

Rowing Together

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Communication Roadblocks between PM's and Testers



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Agenda



- Communication & Human Nature
- Getting in the Same Boat
- Sharing Valuable Information or Making Noise
- Areas of Focus for Communicating the Test Effort
- Collaborative Solutions
- Getting What You Need – Tester Perspective
- Getting What You Need – PM Perspective
- Summary

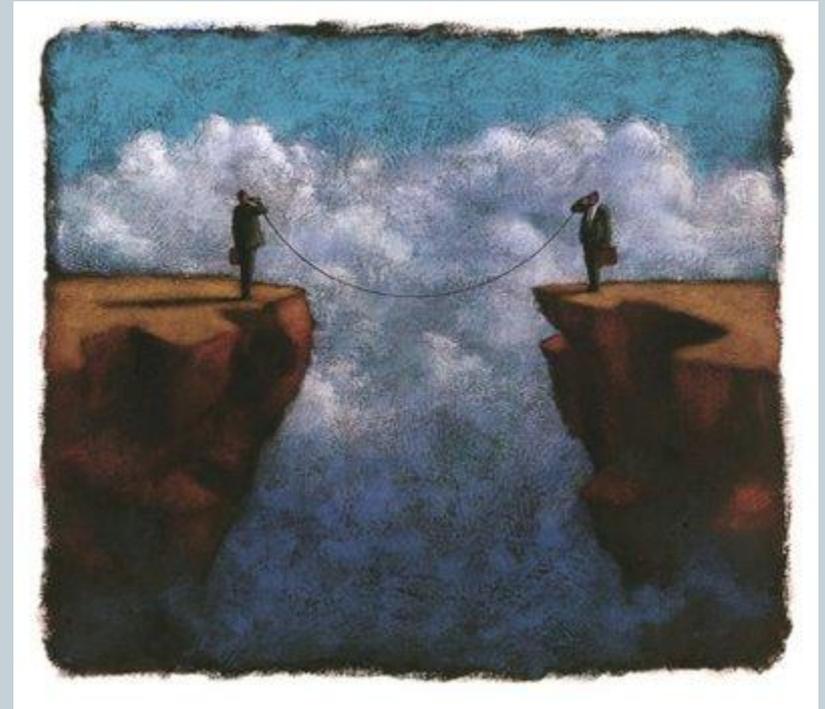
DISCLAIMER



WARNING: There is a wealth of knowledge, books and entire professions based on interpersonal communication. This discussion will focus on sharing our observations and communication styles in facilitating effective relationships with project managers. Contents of this presentation are under pressure. Shake well before using. Batteries not included, but lots of MSG and preservatives are. Avoid prolonged exposure to this presentation. Void where prohibited. Some assembly required. Use only as directed. This presentation may not be suitable for young children. Do not take orally. Side effects are not common but may include itching, redness and occasional fainting. If conditions persist, consult your physician. No fur-bearing animals were harmed during the creation of this presentation. Not responsible for direct, indirect, incidental or consequential damages resulting from any defect, error or failure to perform. Do not attend this presentation while operating a vehicle or heavy equipment. First pull up, then pull down. Call toll free before digging. Driver does not carry cash. Use only in well-ventilated area. Keep away from fire or flame. Some of the trademarks mentioned in this product appear for identification purposes only. Contestants have been briefed on some questions before the show. Limited time offer, call now to insure prompt delivery. You must be present to win. No passes accepted for this engagement. No purchase necessary. This presentation may contain peanuts, but we doubt it. Any resemblance between this presentation and others, good or bad, is purely coincidental. This presentation is meant for educational purposes only. The persons and events in this production are fictitious. No similarity to actual persons or predators, living or dead, is intended or should be inferred. Information presented in this presentation does not constitute legal advice. Reproduction strictly prohibited. Should you need legal advice, seek a legal adviser. Subject to change without notice.

Communication & Human Nature

- What is communication?
- When two or more people communicate it is fascinating to observe
- Examine the differences between the message intended by the sender and the message interpreted by the receiver
- Lets try a couple of simple exercises to represent this...



When I say...what do you hear ?



Black

Up

Right

Day

Young

What Happened?



- The brain translates what is heard and responds with the opposite:

Black -> White

Up -> Down

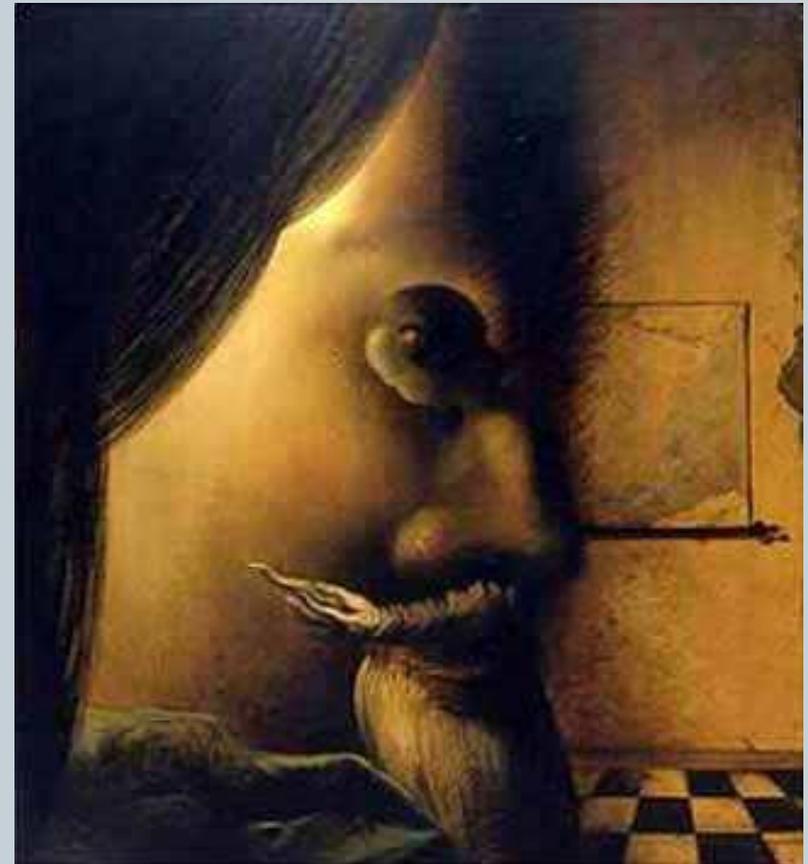
Right -> Left

Day -> Night

Young -> Old



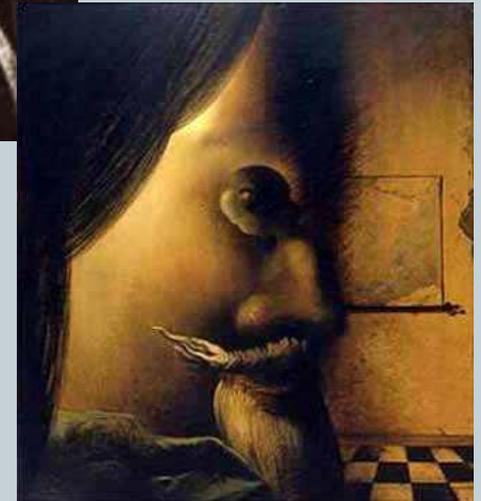
Do You See What I See?



What did we See?

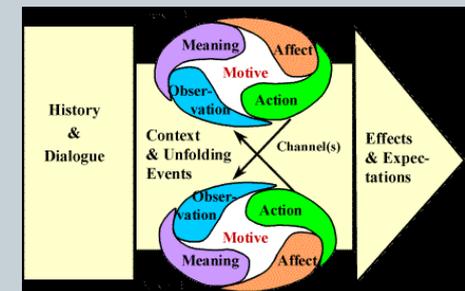
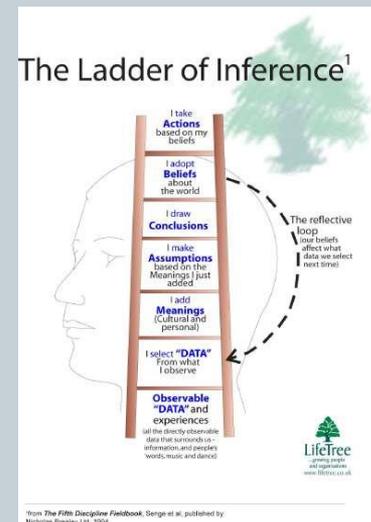
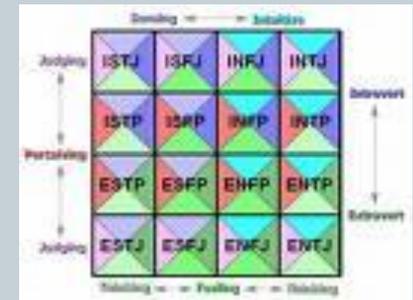
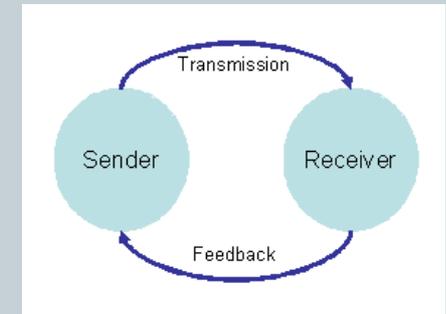


- Let's view the pictures again
 - What do you see?
 - What do I see?
- What can be learned about each others perspective?



Communication & Human Nature

- Why does this disconnect in communication occur?
- What is the impact of the missed or misinterpreted message?
- Leverage the extensive research and tools in this area



Getting the Same Boat

- On many projects it may feel as though project managers and testers are not in the same boat let alone rowing together
- Test efforts can often feel as though they are a row boatbehind a cruise ship, madly rowing and navigating the wake just to stay afloat
- Need to share perspectives and align to common goal



Sharing Valuable Information or Making Noise

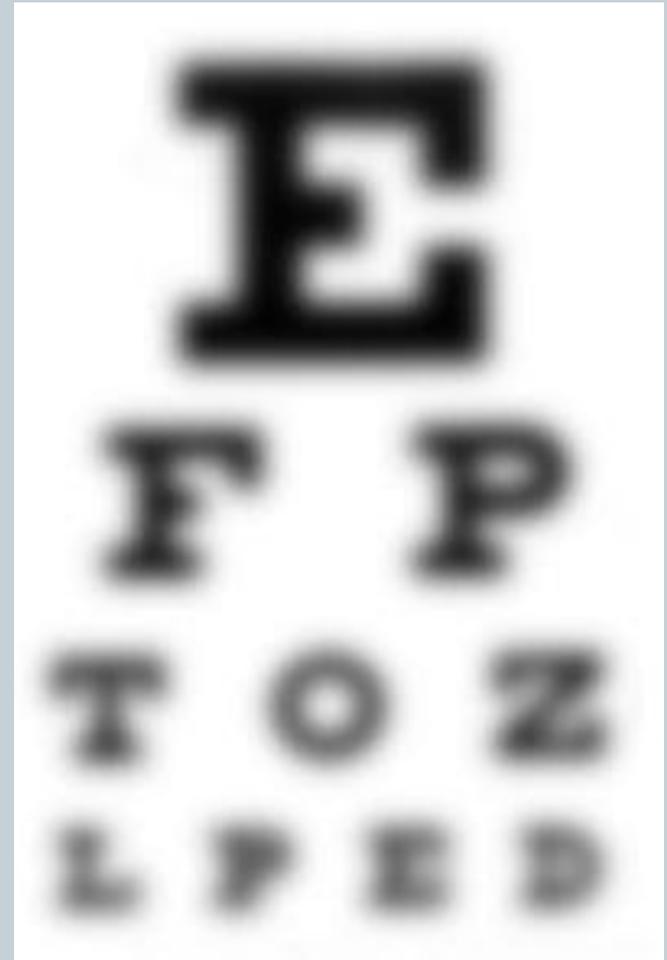
- Project managers often comment on the dialogue from their testers with analogies to “lots of noise” and “too much fuss”
- Likewise testers often comment on the dialogue with their project managers as frustrating; a lack of feeling understood and appreciated
- These communication roadblocks can prevent highly valuable information from being effectively understood and acted upon for the benefit of the project success and stakeholders



Areas of Focus for Communicating the Test Effort



- Collaborate and define the areas of focus for communication early in the project
- Set expectations on what will be communicated within the definition, implementation and evaluation of the test effort
- Consider the timing, frequency, format, audience, etc
- Consensus on the planned communication will limit surprises and potential concern



Collaborative Solutions

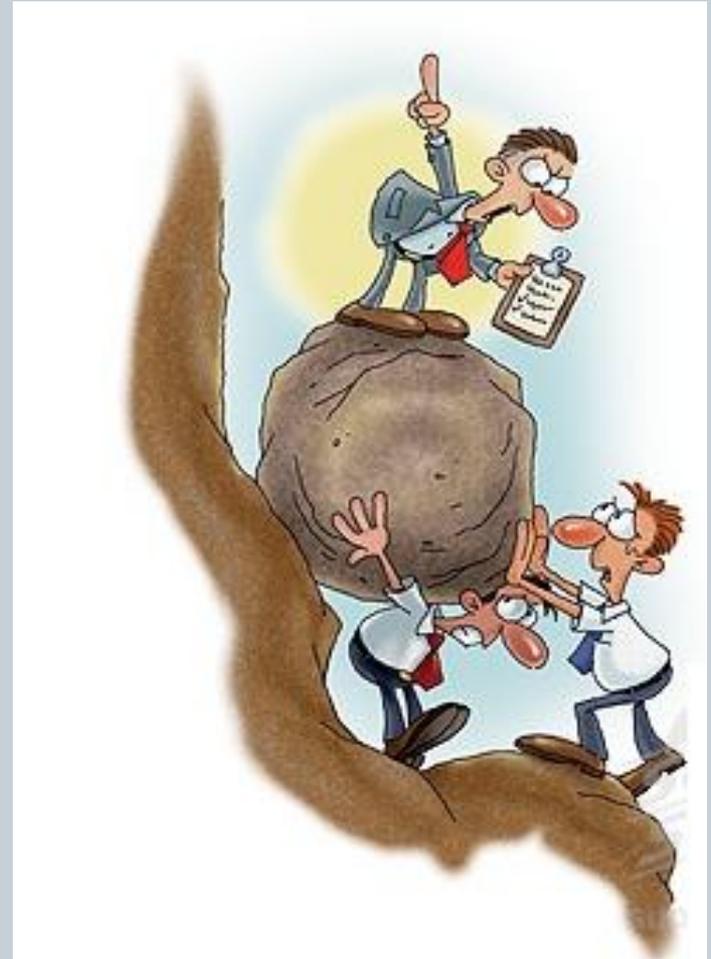
- Even the best of projects are likely to encounter challenges
- Effective collaboration between project managers and testers can be invaluable in creatively developing solutions
- Collaboration is important for defining, clarifying, problem solving, communicating, etc. the needs, concerns and progress of the testing effort



Getting What You Need – Tester Perspective

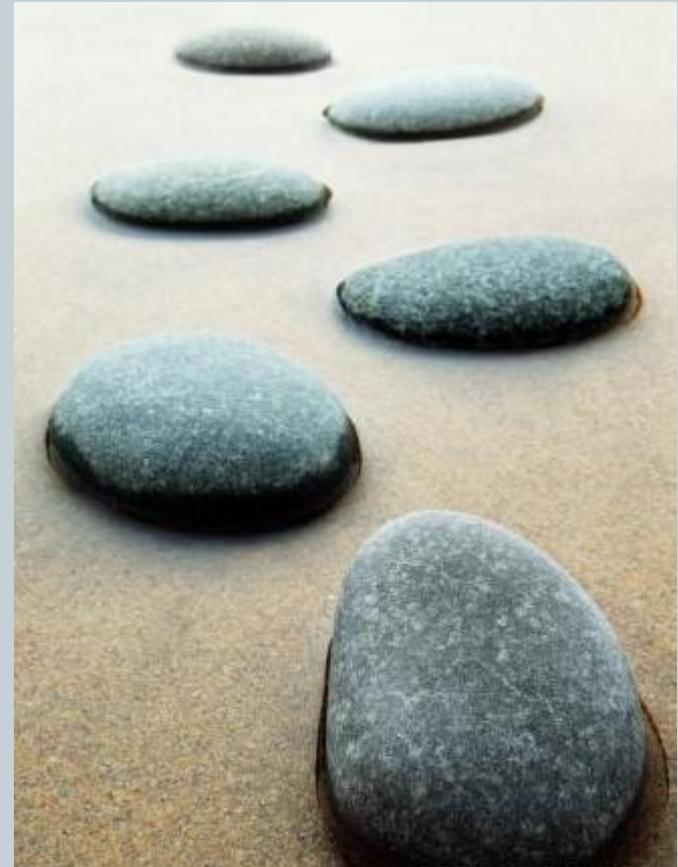


- Communicating the strategy, needs, concerns, progress, etc. can feel like rolling a weight uphill – it can be a tough sell
- Increase the effectiveness of the “sell” by aligning the test effort needs with achieving the stakeholder expectations
- Ensure you are actively engaged from project inception in order to understand the stakeholder goals and expectations



Counsellor Sales Process

- The “sell” of the test effort on a project can be likened to the sales process
- The stages of the Counsellor sales process are:
 - Stage 1 Relating
 - Stage 2 Discovering
 - Stage 3 Advocating
 - Stage 4 Supporting



The Sales Process & Selling the Test Effort



- **Relating – Establishing Trust**
 - As a tester joining a new project team, you are in the Relation stage and need to be focused on establishing trust with your project manager
 - Through this stage you want to establish the groundwork for the project manager to get to know you and learn the value you can bring them and to the project
- **Discovering – Uncovering Needs and Motives**
 - Focus is on understanding the goals and expectations of the stakeholders for the project as a whole and then specifically for quality
- **Advocating – Solving Problems While Meeting Personal Motives**
 - Focus on how to position the strategy, needs, concerns, etc of the test effort. Highlight the advantages and the benefits from the solution you are proposing
 - Advantages - “How does it solve the problem (lack of time, resources, budget, quality, etc)?”
 - ✦ Task motivated solution
 - Benefits - “What does it do for the project manager or stakeholders?”
 - ✦ Personal motivator
- **Supporting – Process of Reassuring**
 - You have successfully gained buy-in to solution your problem, implemented that solution and now you need to follow up on the success in achieving the advantages and benefits you outlined

Getting What You Need – PM Perspective



- Keep in mind test efforts are often more complex than may meet the eye
- Avoid simplifying the test effort to the development and execution of test cases
- Actively engage testers from project inception through closure
- Recognize the value of a skilled tester and their key role in project success



Summary



- When considering the communication between project managers and testers, the key success factors include:
 - Building a collaborative partnership between the project manager and tester
 - Ensuring the tester's awareness of stakeholder goals and expectations for the project in order to define an aligned test approach
 - Define the areas of focus for communication of the test effort
 - Collaboratively solution the challenges of the project
 - Aligning the needs of the testing effort with the stakeholder goals and expectations

Questions?



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