Building a Testing Strategy

Karen N. Johnson

Who am I?

Karen N. Johnson	
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Within the context of building a test strategy, what matters?

- Building a test strategy isn't about writing a document.

- Building a test strategy is about thinking creatively and strategically. It is the thinking and planning behind the test strategy and the ongoing tactical adjustments throughout the project that matter.

Creative Thinking

Research

- Troll online forums on specific technology topics
- Scour for ideas from the specific technology research
- Use testing conferences and social networking to connect to testers in the same/similar space
- Sometimes researching a new technology is the best place to begin collecting ideas so you can host stronger brainstorming and investigation sessions

Solitary Think Sessions
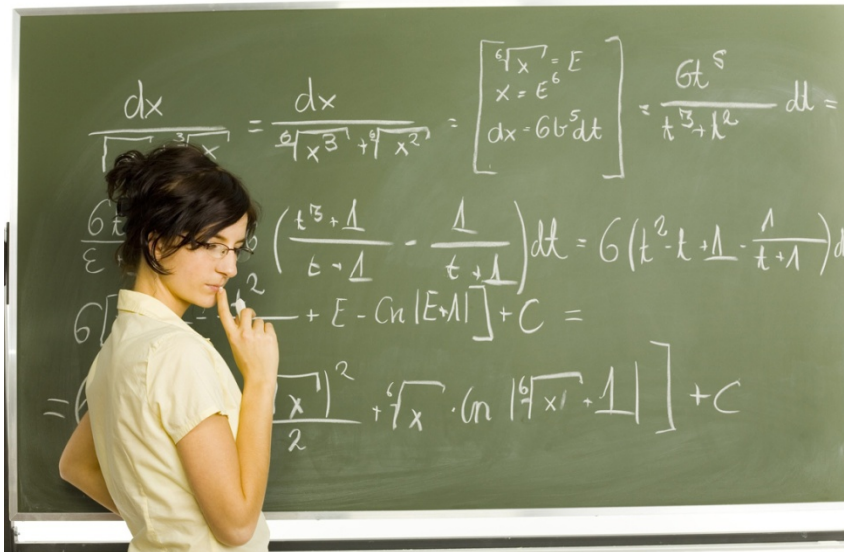
- Leave the office
- Dedicate a timed think session
- Think about potential catastrophes
- Plan investigations and conversations
- Acknowledge challenges
- Draw out ideas in any format that helps; including multiple formats
- Give your self permission to follow your idea paths without editing

Brainstorming

- Create a safe environment
- Build no censor rules
- Encourage creative and unusual ideas
- Watch for team reactions to ideas raised; these reactions can be informal risk assessments
- Note ideas worth taking offline for further investigation
- Record as much information as possible; use an "idea collector"
- Keep ideas for consideration later in the project
- Look for reoccurring concerns that might be raised in different ways

Creative Thinking

- Research
- Solitary think sessions
- Brainstorming
- Investigation sessions
- Investigation skills

- Academic test review
- Perpetual curiosity
- Six thinking hats
- Six action shoes
- Product analysis
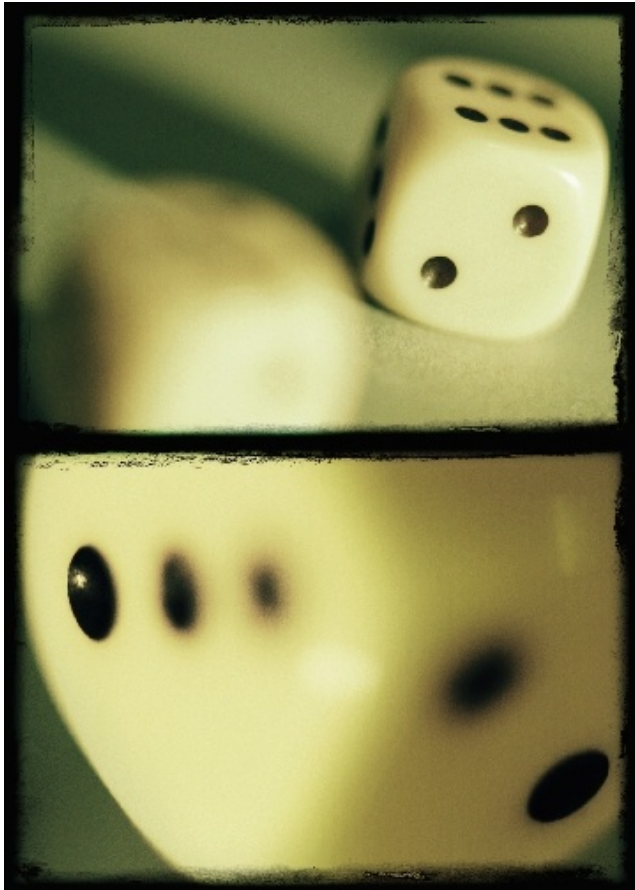- Collecting information

Strategic Thinking

Vision

- Overall release goals
- Individual test plan goals
- Individual goals
- Have you communicated your vision clearly and consistently?

Risk

- Formal methods: FMEA, MMEA
- Informal methods
- Project team
- Test team
- Collect opinions (support, customers, stakeholders, developers)

Surrounding the Product

- Service level agreements
- Regulations
- User acceptance testing

Strategic Thinking

- Vision
- Risk
- Surrounding the product
- SDLC
- Politics
- Alliances

- Resources
- Money
- Estimates
- Direction
- Tactics
- Stakeholders

The Test Strategy Document

Possible Components of a Test Strategy Document

- Project scope
- Risk analysis
- Types of testing
- Test environment
- Test data
- Release cycle
- Defect reporting
- Resources
- Estimates
- Project plan
- Status reporting
- Acceptance criteria

Project Scope

- Features in/out for the release

- Testing in/out for release

- Tie features to testing approach

- Scope includes your vision for the release.

Types of Testing

- Opportunity to delineate the types of testing.

- Different tools, skills and resources may be needed to tackle each form of testing.

- Explaining more about testing helps clarify the needs of your team.

Test Environment

- Identify the environment
- Compare test to production in terms of configuration, server class, etc. and where the differences could impact testing.
- If there is a risk that the test environment might not be ready, the strategy is a place to raise the conversation.
- Ongoing maintenance and support for the test environment are possible topics.

Release Cycle
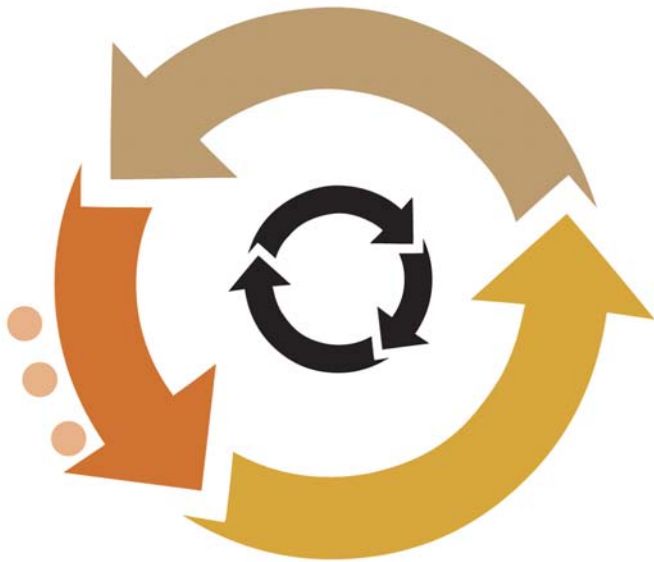
- Is the internal release cycle understood?
- Is the cycle for the release the same as in times past?

Stakeholders

- Release criteria
- Defect priority
- Decision makers at the go/no-go meeting
- Timing of the release meeting

The Test Strategy Document

- Approvers
- Project scope
- Risk analysis
- Types of testing
- Test environment
- Test data
- Release cycle

- Defect reporting
- Resources
- Milestones & project plans
- Status reporting
- Acceptance criteria
- Post release retrospectives

Conclusions
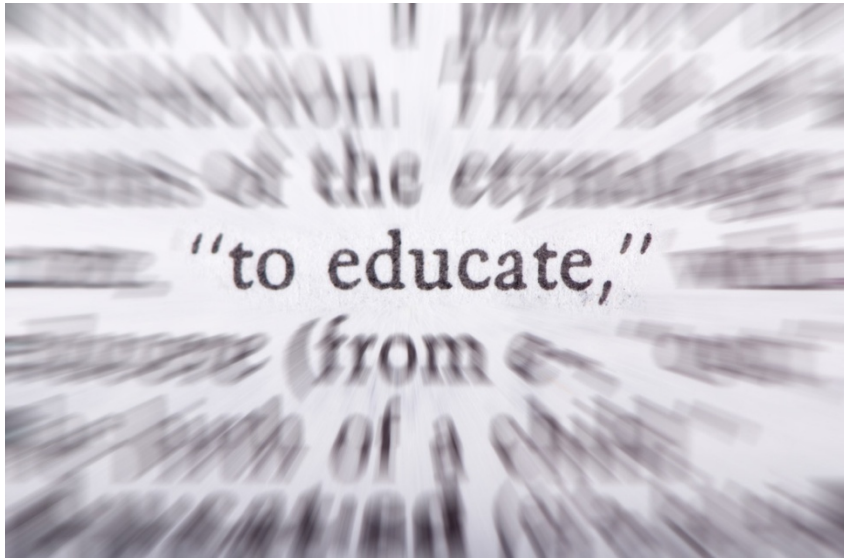
A well-written strategy is your statement of work, your bill of goods and should be written at the front of the project and updated throughout.

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- Satisfice Test Plan Evaluation Model: http://www.satisfice.com/tools/tpe-model.pdf
- Test Strategy Blog post, James Bach, see: http://www.satisfice.com/blog/archives/63

Thank you.

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