CAREER GROWTH FOR TESTERS

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Hi, I'm Tina!

I'm not a Tester now, but I've been one.
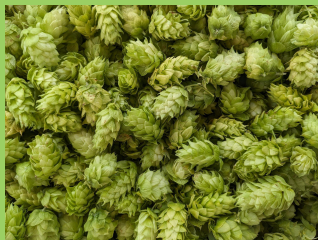
About this talk

1. Why being in a testing role is awesome

2. Career paths and roles testers can grow into

(+ how to get started!)

3. Things that will help you grow no matter which path you choose

1.
Why being in a
testing role is
awesome

" *It's the tester's job to believe that there are problems that matter to important people, and to seek those problems out.*

It's the tester's job to suspect that there is trouble at hand, just below everyone else's level of awareness.

No one else has that as their primary mission.

–*Michael Bolton*

It's the tester's job to help everyone understand differences between the product we think we have, the product we've got, and the product that the business wants.

–Michael Bolton

Testers need a diverse skill set

Including:

- Test data creation & management
- Test environment setup & configuration
- Exploratory testing
- Figuring out what tests to automate
- Writing automated tests
- Understanding product code
- Test coverage planning & prioritization
- etc...

What happens when your family becomes obsessed with the musical "Hamilton"?

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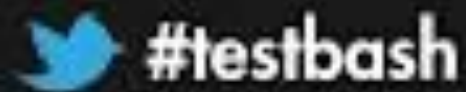
A Tester is a connection point

End users

Testers

The rest of the dev team

The business and product owners
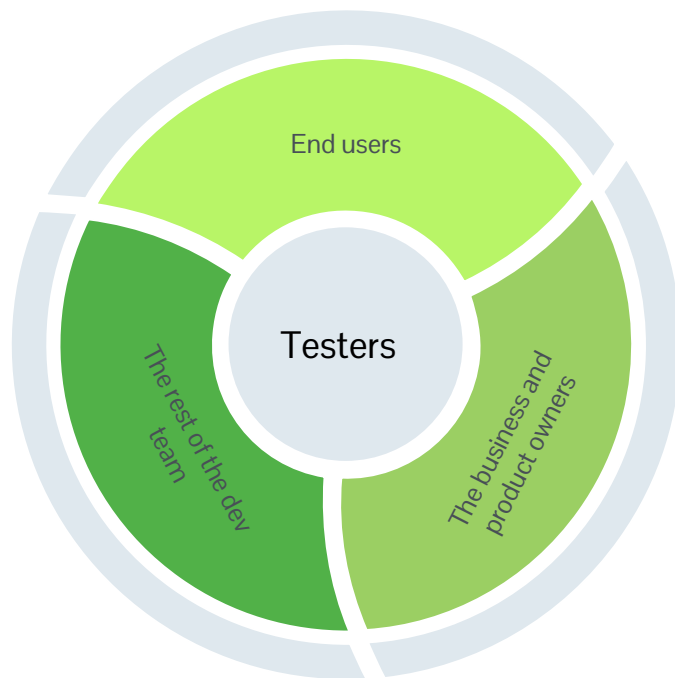
Testers are uniquely positioned to identify problems and risks

End users

Testers

The rest of the dev team

The business and product owners

RECAP:

Why being a tester is awesome

Unique mission

Diverse skill set

Be a connector

2.
Career paths and roles testers can grow into

(+ how to get started!)

Be an (even more) excellent tester on your current team

- Dive into your domain
- Build user empathy
- Understand competitors
- Build developer empathy

GOAL: Get even better at finding problems and risks that everyone else misses

Become an influential test architect or principal tester at your company

- Learn more about what other teams are doing
- Lead cross-team initiatives
- Build relationships with testers in other teams

GOAL: Influence company-wide quality and test strategy

Specialize in a particular type of testing

- Performance, security, accessibility, + others
- Learn specialized tools
- Tune your risk analysis and troubleshooting skills

GOAL: Act as a "specialist" consultant for teams/testers in other areas

Belong to a test/quality "center of excellence"

- Similar to principal tester, but more formalized
- Maintain understanding of "real life"; embed yourself
- Create feedback loops both internally and externally

GOAL: Provide company-wide guidance on test/quality strategy

Become a people leader

- Manager of testers and/or developers
- Volunteer for leadership tasks to help build skills
- Learn about leadership in general

GOAL: Bring a quality-focused mindset to a particular team

Focus on company–wide process improvement

- Many aspects of business benefit from a test/quality perspective
- Get involved in (or create!) working groups to improve how things work

GOAL: Bring a quality focus to company processes

Try another type of role

- Development, product, UX design, customer support, technical account manager
- Job shadowing
- Micro credentials/courses
- Volunteer to help out in other areas

GOAL: Build new skills, and bring a quality perspective to a different type of work

Try another type of product or even another industry

- Work on something that has different test/quality needs
- Legacy vs new, embedded systems vs web, more or less regulatory requirements, etc

GOAL: Experience and define different approaches to testing

Career paths and roles you can grow into

An (even more) excellent tester in your team

Influential senior tester

Specialized tester

Centralized strategy guidance

People leadership

Process improver

Experience testing in other contexts

3.
Things to help you grow no matter which path you choose

Find mentors, and keep in touch

- Choose a variety of respected colleagues
- Connect regularly and discuss projects, challenges, learnings

GOAL: Ongoing learning and see new perspectives

Join events and social media

- Meet ups, threads, posts
- Show up/read/follow... and eventually contribute

GOAL: Ongoing learning and see new perspectives, build your network

Sharpen and expand your craft

- Learn new tools
- Practice reading/writing code
- Try a new type, style, or technique of testing
- Observe/learn from others

GOAL: Improve core testing skills

Become a better communicator

- As a "connector", communication is critical
- Build presentation skills
- Lead meetings and discussions
- Communication courses

GOAL: Improve your ability to share ideas/knowledge

Build business acumen

- Broaden understanding of other areas of business
- Job shadowing, mentorship, formal learning

GOAL: More holistic thinking and collaboration ideas

RECAP:

Growth ideas for any path

Mentorship

Community participation

Build your craft

Communication skills

Learn about other parts of the business

Final Thoughts

Being a tester is an awesome, unique, and important role in a software development team.

There are many ways you can grow within your role, and many ways to apply your quality focus to tasks and roles outside of testing.

But wait, there's more!

Roles that lead well into testing?

What skills, experiences, and knowledge would make someone a good tester? How can we welcome more people into the field?

Let's connect later and share more ideas!

Find me on LinkedIn and look for a thread later today. Share your favourite learning resources for testers; expand your social network!

Credits

Special thanks to all the people who made and released these awesome resources for free:

- Presentation template by SlidesCarnival
- Photographs by Unsplash

Thanks!

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