
Testing, Outside of the Box

STAR West 2018

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Sr. Program Manager for Risk Team at eBay



Boxes

- Our desk**
- Our role**
- Our responsibility**
- Our goals**
- Our department**
- Our environment**
- Our team**
- Our values**
- Our culture**
- Our company**



My role "boxes": 2011 to present

2011 2012 2013 2014 2015 2016 2017 2018



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[Direct Poll](#)

[Results](#)

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You are the airplane's "Black Box"

- You show what happened
- You collect data
- You help correlate theories
- ... and inspire new ones
- First thing sought after a crash
- Crashproof (integrity)



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The Sandbox: a safe space to play

- Play nice with others (integration)
- Find out who you are, socially
- Test your implementation
- Experiment
- Smoke test
- Configure / Operate / Observe
- Learn
- Failure has lower consequences



The toolbox

Your domain knowledge

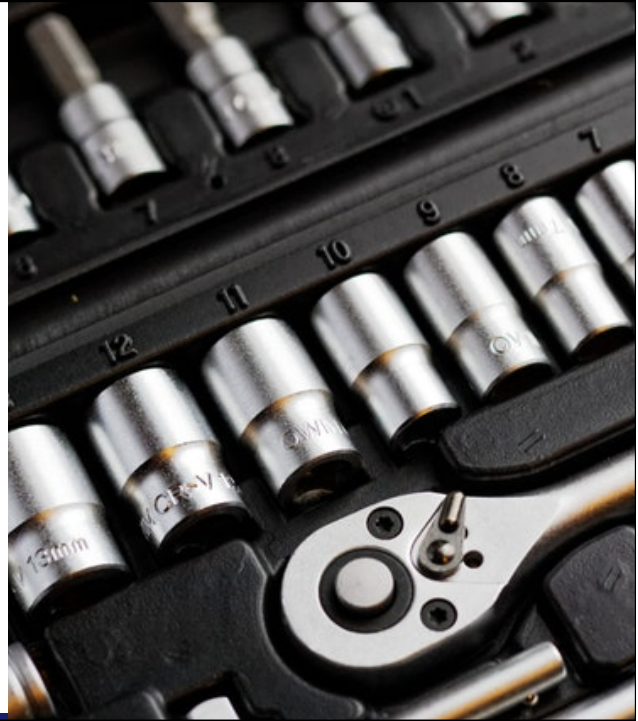
Your skill

Your experience

Agile Methods

Dev & Testing Tools (e.g. Docker)

Project Management tools (e.g. JIRA)



Yeah, so?

OUT of the box, there are important

Opportunities

Opportunity #1: *Turn rhetoric into action*

Opportunity #2: *Increase your Influence*

Opportunity #3: *Elevate our craft*

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Opportunity #1:
Turn rhetoric into action



Leader: "We value these kinds of things."

Cultivate Trading Zones

Staff: "I value these kinds of things."



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**Opportunity #2:
Increase your influence**



Manager: "Do this."

Your ability to influence or find what CAN be done

You: "We have these others things to do."



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**Opportunity #3:
Elevate our craft**



Project Manager: "Anyone can do testing."

Your unique value to the project and the company

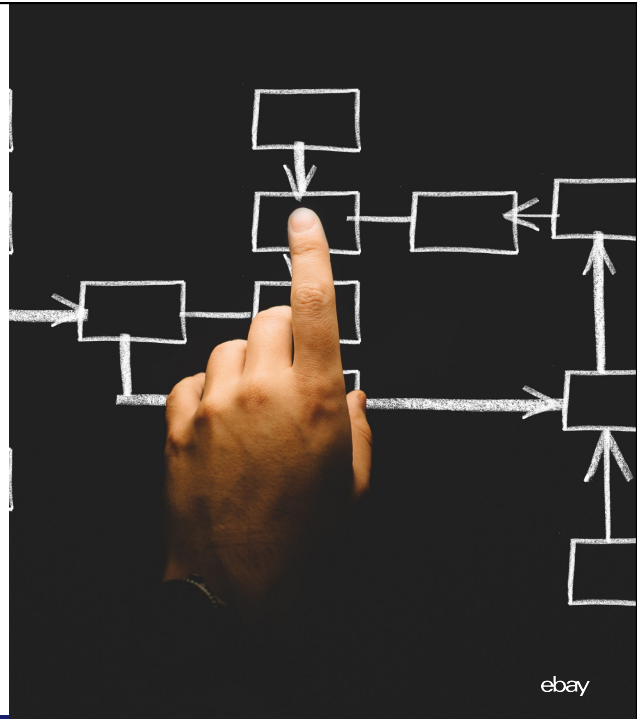
You: "Testing takes skill."



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I'm counting on you as Testers to...

- ... involve and partner with me
- ... push back
- ... be critical
- ... be skeptical
- ... question assumptions
- ... find hidden requirements
- ... follow procedure
- ... not just follow procedure
- ... look outside your box



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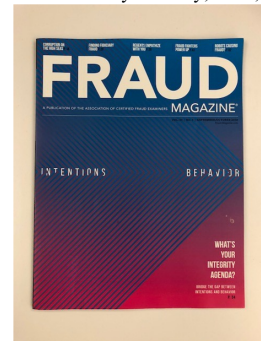
I'm counting on you as Testers to...

- ... think of risks
- ... invent ways to discover problems
- ... inform me how things are going
- ... escalate
- ... involve and partner with me
- ... push back
- ... help me see blind spots

June 25, 2018

Ryan Homa Exploits Accounting Software Glitch and Steals \$1.3 Million

“You would create the check and the program would ask, ‘Would you like to print?’ And of course you’d say, ‘Yes,’” he said. “A prompt would ... ask, ‘Did the check print properly?’ ... I found out if you hit ‘no’ then it would bring you back to the previous screen, and you could manipulate the check you’ve already printed,” he said. “And then after you manipulate the check you get to save it again and then pull it. My discovery was that you could print a completely legitimate check and change the information in the computer to say something else.”



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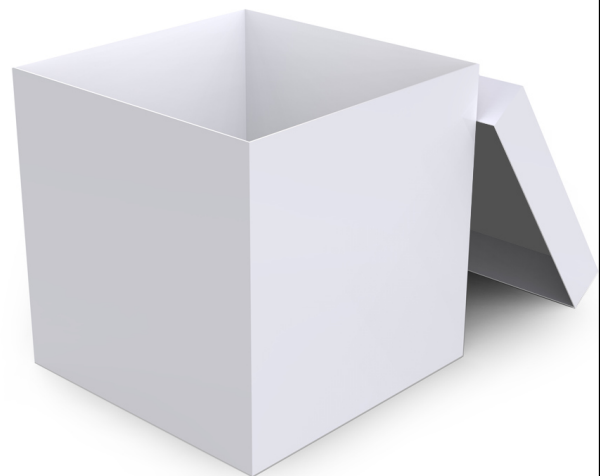
I'm counting on you as Testers to...

- ... expose risks that threaten our brand
- ... speak up when you're worried
- ... know how to ask questions in different ways
- ... anticipate scrutiny
- ... want to improve at finding risks and issues
- ... let me know what you need
- ... argue your case
- ... celebrate your skills



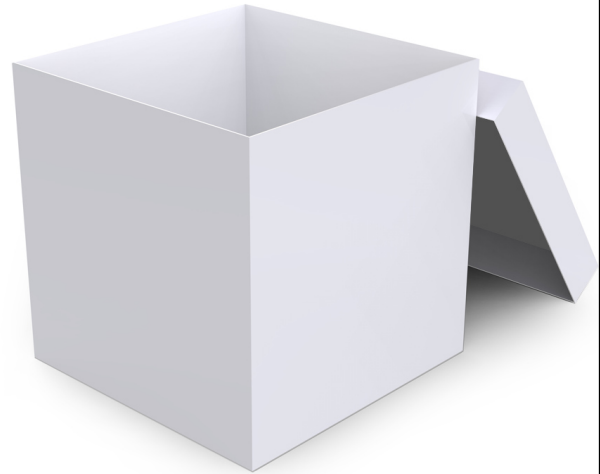
In return, I will go back to my PM box and I will...

- ... investigate – *(confirm rumors)*
- ... educate – *Why did we decide this?*
- ... coordinate – *What are other teams doing?*
- ... facilitate – *“I’ll schedule a deep dive...”*
- ... mediate – *“Who really should own this?”*
- ... ameliorate – *(more clarity on milestones)*
- ... elucidate – *“Let me make a dashboard”*
- ... advocate – *“We will use <my dashboard>”*



In return, I will go back to my PM box and I will...

- ... ask questions
- ... provide expectations and oracles
- ... look holistically to find and fix gaps
- ... report on project risks
- ... triage and escalate your concerns
- ... give status updates
- ... keep you aware of milestones



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So...

... just for this week...

take stock of what's IN your different "boxes" ...

but also what might be **OUTSIDE** them that you can bring *in*.



Thank you
for being part of
this keynote...

Your cubicles
might miss you,
but you'll come
back smarter for
having been out
of them.



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Poll Results

(added just after my keynote)

Poll results:

- [Question 1](#)
- [Question 2](#)
- [Question 3](#)
- [Question 4](#)
- [Question 5](#)
- [Question 6](#)
- [Question 7](#)
- [Question 8](#)
- [Question 9](#)
- [Question 10](#)
- [Question 11](#)

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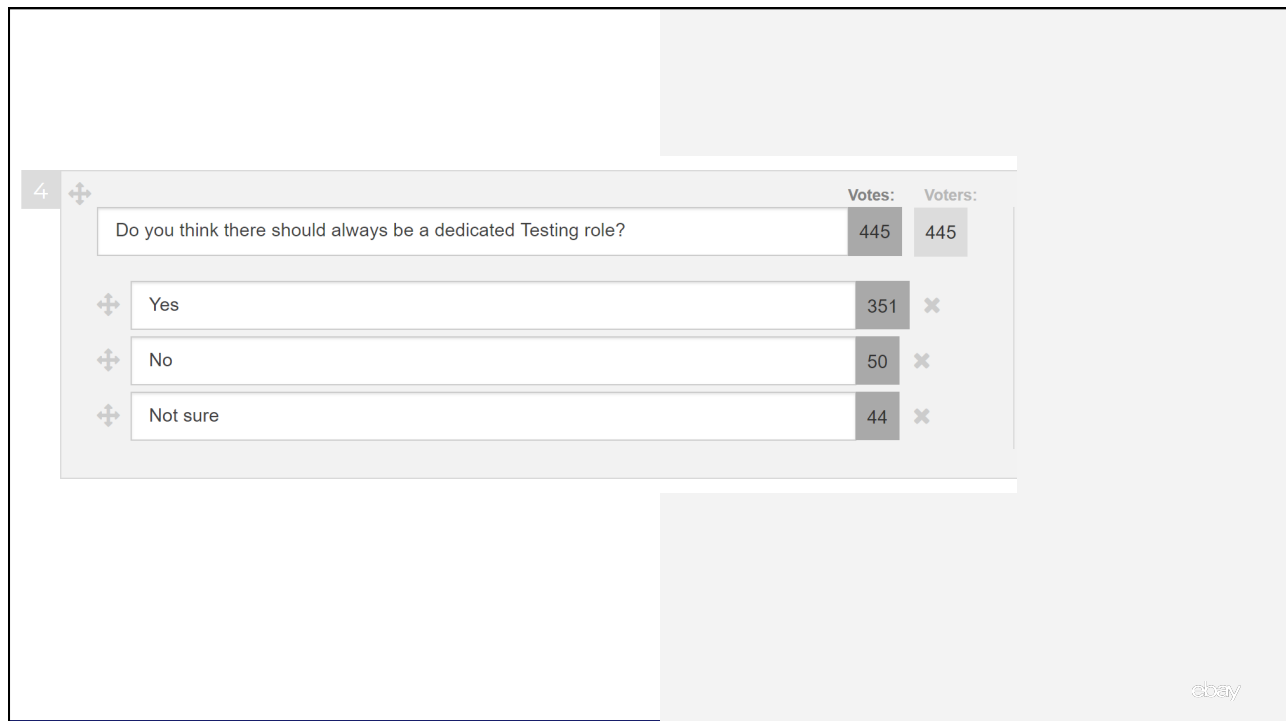
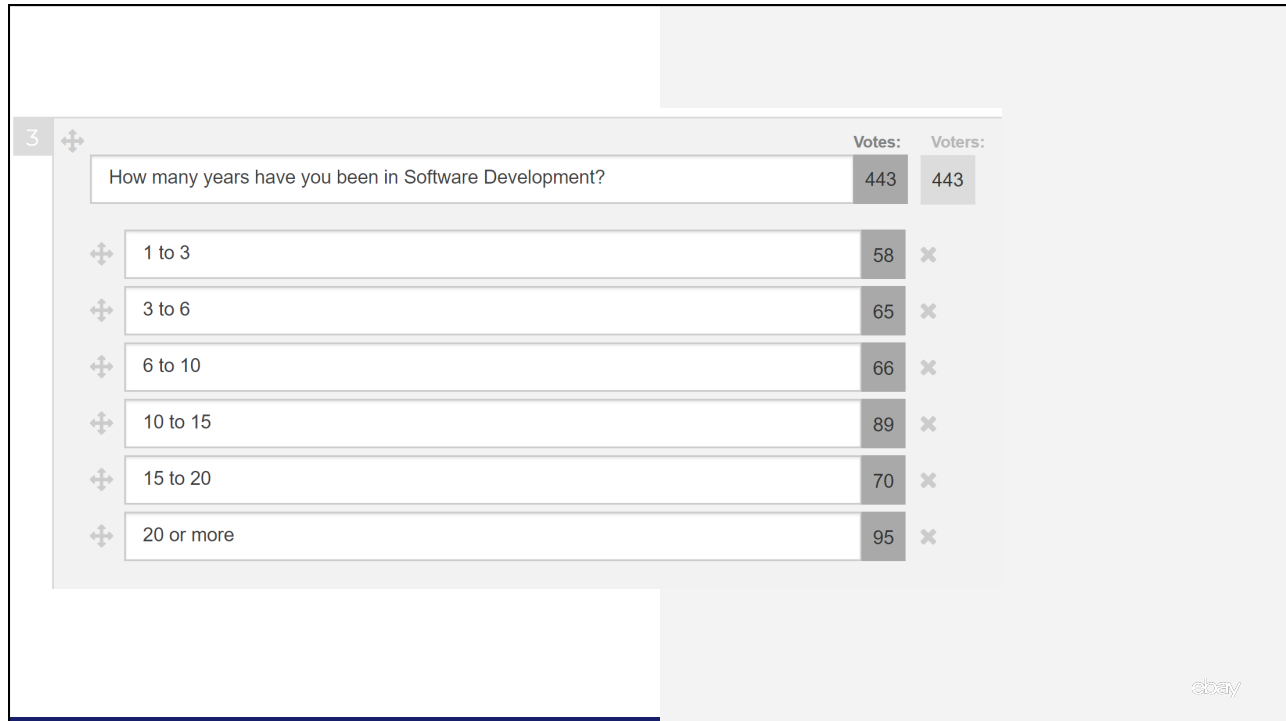
	Votes:	Voters:
What best describes you current role?	455	455
Developer (Programmer)	7	x
Program Management (big picture -- roadmaps, cross-team milestones)	+27 14	x
Project Management (sprints, scrums, standups, etc)	+11 7	x
Product Management (specs, customer visits, wireframes, etc)	+20 4	x
Automation Engineer	109	x
Tester	183	x
People Management (in PM, Dev, Test)	93	x
Agile role: Product Owner / ScrumMaster / Agile Leader / Coach	+22 10	x
Business Analyst / Support	3	x
Design / UX	1	x
Other	24	x

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	Votes:	Voters:
What kind of tester do you MOST think you are?	447	447
Empathic	14	x
Social	17	x
Analytical	193	x
Technical	116	x
Administrative	21	x
User Expert	62	x
Developer	24	x

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5 +

	Votes:	Voters:
Have you ever transitioned between PM / Dev / Testing / (other roles)	451	451
+ Yes	268	x
+ No	183	x

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6 +

	Votes:	Voters:
What do you want most to learn from others here at STAR West?	451	451
+ Their role	7	x
+ Their company culture	29	x
+ Their project	5	x
+ Their solutions (methods, tools & tactics)	368 +2	x
+ Their project war stories	28	x
+ Other	14	x

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7		Votes:	Voters:
How have you learned something REALLY important in the last week?		839	442
+	Took a class / attended a talk or meetup related to my work	+19 211	x
+	Meetings	47	x
+	Talked with my Mentee / Mentor / Manager	65	x
+	Had lunch with someone on another team / company	+8 61	x
+	Talked to a customer	34	x
+	Did some paired testing / programming	62	x
+	Heard something valuable at a meeting / standup	+7 137	x
+	Questioned a key assumption I had	94	x
+	I'm looking up at screen for ideas...	63	x
+	Something that's not on this list, but I'll tell you at lunch.	+22 65	x

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8		Votes:	Voters:
What's the most important thing you need from a Program Manager?		443	443
+	Provide clear info (like milestones and dependencies)	+13 195	x
+	Listen to me, or at least answer my email the same day	+14 14	x
+	Tell me what's going on from other teams	26	x
+	Facilitate useful meetings	25	x
+	Understand my role	16	x
+	Clarity on what decisions were made and why	+3 132	x
+	... to stop bothering me	26	x
+	Other, (lunch conversation)	9	x

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9

	Votes:	Voters:
Has anyone from another role ever asked you what your job was really like?	450	450
Yes	286	x
No	146	x
Maybe	18	x

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	Votes:	Voters:
Why do you think people tend to stay in their boxes (silos)?	442	442
They like things the way they are	215	x
They're already pretty aware of things outside their role	+17 11	x
It isn't rewarded; nothing in it for them	+1 65	x
It's too much work to find out what's going on	+6 88	x
I don't. This isn't a problem where I work	+2 27	x
It's complicated... re: lunch conversation	+2 36	x

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	Votes:	Voters:
How could Testing most be valued by others who are not Testers?	429	429
Not sure	4	
Tie results or potential risks to business value	+8 255	
More bug advocacy or bug "framing" (contextual considerations)	+22 23	
More emphasis on how difficult / complex it is	+6 32	
Have them be testers for a day	65	
Stop doing it well and let them see what happens	+8 47	
Let me think about it and tell you at lunch...	+6 3	

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