

HONDA

The Power of Dreams

ABOUT THE CUSTOMER

Founded in 1948 and now one of the world's most recognizable brands, the Honda Motor Company is a major manufacturer and retailer of automobiles, motorcycles and a wide variety of other products including engines, aircraft and robots. The company employs more than 215,000 people, with total global revenues of over \$138 billion in 2017.

Honda Motor Europe selected automation software from Basis Technologies to provide greater visibility, control and efficiency within an outsourced SAP development process, where change is delivered on an extremely frequent basis.

The Challenge

Honda Motor Europe, Honda's main European sales organization, was delivering daily SAP change but found that their change management process was too labor-intensive and did not provide the necessary transparency or control. Auditing was difficult, production issues were frequent, and the internal BAU support team was overloaded. Outsourcing of IT support to an external service provider amplified these challenges.

About Honda Motor Europe's SAP landscape

Honda Motor Europe's SAP systems support over one thousand internal users and two-and-a-half thousand dealerships. A three-system landscape is used for each system, consisting of Dev, QA and Production with occasional sandbox environments. Single track development (BAU and projects in the same environment) is currently employed, though a multi-track approach may be adopted in future.

The Solution

Honda Motor Europe selected ActiveControl from Basis Technologies to support their need for a more efficient, transparent automated change management process that would provide the required levels of flexibility and control. Installed in their SAP ECC and PI systems, ActiveControl has "made the process more efficient and reduced effort ... with less issues and errors after deployments."



We looked at a variety of options but I wanted to have the complete solution in one tool. For example, some others are strong in change management but have no automated checks [and vice versa]. ActiveControl provides the balance we need between the right functionality, ease of use and simple maintenance.



Andreas Schaum, Manager SAP System Services, Honda Motor Europe

Why automate SAP change?

SAP change automation was not a new idea at Honda Motor Europe, where a streamlined process for daily deployment was well established. However, despite succeeding with a pace of change that would be considered remarkable in many organizations, as time passed the limitations of the tooling in use became increasingly apparent.

The catalyst for adoption of a new solution was the contracting of an external service provider to manage all IT support services, including SAP. Existing processes could not easily be adjusted to align with the provider's standard approach (a notable feature of which is a weekly, rather than daily, release cadence), coordination between internal and external teams naturally became more challenging, and Honda's team needed a means to ensure that the partner was maintaining the required levels of quality. ActiveControl from Basis Technologies was the product selected.

Control, visibility, quality

ActiveControl's powerful automation provides Honda Motor Europe with a new level of control and visibility. Acting as a 'single source of truth', it provides a complete record of all SAP change and supports highly customizable automated approval workflows. In combination, these features have enabled an effective CAB process to be established and provide the means to effectively monitor external teams, making development and release planning far easier and more efficient.

The range of advanced analyzers available in ActiveControl also aid management of distributed teams, by shifting ownership of quality left to developers. Configured to automatically run before any transport leaves a development system, the analyzers reduce manual QA effort and production issues by ensuring that problems (such as overtakes, dependencies, security issues and many more) are detected and addressed at the earliest opportunity.

Pain Points

- ▶ Many post-deployment errors in production
- ▶ Excessive manual effort to safely deliver change
- ▶ Unable to implement effective CAB process/approvals workflow
- ▶ Difficult to adapt to external supplier's processes
- ▶ Lack of coordination/visibility across internal and external teams
- ▶ Challenging audit/compliance requirements

Outcomes & Benefits

- ▶ Reduction in production errors and issues
- ▶ Reduction in manual effort
- ▶ Standardized, repeatable SAP approval and deployment process
- ▶ New balance of flexibility and quality control
- ▶ Complete cross-team visibility of requirements and work in progress
- ▶ Improved audit process for SOX compliance

“A developer today can run nearly all the analyzers which make sense, at any time, in the development environment,” observes Andreas Schaum, Manager SAP System Services, Honda Motor Europe. “So he can never complain to the BAU team at a later stage that he was not aware of any issues.”

This level of sophisticated automated analysis is all the more important in a single development track, where the risk of conflict between BAU and project developers is higher.

Eliminating manual effort

Despite their external service provider and pre-existing use of automation, Honda Motor Europe’s BAU support team was becoming overwhelmed by their frequent release pattern. Their responsibility to act as a manual quality gate (in the absence of an effective approvals workflow and automated quality checks) meant that they were unable to focus on other value-add tasks. The increase in control, visibility and quality enabled by ActiveControl has reduced the amount of manual intervention that the BAU support team have to make.

Manual effort was reduced further by ActiveControl’s Transport of Copies (ToC) functionality, a vital part of Honda Motor Europe’s workflow. In extreme cases, a given change might cycle between Dev and QA up to thirty times as it is tested, refined and made ready for deployment to Production. ActiveControl’s ToC functionality eliminates the effort involved in manual movement of these transports and ensures that QA systems are automatically kept tidy.

Andreas Schaum notes that audit reporting, in particular for SOX compliance, is another “very, very important” task that had to be done manually in the past - a slow, complicated process. Thanks to ActiveControl’s comprehensive record of change and range of pre-defined audit reports, this process has now been improved.

Duplication of effort between different tools can also be a drain on resources. Honda Motor Europe is busy moving their central change management from an isolated bespoke Notes-based application to JIRA, and when they do so will benefit from ActiveControl’s out-of-the-box, bi-directional JIRA integration.

Working in partnership

Honda Motor Europe’s selection of ActiveControl was driven not only by the comprehensive feature set of the product, but also by Basis Technologies’ philosophy of working in partnership with end users.

“Now we have a workflow which balances flexibility for our off-shore service provider with the control needed by internal Honda teams. ActiveControl has made our process more efficient and reduced effort ... we have seen fewer errors and issues after deployments,” explains Andreas Schaum.

“We like to have suppliers where we have the feeling that we are playing a role,” say Schaum. “Where the supplier reacts to our input to help develop the tool. This is very important.”

Ease of use and speed of adoption were also considerations. Training and familiarization can be a major overhead when adopting new tools, but Schaum describes ActiveControl as “quick and easy” to get up and running. Being fully integrated into the SAP environment (ActiveControl is certified on both S/4HANA and Netweaver) was also a plus - complexity and running costs are kept low as no additional licences, hardware, back-up systems, etc are required.

Conclusion

ActiveControl has given Honda Motor Europe the means to take their change and release process to a new level of transparency and efficiency, so that they are able to effectively manage external service providers and get the most out of internal teams.

Fast and simple to adopt, ActiveControl has reduced production issues, eliminated manual effort and provided greater levels of control, increasing efficiency and allowing team members to spend more time on tasks that add real business value.

The flexibility of the product also provides a platform to support Honda Motor Europe as their approach to change management evolves in future, for example as they consider when and how to transition to S/4HANA. Andreas Schaum provides a succinct summary: “The best thing about ActiveControl is that it gives our external provider flexibility, but allows Honda to keep control.”

About ActiveControl

ActiveControl from Basis Technologies automates the end-to-end SAP change and release process to massively reduce manual effort and protect systems from downtime. Built specifically for SAP, it delivers a fundamentally new approach that enables companies to adopt agile development, DevOps and Continuous Delivery in SAP environments.

All product features and specifications may be subject to change without notice and do not constitute a guarantee of performance.
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We're really happy with both ActiveControl and Basis Technologies. I would recommend them both to other SAP users.



ActiveControl can transform the way you run SAP. Visit our website to find out more and request a free demo.

www.basistechnologies.com

