementing Jira Software and Confluence in the cloud across an enterprise-scale organisation is a big feat in itself," Stephen says, "but Valiantys' consultants bring so much extra value to the table thanks to their experience. The whole experience has been second to none."

Quick Jira Software deployments facts

- ◆ Projects created: 256
- ◆ Issues created: 139,903
- ◆ Locations: 4
- ◆ Users: 1,562
- ◆ Confluence spaces: 51

