

BENELUX

An appetite for progress

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THE CLOSER
YOU LOOK

THE MORE YOU SEE

In last year's analysis, we noted that Belgium, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg – collectively known as Benelux – were making insufficient progress in test automation, and indeed that the pace of change, in general, was slower than in other regions.

What a difference twelve months can make. This year, we're pleased to report that test automation has been making big jumps ahead and organizations seem keener than ever to move forward in their quality engineering (QE) efforts. In fact, in what we feel is a new development in this geographical region, several of them have been asking us about which innovations they should be exploring. That's how keen they are.

Specifically, with automation in testing, we're seeing the scope widening beyond test cases to embrace the whole CI/CD pipeline in a bid to improve overall quality.

Drivers of change – and continuity

Across software development and testing as a whole, there are key factors precipitating change. The ambition is to make quality and testing more and more integrated in the software development lifecycle, with the twin goals of improving time to market and customer experience. For example, we're aware of a major Benelux bank that has been actively seeking test managers and quality engineers to help define the QE vision and who then go in hands-on to help developers.

There's another major factor, but it's more accurate to say that it drives continuity rather than change – and that's security. Across all Benelux countries, a sustainably secure performance comes before anything else.

One of the reasons for the growth in automation in testing is the obligatory transition of legacy SAP environments to the new world of SAP S/4HANA. It's a major proposition for any enterprise, and test automation can help organizations conduct quality assurance (QA) programs at scale.

Challenges in quality engineering processes and skills

However, there are still challenges. Test environment management is causing difficulties for some Benelux organizations, and so too is the lack of representative test data at the point of need. There are also what we might call cultural hurdles to overcome: for instance, some of the region's businesses are finding it hard to manage quality consistently across their development pipeline, because individual teams have high levels of autonomy and low levels of collaboration.

Skills needs represent another challenge, and in Benelux, we see several gaps right now. There's a need for technical skills – for instance, in cloud development and CI/CD; in security, which is a constantly moving target; in other non-functional areas, such as usability and performance; and in general, the knowledge of testing tools and technologies, which are proliferating. It's unrealistic to expect everyone to know everything, but organizations are doing their best to ensure that all bases are covered across the team.

It's worth adding that, in our view, skills aren't just about knowledge and experience. A big part of it is raw talent – and identifying that talent, and creating an environment in which it can thrive, is a skill in itself.

The broad picture is positive

In summary, we'd say the development of quality engineering in Benelux looks more promising this year. Yes, we've noted some challenges, and the pressure to meet various business goals can make those issues more daunting – but, in general, companies are keen to build on their capacity and talent pool to take advantage of the opportunities that come their way. Automation is changing testing dramatically by absorbing much of the workload and enabling skilled people to focus on areas in which they can be of greater benefit.

The aim is to deliver technology outcomes better, faster, and more safely – and, in Benelux countries, it's a pleasure for us to see the high regard for the role quality engineering plays in helping to make this happen.

Survey watch: Agile Quality Maturity of Benelux organizations

42%

of agile teams have professional quality engineers integrated

50%

of agile teams have test automation implemented

46%

of teams achieved better reliability of systems through test automation

48%

of teams achieved faster release times through test automation



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