

# How to promote Testing in Your Organization



**Testing Circus** Regular Feature

**- Rob van Steenbergen**

# Test Promotion Tip

## How to promote testing if you are the first tester in the organization.

It is amazing how an organization that has no experience with testing can react to simple test results. I worked for companies or teams that did not had not really heard of structured testing until they hired a tester for a few months.

The basic stuff you perform with testing is very much appreciated in these cases. Doing the testing job within these contexts is almost automatically promotion of testing.

So this should be read in the context of the organization or team that has no experience in testing. And you are hired as the only tester to start there (or maybe you are the first of the two or three testers)

### Ask questions:

- What is this product about, has somebody got some documentation for you?
- What are the problems in production at this moment, is there a database, log or something about incidents in productions? Does someone has a story to tell about that?
- What kind of risks do people see with this new product or upgrade?
- Who are the competitors of the product, have they comparable functionality?
- What is the goal of the organization with the products they make?
- How is marketing promoting these products?
- ...

Just by asking test related questions about, people will become aware of you and will help you with answering these questions. They automatically are (sort of) part of your testing team at that moment. People like it when someone is researching and concentrating on this task of recognizing possible issues.

So have the questions ready. Create a list of questions that you update regularly and use it to get the

information you need and automatically make people aware about testing.

### Write your first test plan in more formats

You can create a test plan in MS-Word with focus on what a software tester needs. Call it a test plan, but it is more like a wish list for the tester when you do this at first:

- o What are we going to test?
- o Who is going to help me testing this stuff?
- o Do we concentrate on document reviewing as part of testing?
- o What do you expect from testing environments in a structured testing project?
- o What is the approach in testing? Risk based, exploratory, writing test cases?
- o How will you log bugs, propose using a open source tool like Mantis?
- o How will you log your test cases. Also a open source tool? Like Testlink for example?
- o Don't make this document too technical, but a 'normal' person should be able to read it and understand.

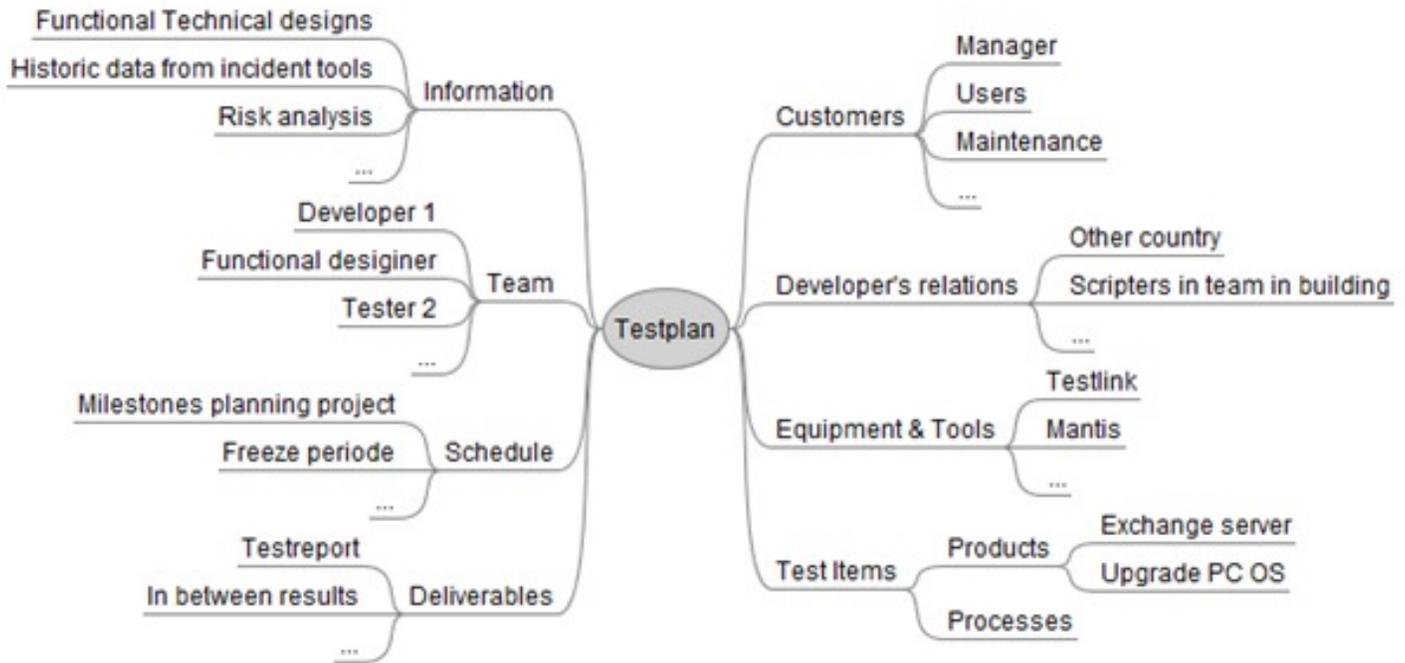
A good way to start your testing plan is using the CIDTESTD heuristic:

- o Customer
- o Information
- o Developer's relations
- o Team
- o Equipment and Tools
- o Schedule
- o Test items
- o Deliverables

For more info about CIDTESTD: <http://www.satisfice.com/tools/satisfice-tsm-4p.pdf>

You could also create this test plan in a Mind map.

- o With a mind map you can talk with non-testers and discuss testing visually
- o Maybe you could start with a mind map before you write it down in a MS-Word document.



Create a PowerPoint presentation

- o If you work out your test plan in a PowerPoint presentation, you will have a presentation (after some editing) that you can use to present to project managers and other disciplines, who don't have the time.

So the MS-Word document is for managers and people interested in testing and your approach. It doesn't have to be final, but for people who like reading it a good start. Creating a mind map is good for discussion, and the presentation is for people that have no time and you want them to get an idea about testing.

### Introduce at least a bug tracking tool

In a technical environment it is always possible to ask someone to install tooling for you. If you don't have much

technical experience in using bug tracking systems, learn how to use and configure Mantis. It is very important that you know the tool, but check if someone else in the organization has experience with it and let him/her help you. Someone in the organization that helps you, also automatically helps you promoting testing!

### Start testing and make reports

Make reports on daily, weekly or longer periods, just to show what you found as a tester. Even a simple list of daily open bugs is an eye-opener for a lot of people. In most cases this will be seen as good input for release

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decisions. Of course you can add risks, test case results and statistical information, but do not overdo it the first times you report.



### **G i v e presentations and write small articles**

I already described this before in some other articles in the testing circus, but if they ask you to

give a presentation about testing, do it. You could use your “test plan in PowerPoint” as a basis for your presentation to let the people know about your testing ideas.

Furthermore, write very small articles (to start with) of about 20-30 lines about something you did in your testing work and looks successful, like: We did a risk analysis session, we introduced a testing tool, the first testing results from project x. That kind of things.

### **The first tester meets the developers**

Being the first tester in an organization can be a hard job, especially when you don't have too much experience yourself. A lot of developers will see testing as a second hand job and will think you will be there to fight a war with them. Well, just don't accept a separate office and join the developers immediately, asking the questions I mentioned earlier and learn from them how the software works.

And another final tip for starters: Don't laugh and jump excitedly on the tables when you found your first bug (although it will feel good), but try to stay calm and discuss the issue you found, before logging it into the bugs database. They maybe will fix it before you could even log it. If they're busy, they even will ask you to put it in the database, so they can look at it later.

### **Do the basics and learn together with the organization**

If you are just starting in testing and your organization too, then you can grow up together and learn. That's great! This article gives some of my advice accordingly to my experiences where to start.

If you are a more experienced tester in an organization with no testing experience, start with the basics mentioned above. If there is time you can do more, like product risk workshops or document review sessions to get the people involved in testing. But be aware not to plan too much of these extra activities. First start with the basics. Then the next things will come as the organization will learn how to deal with testing.

Promote by doing the work and show it to the team. That's a good start. ☺



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