

How to promote Testing in Your Organization



Testing Circus Regular Feature

- Rob van Steenbergen

Test Promotion Tip

Have an elevator pitch ready at hand about testing so that you can always use when you talk about Testing.

Have an elevator pitch ready at hand about testing that you can always use when talking about testing.

A lot of people, and really a lot of people in the IT world still don't know 'what those testers are really doing over there'. So if someone is interested in what you are doing, you better have your story prepared.

When someone is asking about your work during lunch, when standing next to a printer or coffee machine or in an elevator, you want to keep your testing story very short. Because if you are going to talk for half an hour, they will stop listening to you. Maybe they will leave you before you could arrive to the important bit.

So prepare this story up front. Here some tips to work out an effective story, often called the elevator pitch.

The elevator Pitch

The meaning of the elevator pitch is to present yourself within the time of an elevator going to another Floor. Normally you would have about 60 seconds. So better start today, even if you don't have an elevator yet, you're next building could have a nice elevator. J

To help you write the short story

To help you with writing your story I've written this article in two parts. For the people who like a step-by-step explanation (and you should take your time to work this out!), I've written these steps down. For the people that just want some tips, there is a tips section below.

Step-by-step explanation

This instruction is written as if you are doing it on your own. But you could also do this together as a testing team, to have the same story.

1. Make a list of tasks of what you are doing.
2. Read the list. On which of the tasks on the list did you spend the most time?
3. Close your eyes, and think about these tasks. Which one did you like most?
4. Write down exactly what you feel

a. Example: With this tasks I feel like I serve the customer, I feel concentrated, I forget time

5. Write down what you did exactly in verbs and words that someone outside of testing can understand.

6. Write down your customer for whom you did these tasks. Write down the name and if necessary the name of the kind of institution the customer is (bank, software house, ...)

7. Write down some feedback you got from the customer or people you worked with.

a. My customer thought that I / we...

b. A colleague thought that I / we

8. Write a text with the answers of the above points and combine these answers in this text. Don't mind the length yet.

a. Start with the tasks

b. Then how you feel

c. Follow up with the target audience

Now it is time to rewrite your text into three big parts

Part 1: Catch your audience - "The catch"

You are doing some tasks. And these tasks you are doing are all about solving a problem for your customer. So trace the tasks to the problem(s) and write down the problem(s) you are solving with these tasks. Your audience will be interested when he or she hears about the problem.

Part 2: How do you solve this problem - "The Thing"

The tasks you love most and you have positive feedback on are your specialty. So write a list of best done tasks (from year earlier list) down. These are the things you are doing that help to solve the problem(s) mentioned in the last part.

Part 3: Who will benefit and how does your customer benefit - "Benefits"

What's the benefit for your customer when you are doing the tasks to solve the problem? Most of us are

concerned with saving money or saving time, so that could be two great savings you can talk about in this last part. If there is some other company wide goal (environment) or other concerns your company is trying to solve, write those down.

Getting it in 60 seconds

Now try to bring back the text you wrote to a maximum of a 130 words (this would be in English about 60 seconds).

TIPS: for the people that quickly want to get started (but also to finish your step-by-step write up)

Think about and write down:

- Who am I, what do I do and for whom am I doing that? (tasks you do and the customer)
- What do I like most, and which part of my work is appreciated most (your specialty)
- What is the value for the customer / what needs do I fulfill with doing my work? (money, time, environment, etc)

Rewrite your story

- Make sure it is easy to pronounce
- Is this story really you? Double check, don't tell a story about someone else or another team.
- Check if your story is made up out of these three parts
 - o Part 1: Catch your audience – “ The catch”
 - o Part 2: How do you solve this problem – “ The Thing”
 - o Part 3: Who will benefit and how does your customer benefit – “ Benefits”
- Rewrite again to get the text now into 60 seconds when you speak it aloud.

When you got a great text

- Have you got sentences with more than 12 words? Make those sentences shorter.
- Did you write your text in past sense or future? Make it so that it is about doing stuff now.
- Did you write about people in your story (colleagues, users?). Please do use people in your short story. Example: You test software, but you do it for the end user.
- Do you use words like “maybe, little, short, possibly,” Words that say you are not completely clear about what you are saying? Remove those words.

- Check again for testing idiom. Regression testing, for example is not understood by the majority of people. Try to speak in a non-testing language

When you really finished your text:

- Read it aloud for yourself. Does it feel good?
- Is it easy to remember? Not only for you, but also for the listener?
- Is it you? (it should be your text, else it will sound silly)
- Check the time of your text often, is it (still) within about 60 seconds?
- Try it out with a colleague

So what to expect?

I really cannot say what you should expect, because it will be different for everybody. When I did this the first time I was amazed by the reaction I got. The person got really interested: You really do that? And she wanted to know more.

It really helps, but take your time to create your elevator pitch.



Rob van Steenbergen is an independent software test consultant from The Netherlands.

In the last five years he has been involved in infrastructure projects and is now working at the Dutch company Nobel as a test manager. He is working in miscellaneous projects for customers of this company and coaching and helping project managers and technical colleagues with setting up and improving test processes internally.

Website – www.chickenwings.nl

Blog - <http://rvansteenbergen.blogspot.com>

Rob can be reached at

<http://twitter.com/rvansteenbergen>