EASTERN EUROPE

Exciting times

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WORLD QUALITY REPORT

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THE CLOSER YOU LOOK
THE MORE YOU SEE

In last year's World Quality Report, we said that, while the quality engineering (QE) landscape hadn't changed greatly in Eastern Europe, the climate was improving and there were grounds for optimism.

This year, the countries on which we're focused are Poland and Romania and, in general, we'd say that the optimism has proved to be well founded. Real progress is being made.

In Romania, we're seeing IT investments in automotive, telecommunications, retail, and IT. This last sector is particularly active because many global IT companies are establishing development centers here.

In Poland, major industry sectors including retail, manufacturing, pharmaceuticals, financial services, and telecommunications are all growing, and are investing in their IT infrastructure. Robotic process automation (RPA) is well established, and we're witnessing a significant shift to agile development environments, largely in a bid to improve time to market (more on agile in a moment). Cloud platform developments are substantial too, driven in part by the national requirement that the server farms supporting Polish cloud developments in regulated sectors must be based within the country's borders.

Trends and drivers

What's been happening in QE in particular? There has been much movement over recent years. The economies of both Poland and Romania are growing fast, and testing is being automated as much as possible, partly to improve quality outcomes and partly because of the time to market pressures that economic growth creates. We're also seeing a great deal of focus on artificial intelligence (AI) in data analytics, and QE approaches are expanding to accommodate this development.

In Romania, two interesting trends are seen: first, the rise of DevOps has meant that the testing function is increasingly being embedded in teams rather than being run discretely; and second, the concept of test-as-a-service is growing in popularity.

Of course, QE must work within budget constraints — everything always does — but that doesn't mean that quality is somehow devalued. If an organization is willing to achieve quality at a certain level, it will organize itself within its resources to get there. For example, even in agile development environments, where QE is often the responsibility of a hybrid team member, quality assurance nonetheless remains a distinct phase in a process, and so can be quantified and budgeted for separately.

And what's driving these trends? In our experience, QE is driven by business-oriented factors such as security, time to market, and cost. Every organization has its own appetite for quality, and in addition, some industries must abide by their compliance and regulatory criteria, as well as by their cultural preferences.

Agile: conditioned by maturity

Let's take a closer look at agile developments. The approach to QE in Polish and Romanian agile teams is driven by the level of maturity: the lesser developed the approach, the slower and more discrete the quality function is. By contrast, the longer established the approach, the more integrated and time to market-driven it is.

In these mature teams, everyone – not just developers, but others including business analysts and creators of user stories – owns the brief for quality. In these cases, where quality and test are just two elements in a person's skillset, it tends to be more tools-based.

Skills: the key to future success

We've already noted the substantial growth in Poland and Romania of test automation, so it's no surprise to find that skills in this area are much in demand. So too are test managers, and in Romania in particular, there's a need for people with skills in performance testing, as well as non-functional disciplines such as integration testing in cloud migrations.

Overall, we think it's fair to say that finding good people is one of the greatest challenges we face right now. In very many of the organizations we see, teams are growing very fast, developments are maturing, and more subject matter experts with hybrid skills are needed.

There's a lot to be done in these exciting times.

Survey watch: Agile Quality Maturity of Eastern European organizations

54% of agile teams have professional quality engineers integrated

51% of agile teams have test automation implemented

49% of teams achieved better reliabiity of systems through test automation

48% of teams achieved faster release times through test automation

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