

Trends in IT: Testing of software

Detect and eliminate

According to Wim van Uden, the company's testers are its special agents. Just like Secret Agent James Bond, they must possess a wide range of capabilities. First of all, testers must have mastered the testing techniques and work at least at higher vocational level. Good testers have extremely strong communication skills, as they consult continuously with users and developers. Furthermore, testers have highly developed analytical skills and can work to a high degree of accuracy. They must be able to set priorities, but at the same time tackle a problem if they suspect that they have detected a system error. Detection and elimination: this is their mission.

TMapNext

In the next four years, the shortage of testers will rise to around three thousand. That is the estimate of Wim van Uden, Divisional Director of Software Control at Sogeti. Because the market needs certified testers, this coming Spring EXIN will introduce a new Short Track Test Management course, based on Sogeti's 'TMapNext' book. TMapNext is the successor to TMap. It makes the step from 'How do you test?' to 'How does testing contribute to the business?'. At the introductory sessions, Wim van Uden makes his entrance as James Bond: "Testers are the company's secret agents. Their mission: to detect as many risks as possible and eliminate them."

The ICT professionals most in demand? Testers. There is a shortage of testers and that shortage is growing all the time. Not really strange when you think that thirty to forty percent of the total IT budget in the Netherlands is spent on testing. Wim van Uden estimates that in the next four years there will be a shortage of around three thousand testers. He bases his estimate on figures from the CBS, fewer people taking IT training courses and the growing share of testing in IT projects. "One reason for that increasing need for testers is that IT processes are becoming more and more complex. Chains of systems now often run from the consumer to the supplier. At the same time, error tolerance is decreasing."

Less building, more testing

Another reason for the growing need for testers is that organizations are using standard solutions more and more often. Most companies are no longer building their applications themselves. They're buying ready-to-use packages, but these packages still have to be adapted and tested. "Less building, more testing: that's the trend for the years to come. Testing is a continuous process," Wim continues. "That's why testing is set to become an independent activity. As it is already in many companies. Testing is no longer something IT employees do alongside their usual tasks. It has become a specialization. Because of the developments in quality, the market is demanding professional, certified testers."

The changing role of the tester

Every organization is dependent on the efficient exchange of information. Continuous and professional testing reduces the risk of bottlenecks in the exchange of information, and therefore also in business processes, as much as possible. That is essential if the business objectives are to be realized. The role of the tester is changing. To an increasing extent, testing is now seen as an essential part of the business. Together with the management of the business, testers analyze the risks, determine the riskiest components in advance and outline a test strategy so that they can then go through the entire test process step by step. At the same time, they regularly report their findings to management in a transparent manner, advise them about risk control and use their findings to provide developers and IT administrators with feedback.

The company's secret agents

To stimulate new employees to develop the required skills, at introductory sessions Wim makes his entrance as James Bond. "Testers are the company's secret agents. Their mission: to detect as many risks as possible and eliminate them. Just like James Bond does on the international stage. They have to work in a well-substantiated and disciplined way." That demands quite a lot from testers. With over six hundred testers in his division, Wim knows the requirements for a good tester better than anyone else. "At least Higher Vocational level and very good communicative skills. Once testers are onto something, they really get their teeth into it. There isn't a lot of enthusiasm for the profession among young IT professionals. People choose to work in IT because they want to make games or the like. But once they've become familiar with testing, all that changes. Testing is a kind of religion: once it grabs you, it never lets you go."

The new Short Track Test Management course that EXIN has introduced earlier in 2007 is aimed at meeting the growing need for certified testers. The Short Track consists of a new TMap Next Foundation exam and an updated TMap Next Advanced exam. TMap is a testing method that is now accepted as the international standard. The Short Track is based on the book TMapNext published by Sogeti in December last year. TMapNext describes the entire test process from every angle and focuses on the responsibilities and the controlling role of the business in the testing sphere. TMapNext is also a very adaptive approach, which means that it can be used for both large and small projects.

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