



Flexagon FlexDeploy - Customer Case Study

Starkey

Background

In 1967, William F. Austin founded Starkey Hearing Technologies with the simple premise, "Alone we can't do much. Together, we can change the world." Starkey is much more than the hearing aids they produce, "we are in the business of connecting people and changing lives." Starkey understands that the patient's ability to experience the world and each other through hearing is as essential to the human experience as breathing. As Austin describes "living life with a hearing impairment is like living life under water." With so much at stake, Starkey requires business processes and technology that deliver consistent results.

Starkey Challenges: Manual, Scripted, Inefficient

Code deployment automation had been on Starkey's wish list for more than 10 years but always slipped to the bottom priority as compared to Starkey's Oracle EBS implementation. Starkey's EBS development team had done without professionally written software and instead cobbled-together a custom solution with lackluster results. The team had become accustomed to "getting by with less."

Rob Elliott, Senior E-Business Suite Developer, described the situation by saying "I wanted to get the Starkey development team out of the business of writing and updating scripts and custom forms to support code deployment. Such efforts always seem to take the team's focus off the EBS implementation, while never getting us what we really want. Flexagon brought a superior design and approach to code deployment which, in retrospect, was a game-changer for Starkey."

Starkey knew that acquiring an advanced code migration solution is about far more than simple time savings and convenience for developers. Advanced deployment and release management solutions are about accountability, process control, repeatability, communication, and teamwork.

The Solution: FlexDeploy

Starkey undertook an extensive evaluation process, which included nearly a dozen products, including Quest Stat, HP PPM/Kintana, Unitask Migration Director, and Oracle AMS. Elliott describes FlexDeploy's value proposition as "quite exceptional and a clear favorite among old players who have become accustomed to over-promising and under-delivering in this space. I was blown-away, not by the sales pitch, but by the observable results."

"We were excited when we started talking with Starkey, because they saw the bigger picture of what could be possible with DevOps software," said Flexagon President, Dan Goerdt. "Starkey came in expecting to see benefits across multiple areas of the delivery process, and quickly saw the value FlexDeploy could achieve."

Key Facts

Industry: Hearing Solutions

Company: Starkey Hearing Technologies

Employees: 4,000+

Manufacturing and delivering advanced hearing solutions

Environment

- Oracle E-Business Suite
- Oracle Database
- Team Foundation Server

Benefits

- Repeatability: "Create-once, deploy-multiple" deployment model
- Security: Segregation of duties between Developers and DBA
- Time Savings: Automation frees up team from having to focus on deployments
- Process Control: Workflows ensure processes are followed



Challenges before FlexDeploy

- EBS code migration processes were tedious and error-prone
- Developers building and deploying their own code to production led to concerns of security and segregation of duties
- Lack of visibility into changes being made led to on-the-fly decisions about fixing problems
- Individual migration scripts meant developers had inconsistent approaches for moving code objects

Life after FlexDeploy

- Code migration is automated, giving Starkey a proven, efficient, and repeatable process
- DBAs, whose number one goal is system stability and availability, deploy changes to production
- Visibility into the what, when and who of changes make managing deployments and rollback more effective
- Everyone is following a common process on a common tool for deployment and release management, making bodies of work more transferrable among teams as project needs evolve

Starkey After: Automated, Repeatable, Streamlined

Elliott noted that “FlexDeploy has an X-factor benefit. The tool is designed to be a generic deployment tool with support for many commercial and open-source products. We knew going in that we may find additional uses among other groups separate from the Oracle EBS team where we can leverage FlexDeploy as a true enterprise platform.”

“We were able to fully implement and test FlexDeploy with 30 hours of remote configuration assistance and experienced no financial risk whatsoever in the acquisition, something rarely seen with other vendors,” said Elliott. Via a combination of a free Community Edition, an easy installation process, and support from Flexagon throughout, Starkey ran a POC without diverting resources away from the main Oracle EBS implementation. Elliott summed up the technical team’s response. “The team was elated with the results; the developers felt that they were being provided with a strong tool that made their jobs easier without a bunch of wrangling, complex training, or complex software to install on every PC. In short, it just works.”

After the POC, Starkey seamlessly transitioned into a full FlexDeploy implementation via the Oracle development team rollout. The results achieved aligned to four main areas:

1. **Time Savings (ROI):** FlexDeploy freed up the Starkey team from having to spend so much time and energy on planning and executing code deployments, enabling them to focus on innovative solutions to business needs.
2. **Repeatability:** FlexDeploy works off the principle that the best way to guarantee successful production deployments is to deploy the same builds across all environments. This “build-once, deploy-multiple” deployment model saves time, minimizes risk, and produces high quality results.
3. **Improved Security:** With FlexDeploy, different roles can have different permissions, e.g. the ability to deploy to production. Segregation of duties between the developer building code, the Business Admin testing it, and the DBA publishing it to a production environment is essential for stable production environment.
4. **Process Control:** Workflows in FlexDeploy ensure processes are followed, and required approvals are given before changes are made. Starkey saw a move from implicit to explicit governance of the change process.

Results

Since using FlexDeploy, Starkey has seen a 5x decrease in the time to execute deployments, and a reduction in deployment related errors by 3x, meeting and exceeding their goals when implementing an advanced code migration solution. Andy Birch, Starkey Director of Oracle Applications said “FlexDeploy provides the streamlined, repeatable, and controlled delivery processes that we were looking for. Exactly what we needed.”

About Flexagon

Flexagon provides DevOps and Automation software and services which improve the speed, quality, and cost of software development and operations. Flexagon’s FlexDeploy brings automation, controls, and visibility to software provisioning, build, deploy, test, and release processes, and includes pre-built plugins for Oracle Database, Fusion Middleware, E-Business Suite, Cloud, and many open source and commercial technologies.

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