THE BUSINESS OF SOFTWARE TESTING

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JOHAN STEYN

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About the author

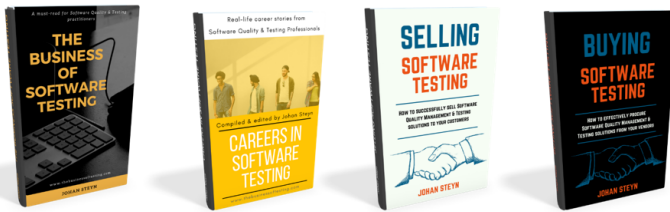Johan Steyn is a business development specialist who has been selling technology products and services in South Africa and in Europe over the last 20 years. Over the last decade his focus turned to the software quality assurance & testing market. He worked in senior roles for global consulting firms like SQS and Accenture, and is currently working at one of the largest banks in South Africa.

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Dedication

I dedicate this book to all the young, enthusiastic and inspiring test professionals I worked with over the years. I trust that this book will help you in some way as you venture into the future.

I especially dedicate the book to my friend Gaven. We met when you were a young testing intern. I am proud of how far you have come.

1 A brave new world

The shifting sand under our feet

There is a momentous shift taking place in the world of digital technology. Industries and careers that offered sanctuary to many professionals for many decades are being disrupted in ways that we may never be able to grasp. Although the news media and industry forums have been shouting this news into our ears for a long time, many of us remain oblivious to the dramatic impact of and speed at which we are approaching the cliff of innovation.

We are entering a new technological world, a world where only the brave will survive. Who are those brave souls? They have the foresight to understand the massive impact of what is already happening to our world and have taken the needed steps to survive the coming tsunami.

"Tsunami" is the right word to use here. When a tsunami approaches, we cannot do much to stop the destruction about to hit our homes, but we can heed the warnings from scientists and prepare accordingly. A tsunami moves with great speed and is usually unexpected. As meteorological technology advances, we will have more time to organize when the warning bell sounds, but we will never have enough time. A tsunami wave moves faster than we can imagine.

The DevOps Tsunami

Tsunami is the word I have been using for a long time to describe the changes in our digital world and technical careers. Some months back, I published an article on LinkedIn

called The DevOps Tsunami which caused quite a stir among my peers. The article was also picked up by an influential British Software Testing publication. Resultantly, many software quality professionals from a global spectrum contacted me to express their views.

My sincere belief was that my description of the tsunami would echo what many others in our industry already knew and experienced. But I was surprised by the amount of resistance and criticism that filled my inbox. Many who made contact expressed a belief that DevOps and the resultant impact on Software Quality Management was just a fad – another buzz word like Agile or Scrum – and that it would soon disappear like the sound of a jet plane passing by. They expressed a "been there – done that" view: they have seen the many changes hitting our technological world but have experienced little change in their daily lives as testing practitioners. There are always new tools at our disposal, new buzz words, and new trends. But many are still conducting software testing in a manual way, and they seem to be quite happy with that.

The Status Quo

This comfort zone of the status quo was built on personality cults, and empires that were carefully manufactured in our corporate environments over the years. These cult leaders may have been good testing professionals in their hey-day. But over time, have they climbed the corporate ladder, nestled in a comfortable career where change and innovation were the enemy, and where like-minded minions filled the ranks of the teams managed by them.

They have achieved becoming the go-to software guys in their corporate divisions and are the holders of the keys

to quality. But to justify their existence, they keep their stakeholders – especially those with the funding on which their kingdoms depend – at ransom. Concepts like automotive innovation, cognitive technology, and even the expertise of vendor partners are avoided at all costs. Innovation, the reuse of assets, and the employment of disruptive thinkers are not welcomed. These things will make their houses built on sand to crumble.

The Testers of Tomorrow (Today)

The clarion call goes out to the software quality and testing community. What we desperately need TODAY is an army of *testers of tomorrow*. The call goes out to those testing professionals who embrace the coming tsunami, with all the change and uncertainty it brings. Nothing could have prepared you for this.

What does the *tester of tomorrow* look like? First of all, he or she is a testing professional with good technical skills. This is not someone who is bound to a specific tool, framework, or methodology. This adaptable tester allowed himself or herself to be exposed to a variety of tools of the trade. Exploration, a hunger for growth, and innovation are the name of the game.

Testers of tomorrow are real leaders. While many in this trade like to work in the shadows, they operate in the trenches with their teams. They drive their teams through their example of commitment and dedication, and they see the strengths in their teams not as threats but essential elements that will make the testers successful, too. They are always keen to promote others and give praise where it is due.

Testers of tomorrow are commercially savvy leaders. They understand that software quality management and testing are means to an end. He always and foremost takes into account

the business objectives of his customers and stakeholders. He spends time and effort with his team to ensure all are aligned with the business goals of their organization, and aligns their testing approach and planning to these. He is measured and measures his team on the successful realization of business goals through software quality management.

The tester of tomorrow is a shrewd political navigator. She knows that both she and her team's success rely on her political capital within her organization. She makes sure that she is connected to the relevant influencers and that she has their ear. She knows that gossip and second-hand information within the corridors of the workplace can scuttle her success.

She knows how to promote herself with skilled maneuvering, and she always ensures that the achievements of her team and the credit due to them is visible to her stakeholders. She recovers from failures gracefully, knowing how to dust herself off and tackle the failure with ownership to exceed expectations.

The tester of tomorrow is a reader and a learner. Learning never stops for this leader. He is on the cutting-edge with technological advances and innovation because he attends conferences, participates in webinars, and spends time reading.

He or she is not a lazy information gatherer. He is also well connected with his peers in the world of software quality. She is a voice worth listening to, a thought leader.

Testers of tomorrow live and breathe software quality management. They are not merely testers at the end of the cycle. They are not seen as the "stepchildren of the SDLC." Their voices and influence are heard from the very outset of a new project or planned feature. Their peers welcome their opin-

ions and shape their planning around the testers' guidance. They embody a "shift left" of innovation and test automation as they skilfully practice their craft throughout the software development and release process.

The Impossible Dream?

What I have just described may seem like a far cry from the reality that most quality professionals experience. The growth of a plant in a pot is restricted by its environment. Many organizations – whether end users of software services such as banks or even the supposed experts like global vendors – are not aware of or prepared for the tsunami.

Your career ambitions as a tester of tomorrow may not be realized where you currently work. Many organizations still see software testing as a necessary evil to be avoided at all costs, or at least as a grudge purchase like insurance.

Traditionally, our peers in the software world looked at testers as second-hand citizens. Testing was seen for those who did not "make the cut" to become developers. One would never be able to entice a hard-core developer into a career of software testing. The tsunami will force a change here. As we wake up to the tsunami-hit world around us, and as the actual role of software quality is recognized in a world moving at a fast pace that introduces massive risk, the *Tester of Tomorrow* will find her real place.

I see a world where those hardcore, weirdo pony-tail developers can be enticed to focus on a career in software quality management. In this world, their technical and development skills will make them the ideal candidates to test software.

Dear Reader, Welcome to a brave new world! Will we find you sinking or swimming as the tsunami hits?

Note: see this link for my Article about the DevOps Tsunami:

https://www.thebusinessoftesting.com/single-post/2017/04/27/Testers-while-you-were-sleeping-the-DevOps-Tsunami