

Test Practice Management

Mastering the Dark Art

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Why This Topic?

- People wonder what I do all day
Sometimes I wonder what I do all day!
- I'm always busy. Is there a better way?
SIGIST feedback

So what is it?

- It's not all specific to Testing.
- Significant amount is Management 101
- So what is Management 101?
“The art of making people more effective than they would have been without you”. There are four basic pillars:
 - Plan
 - Organise
 - Coach
 - Monitor

Plan

- Figure out what the goal is
- Figure out the best way to get there based on:
 - Who's available
 - Strengths and weaknesses
 - Time constraints
 - Other constraints
 - Best case? Worst case? Likely case!

Organise

- Make the plan happen!
- Is everything ready for your plan to take place?
- Does your team have everything they need?

Coach

- Tell people what to do ... hmmm
- How about just saying “Go!”
- The team and/or individuals need to have the skills available so you don't have to direct their every move (Don't micromanage).
Consider a hockey team ... practice, practice, practice ... then play!

Monitor

- Keep an eye on things
- Tracking to plan?
- Change the plan?
- Adjustment
- Provide constructive feedback

Key things I spend my time on

- People management
- Estimation
- Capability uplift / improvement
- Strategic vision
- Marketing and Education
- Meetings, meetings, meetings

People Management

- Pipeline:
 - Making sure people have work to do
 - Getting the numbers right
 - Permanent headcount / baseline
 - Contract staff to manage peak demand
 - Minimise downtime
- Responding to urgent work
- Recruitment
- Performance Management
 - Reviews
 - Training

Estimation

- Architects do high level estimates but must have their assumptions validated by the competencies
- Test Manager / Test Lead validate the detail using:
 - Historical data
 - Top Down
 - Bottom up
 - Formula (% of project, ratio)
- Variances? Methodology!

Capability Uplift / Improvement

- There's always something new
- There's always a better way
- Created the TIF (Test Improvement Forum).
 - Fosters a team commitment to continuous improvement
 - Structured approach to continued learning and improvement
 - Driven by the team
 - Create a prioritised backlog of tactical / operational improvements and have a continuous delivery stream.
 - Contribute to prioritised backlog of strategic improvements

Strategic Vision

- Where is the company going?
- How does testing need to adapt to meet the needs of the company?
- Not just tactical or operational day by day

Marketing and Education

- Business and IT!
- The value of testing
- The risk of not testing
- Testing is not ...
- Testing better

Meetings

- Keep them short
- Understand your drivers and expected outcomes
- Conversation and collaboration is a key to successful delivery
- People are time poor so don't hold them up

Thank You & Questions?
