

# The 7 Habits of Highly Efficient Testers

By Naseem Mariam

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ABSTRACT: Testing is an important part of any project. Getting it right can spell success for the project. Within the constraints of time, manpower and lab resources, a positive attitude and knowledge of the attitudes and actions of a highly efficient tester will help you test better, more efficiently and effectively.

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Here are the 7 habits of Efficient Testers, derived from Stephen Covey's 7 Habits of Efficient People. Testing is both an art and a science. Even in the best-managed projects, the testing phase expands to fill the available time.

Regression testing, use of automated test suites does help provided the tester knows the optimal order in which he should execute the test cases. Prioritization amongst the features to be tested does ensure that top priority features are thoroughly tested before product release.

## 1. Be Proactive

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The highly efficient tester

- (a) Communicates with customer, client on assumptions, dependencies, constraints right from the specifications stage itself: 'When in doubt ASK' is his motto
- (b) Develops and fosters harmony and good-will amongst the team members
- (c) Plans for and ensures that all equipment, testing tools, machines, lab set up is available on time
- (d) Keeps customer and company updated on progress of the project - both good news and bad is communicated and suggests solutions to issues
- (e) Anticipates and appreciates feedback from customer, team members, peers

## 2. Begin with the end in mind

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The highly efficient tester

- (a) Studies the market trends for the product being developed
- (b) Understands how and where, to whom and when the product will be delivered, marketed
- (c) Lists out and verifies with customer the various scenarios that the product will need to work in
- (d) Voices, clarifies and records the customers requirements and expectations
- (e) Remains alert for opportunities to remove stress and introduce fun and joy within the team

## 3. Put First Things First

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The highly efficient tester

- (a) Knows the interests of all stake-holders in the project
- (b) Ensures that the test suites cater to all these interests: in case of clash of interests, he negotiates for a compromise with the respective stake-holders
- (c) Keeps all lab equipment, testing tools and testing software package licenses in working condition
- (d) Organizes his day and the work space for uninterrupted testing, for discussions and status updates
- (e) Remembers to fulfill the expectations of the stake holders and not just their requirements - his goal is to delight his stake-holders.

## 4. Think Win-Win

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The highly efficient tester

- (a) Recognizes that customer/clients require exhaustive testing
- (b) Realizes that investors require cost effective and profitable projects with sufficient good quality testing
- (c) Knows that the team members wish for effective, efficient stress free testing
- (d) Plans well, re-plans according to contingency plan when risks materialize

(e) Makes quick decisions, faces surprises heads-on

## 5. Seek First to Understand

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The highly efficient tester

- (a) Understands the context, the environment in which the product needs to function
- (b) Understands the restrictions, the assumptions and dependencies
- (c) Understands well the Specifications, the requirements,
- (d) the design constraints,
- (e) the implementation drawbacks and possible errors and defects that the product can have

## 6. Synergize

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The highly efficient tester

- (a) Is creative in searching for new and better ideas and solutions, better ways of testing, optimal test suites: for regression and automation
- (b) Values and seeks the insights of others to arrive at the minimal test suite
- (c) Encourages others to express their opinions and inputs to prioritize the various tests
- (d) Involves everyone in the team
- (e) Listens carefully and gives credit to others for their contributions

## 7. Sharpen the Saw

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The highly efficient tester

- (a) Seeks to continuously improve his own testing skills
- (b) Designs test scripts, test suites with test automation, automated regression testing in mind
- (c) Mentors team members in debugging skills
- (d) Studies available testing packages and test tools
- (e) Adapts available testing tools to the project needs.

Testing is an important part of any project. Getting it right can spell success for the project. Within the constraints of time, manpower and lab resources, a positive attitude and knowledge of the attitudes and actions of a highly efficient tester will help you test better, more efficiently and effectively.

## Related Reading

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1. "5 Steps to Better Manage Your Customers' Expectations"

<http://www.123projectmanagement.com/crm-expectations-management.html>

2. "Risk Management Reduces Project Fires"

<http://www.123projectmanagement.com/project-risk-management-fires.html>

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#### About the Author

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Naseem Mariam is the editor of "Management that Soars" Newsletter & author of "Project Serenity - How to gain happiness and peace" . Her writings draw life from her 18 years experience managing software projects. Let her guide you towards Faster All Round Success and a Stress Free, Joyous Life. Her free ebook and Newsletter tell You How. Subscribe with mail to [projectdioxide@sendfree.com](mailto:projectdioxide@sendfree.com) Visit her at <http://www.123projectmanagement.com>

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