

GDC Canada

Vancouver, BC



May 12–13, 2009

Game Developers Conference® Canada
Vancouver Convention & Exhibition Centre

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The art and science of quality assurance in the video game industry

Our journey to transform QA at EA Canada

Mario Vasquez





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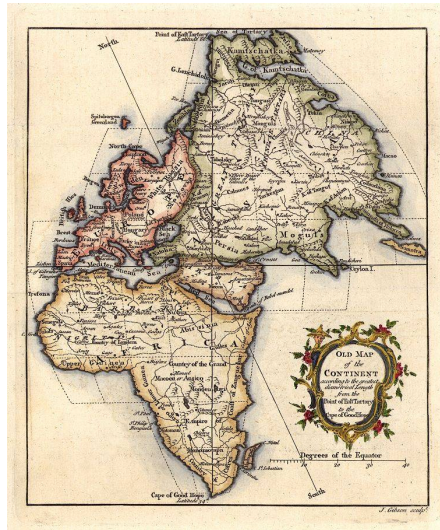
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REBOOT
Communication Services

A tale of 2 QAs



The old QA

- ⊗ Defect detection
- ⊗ Blackbox test centric
- ⊗ Audit quality

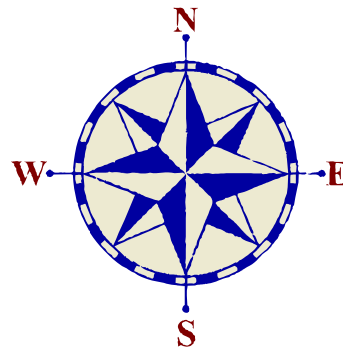


The new QA

- ⊗ Defect prevention
- ⊗ Highly skilled
- ⊗ Build to quality

Our north

Achieve and sustain the highest *appropriate* quality in the industry while decreasing overall expenditure



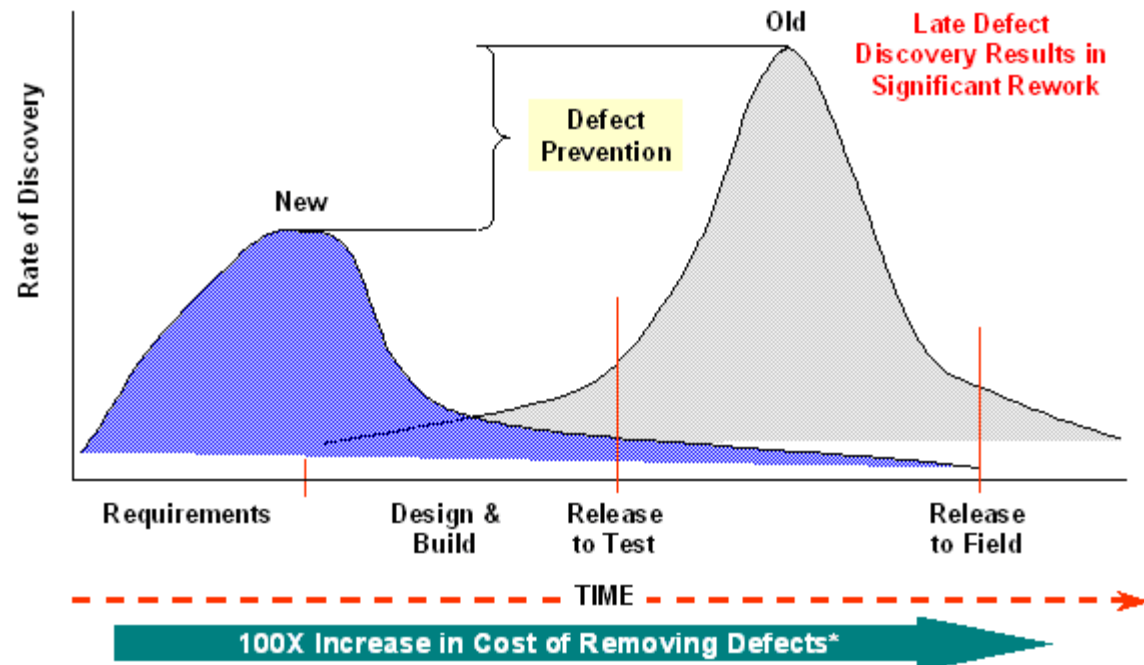
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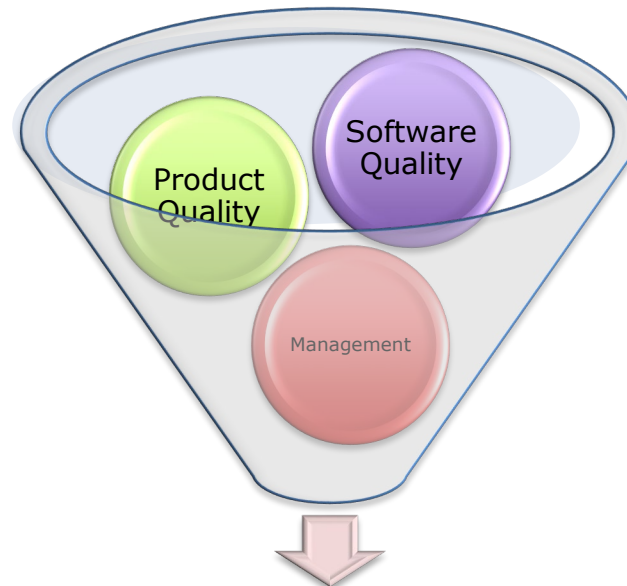
Prevention over detection



Source*: Boehm, Barry. *Software Engineering Economics*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc. 1981.
Boehm, Basili. "Software Management." *IEEE Computer*, January 2001.

From: <http://software.isixsigma.com/library/content/c030611a.asp>

QA function



**Highly skilled quality
assurance Team**

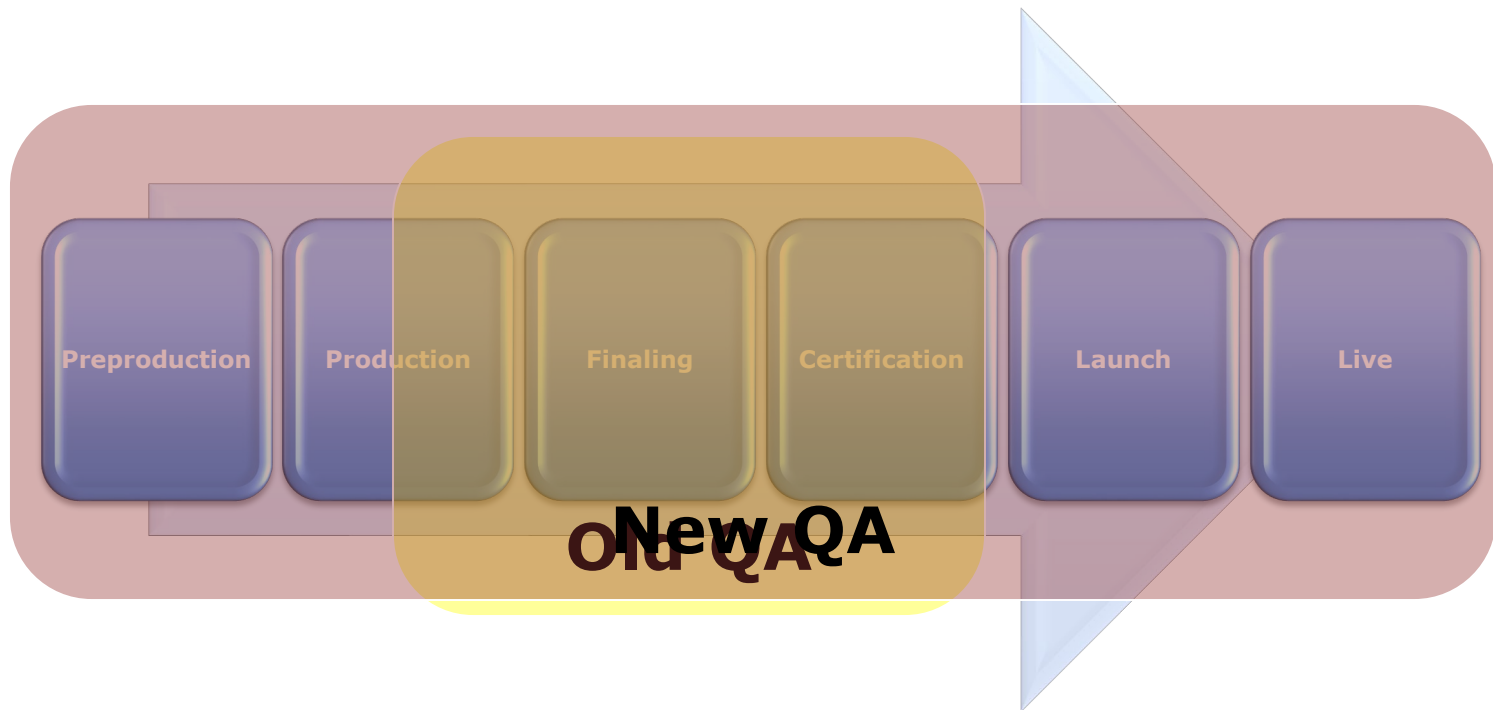
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Reinvented Business Solutions

QA scope



End to end Quality ownership



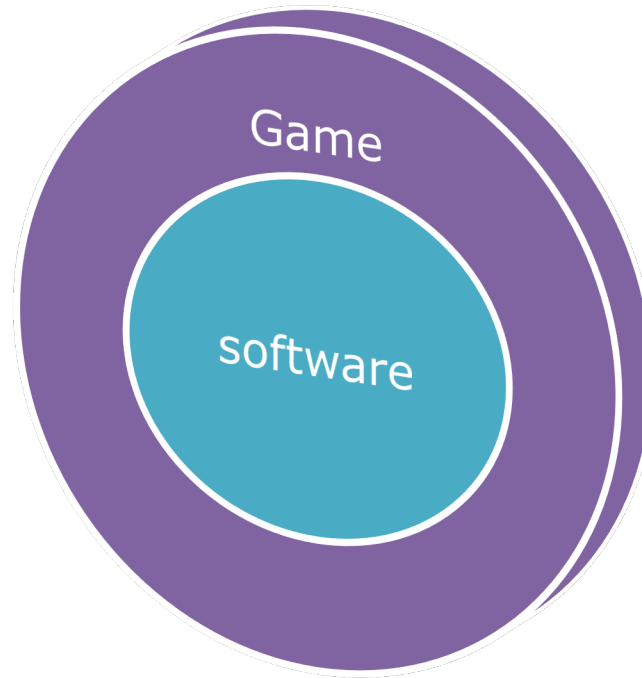
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Software Quality (SQ)



**Software
Quality**

Product
Quality

Management



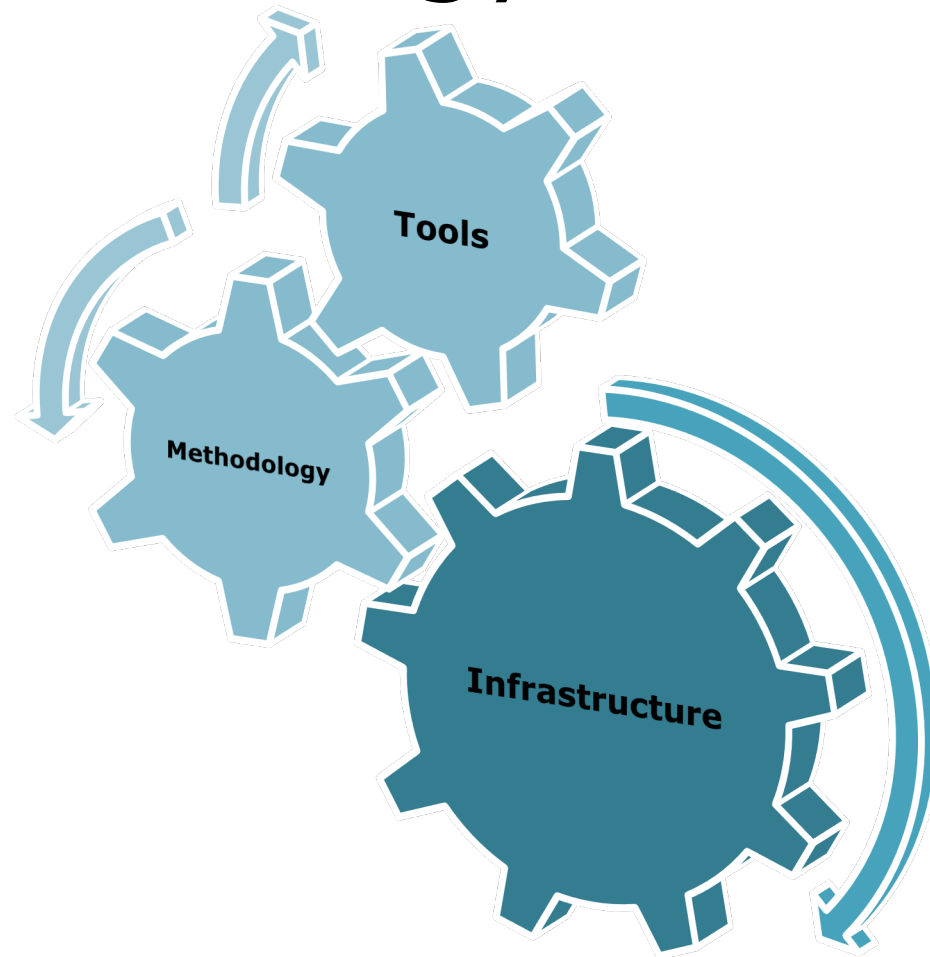
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QA technology



**Software
Quality**

Product
Quality

Management

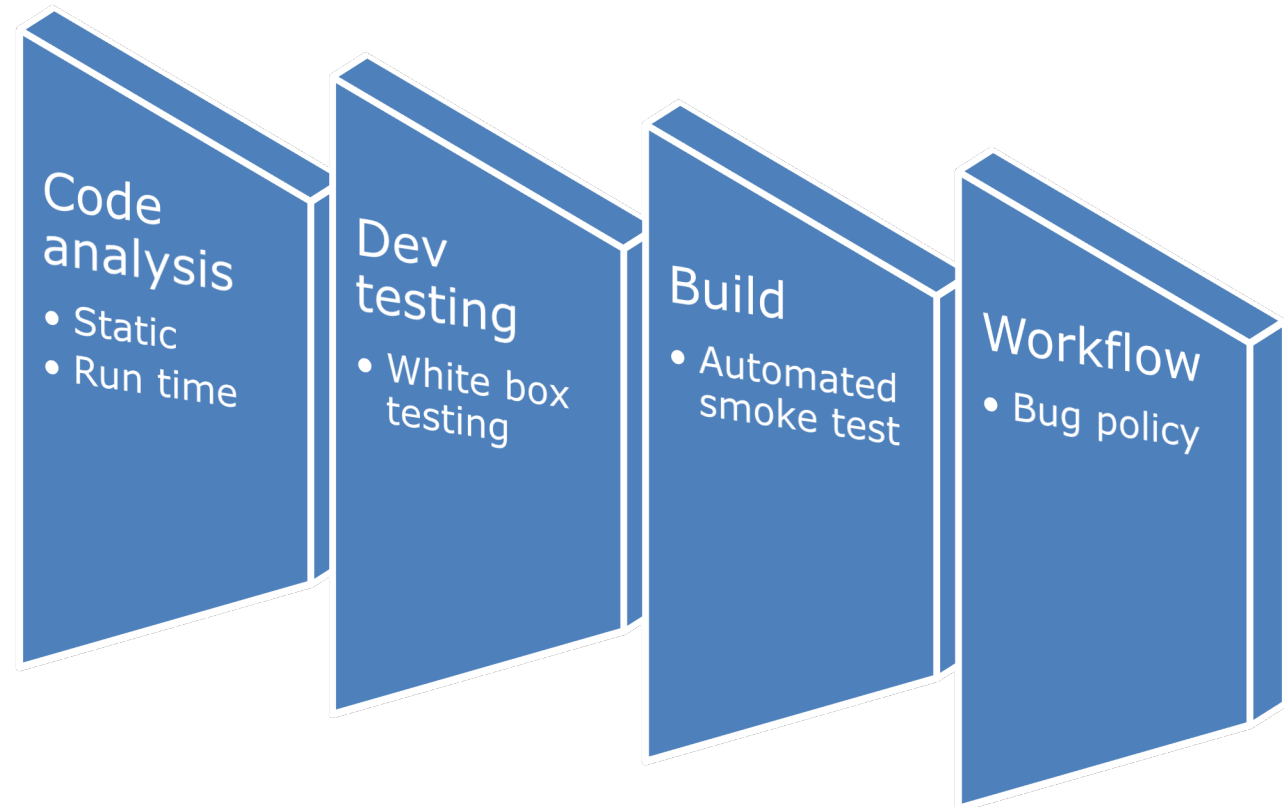
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REBOOT
Reinvented. Reconnected. Rebooted.

SQ helps Development



**Software
Quality**

Product
Quality

Management

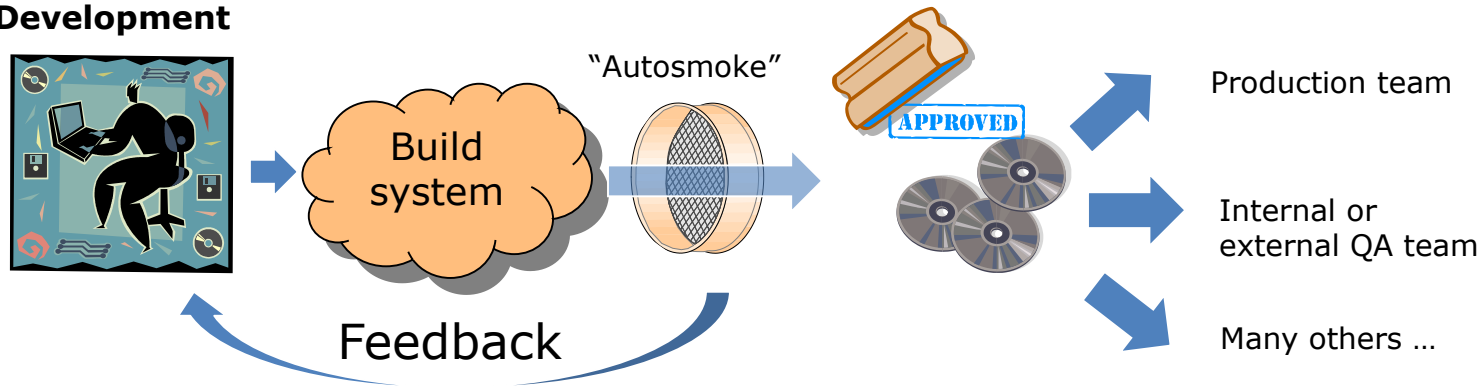
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Automated smoke test

Development



**Autosmokes increase predictability
while saving time and effort**

**Software
Quality**

Product
Quality

Management

SQ helps manual testing

Telemetry

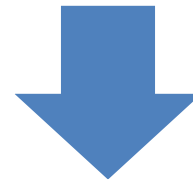
- Reports on key metrics (e.g. coverage, completion)
- Supports Decision making

Test Automation

- Tailored to project needs
- Reduces manual testing required

Test tools

- Must have to complete manual test plans



**Increasingly complex games
≠
more manual testing**

**Software
Quality**

Product
Quality

Management



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Product Quality (PQ)



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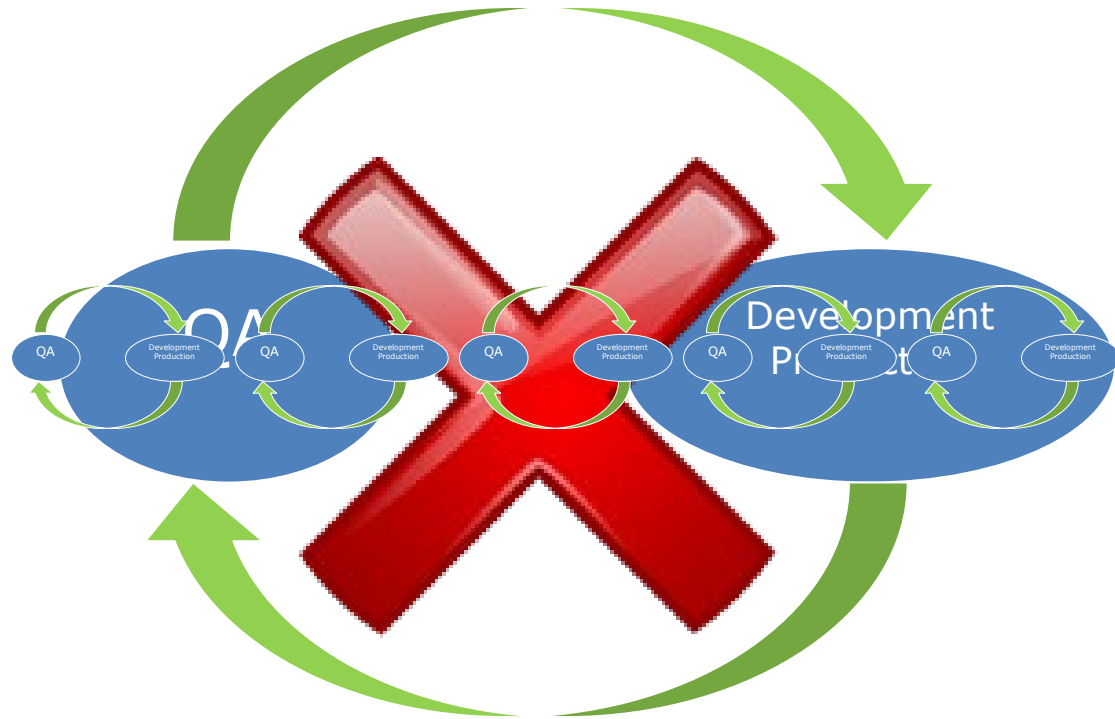
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Software Quality

**Product
Quality**

Management

The embedded QA cycle



Minutes, or hours, or longer instead!

Software Quality

**Product
Quality**

Management



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Embedded helps

- ③ Build relationships and allegiances
- ③ Enable creativity and change while maintaining control
- ③ Increase organizational awareness of the QA role and value add
- ③ Improve test strategies and plans

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Software Quality

**Product
Quality**

Management

Management



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Reinvented Business

Software Quality

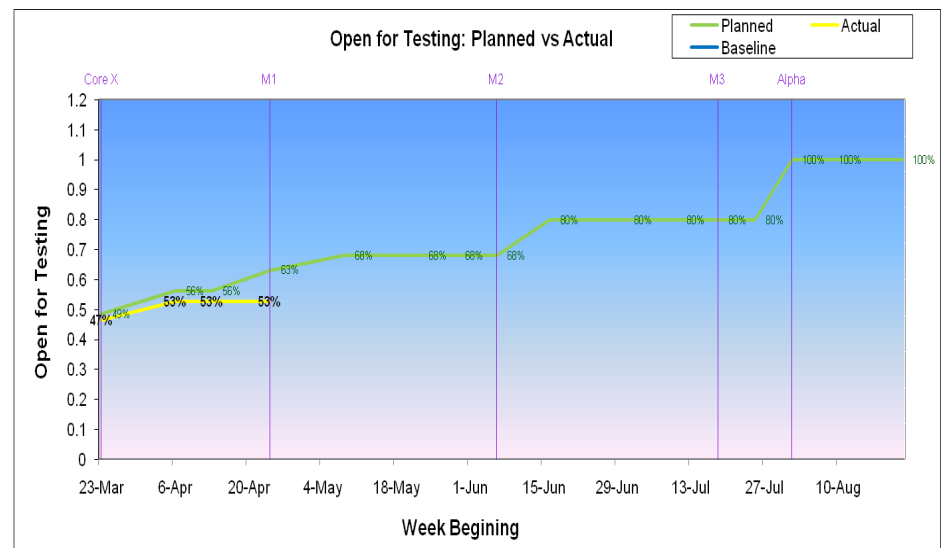
Product
Quality

Management



Communication

- ⊗ Relevant and appropriate
- ⊗ Consistent
- ⊗ Timely



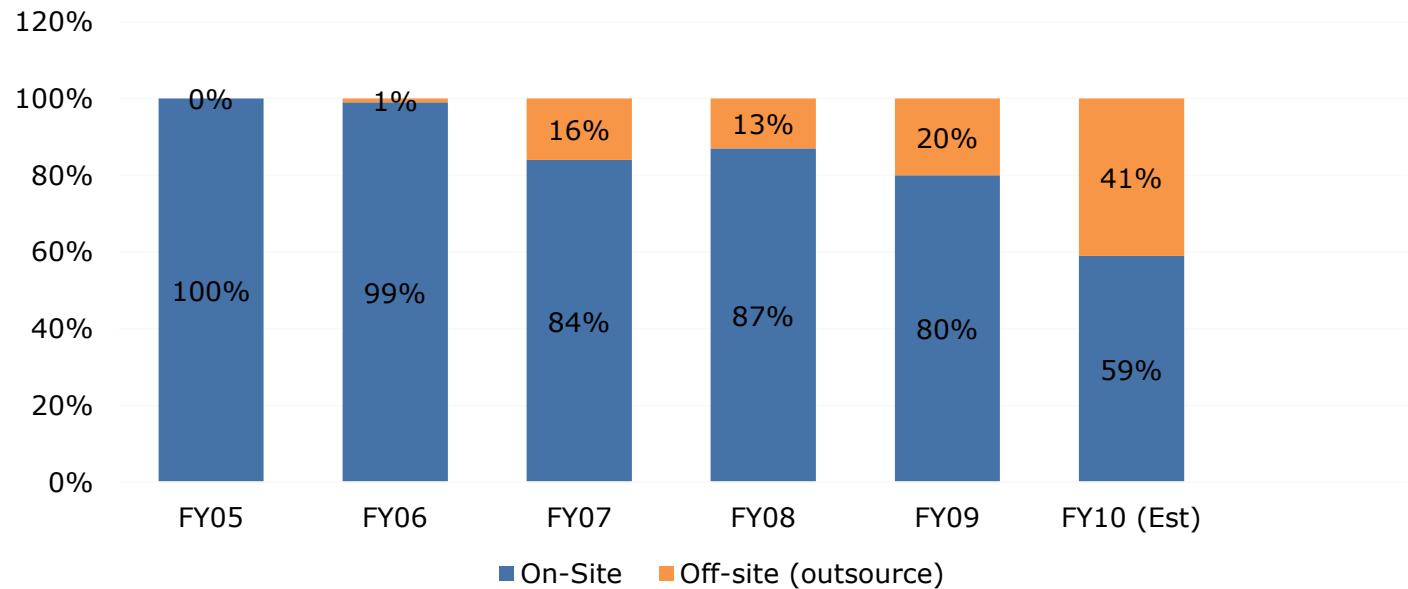
Outsourcing

- ⌚ Flexibility!
- ⌚ Reduces EA studio footprint
- ⌚ Reduces seasonal hiring/training burden
- ⌚ Load balance
- ⌚ Cost savings



YOY test outsourcing

Blackbox Test - Team Profile



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Software Quality

Product
Quality

Management



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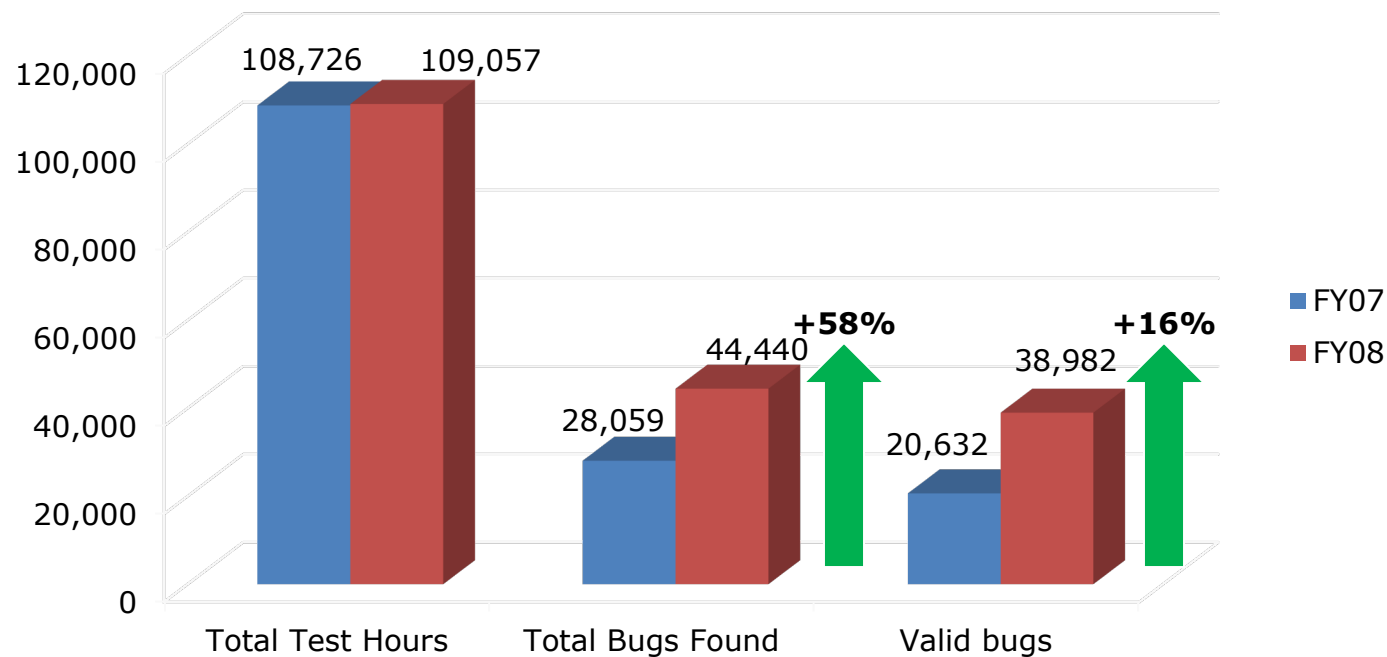
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Investing pays off

2 year comparison in Outsourcing results



Software Quality

Product
Quality

Management



Organizational considerations

- ⌘ Tackle common components first
- ⌘ Offer incremental approach
- ⌘ Prepare to refactor the plane while in flight
- ⌘ Never underestimate culture and team differences



Moving in the right direction

Overall results

- ⌚ Reduction in issues and shortened bug lifecycle
- ⌚ QA cost reduction
- ⌚ High customer satisfaction ratings
- ⌚ Strong team health
- ⌚ Increased Game Quality!

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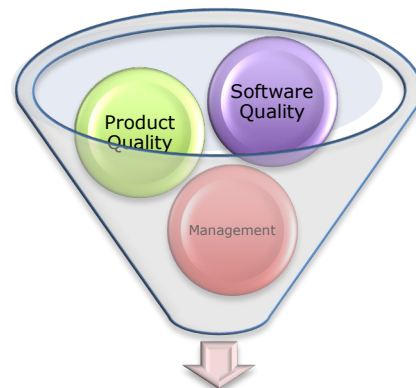
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Key takeaways

Team recipe



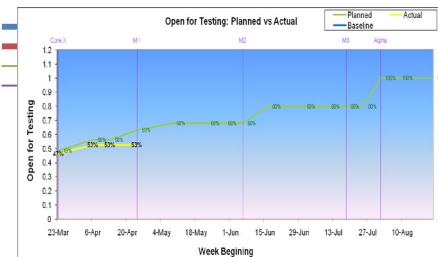
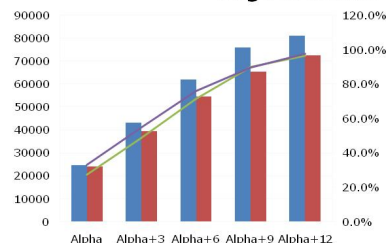
Highly skilled quality assurance team

This is a marathon



Communication & trust

Bug Fix trends



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Thank You!
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