

10

Mistakes

Companies make
when Outsourcing
Software Testing

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ABSTRACT

When it comes to completing software projects on time and with the fewest possible defects, managers are faced with the question of whether or not to outsource software testing or deploy an in-house team. Outsourcing provides several advantages such as reducing HR, training, and tool and equipment costs as well as saves time. That is, if you approach outsourcing correctly. In this white paper, we will discuss ten mistakes that companies make when outsourcing QA that undermine the success of their projects so that you, the reader, may bypass them when outsourcing your software testing and QA.

"6 out of 10 IT projects fail initially, largely due to poor testing during development". – Gartner

INTRODUCTION

With software testing accounting for 35% of IT budgets in 2015 (according to the World Quality report 2015-2016), it's clear that managers are looking to maximize their test spend, making the most of each dollar by testing as efficiently and effectively as possible. Obstacles that many managers report experiencing when trying to release new systems are their reliance on manual testing and lacking the tools, time, expertise, etc., needed to test thoroughly. That's why outsourcing is a very smart solution because you don't have to go through the hassles of recruiting, hiring, training, purchasing tools, and the like. When you leave testing to experts in the field, you reduce business risk and obtain higher quality testing. The best part is that you have more time to focus on what you do best. That is, if all goes well. Here are 10 common mistakes companies make when outsourcing software testing that you can learn from the easy way.

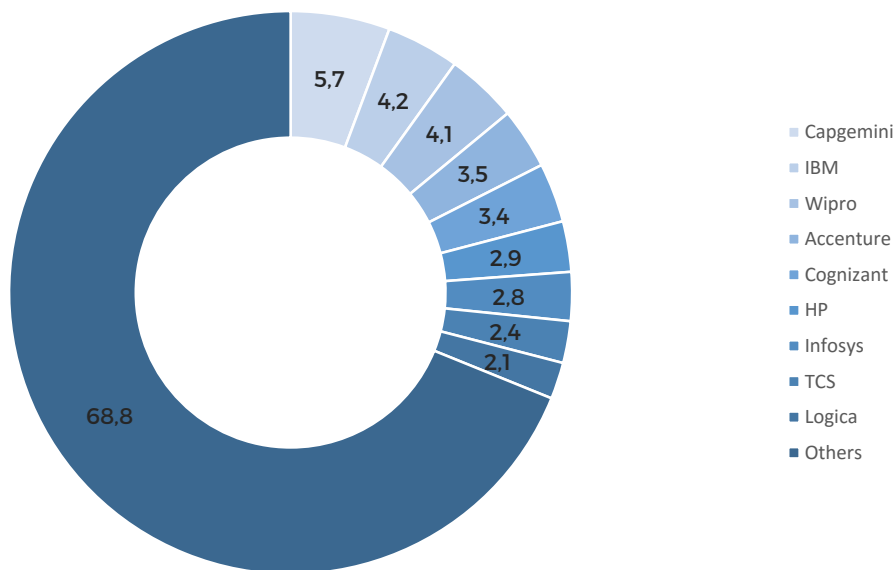
10 Mistakes Companies Make When Outsourcing Software Testing

1. Skipping the part where you do your homework on the company

There is a plethora of software testing service providers globally with the leading vendors only holding about 5% of the market share each or less (Global Outsourced Software Testing Services Market Report 2014-2018).

Don't assume that the big names in testing with the most employees are necessarily the best. Many of the larger testing companies are not solely focused on testing or may not have as much time to dedicate to each client as the smaller ones do.

Software Testing Services Market in 2015



Source: TechNavio Analysis

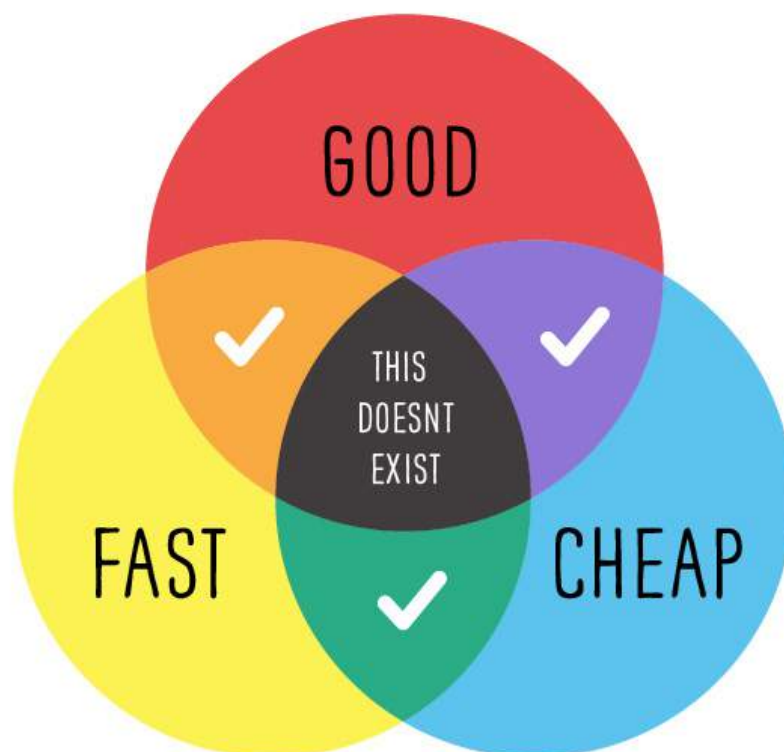
Here are some important questions to ask when picking a testing company:

- . Is the management team comprised of highly educated thought leaders in testing?
- . Is the company involved in the testing community? Do they contribute to the open source community, building good karma?
- . Is what you are looking for within their principle focus? For example, if you seek performance testing services, is that it something that they specialize in?
- . Can they give you the resources (whether it is time, people, training, etc.) that you need to be successful?
- . Does the company have experience in your vertical? For example, if you are a software provider in the banking industry, has the company tested a similar application before? Are they aware of the laws and regulations that to which your application must adhere?



2. Allowing price to be the main decision criteria

Like they say, you can only pick two out of these three when buying services: **good, fast, and cheap**. Ask yourself which ones matter the most. You can go for the cheap and fast options if you are in a pinch for time and money, but you may accrue so much technical debt that it will end up costing you more money down the line than it's worth. It is also important to note that some outsourcing destinations may offer more competitive rates, but you have to do more background research to verify their credentials and the gap between time zones and cultures may end up holding you back, (but we'll get more into that next).



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Photo source: BJ Heinley

3. Choosing a company whose business culture or time zone does not mesh with yours

It may be surprising to find how different one company's work culture is from another. It's important to identify an outsourcing partner that understands your work method and can adapt to it easily.

Some things to consider are:

- . Do they stick to deadlines as strictly as you do?
- . Are they proactive in finding solutions to problems?
- . Do they have a similar "let's get it done" attitude?
- . Do they only do what is asked of them or do they believe in going above and beyond by suggesting improvements when they think of them?
- . Do they see the value of weekly status reports as much as you do?

Secondly, how willing are you to make off-hour conference calls at say, 6 a.m. or 8 p.m.? What sacrifices in your day would you have to make just to get things done?

It's always important that you and the testing company be mindful of each other's schedules or else both may become frustrated when requests keep arising at inconvenient times.



4. Overlooking co-managed approach and staff augmentation delivery models

Outsourcing doesn't have to mean that you hand over testing 100% to an outside team. Sometimes it's more helpful to add extra testers to your current one whether it be for just one project or long term. There are so many delivery models of test outsourcing that there is a solution for almost everyone.

In-sourcing, or having the outsourced tester work out of your own location, is becoming very popular as it combines the best of both worlds: skipping the process of having to recruit and hire a tester yet having them there with you for instant access and communication. In fact, 23.5% of respondents in the ISTQB World Wide Software Testing Practices Report indicated that in-sourcing was one of the ways in which they manage testing. It is good to find a testing provider that can meet your needs and work with you to find the best mix of working remotely or on location, co-managed or 100% outsourced testing, etc.

5. Forgetting to establish a point of contact on both sides

It's important to remember that even though you have outsourced testing, part of your day will still be devoted to answering their emails and helping to solve problems. Something that makes a world of a difference when working with an outsourced team is to appoint one person from your team and one from theirs who will be the main points of contact. These people will be in charge of making sure that everything goes smoothly and that everyone receives whatever they ask for in a timely manner, preventing project delays. In agreement with Karen N. Johnson, in her presentation, "[Managing an Offshore Team](#)," creating an environment where anyone feels comfortable to ask questions is essential for successful outsourcing. This way, the outsourced testers will know exactly whom to address when working with you and vice versa.



6. Not involving the testing team at the beginning of development

The sooner you involve the test team, the quicker and easier they will be able to understand the product and what it is you are trying to achieve in order to add value. It also is a huge time and cost saver to start testing as soon as possible. Fixing bugs that are found earlier on **costs significantly less** compared to bugs found during UI tests or production, especially the larger bugs.

7. Failing to establish a strategy and project goals on the outset

Not establishing the test strategy, process, test cases, timeline, etc., before starting is like going on a road trip without a map. Eventually, you may come to some dead ends and everyone will have different opinions about which direction to take next. Make sure all parties are aware of the plan. Give testers all of the information that they need to start testing including the requirements specification.

It is also important to set expectations in the beginning so that the testers know for what to aim. How can they meet or exceed expectations if they don't know what they are? Draw up a thorough **service level agreement** that covers volume of work, deadlines, downtime and availability, etc., so that there is no room for doubt on either side.



8. Failing to build trust

In order for the endeavor of outsourcing to work, both sides must trust one another. Trust, meaning, confidence in the fact that everyone shares the same goal, you can count on each other, and that both sides are capable of effective cooperation.

To build trust with the outsourced team, it is important to:

. Listen to their needs

If they see that you care about their concerns by listening to them, you build mutual respect which also builds trust.

. Follow through

If you do what you say you are going to do by keeping your promises, they will trust that you are a reliable partner and will be more likely to follow through on their end.

. Be honest

Don't give them a false reason why you are disappointed with a certain outcome to spare their feelings. Give them your honest feedback so that they can trust when you actually are pleased by their work.

. Get to know them as people

Your outsourced team members are humans as well. One way to build trust is to have empathy for them. Ask how they are doing and get to know them a little bit more than just where they live and what they do. Have regular video chats to be better acquainted than you could over the phone. Simply seeing each others' faces makes it a much more human interaction. They will appreciate you for seeing them as people first and foremost and secondly as testers.



9. Neglecting to manage staff morale

Sometimes, your in-house tester morale may take a hit when you outsource part of your testing. Be transparent in your motivations and explain how it will only benefit them and the overall quality of your application. On the other hand, to maintain a high morale amongst the outsourced testers, invite them to your office or have an introduction over Skype to the entire team and make them feel included as much as possible.

10. Treating it like a short-term relationship

Regardless of the horizon of the project or contract, a good vendor should treat all clients equally. That doesn't mean though, that they won't notice if you brush them off as less important because you only hired them for a short while. If they don't feel valued, they may put more of their attention on projects for clients whom they know will be interested in doing business again. In any case, treat them as if they were a long-term partner because you may need to rely on them again unexpectedly in the future.

CONCLUSION

Given the various advantages of outsourcing software testing and quality assurance, several software engineering and quality assurance managers have turned to it as a helpful solution. There are best practices when outsourcing testing that all managers should be aware of first and foremost to avoid the ten mistakes that we explained in this white paper. As with any team, your outsourced team requires proper management in order to provide the most value for your company. Hopefully, this paper has made it easier for you to choose and work with a testing service provider.

Ready to let outside professionals improve the quality and user experience of your systems while reducing time to market?

Abstracta provides an array of testing services from performance to automation testing using a variety of delivery models to best complement your team in a fully outsourced or co-managed approach.

About the author



Sofia Palamarchuk was appointed Abstracta's Chief Executive Officer at the start of 2015. With a B.S. in Computer Engineering, Sofia was Abstracta's technical consultant in application performance optimization, system monitoring and load testing for the corporate sector for many years. With a solid background in performance tuning, automation, and account management, Sofia has become a business development leader and is responsible for managing client relations and all aspects of Abstracta's operations.

About Abstracta

Abstracta is a world leader in quality assurance and testing focused on improving the performance of software applications. With offices in Latin America and Silicon Valley, Abstracta has over nine years of expertise working not only with leading-edge proprietary and open source testing tools, but developing specialized tools for financial, retail and technology including companies such as BBVA financial group, Verifone, GeneXus software, and the largest retail bookseller in the United States.



Formed by passionate computer engineers and PhDs, Abstracta is always looking for innovative ideas and solutions to give customers the best solutions possible. Abstracta develops its own testing tools and are an active contributor to the open source software testing community. Abstracta has extensive experience using performance testing tools such as Jmeter, OpenSTA, HP LoadRunner, WatiN, LoadUI and more.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

[Managing your Offshore Testing Team](#) by Karen N. Johnson.

[9 Reasons to Pick Uruguay as your Nearshore Service Provider](#) by Abstracta.

[10 Key Considerations When Outsourcing QA and Testing Services](#) by AppLabs.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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