

How to promote Testing in Your Organization



Testing Circus Regular Feature

- Rob van Steenbergen

Test Promotion Tip - 8

Telling People About the Benefits of Starting Testing Early

Part 1

A lot of companies are still treating testing as a phase at the end of development. We create designs, develop the software and then... we TEST.



That is a bit strange. If we want to explain to our organization about the benefits of starting testing early, first we should understand the benefits ourselves. Imagine a manager telling you that a new project is starting and you will have to start testing right now. Would you know how to handle the situation?

Doing product risk analysis

I already wrote in earlier articles how and when this should be done. It is a fact that you can do a product risk analysis in every stage in a project. It doesn't have to be a brain storming session, but could just be you asking the right questions to project team members and other people in the organization. And also being a good listener will help. Well that's communication isn't it?



Certainly a risk analysis session at the start of a project will help get the team members focusing on the right things when we all go into thinking, designing, developing, and doing that kind of magic. This will automatically promote testing and set a quality as a focus in the

minds of team members.

Helping with the quality plan

Within Prince2 (project methodology), a project manager should write a quality plan. Subjects in this plan would be things like quality expectations, acceptance criteria, applicable standards, quality processes, etc. So how can we help here?

Customer's quality expectations

As a tester you could try to translate a customer's expectations for quality into quality attributes. Something like: "The system should be ready for company growth of 50% within the next two years", would suggest some priority in testing concerning a quality attribute like "Scalability".

In this way you will already know the general focus on quality attributes for the complete project. Also the project manager can better focus on these quality attributes in their approach.

Acceptance criteria

At the start of a project the customer will try to create acceptance criteria. You could help the project manager and the organization making these criteria SMART. Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, Timely.

From a tester's perspective the Measurable part is extremely important. If you have an acceptance criteria like "It should work like the old system", it is a very difficult task to measure this in testing. You would have to do parallel testing or shadow testing, or test the old system first. These are not the most efficient ways of testing. So you could save the customer a lot of money by trying to find out what they did like in the old system and what they want in the new one. Make it more specific and measurable for testing.

Also, as you often see in projects, acceptance criteria that are not SMART are forgotten and not used to accept the system at the end. Or discussions arise at the end of the project because they are not clear. And with this 'old and new system' example in mind; new systems will never work the same way as old systems. It's a new system.

If you have SMART acceptance criteria, there is another



great way of using these for testing, because an acceptance criteria turned around is a product risk! For example: "When a customer orders an article from the shop and opens his shopping basket, the page should load completely within two

seconds." When you turn it around it becomes a risk: "When a customer.... the page does not open within two seconds." The quality attributes to this risk could be Performance and/or Usability.

Now you can define the risk class by estimating a "change of probability" and "damage" number to this (high, medium, low). This can be used to estimate if it is an important risk (acceptance criteria) to deal with in testing.

Quality responsibilities

This is something you will have to think about for your test approach, so why do not do it with the project manager together?

~ End of part 1, this article will continue in the next issue of Testing Circus.

Thank you for reading, if you've any got questions or remarks, please do not hesitate to contact me.



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