

People as the Dominant Factor in Successful Testing Projects



The Best are **Getting Better**



Alon Linetzki

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- Quality, Testing and product assurance coach and trainer – for the last 28 years
- Vast experience in QA and Testing for SW and embedded systems
- Train and coach internationally since 1995
- Coach agile testers, test managers, risk managers, Quality engineers and managers, development managers, developers, project managers, release managers, etc.
- Keen on people, how we think, how well we work, how we can do better...
- Established ISTQB® - ITCB (2004), serve as VP and marketing director,
- Lead the ISTQB® Partner Program w/w
- Lead in the ISTQB® Agile Tester team
- Founder of SIGiST Israel – Israeli Testing Forum (2000)



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Discussion of Today



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- Motivation
 - Successful projects
 - Demand for professional testers
- Tips for creating successful test professionals/teams
 - Domain Expertise
 - Technology Expertise
 - Constant Skills Improvement
 - Help New Testers Succeed
 - The Morale of Your Staff
- The Overtime Dilemma
- Creating Training opportunities
- Hiring Good people
- Belbin's Balanced Team
- Summary

Motivation – successful projects

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- Successful testing projects are those who are:
 - Accurate on their estimation (+/-)
 - Alert problems ahead of time
 - Handle risks
 - Measure and learn retrospectively
 - Communicate better with peers and others
 - Technically capable
 - Domain knowledgeable
 - Personally communicative and responsible
 - Team work is exercised along the whole project life cycle
 - ...

In Short – it all depends on People!

Motivation - Demand for testing professionals

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- The need for professional testers with **high level of skills** is on the rise. The Agile world is even more demanding, as the tester's skill set changes dramatically...
- The available professionals in the market do not meet this growing need,
- We are always looking for good testers...
- Companies are looking for less people with more skills than ever before...

Still we should realize:

“People are hired because of their professional abilities and are fired because of their personal disabilities...”

Tips for achieving a Highly Skilled Staff

- Build team domain expertise
- Build team technology expertise
- Constant skills improvement
- Help new testers succeed!
- The moral of your staff
- The overtime dilemma...
- Creating training opportunities
- Hiring good people
- Building a balanced testing team

[1] Build Domain Expertise (part 1)

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- Know the external facts that constraints the design of the product,
- Know how people use the product or similar ones,
- Know what concerns your users regarding the use of the product...and -
- Know how competition solved these issues with their products...

[1] Build Domain Expertise (part 2)

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- Build your expertise in several ways:
 - + Read books/e-books written for people like your customers on their experiences
 - + Go to classes that teach the underlying subject matter of your product,
 - + Work as much as possible on customer site, visit regularly, collect data, and/or stay in regular contact with your PO
 - + Learn your customer's problems by experiencing your company's technical support work for a few hours/days

[2] Build Technology Expertise

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- As the complexity of systems rise, typical problems are those of the application interfacing with other applications – know those and possible solutions,
- Know the technology used by programmers in your company,
- Participate in design and architecture meetings, share ideas with scrum members,
- Learn more of your product's technical environment,
- Learn how to code (R&D languages preferred),
- Have a pick at production code of various areas from time to time...

[3] Constant Skills Improvement

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- If a technique is worth learning ...
- It is difficult to enhance ourselves constantly... but...
- ... it is most beneficial to you, your team and your company,
- I would put 2-3 hours work per person within a sprint (of 3-4 weeks) on learning and mastering or enhancing new things and other skills...

[4] Help New Testers Succeed

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- Take a few steps in making their first 2-3 weeks a success:
 - Choose their personal space, HW and SW ready (co-location), next to someone who will serve as their coach,
 - Spend at least a day's worth with them in meetings, them getting to know people from the department/agile team, talk about your hopes and expectations from them,
 - Assign a coach/mentor to show them around the technical aspects and other aspects like company culture,
 - Review their readiness on various issues with the coach frequently,
 - Send them to internal important courses before they start working hard...

[4] Help New Testers Succeed

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- People will always remember these 2-3 weeks that you gave them to adjust...
- People will drive themselves to work hard, when they witness investment on managers' part...

These weeks should be kept sacred!!!

[5] The Morale of your Staff (part 1)

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Staff who believe that their work is *important*, that they can *succeed if they put their mind to it*, and that *their achievements will be valued* – can make remarkable accomplishments!

- Ways to encourage that and encourage WTA:
 - Treat staff with courtesy and respect, notice their work,
 - Compliment on good work, enthusiasm, and honest effort,
 - If your team work late, work late yourself – personal example is key, especially in small agile teams!
 - Measure Team Happiness (discuss at end of sprint)

[5] The Morale of your Staff (part 2)

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- ❑ When someone is not succeeding, assign someone to assist them, coach them, or reassign them for a while,
- ❑ Setup training opportunities – show that you value development of skills and professionalism,
- ❑ Never mislead one of your staff. If you do not know an answer, check first. If you share a hunch, make it clear you are guessing,
- ❑ Avoid criticism of staff member in public, but DO make positive announcements in public!

[6] The Overtime Dilemma

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- Ideal and effective hours → less fatigue, frustration, errors



- Prioritize, and make sure everybody knows what will not be done if time will not permit. RBL/SBL should reflect that clearly!

[7] Creating Training Opportunities

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- 'Reading Task',
- 'Lunch-time Training' sessions,
- Encourage academic education (after working hours),
- Interest staff in relevant company/external courses,
- Bring your own practice to the team,
- Exposure to different knowledge and opinions.

[8] Hiring Good People

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- Do not hire rejects from other teams (unless it is given a chance and proven right),
- Hire people with diverse and multidisciplinary background,
- 'Opportunity' candidates (i.e. Lawyers, CPAs, Industrial Eng.),
- Consensus on hiring within the team,
- Seek passion for the testing profession, and a hunger for putting up a working SW...
- Search for Integrity.

The Testing Team - Skills Required

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- Team work player, responsible, dedicated to the job, ability to do routine work, organized, efficient, effective, learn fast, flexible, accept authority, technical knowledge, understand systems and architecture, protocols, OS, HW, SW, Networking, communication skills, good process, problem solving abilities, understand life cycle and testing, written test design, test data, test planning, ability to meet time pressure, operate well under stress situations in a dynamic environment.



Superman!

The Testing Team - A Balanced Team

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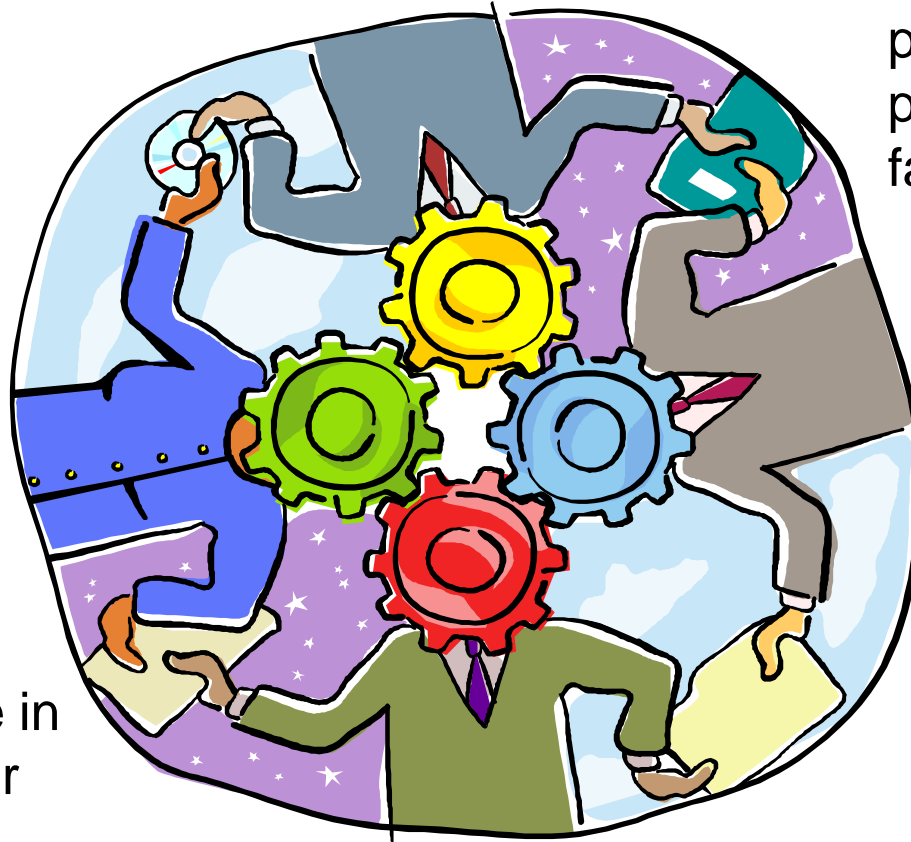
We need to balance our team's Skills, Personality and Knowledge in order to build team momentum, continuous added value to organization and customers,

'Balanced Team' is an approach for building a testing team profile, balancing skills, personalities and knowledge, to reach maximum effectiveness and efficiency in work productivity & communication

[9] Belbin's Personality Types Required

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DRIVE – people who Drive to accomplish results in spite of opposition or antagonistic circumstances



INFLUENCING – of people to act positively and favorably

STEADINESS - in performing work to consistently produce in a predictable manner

COMPLIANCE - with policy and standards to avoid error, conflict and danger

[9] Belbin's Balanced Team

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- Team roles are not the jobs that people have but **the roles which they play within a team.**
- Belbin identified nine different **roles that exist within teams** and how people's behavior, contributions and relationships dictate the role that they possess in the team:
 - Co-Ordinator (**CO** aka Chairman)
 - Shapers (**SH**)
 - Plants (**PL**)
 - Monitor Evaluator (**ME**)
 - Resource Investigator (**RI**)
 - Team Worker (**TW**)
 - Implementer (**IM**)
 - Completer Finisher (**CF**)
 - Specialist (**SP**)

Belbin's Team Roles & Personality Types

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Belbin's Team Roles		Test Analyst	Test Leader	Test Manager
	Co -Ordinator	5	5	5
	Shaper	2	3	3
	Plant	1	2	3
	Resource Investigator	5	5	5
	Monitor Evaluator	2	3	3
	Team Worker	4	4	4
	Implementer	4	4	5
	Completer Finisher	3	3	3
	Specialist	2	2	2

Key

1 – Least relevant role

5 – Most relevant role

Summary

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- Motivation
- Domain & Technology Expertise (i.e. Agile Scrum teams)
- Constant Skills Improvement – not just a word...
- Help New Testers Succeed
- The Morale of Your Staff = Everybody's Success
- The Overtime Dilemma: More Effort invested = Less Working SW?
- Creating Training opportunities
- Balanced Team approach

A changing world...

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“It is not the strongest of the species that survives, nor the most intelligent but the one that is **most responsive to change**”

Charles Darwin



Or perhaps . . .

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. . . the one who had anticipated all possible customer requirements !



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THANK YOU!


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Questions?

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