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written by Manoj Khanna | March 23, 2005
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Agile Testing

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While most of us agree that how hard it is to cope with the nagging of the documentation stuff required while the ordinary system team (i.e. the developers along with their PM) is working off to resolve the baselines of the code. In the testing world, certain things don't work right. What written up there in that document might not have the effect while its up there on the screen or is running behind the code.

There are certain aspects sometimes on a project which is run conventionally. You can't have all the information available to all parties at one time and have satisfied as well. In my previous project experience, I came across the scenario where the users were comparatively weren't satisfied with what was tested and what was left out of the scope for testing. Involving them, in our daily 30 min test scrum with the developers as well helped sort out getting the answers straight and clear.

Although, if a project is managed through the agile methods things are little different and following any agile method for status meetings and testing becomes easier for all of the team to follow but in a scenario where there is an element of conventional project running – certain parties might not agree (partial or completely) with this approach. Hence, for those parties there should be a one-on-one approach to make things better.

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The Management Update

written by Manoj Khanna | March 23, 2005

What's your take on management? Do you think that management is all about "Managing the people". Doesn't management rings a bell or two about where the heck is the work-pressure coming from. The deadlines and milestones. The deliverables and the likes. My own personal experience makes me think that management is not just about managing people in a given organization but also managing its culture.

Think about how well the culture of your past organization/department was. Think about how your own needs were well taken care of when you wiped your butt in the middle of the night thinking what's it going to be in tomorrow's status meeting! Spending sleepless nights and just putting things right.

Do I understand what management is? Am I'm no management guru. All I know is what I've learnt through by myself. But even if somebody has or thinks he's a management guru – they wouldn't argue as well on this; because, management is not only a day-to-day cultural movement but also it's a statement of complex relationships to be managed. Every company/organization/department has its own style. It has its own and self-defined management personnel. Its own way of life. Despite of the fact that there exists a standard – milestone corporate management policy. Management is actually a breathing life of the organization. If management loses its track or breathes out dead – the organization is dead as well. In order to keep the longevity and health of the organization – the management needs to act in a way to keep it healthy and alive.

This is now forcing me to think things like what else happens when the companies goes awe! The management is the critical piece of any organization in running and continuing the

business. A business itself is very critical and competitive to run. When a company has a business and in order to sustain it – it takes a lot. But in order to keep running it and keep pushing the workforce to make it work better and better – its a lot of effort and this all comes from no other than the management itself.

Imagine a workforce, diversified, de-located and at distinguished levels. Graduates, or undergraduates. Professionals and administratives. All working for the same cause – money. And the product they are creating is the this company. And the not so strange fact about a organization is that, that any organization is born based on certain objectives and principles/values. These objectives and principles/values bring together a thought process. That thought process gives a way to the challenges and creates an actual working prototype of that organization. This prototype is further enhanced and polished by the analysis and adjunct by the entire core team which is working towards these objectives.

In simple terms, management is not just a bunch of white/blue collars sitting across each other in a large conference room, trying to resolve a conflict or pave a way to the next big-idea! Now most of you'll agree that – these conference rooms are not at times the place for the big-ideas! But pave a way to conflict – may be yes!

Sometimes management means, a grievances committee. Not necessarily true however for some companies. For those companies these sometimes could be handled by the Grievances Department specially created by the management, for the management and also is a representative of the management!

More to follow…

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Understanding the User

written by Manoj Khanna | March 23, 2005

This is a very touchy subject. No one wants to be in a position where they are not able to fully support a user. An IT Manager's worst nightmare is the inability to meet the expectations of the users. In a functional organization where the earnings are through the functional means, more or less the It department is on the mercy of the main department. And in order to keep the IT shop running – IT people have no choice but to meet their expectations and fully understand them.

At times, where the IT staff is fully supportive – a user understanding is very poor. Couple of years ago I interacted with a user via phone and when asked to hit the "escape" key the user got a shock saying that "is there an escape key on my keyboard? Where is it?". Now if the IT department breathes in and out the facts of the computing world it doesn't mean that the rest of the world is also on the same boat. That incident taught me a lesson to never underestimate the user – user can be as intelligent as a freshman or as naive as in junior school.

The expectations and the objectives which the user community has from the IT department is large. At certain point IT department is a magical world where everything and anything can take place as per their needs. No necessarily as it sounds like. But some folks do not want to understand. Some user completely underestimate what IT does. Well, there is no easy way to resolve these mutual misunderstandings.

Thus, in order to avoid such scenarios some of the good approaches is to have a middle-person. A person who knows well

about the users and at the same time about the technology. A person chosen not for the technology skills but for the ability to interact successfully with others in their language.

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Tsunamis: Disaster, Technology, and The Sixth Sense

written by Manoj Khanna | March 23, 2005
In a recent string of stories popping on tsunamis, and carrying on the tsunami calamities, and what's left thereafter. In the end no one can beat nature, but certainly with the modernization and developments since the late 19th century till today – some warnings can be predicted and the disasters could be brought down to minimal. Here are highlights of some:

> *As thousands perish due to the gigantic killer wave, fingers point at forecasting agencies, ill-equipped to predict such calamities.*

How Did Animals Escape Tsunami?

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