FRANCE
Positivity and progress

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THE CLOSER YOU LOOK
THE MORE YOU SEE

When it comes to quality engineering (QE), there's a lot of positivity in France right now. In sectors such as financial services, manufacturing, energy, and the public sector, we're finding that, because of major digital transformation projects and business mergers, the quality agenda is being pushed forward enthusiastically. There's an appetite for innovation, and for smart QE tools in particular, which is why we're increasingly being asked to provide proofs of concept (POCs) to demonstrate efficacy and good returns on investment.

Quality drivers

What's driving this push for quality? Partly, it's user experience. Two years ago, the World Quality Report noted that many people in French IT were beginning to acknowledge the need to be more outward facing and, since then, the momentum has grown. Quality engineering teams are much more conscious of the need to listen to their customers and to meet or exceed expectations.

Some French sectors have their own catalysts for change. In the public sector, organizations are conscious that their levels of test automation are low, and they're trying to catch up; in financial services, they're aiming to reduce time to market while simultaneously maintaining quality and their delivery lines focus.

Interestingly, additional drivers of quality are sustainability and inclusion. Sustainability is a new topic, but we've only heard it being discussed at a high level among CIOs. However, we expect a growing interest in quality solutions that will enable or enhance the sustainability agenda of organizations.

By contrast, accessibility is very top of mind. There is a national requirement in France for technology platforms to address accessibility issues. It's coming into effect this year, first in the public sector, and then across all private sector organizations with a turnover of €250 million or above. In addition, the European Accessibility Act (EAA) must be implemented by June 2025. It aims to remove access barriers faced by disabled people in the EU to the use of computers and mobile devices.

Recent and nascent developments

Agile adoption has now reached a stage in France where it's no longer an issue in large-scale developments. In fact, it's the new normal. However, in some enterprise-wide digital transformation projects, the approach is not as end-to-end as it could be.

It's often assumed that agile teams comprise people with hybrid development and testing skills, but that's not often the case in France. France's agile teams have dedicated QE people – but they are nonetheless fully integrated into the scrum. For instance, a financial services organization with over 100 quality assurance people is using a model-based testing approach in which individual roles are designated within the teams – and this is a business that's regarded in France as a trailblazer.

The concept of value stream mapping, in which organizations look at where they are now, where they want to be, and map out the intermediate process stages, is not something we see being implemented in France just yet. However, we feel it's a useful concept to be explored in the future. Creating a framework to measure and optimize the value of the QE practices is beneficial.

Test automation continues apace. New tools, which speed up the integration of test automation in the CI/CD pipelines, are being introduced in France this year, and they're being used in continuous testing programs in financial services, manufacturing, and other sectors.

However, there are challenges. Test data and test data management can be difficult. The data itself is hard to test, it presents security issues, and the creation of synthetic data isn't straightforward. Also, the transition to cloud platforms means organizations need to migrate hundreds of apps and find new ways to test them all. It's a special skill and one in which sector knowledge is an advantage.

People are the future

In general, France is transforming how quality engineering services are being provided.

However, success is predicated on the availability of people with the right skills. There has been much talk in the industry about finding people with strengths in quality and test and training them in soft skills, giving them domain knowledge, or both.

But does it have to be this way? In French financial services, we see organizations identifying people with the requisite soft skills and then training them in the practicalities of QE. Similarly, QE service providers are actively recruiting people with industry knowledge and helping them gain QE skills. It's a combination that makes them eminently employable – and it's also something that every organization in France is depending upon for future success.

Survey watch: Agile Quality Maturity of French organizations

50% of agile teams have professional quality engineers integrated

56% of agile teams have test automation implemented

44% of teams achieved better reliabiity of systems through test automation

49% of teams achieved faster release times through test automation

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