How to cope with the growth of your testing team

If you are lucky your team is growing...

This is a good thing, but it is also a pretty big challenge!

How can you grow your operation and
still maintain your level of expertise and service?

Maintain Value &
Expertise?

Team Structure?

Hiring &
Onboarding?

**Some of the big questions you
should be asking yourself**

Changes in your
management?

Working with
Distributed Teams?

Team
Professionalism?

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Some of the big questions you should be asking yourself...

1. Team Structuring & Restructuring

As your team grows to 8, 10, 12 testers, it is harder to manage them as a single unit.

When should we split up your team?
- When you are not able to be on top of all their tasks
- When there is no interaction between the team members
- When there is too much noise

Do we need to work in parallel to Dev?
- Only when it serves a purpose, not automatically!
- Think about testing tasks and only then about technology
  (but think about technology nonetheless)
- Cross Functional Agile Teams are very useful, but they require
  special organizations and special people.

How to choose the Team Leads?
- Openly and based only on merit, never (ever!) based on
  seniority or tenure
- No Team Leader can lead every team - it is a matchmaking process
- New Team Leaders will make mistakes, it is part of the job and you
  need to catch them when they fall!

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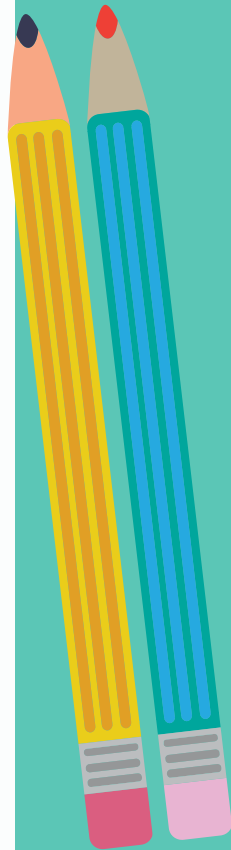
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2. Bringing in new employees

It is not as simple as telling your HR - "I need more testers, and do it quickly!"

Who do we need to hire next?
- From the time you decide to hire and until the person is onboard and
- Look at your current testing blend - New vs. Experienced testers, Tech vs. Empirical, you will need all.
- Think about career paths!

How to interview and select?
- Make this a team effort - if you are interviewing for a team, have team members interviewing too.
- Search for the interview questions that reflect the type of work - don't copy blindly from the Internet!
- Remember that you are selling the position as much as you are looking for a good candidate
- Don't make empty promises.

How to train and bring new employees up to speed?
- Work with a template and modify for each tester depending on who s/he is, what s/he's done, and what s/he will be doing.
- Use training as a way of learning the product, the company and the people.
- Do not expect any deliverables on the first 2-6 weeks on board

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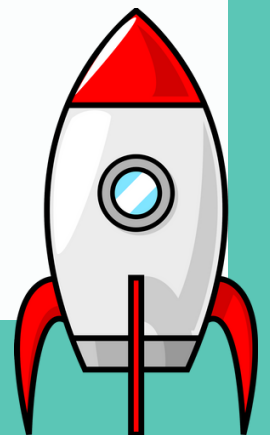
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3. Changes in your Management

The tasks and responsibilities of the manager are very different and challenging

Management Responsibilities:
- Define a Roadmap for the Team and the Policy in front of the rest of the Company
- Become a Policeman / Policewoman: Stop workplace politics from corroding staff & stop noise from distracting testers
- Ensure internal communication
- Innovate and support innovation
- Represent the team externally

Management Style:
- Stay in the loop, but it will not be 100%
- Learn to delegate as much as possible
  * Delegating is NOT Release & Forget
  * Even when you fully trust someone, follow up on what they are doing
- Work with both formal and informal communication channels
- Make EVERYONE feel comfortable around you

Management Fun:
Your first responsibility is for your testers to have fun and only then you!

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4. Team Professionalism and Communication

When teams grow, disconnections and "expertise silos" are issues to handle actively

Be on the lookout for new technologies and solutions
- Encourage your team to bring up and share ideas
- Bring ideas by yourself

Create channels to share information and experience
- Professional guilds across teams
- Newsletters and professional boards
- Periodic awards for innovations and technology introduction

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5. Ensuring value and expertise

Moving from "Johnny knows everything" to "QA will help us with these questions"

Start by making clear that VISIBILITY is the value of the QA
- Many times this is not clear to people inside or outside of your team
- It is not about knowing the system inside-out, this is impossible after some time, but your team should be the one that provides the answers when questions arise.

Don't create too much red tape as a result of your growth
You want to maintain some control, but do not turn into a "Bureaucracy"

Constantly evaluate the needs of other teams growing in your Organization
- Visibility is service that you can provide
- Other teams are growing too and you can help them!
- Make a case to provide value inside and outside of the R&D / IT

Every testers needs to know his place and value - there are no small screws
- Since testers can work with people from all levels of your organization, make sure everyone knows their value and are able to help
- Encourage people to think "outside the box" and look for ways to contribute

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6. Managing globally distributed teams

There are many other barriers other than language...

Cultural differences are more challenging than language barriers
- Meanings of words are very different from culture to culture
- Small misunderstandings can make big differences

Get a traveling budget
- Cheap offshoring provides less value!
- Managers need to visit their teams at least twice a year
- Testers need to travel to know other teams and cultures

Visual communication is as important as voice
It's as simple as having Skype video sessions and not only phone calls

Company culture should be shares as well
Posters, T-Shirts, notebooks and pens can have a lot of value

For more helpful resources visit the QA learning center: www.practitest.com/qa-learningcenter