Barfoot & Thompson Case Study:

iPad App Testing

How Barfoot & Thompson ensured the quality of its iOS app via our scalable, on-demand Digital QA delivery model.

> *"Planit provided a thorough and adaptable testing service for our iOS app that has significantly reduced the risks involved with our programme of delivering new features to enable our customers to work even more closely with Barfoot & Thompson."*
>
> *Simon Casey*
> *CIO*
> *Barfoot & Thompson*

Overview

Barfoot & Thompson is New Zealand's largest privately owned real estate company. Every day, the company manages 1 in 3 of the property sales in Auckland. It has a team of over 1400 residential and commercial salespeople across 67 branches from Kerikeri in the north to Pukekohe in the South. Barfoot & Thompson is expert in all real estate services and has sales and property management teams across the residential, commercial and rural and lifestyle sectors. It is a significant supporter of the communities in which it works. Its diverse range of events and sponsorships include the being a Five Star sponsors of the Starship Foundation, the major sponsor of the Barfoot & Thompson ITU Triathlon, and major sponsors of the Auckland Lantern Festival, the Diwalli Festival of Lights, Auckland Rugby, the Blues, and the Northern Mystics Netball team among many others.

The Situation

Barfoot & Thompson have developed a highly popular app for iPad designed to help customers find their perfect home. It allows potential clients to see houses for sale nearby or use the easily adjustable filters to find homes that match your criteria. You can flip through beautiful full-screen photos, videos and floor-plans of properties for sale, and much more.

> *"I have been delighted by the level of expertise and support provided by Planit's testing team. Their professionalism and their innovative Digital QA model has allowed my team to focus on supporting our business with new initiatives – safe in the knowledge that Planit will take care of our testing needs in a proficient and cost-effective manner."*
>
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The app for iPad works on the principles of "keep-it-simple" and "let the technology work for the user instead of getting in the way". Informed commentators (such as Alistair Helm, the former Realestate.co.nz CEO) have said that they would judge that it is the best property app for iPad developed in NZ and an equal of some of the best they have seen worldwide.

Barfoot & Thompson's app for iPad is innovative in its focus on the inherent GPS capability of mobile devices, and as Alistair Helm says, "School zones are one of the highlighted features of the app and the execution is great."

Ensuring the quality of the app for iPad has assumed significant importance as it is widely used by both Barfoot & Thompsons' sales teams as well as by their customers, and there is a focus on continual improvement of it.

The Challenge

As Barfoot & Thompson shifted towards an iterative approach to developing their app for iPad, the demand for regression testing increased significantly, with regular builds each requiring regression testing and testing of the new features. Having a relatively small IT team, Barfoot & Thompson had limited staff available to perform the regression testing.

Like many organisations, Barfoot & Thompson faced the following issues:

- A dynamic applications landscape mandates frequent regression testing
- Limited in-house capability and access to specialised testing expertise
- Varying resource and expertise needs for testing
- Inability to leverage best practise, test assets and tools
- Highly variable resource requirements driven by projects

The Objective

Barfoot & Thompson have an industrious and productive IT team, focused on supporting their internal partners within the business. The team handles over 700 support calls per week, and supports 1,400 sales people on the road, as well as delivering a significant number of new business initiatives. This restricts their internal resource availability to perform the necessary quality assurance activities on the new initiatives.

The necessity for appropriate testing resourcing was amplified by the business's requirement for a busy programme of updates, including the addition and upgrade of features for their ground-breaking and easy-to-use app for iPad.

With releases being delivered on a recurrent basis, additional testing resources were required for short-term peaks, and then drop-off until the next release.

KEY OUTCOMES:

- Planit's scalable, on-demand regression testing solution enabled rapid release and a time-to-market advantage over B&T's competitors.
- Approximately 350 test cases completed within each 4-5 day cycle.
- Minimised impact of defects by quickly finding and resolving defects.

DELIVERED:

- Mobile App Testing
- Functional Testing
- Digital QA

The Solution

To address the issue of limited resource availability, Barfoot & Thompson evaluated several suppliers and selected Planit as their testing partner. The four key reasons why Barfoot & Thompson chose Planit were:

- Planit's permanent resourcing model allows them to guarantee the quality of Planit staff and their processes
- Planit's pure focus on testing
- Planit's outsourced Digital QA solution which provides an extremely flexible and cost effective approach to delivering high quality testing
- Planit's transparency in disclosing the skill-sets and costs involved with the Digital QA On-Demand approach

Barfoot & Thompson selected Planit's innovative Digital QA model for testing throughout their programme of app for iPad releases.

Planit's Digital QA Centre and Labs provide a scalable outsourced solution that ensures software testing projects are effectively managed and controlled, removing the stress and costs of setting-up and running an in-house solution. It provides a testing environment that matches your unique security and resource requirements while also employing toolsets appropriate to your specific project.

Digital QA projects are executed by Planit's experienced ISTQB certified testers, following a repeatable test process. As Barfoot & Thompson's partner in testing, Planit share the load and risk, enabling Barfoot & Thompson to manage the peaks and troughs in their project cycles while delivering real value for their testing spend.

The Implementation

Planit provided local (Auckland-based) resources on a Digital QA model to work with Barfoot & Thompson's team in Auckland. The combined team used a variety of communication methods to ensure an effective approach to the delivery.

Planit built a great and trusting relationship with Barfoot & Thompson and its development vendor, based on a mutual understanding and drive towards the common goal of 'customer satisfaction'.

Barfoot & Thompson's IT team contributed to the testing of new features prior to regression testing and determined the test cases for regression testing.

The Planit team operated in short testing cycles to perform regression testing of the app for iPad on a variety of iPad devices and iOS versions. Around 350 test cases were completed within each 4-5 day cycle. The testing included application functionality and data that is served from Barfoot & Thompson's API.

Through its partnership with the Planit testing team, Barfoot & Thompson ensured that all business requirements were successfully implemented, managing and minimising the risk of failure.

The testing was highly successful, with no major issues being found post-go-live in those areas covered by the agreed scope of Planit's regression testing. As a result, Barfoot & Thompson had the confidence to push ahead with their planned programme of new features and business initiatives.

As Simon Casey (Barfoot & Thompson's CIO) stated:

"The Planit test team provided a thorough and adaptable testing service for our app for iPad that has significantly reduced the risks involved with our programme of delivering new features to enable our customers to work even more closely with Barfoot & Thompson."

- **The Challenge:** Barfoot & Thompson required regular regression testing for their innovative new app for iPad to support a series of key business initiatives for their customers and their 1,400 sales people.
- **Objectives:** Provide scalable, on-demand testing resourcing for regular regression testing to ensure the quality of Barfoot & Thompson's ground-breaking and easy-to-use app for iPad.
- **Solution:** Planit was able to supply an experienced testing team via their Digital QA Lab, providing a sustainable and cost-effective testing solution for this programme of releases.
- **The Results:** Key issues were found and resolved utilising a timely and cost-effective approach, providing peace of mind and allowing Barfoot & Thompson to deliver their iPad initiatives to the market in a timely manner.
  - *Efficiency* - this freed Barfoot & Thompson's IT team from time-consuming regression testing, allowing them to focus on their key roles of supporting internal partners, and driving new business initiatives.
  - *Effectiveness* - Barfoot & Thompson were able to meet their ambitious release cycle while ensuring quality by leveraging the flexibility of the Digital QA solution to scale up and down to meet the fluctuating requirements of Barfoot & Thompson's business initiatives.
  - *Staff* - From the outset of the project, Planit built a great and trusting relationship with Barfoot & Thompson and its development vendor based on a mutual understanding and drive towards the common goal of 'customer satisfaction'.
  - *ROI* - Barfoot & Thompson were able to swiftly deliver their business initiatives to market, providing a time-to-market advantage over their competitors. Furthermore, Planit's scalable Digital QA solution has provided the testing support that Barfoot & Thompson needed in an extremely efficient and cost-effective manner.

Conclusion

Planit were able to provide a scalable, on-demand testing solution for regression testing to ensure the quality of Barfoot & Thompson's innovative app for iPad. This was provided via Planit's flexible Digital QA solution, providing effective quality assurance in a cost-efficient manner. This has allowed Barfoot & Thompson to deliver their business initiatives to market swiftly, providing a time-to-market advantage over their competitors.

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