

Software Development: Increased Productivity with Improved Predictability

Vendex KBB IT Services and Capgemini collaborate to pilot Microsoft Visual Studio 2005 Team System

The Situation

Vendex KBB IT Services provides many of the technology services and solutions to organizations in the Vendex Group, the largest non-food retailer in the Netherlands.

In an increasingly competitive marketplace, it wanted to increase the productivity and predictability of its software development environment.

The Solution

Working with partner Capgemini, the company trialed Microsoft Visual Studio Team System in Beta. In a pilot lasting under 30 days, the team uncovered a raft of benefits for their development teams.

The Result

Vendex KBB IT Services enjoys an improved software development lifecycle with more integrated team-working across all developer

team roles. A simpler, integrated workflow and process delivers greater return on investment, and the toolset supports the company's drive for CMM accreditation.

How Vendex KBB IT Services and Capgemini Worked Together

Vendex KBB IT Services delivers technology and systems to Vendex KBB Group subsidiaries including Hema, V&D, M&S, Bijenkorf and Praxis. Together, these organizations represent the largest non-food retailing operation in the Netherlands with net sales of € 4.1 billion.

One of its main challenges was the rapid delivery of reliable, predictable solutions to its customers, especially in view of the

“ From our perspective, the adaptability and stability was particularly striking and has given us confidence to add Visual Studio Team System to our existing Microsoft development toolset. **”**

Ed Houweling
Development Manager
Vendex KBB IT Services



diverse retail businesses of the group, whose merchandise ranges from DIY to consumer electronics, fashion, and jewellery.

Group retailers are free to choose consulting services and technology solutions from other vendors where a business case exists. This added element of competition puts pressure on Vendex KBB IT Services to deliver new solutions rapidly without compromising the reliability and predictability of the technology.

The company is constantly looking at ways to refine and accelerate the software development lifecycle. With a large proportion of its software architected on the Microsoft .NET platform using tools like Microsoft Visual Studio, this is especially so for Microsoft products.

Vendex KBB IT Services works with Capgemini, a Microsoft Gold Certified Partner, to evaluate new tools and processes as soon as they become available. It helps the company to achieve an early competitive advantage. One recent example was a pilot project to trial Microsoft Visual Studio 2005 Team System (VSTS). In order to derive full benefits and in keeping with a company goal, an early decision was to tailor RUP (Rational Unified Process) aligned to the pilot.

Three Vendex KBB IT Services employees and four colleagues from Capgemini worked intensively over a fortnight. Elements included team building, getting to know VSTS, testing functionality and simulating development of the Web system. Other elements included support for Domain Specific Languages, service-orientation and comparison of RUP with MSF for Agile Software Development.

The team focussed attention on collaboration tools within the Team Foundation Server (TFS). These would help the company manage and track progress of software projects.

TFS includes a new build engine, source control system, work item tracking, integration of Microsoft Office tools, and rich reporting via SQL Server 2005 technologies.

The concept was based on an existing Web-based ordering and fulfilment system that had already been delivered to a customer.

“In simple terms, we wanted to take something apart and put it back together again using RUP and VSTS. As well as demonstrating the viability of these tools, it also meant we could compare the speed and reliability of this new approach with our legacy processes.”

Ed Houweling,
Development Manager,
Vendex KBB IT Services

Even though the Visual Studio Team System was in beta version, the team was impressed. The team reported that the tool was mature with higher than expected quality. New capabilities of VSTS allowed the team to prove the concept within 29 days instead of an estimated 50. The team also concluded that the system offered excellent adaptability for users to adjust almost anything including work items, queries, reports, documents and structure for archiving. Stability was above par, user interface intuitive and required functionality easy to find. Service orientation is supported through VSTS's application designer—DSL.

The project demonstrated substantial improvements in productivity and predictability of software development based on the Microsoft .NET platform. As well as increased efficiency and productivity, Vendex KBB IT Services expects VSTS to further its goal for accreditation based on the Capability Maturity Model (CMM).



About Capgemini and the Collaborative Business Experience

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Backed by over three decades of industry and service experience, the Collaborative Business Experience is designed to help our clients achieve better, faster, more sustainable results through seamless access to our network of world-leading technology partners and

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Capgemini employs approximately 61,000 people worldwide and reported 2005 global revenues of 6,954 million euros.

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Approved by:

Ed Houweling, Development Manager,
Vendex KBB IT Services

Jort Meijer, Account Director, Capgemini

Artur Pereira, Alliance Director, Capgemini