



Gerber Life Insures Software Quality with SmartBear

Gerber Life Overview

Since 1967, Gerber Life Insurance Company has provided quality life insurance, especially for young families on a limited budget. Today, Gerber Life is licensed to provide life insurance throughout the United States, Canada, and Puerto Rico. Based in Fremont, Michigan, United States, it has more than \$37 billion of life insurance in force, and helps provide financial security with over three million policies. Gerber Life has insurance products available for people at every stage of life.

The Challenge

The Gerber Life Insurance Company's IT department had been using a variety of manual and software-based processes to manage application development and evolving management issues, all of which fell short of expectations. Departments used different spreadsheets and databases, leading to inconsistent and incomplete data. This piecemeal approach made it nearly impossible to align IT performance with business requirements. The lack of a centralized Application Lifecycle Management tool also made reporting significantly more challenging.

As a financial services company, government regulations require Gerber Life to report on its accounting practices. It also must adhere to industry rules such as COBIT and payment card industry (PCI) standards. Internal auditors often query the IT department to ensure the proper implementation of business software to confirm regulatory compliance. Andy Bickham, IT quality assurance compliance manager at Gerber Life, knew there had to be a better and easier way to manage the application lifecycle to meet both IT and business requirements. At previous companies, he had used a number of ALM tools but none met all of his needs. When he evaluated ALMComplete™ from SmartBear Software, he knew he'd found the answer.

Gerber Life Snapshot

- ◆ 100 IT and business users in N.Y. and Mich.
- ◆ Used a variety of manual and software-based processes for managing application development across different departments, leading to errors and duplication
- ◆ Multiple systems made reporting difficult and time-consuming
- ◆ Needed a centralized Application Lifecycle Management tool that would
 - ◆ Adhere to industry and business standards
 - ◆ Be easy to use and implement across the company
- ◆ Smooth 6-week transition from old tools to ALMComplete



The Solution

Gerber Life decided to implement ALMComplete from SmartBear Software because it offered all of the capabilities lacking in other tools. In just six weeks the team migrated from

its old tools and fully implemented and trained the staff to use a software-as-a-service approach with ALMComplete. The tool enabled 100 IT and business users in White Plains, N.Y., and Fremont, Mich., to track, manage and report on application development and software upgrade projects quickly, easily and cost-effectively. The system was fully operational in just over two months, has been in use for more than a year and requires just one administrator.

"The benefits of using ALMComplete are nearly incalculable. You never know just how much good documentation and process management can impact software quality until you've experienced it. By helping us create an automated, repeatable process, we've been able to greatly speed up the process needed to take information from the hands of marketing project managers, translate it into operational needs, and execute the development steps needed. Furthermore, the ability to go to one place to look at what I did six months or two years earlier, without having to disrupt production by pulling a developer or a project manager off the line, is a benefit we didn't even realize we could incur, and that has made us more efficient."

—Andy Bickham,
IT Quality Assurance Compliance Manager at
Gerber Life Insurance Company

The job of building and deploying new applications now takes weeks, not months. The tool makes reporting simple. A single analyst can generate a report without having to query busy developers.

"The navigation of the tool is so easy, it's unreal. I can't even compare it to anything else. And the value you get with ALMComplete far surpasses other tools I have used and evaluated in the past."

ALMComplete comes in two versions: a Web-based service and a client-server system. Gerber Life opted for the Software as a Service (SaaS) approach, eliminating the need to manage the system and implement software updates internally.

SmartBear's Application Lifecycle Management system enables the IT team to document business requirements for new and updated applications, and it stores that information in a shared repository. It also enables development managers to create development schedules, prioritize business needs and track the finished application against those requirements through agile task management. The staff records design features and IT management captures application development costs by hours, materials and processes. Cost justification for a project is easy to access, as the team can look back six months or a year and quickly find information. IT also uses ALMComplete's test management module to document the software tests that will be performed on an application and to store test results.

The Benefits

"The benefits are nearly incalculable," says Bickham. Deploying ALMComplete from SmartBear Software has:

- ◆ **Enabled Gerber Life to implement best practices.** With information now in a central repository, each department can manage all ends of the application lifecycle development process more efficiently. They have the flexibility to realign for any process and reuse assets across projects.
- ◆ **Improved cost and efficiency.** Eliminated manual and other automated systems that didn't meet company goals. Even non-IT staff can use ALMComplete effectively.
- ◆ **Made reporting fast and easy.** Reports can be generated in hours, saving time and effort.
- ◆ **Made it easy to adjust processes to meet changing needs.** The company can stay ahead in a rapidly evolving industry, enhancing its relevance in the marketplace.

The IT team is so pleased with the results of the ALM implementation it plans to implement other project management modules of the tool in the next year.

"Support has been exceptional. I can put in a request at 8 a.m. and someone responds in 15 or 20 minutes. Rarely have I ever had to wait longer than a week for something to be fixed or made right," says Bickham.

About SmartBear Software

SmartBear Software provides tools for over one million software professionals to build, test, and monitor some of the best software applications and websites anywhere – on the desktop, mobile and in the cloud. Our users can be found worldwide, in small businesses, Fortune 100 companies, and government agencies. Learn more about the SmartBear Quality Anywhere Platform, our award-winning tools, or join our active user community at www.smartbear.com, on [Facebook](#), or follow us on Twitter [@smartbear](#).

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