Position Paper – Domain focussed Testing – A Necessity

Over the last few years, significant advances have happened in the testing space. Continuous Integration, Shift-Left testing, Test Driven development, Behavioral Driven development (BDD) , Test Driven development (TDD), Test automation etc... . Though every software development and test organization talks about domain expertise and domain focused testing, the reality is quite different. More often than not, the focus of the testing teams seems to gravitate towards adoption of latest tools and technologies. The domain and / or business processes that underpin the software being tested are not given the appropriate measure of importance. The absence of a consultative testing approach is highly correlated to the lack of domain expertise within the test team. The result of this disproportionate focus on tools, technologies and adoption of the latest technology focused test methodologies at the cost of business process and domain understanding, very often leads to catastrophic results.

Upon further diligence, it is apparent that limited domain expertise becomes even more accentuated in industries that have complex multi-dimensional workflows, such as the insurance vertical. Shallow understanding of business scenarios may present problems well out into the future as long-tail workflows come to fruition. In the short term, there are numerous challenges with UAT and production defects, inefficient end to end testing cycles, higher defect rejection ratio, inability of test team members to understand the context of testing, redundant documentation and test maintenance activities along with increased re-work and re-testing efforts. In the long term, there are challenges like recurring maintenance issues, projects not satisfying intended business goals, client-partner relationship issues and inflated cost of quality.

Having a focus on business processes and domain understanding within the test teams ensure that the business teams involved in the software development and test efforts optimize their own bandwidth. This is a significant hidden overhead and very often leads to business partner fatigue and project failure or abandonment. This focus also enables quicker decision making on change requests and controlling scope creep. Improved test coverage, early defect detection and reduction in effort spent on rework are also seen when test teams have a sharp focus on domain and business processes. The in-depth domain knowledge and specialization of the test teams lead to better synergies and working relationship between business and test teams.

In the light of above context, we have embraced these challenges and created a testing practice specifically focused on validation and verification of insurance (an industry that is characterized by complex, long tail business processes) applications. The testing practice has been built around specialized testing teams that have a combination of Insurance industry experience and specific P&C insurance domain / business process training. By adopting consultative testing approach, we are able to provide customers with clear value and solutions that improve the time to market and overall customer experience. This includes accelerated test phases, enhanced quality, creation of Intellectual Property (IP) and meeting the overall business goals across various parameters like cost, quality and time to market.

REAL LIFE BENEFITS

The real life benefits that we have observed can be quantified as follows:

- Acceleration of knowledge transition phase (more than 30% effort savings) and obtaining head start of testing activities
- 20% improvement in Test coverage and enhanced quality of test scenarios/cases
- 30% or more reduction in defect rejection ratio and defect slippage ratio
- 20% or more reduction in test design & documentation effort
- Reduction in overall cost of quality (Minimum 10%)

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The MFX Services value proposition

MFX is a trusted, global technology service and solution provider to the P&C insurance industry. With pressure around profitability and margins, Clients are looking at skilled resources to test their application with the complete knowledge on the subject that includes federal laws, risks and compliance related to given industry/domain, in short there is a need for SME's/Domain experts with technical inclination to perform testing activities. MFX understands and offers its services with all the required knowledge.