

Collective Testing:

A New Advancement in Agile Testing Management



The Gaps in Today's Approach to Test Management.

Inflexibility is the bane of any innovative organization. Without the ability to get the resources you need when you need them, you'll struggle to ship product updates quickly, which leads to customer dissatisfaction, or even full-blown frustration.

To avoid either, we walk you through why **the traditional way of managing both internal employees and external testers is problematic**. We also highlight the concept of collective testing and show you what it looks like in the wild so you can begin to envision a future of flexible testing, resource accessibility, and faster releases.

There's a Better Way

A collective approach to testing opens up your organization to the benefits of utilizing your internal resources alongside skilled external testers. Instead of keeping their efforts siloed, collective testing integrates their work to deliver better quality. This guide explains how collective testing increases testing flexibility, cohesion, and speed.

Managing software testing with internal and external testers the traditional way

The growth of the distributed workforce seems extreme, but we're actually only at the beginning. Distributed work isn't a trend, but rather a new way for companies and people to get things done. For some time now, organizations have been able to tap into external testing resources, in the form of crowdsourcing and also direct relationships with freelancers.

The benefit of engaging with external testers lies in the ability to quickly acquire additional resources, without being saddled with full-time salaries and benefits.

Workers also enjoy the influx of work options. However, there is a downside when it comes to software testing. Up to this point, most organizations that engage with external QA vendors do so in a way that is very much outside of their typical workflows. For example, internal employees might be working within a test management system, while external testers are working inside of software provided by the vendor that employs or contracts out to them.

Current models for working with internal and external testers lead to these common problems:

- Siloed activity - Internal and external testers work in separate test management software
- Poor communication - Little to no interaction between internal and external testers
- Preset resource allocation - Rigid roles for internal resources (test authoring and strategy) versus external resources (test execution only)
- Inflexible resources - Difficult choices between retaining testers for large test run needs or not having enough testers for runs

When external and internal testing teams work in siloed platforms with no collaboration, speed suffers. There can be duplicate issues as well as coverage gaps or unnecessary overlaps. Worse still is the lack of flexibility. Many vendors want you to sign up for a certain capacity level, and this doesn't reflect the highly variable nature of software testing. For some test runs, you need just 5 testers, and for others you need 50.

The current models for managing your resources make it **hard to gain additional testers when you need them**, and when you do add more resources this only exacerbates the problem of siloed activity.

The foundational features of most test management software were designed for internal use only, before the era of distributed work.

What most test management platforms lack

Test management platforms are designed to help you plan test runs, create and manage test cases, allocate resources, adjust tester workloads appropriately, track issues, and analyze test run results and feature stability. Most test management tools include those

features, all of which are essential and not to be ignored.

But these platforms also lack features that modern QA and engineering teams need, in order to provide quality at speed.

Your test management platform is probably missing out on...

Collaboration and communication between internal and external testing teams

Your test management platform most likely lacks features to make it easy for your internal employees and external testers to work together. Since partnering with vendors for external testers is more common than hiring individual freelancers, it's not so simple to just add your vendor to your test management platform. And your vendor probably has its own software that its testers use.

Flexibility with acquiring additional resources on demand

Your test management platform also doesn't make it easy to get more testers as needed for large test runs. You might be able to get additional testers inside of the platform used by your testing vendor, but then of course there's the silo issue, as you can't add your internal testers into whatever software your vendor uses for their contractors or employees.

In other words, the foundational features of most test management software were designed for internal use only, before the era of distributed work. These platforms are simply not designed for the way that modern organizations test today, which involves the regular (and flexible

usage) of external testers to augment the capacity and capabilities of the internal team. Let's set aside the way that things have always been done, and look at a model of testing that fits organizations' current needs and goals.

Today's collective mindset for agile test management

What is collective testing?

Collective testing is a collaborative approach that equips burstable teams of people across organizations to test exactly when, where, and how is most impactful — all within a cohesive testing ecosystem.

For example, in-house testers might test secure code for internal consumption only. Or, members of your product and marketing teams may want to quickly test a new feature for UX. At the same time, external testers execute black box, functional, exploratory, usability, and other forms of testing. New levels of on-demand flexibility mean your agile test management quickly adapts based on varying needs. The fluid mix of internal and external testers simplifies management and scales up or down based on needs – feeding into a single platform and existing workflows.

The value of collective testing

With collective testing, organizations don't automatically create issues like siloes and redundancies simply because they want to use external testers for increased coverage and speed. Instead, organizations are able to utilize their internal team and external resources in a seamless way that increases the success of efforts made by both teams.

Internal employees benefit from expanded capacity and precise quality goals. Meanwhile, external testers do a better job and experience more pride in their work by collaborating closely with client contacts. They can ask internal testers questions and can work together with them to cover a complicated feature or user flow.

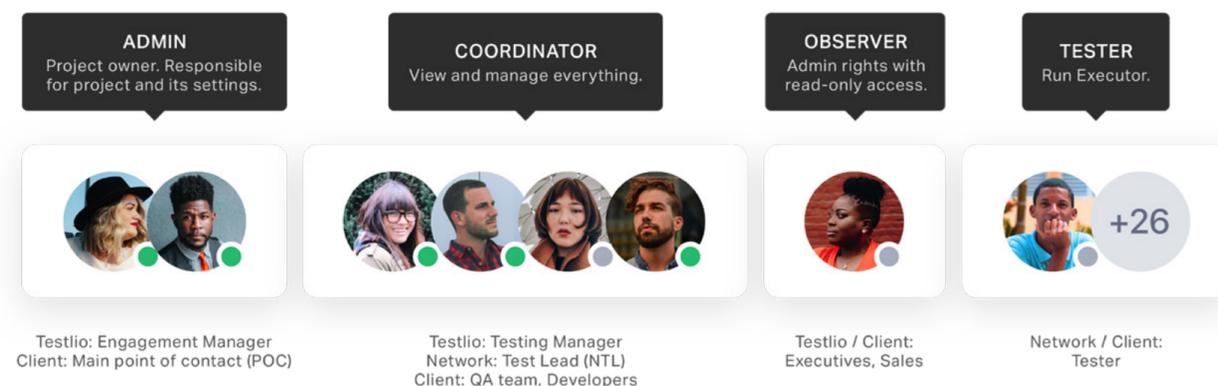
What you achieve with collective testing

- Flexibility - Add resources as needed to bulk up your team for important test runs
- Speed - With no delays to accessing skilled testers, release faster
- Test coverage - Easily expand testers for location, language, and device coverage
- Cohesion - Benefit from QA activity and analysis taking place in a single platform

The Importance of unified systems and integrations

Now that we understand more about collective testing, let's peek at what a collective testing platform can do.

- Add and remove vetted testers to your team as needed
- Gain language, location, and device coverage in minutes
- Manage internal and external testers under one roof
- Assign test cases to internal employees and external testers
- Get help with authoring and managing tests from a QA engagement manager
- Keep track of issues
- Reuse and revise test cases
- Enjoy holistic feature analysis and comprehensive test results
- Open up direct communication between all testers



Collective testing use cases

What would collective testing look like for you? Get inspired with these use cases that you can mix and match to create your perfect testing collective—with full flexibility to switch things up.

1. Internal-eyes-only test run

A product manager is working on a new feature and is not ready to release it into the world. She wants to continue testing it iteratively using in-house employees. She logs into her collective testing platform, writes some test cases for the new feature, and assigns them to internal QAs, developers, product managers, marketers, or whomever she chooses. The issues they create are stored in the system with bugs from other features. When the new secret feature is ready for high-volume testing, the product manager revises and reuses the test cases for the team of external QA testers.

2. Dream testing team for language and device coverage

An internal QA manager needs to test a new feature included in an important upcoming release. With just a few clicks, he invites vetted, experienced crowdsourced testers to the bespoke team based on the languages they speak and the devices they own. He also assigns some test cases to internal QA testers too.

3. Simplified collaboration between external testers and internal employees

A VP of engineering sponsors the migration of the internal QA team to a collective testing platform to enhance communication and collaboration. External testers can get instant access to internal testers for questions about design, product experience, complex issues, test pathways, and anything else. Testers more easily team up for multi-user test cases.

4. Help with test authoring

A QA manager doesn't have the capacity to write all of the test cases for a large test run. He requests assistance from his collective testing platform for test case authoring within a certain feature area. The test cases are assigned equally to internal and external testing teams.

5. Need for test case execution only

A QA manager writes all of the test cases in-house, but doesn't have the internal resources needed to execute on all of them, and also wants fresh eyes for exploratory testing. She invites some external testers she has worked with in the past for certain functional test cases, along with new vetted external testers that haven't touched her product before to conduct exploratory testing.

Tips for achieving quality (with speed and flexibility)

Here are some of our best tips for how to achieve greater standards of quality in less time, and with greater flexibility.

Combine testing efforts in a single platform

Bring all testers under one roof so you can coordinate their efforts more accurately, produce higher quality issue reports, and foster natural collaboration.

Utilize a software testing vendor that doesn't lock you into set numbers of testers

Don't get locked into a specific number of testers per month, or you'll risk overpaying or not getting the support you need.

Choose the test management platform that fits your team

Be open to unique ways of handling test authoring and assigning. Maybe your QA manager can handle this in-house, or maybe their time is better spent elsewhere and your vendor can handle test case creation.

Drop testing platforms that don't support your collective team

Don't pay for more than what you need. Because collective testing platforms work for internal employees and external testers, you avoid doubling up on expensive software licenses.

Key takeaways

Collective testing opens up your organization to the benefits of utilizing your internal resources regardless of their role alongside skilled external testers. Instead of keeping their efforts siloed, collective testing integrates their work to deliver better quality. This method is more effective in the short run and promises smarter analysis in the long term.

Additionally, collective testing offers the opportunity to flexibly add additional freelance testers, so that complicated or large test runs have all of the resources needed to promise a speedy release.

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Testlio clients include Amazon, American Express, CBS, Microsoft, the NBA, and SAP. Collectively, our clients power more than 2

billion users. When apps must perform brilliantly, Testlio helps ensure world-class customer experiences. In any location. On any device. In any language.

Enjoy the world's best freelance testers and collective testing platform with modern and unified test management features. Testlio clients can manage employees while continuing to rely upon Testlio's best-in-industry network of 10K+ expert, managed, freelance testers.



See the Testlio Approach to Collective Testing

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