

Should You Hire a Software 'Tester' or 'Test Engineer?'

What's the difference, anyway?

"The cost of quality is the expense of doing things wrong." W. Edwards Deming

There's a big difference between a software tester and a Test Engineer. The choice you make can be *critical* to the success of your software development project.

Testers run test cases and give you a thumbs up or down as to whether the software worked. That's fine and works fine in some cases (perhaps 10% of real world software development scenarios).

Test Engineers, on the other hand, plan, design and conduct relevant test cases while showing you exactly what is broken and why.

Sometimes testers are a good fit for your needs, and sometimes they're not.

And here's a little known fact. ***Testers can inadvertently kill a project because of their limited capabilities.***

Eventually you will need to make this important distinction. The following discussion will help you make the right choice.

A Recipe for Success – Move Beyond 'What' and Understand 'Why'

When you don't want any analysis with your testing, testers are fine. If you use testers only, however, your development engineers will eventually have to spend extra time to backtrack and figure out why the test failed.

With basic testers, the "why" and "how" pieces are missing – and that adds to your workload and the workload of your developers. Someone on your team has to figure out all of the details and then circle back to the testing team once adjustments are made to the code.

When you want to move beyond a simple pass/fail paradigm – and really improve the quality of your software, you need to enlist the help of Test Engineers. Test Engineers

help you understand the problem and work through it more efficiently. They save you and your developers hundreds of man-hours of guesswork and trial and error exercises.

Don't Be Deceived by Titles

A lot of companies think they've hired Test Engineers when, in fact, they're using testers. To make sure you know which one you've hired, ask yourself some questions:

Do your Test Engineers bring analysis and interpretation to the table? No? Then they're testers.

Do they deliver defect reports **plus** enough information to actually fix the problem on the spot? No?.. again, testers.

With a Test Engineer, you can answer these questions in the affirmative.

Test Engineers help you understand what went wrong and how to fix it. That's just not in the tester DNA – they're a simple binary filter for pass/fail.

Testers	Test Engineers
Run test cases and tell you which ones don't pass.	Learn your application, write test cases, organize them into suites and then run them so they can write defect reports that your developers can immediately take action on.
Tell you when your test cases don't work anymore.	Keep their test case suites updated to match the application's changing functionality.
Testers run as many test cases as they can to get test coverage.	Compare their test case suite to their functionality matrix to make sure that the right areas of the application are being tested at the right time – and then measure how much coverage they have.

How to Eliminate Delays, Worry and Project Failure

As you can see, there's a big difference between these two different roles, and it has a huge impact on how quickly you can get your software released.

If you haven't guessed already, TESTCo uses Test Engineers exclusively. We're committed to doing a highly-professional, thorough, time-saving, money-saving job when it comes to your software testing.

The way to accomplish this is to build the right team from the beginning, eliminate guesswork and fix it right the first time.

There's no need to put up with service that delivers anything less. Don't make the mistake of hiring testers and then putting up with them. All you'll do is complain, move on to other testers, hope for improvement and then make the same mistakes.

What you deserve is optimized software development and quality... as soon as possible.

Test Engineers allow you to deliver on that promise.

What Do I Do Next?

I hope you've found this report valuable.

If your software project is behind or just not delivering the quality that you are committed to providing your customers, then please get in touch.

We can help you!

If you need help today, then by all means, please call my cell phone at 512-970-7283. If I don't answer, please leave a voicemail letting me know that you need help urgently. I'll call you back within 1 business day. You should also send an email to jeff@testco.com so I'll have 2 opportunities to see that I need to get in touch with you quickly.

If you don't need help today but think you might need help in the near future, please send an email to jeff@testco.com and we'll arrange a time to talk on the phone and answer any questions you have.

Here's what one of our On-Demand Software Testing clients said recently –

“TESTCo was crucial to meeting our testing goals and deadlines. Even though I was too busy to provide proper direction to the testing team, they were able to get started on their own, create test plans based on what I wanted and deliver results from day one. As the testing needs of the project grew, TESTCo was easily able to grow with us. They continued to build requirements themselves and they were able to manage the

testing process in a way that worked for us, not against us. Bringing in TESTCo is a huge win for any software engineering project.” - Apar

You may find that you like the idea but are still uncertain as to how to proceed. That's not unexpected. Unfortunately, I can't give every detail of every step in the process – it's just too much information. If you find that you're still a bit uncertain, please feel free to contact me at via our website at www.testco.com. We can schedule a quick meeting to answer your questions and discuss the process in more detail.

I wish you the best of luck and success with your next project.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jeff Hotz', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Jeff Hotz, President/Founder, TESTCo

About TESTCo

TESTCo provides On Demand Software Testing Services so that you can avoid nasty surprises when you release your software.