

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

FOR MEMBERS

OVERVIEW

Quality Model: Implementing Best Practices

by Lisa Shoop of Sabre

Sabre Holdings is making fundamental changes to the way it handles product development and releases. Here are some of the lessons learned.

LISA SHOOP, IT Director – Software Quality and Agile Education, has more than 20 years of experience in the IT industry. She is a leader in the Agile community and is a highly skilled transformation leader.

Southlake, Texas-based Sabre Holdings is a technology company that serves the travel industry, providing software to travel agencies, corporations, travelers, airlines, hotels and rail, car, cruise and tour operators through its four businesses. Shoop works in airline solutions.

“We really needed to change the culture of quality. What did quality look like? Before, it was thought to just be testing. We really didn’t take into consideration from the conceptual stage...all the way to the end of giving it to our customer.”

The team methodically evaluated what was and was not working in their system, created a plan of action, involved leadership and started an ongoing communication effort.

They realized they needed to get leadership to embrace the team's ideas. They engaged everyone from the line managers to the executives, with the goals of getting their support and getting others involved in brainstorming.

Although company leaders understood conceptually what was being proposed, there was some initial resistance because they didn't want to slow the release schedule in order to try something new. Shoop said she responded by holding off – not imposing the new system on a project that was due for release in the short term. They looked two or three releases out and gave leaders the option to pick the release they would start with. “We tried to make it reasonable.”

Although they moved quickly to get the executives to understand the importance of the project, they could have moved faster on educating others, including the project managers, who needed to understand their role, its requirements and what it meant if they didn't make exit requirements to allow release of the project.

When the work began, they were using Excel spreadsheets, and were inconsistently gathering data. They ended up with two software programs: one that serves as a repository and library of test cases and one that provides a tracking system. They built a metrics tool in house, which allows them to track defects now and will eventually allow them to see what they are postponing.

“It's important not to postpone too many issues...” But they are implementing in phases so they can still manage their business as they go along.

They are using Agile practices and scrum methodology.

It took about a year to do the initial evaluation. They had four test focus areas: they wanted to standardize test fundamentals and have a place to house information; they needed test automation – they had full automation on some products and no automation at all on others; they wanted to improve capability and capacity because sometimes they didn't have the appropriate skill sets on a project; and they wanted to develop a culture of ownership.

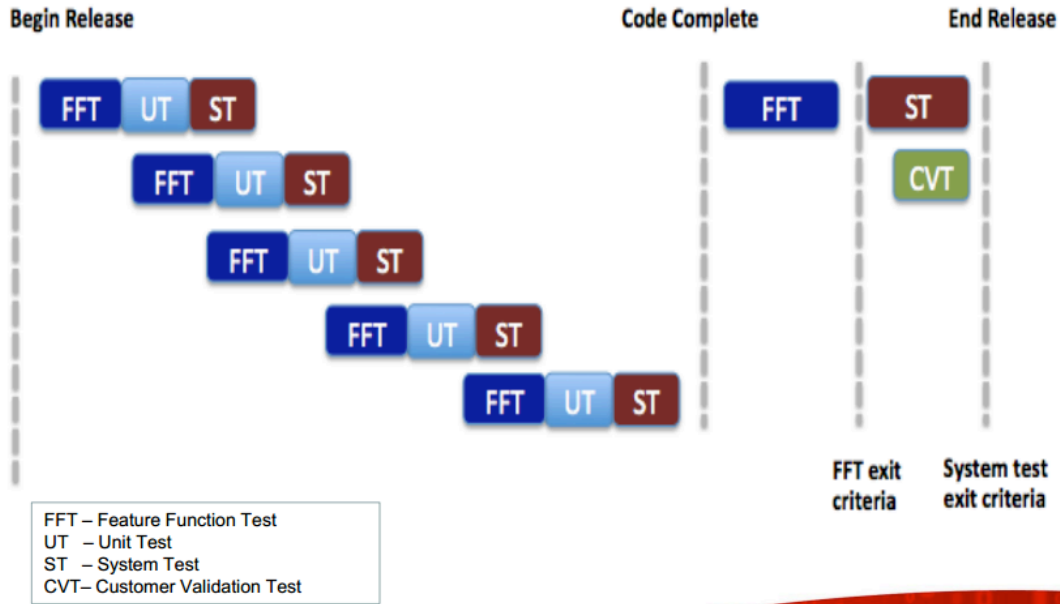
For a while, they found it difficult to get the right skill sets on a project because they were not getting feedback fast enough.

They created a test model that involves feature function, system and unit testing and exit criteria. They wanted repeatable processes that would become the norm.

They break down requirements so they can be tested and do between four and 12 sprint reviews before release.

Quality: Agile Testing Anyone?

Test Model – with Agile FFT and ST phases



The executive summary above was written by staff from watching the presentation and many other ideas were presented. Members may watch the full presentation if wished by logging in.