

Assessing Your Value as a Tester



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Agenda



- The Value Problem
- What is Value?
- Personal Value Assessments
- Setting the Stage for Delivering Value
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 - Stage 2 - Identifying Expectations
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The Value Problem



- **Testing is valuable, right?**
 - Testers gather and communicate timely, quality related information
 - Observations and insights are shared and emphasized based on our understanding of the client's needs
- **But...**
 - Are you providing value?
 - What do your clients value?
 - What is value?



What is Value?



Personal Value Assessments

- We pursue excellence by honing our skills and diversifying our techniques
- Evaluators by nature, we often critique our own work
- How effective are our own assessments?
 - How do we assess our own value? How often? Do our measures matter to our clients? What is our client's perception of the value we are providing?



Personal Assumptions & Bias Traps

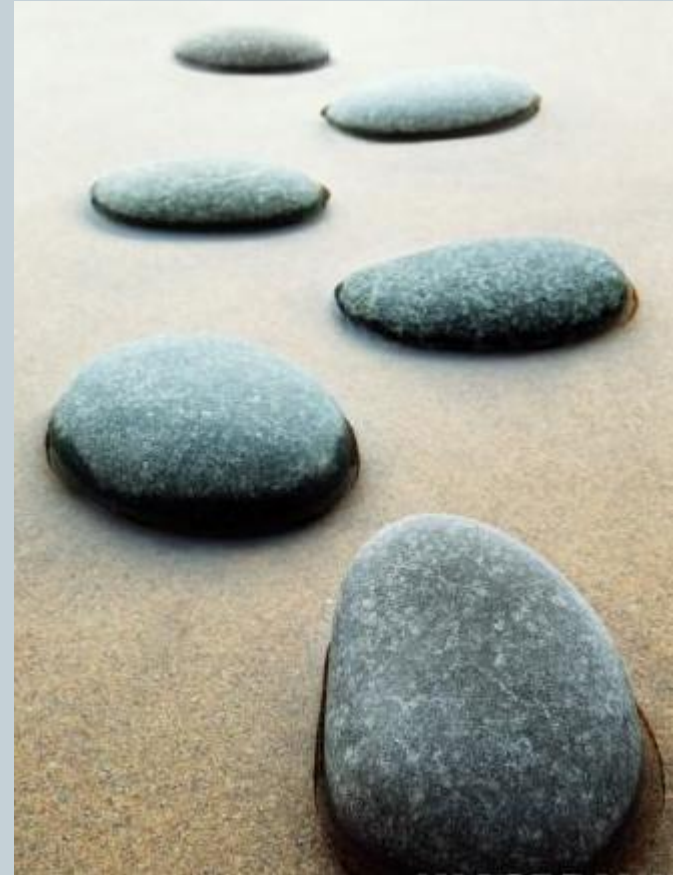
- Assumptions and bias can distort personal assessment
- Common traps:
 - Riding the Emotional High of Project Success
 - Burdened by Project Failure
 - The Effects of Negative Nelly
 - Ego Rubbing People Pleasers
 - Growing Pains
- Be wary of your perspective, gain insights from clients



Setting the Stage for Delivering Value



- Consider the following stages to delivering higher value:
 - Identifying Our Clients
 - Identifying Expectations
 - Gathering Feedback
 - Assessing Value
 - Responding Accordingly



Stage 1 - Identifying Our Clients



- Testing is a service role with a diverse group of clients
- Client's needs and perspectives on testing value will differ
- To provide an effective service you need to understand these differences and align your delivery

Business Analysts

Technical Writers

Customers

Designers

Trainers

Programmers

Managers

Support Teams

Stakeholders

Stage 2 – Identifying Expectations

- Determine client's understanding of testing and their expectations of you as their tester
- The diversity of your clients will drive diversity in their expectations
- Seek out these differences and attune your delivery to each client's needs
- Be prepared to advocate for the role of testing



Stage 3 - Gathering Feedback



- Seek feedback early and often from your clients
- Remember that value is subjective
 - Potential to be superstar status for some clients and rock bottom for others
- Feedback can be gathered actively or passively
 - Active: Requesting or soliciting feedback
 - Passive: Observing the interactions of people



Active Feedback



- Active feedback is an interactive exchange of perspectives
- Allows for the clarification of ideas; can provide guidance and direction
- Tends to be self selecting; obtaining reliable feedback can be challenging
- Feedback provided may gloss over areas of concern; need to encourage meaningful discussion



Passive Feedback

- Passive feedback is observed without participant's conscious knowledge
- One way communication; subject to observer bias
- Requires actively and consciously observing interactions with clients
- Important augmentation to active feedback
- Consider observation, 360° feedback reviews and surveys



Challenges in Receiving Feedback

- Seek feedback for the purpose of personal growth
- Negativity will limit the quality and quantity of feedback
- Establish a positive and constructive mindset, be genuinely appreciative
- Be prepared that not all individuals will be skilled in the delivery of their feedback



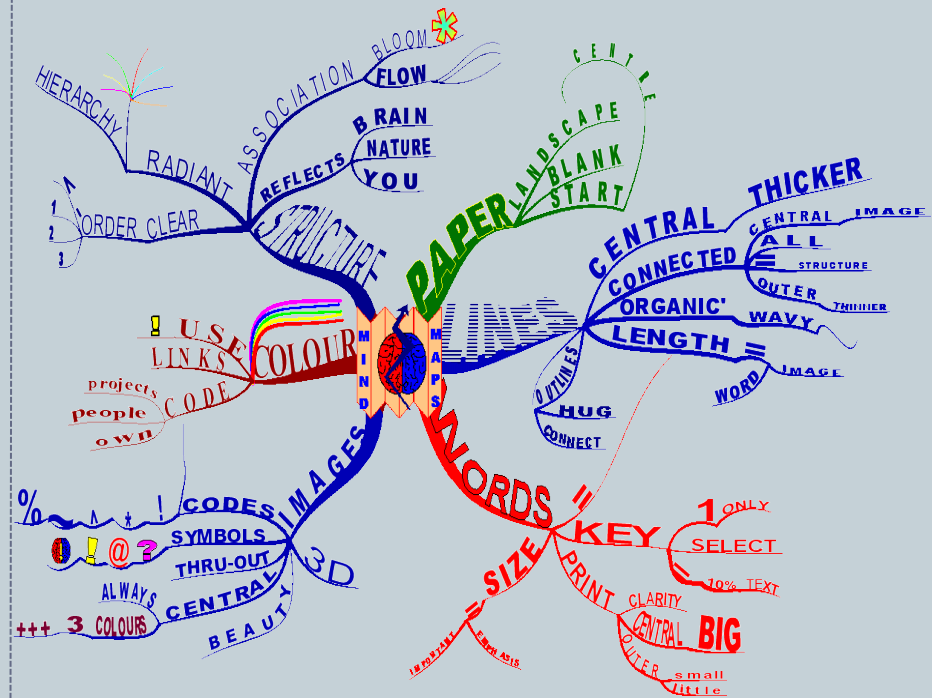
Reminders to Receiving Feedback



- **Actively Engage**
 - Be conscious of welcoming feedback, avoid shying away from constructive feedback
- **Be Open Minded and Accepting**
 - Accept feedback of any sort and in any form as simply information
- **Think Before Responding**
 - Resist the urge to immediately respond to the feedback
 - Consider asking open ended, clarifying questions to allow the individual to elaborate on their feedback.
- **Make a Choice**
 - Make your own decisions about what you intend to do with the information

Stage 4 – Assessing Value

- It is important to draw meaningful conclusions on the value you are providing
- Focus on learning how to improve the service you are providing
- Meeting the needs of your developer will differ from meeting the needs of your BA or PM
- The diversity in clients can be challenging



Stage 5 – Responding Accordingly

- How do we respond to the information? Do we take action? Why or why not?
- Be prepared to stretch your skills, knowledge, and commitment
- Establish your game plan to adapt and better align with your client's expectations
- Be mindful to incorporate both short term wins and longer term objectives



Summary



- Testing is a service role
- Be cautious of personal assumptions and bias on the service you are providing
- Your clients are a diverse group of individuals with differing needs and perspectives
- Seek feedback from your clients; assess the value you are providing as their tester
- With an understanding your client's needs and perspectives, you will be able to align and provide a higher value service

Questions?



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