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7 Strategies to Make You a Better Tester

– A guide to gaining more influence within the product team

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To become a tester who is indispensable to the product team, it takes more than just finding bugs. You need to actively shape the quality assurance process and influence the final product outcome. As a tester, you have the opportunity to make a real difference—if you take initiative.

Strategy 1: Show That You Are Driven and Have a Quality Mindset

Quality is not an afterthought; it is an integral part of every decision and process. As a tester, it's your responsibility to promote this mindset and critically review everything from requirements to release.

- **Be curious:** Ask why things are done in a certain way. If you have or discover better solutions, suggest them.

  → **Example:** "Why did we choose this technical solution? I know a couple of other options that might be more robust or user-friendly—want me to walk you through them?"

- **See the big picture:** Quality is about more than functionality—consider user experience, performance, security, and business goals.

  → **Example:** "How does this feature affect the users' workflow? Does it meet our performance requirements?"

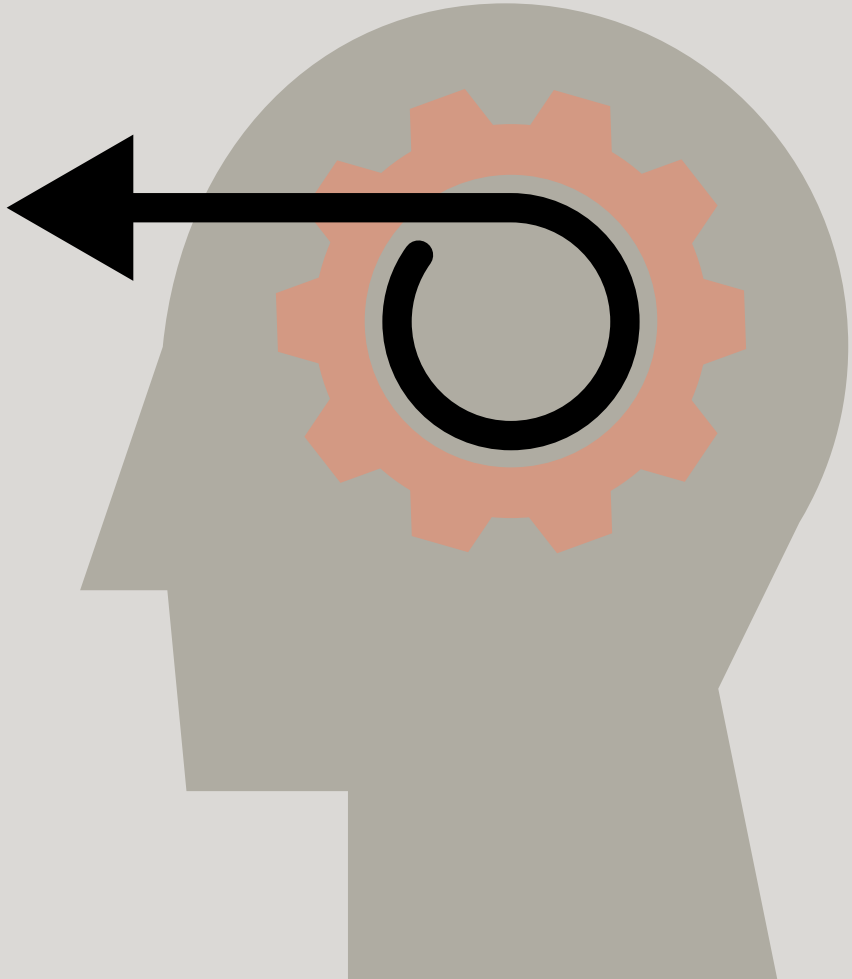
- **Promote transparency and collaboration:** Make sure everyone in the team is aware of quality goals and how their work contributes to them.

  → **Example:** Actively participate in requirement meetings to share your expertise and identify potential issues early.

Strategy 2: Take Initiative and Integrate Into the Team

Don’t wait to be “integrated” into the team. Real impact starts with your own initiative.

- **Be proactive:** Identify bottlenecks, suggest improvements, and show you’re committed to making the project better.
- **Build relationships:** Invest time in getting to know your colleagues. Strong relationships make it easier to influence decisions.
- **Deliver results:** Exceed expectations in your past assignments. It builds trust and shows you’re reliable.



Strategy 3: Create Influence Through Communication and Adaptability

Be clear, specific, and adaptive: Present results and recommendations in a way the recipient understands. Adapt your communication based on who you're talking to or the context. What matters is that the recipient understands your message—not that you sound important.

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Example: Engineers often want lots of detail about what was and wasn't done, while decision-makers usually just want to know: is it done or not?

Be open and honest, but constructive: Raise difficult issues and express your opinions constructively.

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Challenging tone (puts the recipient on the defensive):

"Why are we doing it this way? There are so many better ways!"

Curious tone (encourages sharing):

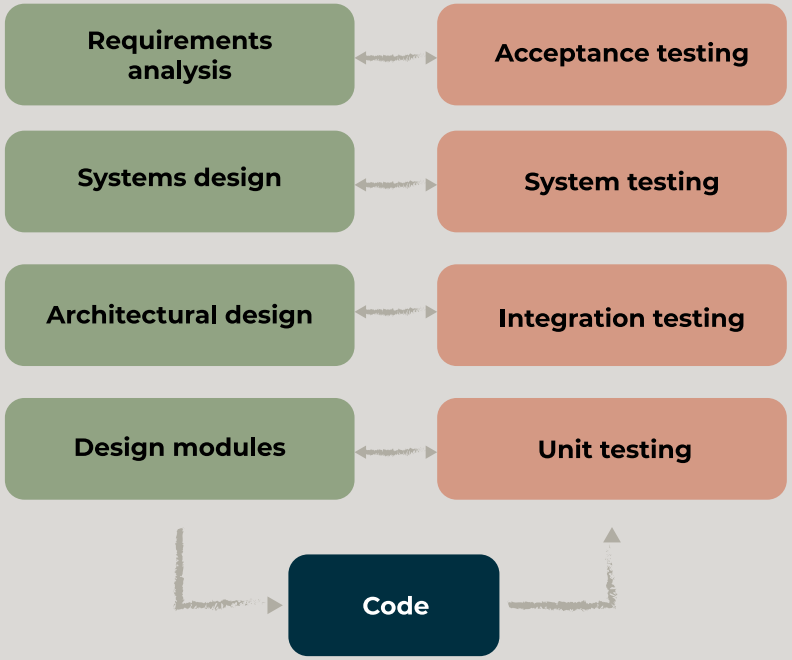
"What led us to choose this approach?"

Strategy 4: Integrate Test Strategies into the Development Process

To maximize your impact, focus on integrating testing throughout the development process and understand the "why" behind the product or feature.

- **Bird's-eye view:** Understand the business goals and user needs.
- **Overall goal:** Know the end goal so you can align all your work towards it.
- **Test strategy as part of development:** Make sure the test strategy is embedded in the development strategy, not treated as a separate activity or document.

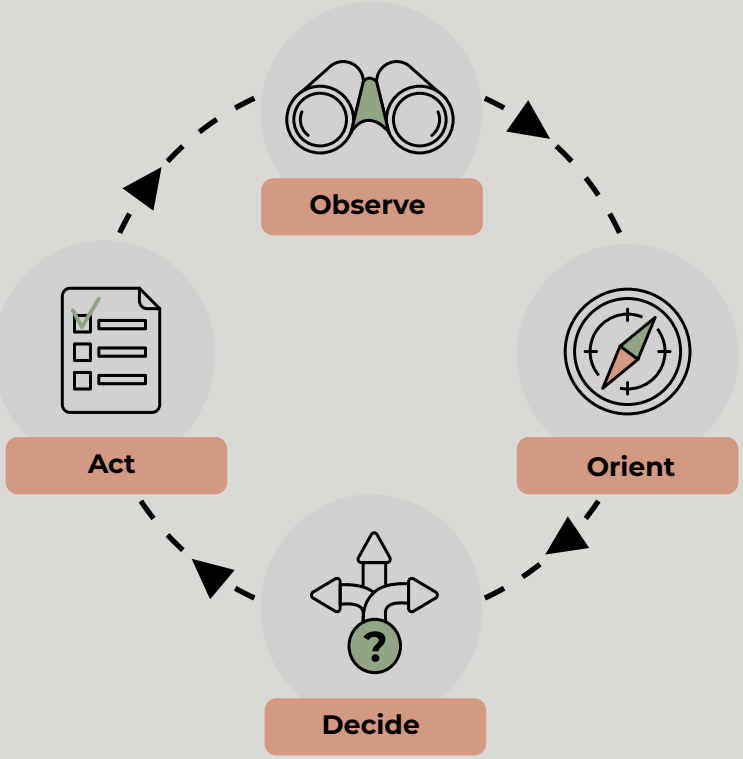
Example of how the process could look like.



Strategy 5: Be Agile and Adaptable

There are many ways to be adaptable, and many frameworks try to define "agile." At its core, agility means being adaptable in everything—technology, processes, work methods, etc. One simple method to describe this is the OODA loop (Observe, Orient, Decide, Act):

1. **Observe:** Stay aware of what's happening in the project.
2. **Orient:** Define where you are and what you need to reach your goal.
3. **Decide:** Prioritize actions and determine the next step.
4. **Act:** Perform the most important task and observe the result.



Strategy 6: Quality Is Subjective – Present Facts

Quality is subjectively objective. Even a critical bug may be deemed acceptable to release with. Your job is to carry information and assess risk—the decision to release lies with the product owner.

Example: A team finds a serious bug just before a major release. The bug affects a specific feature, but only in rare situations. As a tester, you present the facts:

"The bug causes the report function to crash if a user uploads a file larger than 2 GB. This could be an issue for a few customers, but for the majority, it's rare. We can either delay the release to fix it now or release as planned and include a fix in the next update. How should we prioritize?"

By clearly outlining the risks and consequences, you empower the product owner to make the right decision—without having to decide yourself if the bug is acceptable.

Strategy 7: Show Humility and Curiosity

- **Be humble:** Just because something is easy or obvious to you doesn't mean it is to others.

- **Be curious:** Try to understand others' perspectives to see if you've missed something. You don't have to agree, but it's always valuable to hear another view.

As a tester, you are uniquely positioned to influence both processes and products. By being curious, proactive, and communicative, you can make a real difference—not just by finding bugs, but by fostering a quality mindset throughout the team.

Your influence isn't about having the final say, but about creating understanding and providing the right foundation for decisions. When you lead quality assurance, you're not just a tester—you become a key player in the product's success.

We hope this guide offers valuable insights! If you have questions or want to discuss further, feel free to reach out.

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