When Trial & Error Are Not an Option

Defense subcontractor Mercury Systems upgrades its requirements solution from IBM Rational DOORS to build products on time and on budget with Jama.

Challenges

Mercury Systems designs and manufactures high-performance digital signal and image processing systems for the defense and commercial markets. Its solutions are, by definition, critical. In many cases, national security is at stake. Trial and error are not an option.

But the product development tool Mercury was using, IBM Rational DOORS, was a barrier to Mercury's development process. It was costly to manage and did not deliver the reporting capabilities Mercury needs, particularly as the company prepares to comply with AS9100, a new aerospace quality standard that requires complete traceability of product requirements.

A typical Mercury product involves 1,200–1,500 requirements, and Mercury manages all of them in Jama. Up to 300 engineers use the Jama Review Center regularly to share product requirements, iterate on specifications and confirm mutually agreed-upon requirements.

"You can attach comments to reviews and this makes for a quick, dynamic review cycle," said Joe Plunkett, Mercury's director of systems engineering. "We can collect feedback earlier, and this allows more people to add value, all thanks to Jama."

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> Director of Systems Engineering
> Mercury Systems

Solution

Mercury explored several options to upgrade its product development process and ultimately chose the Jama solution because of its superior reporting capabilities, its ease of use and its clean web-based interface. It helps that Jama is incredibly cost-effective compared to Mercury's previous solution.

Business Benefits

Jama has made Mercury's development process much more efficient. Engineers no longer sit in marathon sessions going over documents line by line, then frantically merging changes. Now they can easily manage all revisions, even if the project scope is modified daily.

"We're working with a defense contractor on a multibillion-dollar project," Plunkett said. "They needed to generate reports and show traceability, so I sat down with the client and showed him how easy it is with Jama. He was stunned that something that took him hours to do could be accomplished in a few seconds with Jama. That's the power of Jama — delivering great products on time and on budget."