



SQS PractiQ® - HealthCheck

Process analysis for more efficient quality assurance

The software industry is still young, and it continues to be a leading innovation driver. Maintaining this pace has its price. Ever more features and ever shorter time-to-market cycles mean that IT has to become ever more efficient. This applies in particular to the final link in the supply chain, the test. Not only does it constantly have to be further optimised itself, it also has to react quickly in the event of unforeseen difficulties. And it has to do so in the face of rising demands from customers in terms of quality of delivery and production. In the long run, the test can satisfy all these requirements only if it has stable, adaptable and scalable processes. This is why even the test needs a fitness check now and again as well - much like the health check-up you go to yourself.

Prevent errors rather than correct them

The general expectations for IT are pretty demanding. Function coverage, budget, deadline and quality are the hotly contested magic square in IT project management: 60 per cent of all IT projects do not achieve the set targets, 90 per cent take longer than planned, and for 50 per cent of projects, costs spiral out of control. An estimated 40 per cent of all product problems are not detected until the products are used - and not in beta versions, but by end users acting as involuntary testers.

Innumerable studies have shown where the value added by testing lies: the costs of error correction rise rapidly, the later an error is detected. Even taking the step from conception to production multiplies these costs by a factor of seven. The value of early, systematic and efficient testing cannot be overestimated if it prevents harm to the company's image arising from delayed product releases, problems using the products or even product recall campaigns.

Quality at any price?

Many decision-makers shy away from investment in quality assurance because they are afraid of additional costs and see no means of being able to verify a direct return on investment. This does not necessarily have to be the case, as SQS has demonstrated in almost 5,000 projects over the past 27 years: there are certainly ways and means of reconciling savings on the one hand with more efficient and frequent tests on the other. Decision-makers therefore have to be able to rely one hundred per cent on their test processes. This presupposes that the status of those processes is fully transparent. And that is why SQS offers an independent preventive check-up (HealthCheck) for the quality assurance processes at your company: experts put existing test processes under the microscope to enable them to work out pragmatic suggestions for improvements and solutions to problems, or establish the need for further-reaching analyses. At the same time the results of the HealthCheck provide the crucial arguments for subsequent implementation of the improvement measures.

About SQS: The SQS Group is the largest independent provider of software quality management and software testing services. Founded in Cologne, Germany, in 1982, SQS has around 1,450 employees in 14 countries worldwide and achieved revenues of € 134.3 million in 2009. With more than 5,000 completed projects under its belt, SQS has a strong customer base, including half of the DAX 30 companies.

SQS PractiQ® solutions - best practices, services and tools as a package: Software quality management and quality assurance often need to be faster and less expensive in many companies. SQS has all-in solutions at the ready to handle challenges that companies frequently face and thus enables its clients to lower IT costs and raise the quality of systems.

How healthy are your processes?

In much the same way as a doctor might examine you, the HealthCheck first analyses the symptoms. Are projects completed on time, and are defects detected at an early stage? Is the progress of testing transparent and comprehensible for all concerned, and does it inspire confidence? Are the requirements stable? If the SQS experts identify symptoms here early on, more serious maladies such as poor code quality, exploded budgets, cancelled bonuses or extra overtime can usually be avoided or, if not, effectively cured: the team and customers are spared unnecessary annoyance and in the long term competitive advantages can be maintained or enhanced in this way. For forward-thinking decision-makers, therefore, a regular health check is a must.

Or are the requirements constantly changing, to the extent that the team has to put out one 'fire' after another? If symptoms such as these occur, it is usually not long before the trouble makes itself felt: the quality of the code suffers, budgets are overshot, bonuses are cut, and the team has to put in overtime and becomes increasingly frustrated. If it even goes so far that products arrive late on the market and as a result the company loses its competitive edge, customers show dissatisfaction or turn to someone else, then an appointment with the 'SQS doctor' is overdue, because by running the HealthCheck he helps you to help yourself.

Efficient processes on prescription

As a rule the HealthCheck takes one week, and begins with a kick-off meeting that among other things defines the targets and the extent of the investigation. SQS then uses interviews and checklists for the actual investigative process, while maintaining a constant interchange with you as the client. Finally, SQS writes and presents you with a kind of medical appraisal for your quality assurance processes. At the same time it calculates the potential return on investment for the various suggested improvements.

After all, the processes at your company should not merely be analysed, they should above all be optimised. Besides, like in real life, it can happen that a more thorough analysis is required before the therapy is applied. In that case, too, the SQS experts are ready to help you. A tried-and-tested range of analytical instruments such as SPICE4TEST, TMMI®, TPI® and CMMI® is available to get to the bottom of the causes of the problems detected in the HealthCheck.

Your advantages at a glance

- Independent measurement of the efficiency and effectiveness of your test processes
- Action to increase transparency and traceability for all concerned in the course of the test process
- Improvement in code quality
- Less overtime and frustration in the teams
- Standardised 'level of maturity' allows comparisons to be made
- In addition to process analysis, pragmatic suggestions for improvements with estimated ROI
- Catalogue of specific problem solutions and measures to complete projects on schedule and on budget
- Securing competitive advantages and customer satisfaction by avoiding delayed product releases

Contact

Do you have any other questions, or do you need more information? We look forward to hearing from you, by phone or e-mail: Marie Erdmann, phone: +49 (0) 2203 91 54-1261, sqsmarketing@sqs.de

Kick-Off-Meeting

- Detail approach
- Agree objectives
- Agree scope
- Agree support requirements
- Agree sponsor

HealthCheck

- Interviews using HealthCheck checklists and process
- „Deepdive“ in specific areas if required
- Continual feedback and discussion loop with sponsor
- Examination of assets, processes, defects and service issues

Report & suggestions

- HealthCheck report produced and presented
- Maturity level identified
- Improvement suggestions with potential ROI
- Full results of assessment disclosed
- Next steps discussed

HealthCheck has three stages

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