

Participant 18

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SPEAKERS

Participant 18, Researcher

Researcher 00:15

Good morning. Participant 18, how are you this morning?

Participant 18 01:19

I'm doing very well. Thank you.

Researcher 00:22

I'd like to thank you for the opportunity to do the interview. I do appreciate specially this morning. Do you have any question for me, I will explain how the interview works. And we'll start with the questions. And thanks for sending those answers prior to the interview. And do you have any questions before I explain how the interview works?

Participant 18 01:30

Oh, no, happy to help.

Researcher 00:32

Okay. So it's a research interview. I'm talking to Agile practitioners to understand how do they work in agile and basically, I'm trying to understand the dynamic in a team when they admit mistakes, when they bring a problem forward, etc. The interview is structured on a set of questions, we will go through the questions and we will discuss them. But it is a fluid interview at any time you like to discuss something or to bring something please feel free to do so. We don't have to entirely stick to the interview questions. Okay. All right. Perhaps we can start with a short introduction, if you can introduce yourself briefly your education and your experience.

Participant 18 01:51

Oh, yes. Okay. I have 10 years experience. I am at the third job. Before I started with an internship as a junior Java developer. Then I move forward to job in antivirus programming as a threat researcher, I worked there three years. And last year, I made the software tester course. Who in four months, and then I switched my job to digital tester or QA analyst.

Participant 18 02:41

In a company here in Germany and we have a team in Bucharest, now I am working in a team are using are mostly German. And I started doing test management.

Researcher 02:52

Okay, so basically your job mainly is quality assurance activities, right?

Participant 18 02:55

Oh, yes, yes.

Researcher 03:08

Okay, great. What type of Avatar do you use in your team? Do you use Scrum XP Kanban?

Participant 18 03:19

Now, mainly Scrum. In my experience our implementation is a little bit unique, I can say. Because in the first seven months, I worked in a very small team only with my team leader. And we had not daily standups meetings, we have sprints. But we do have short standups every now and then. It's where we meet with our team leader. She when she asked me what I did yesterday, what I'm doing right now and what I will do tomorrow. And right now, because I just started in this team in Germany about two months ago. I am I have weekly meetings with the teams where we explained where we are in our work. And also I have a meeting go to work three days a week with my team leader and my colleague, also to see where we are, what we can do best, and so on.

Researcher 04:33

Okay, great. Thank you. How big is the team? What's the size of your team?

Participant 18 04:44

I am working closely with one colleague and we have a team leader. And then this team is part of a bigger team, where I have another seat Colleagues work working in different spaces in the project. And then we have a big team leader. Which week who knows everything about what we are doing.

Researcher 05:18

So it sounds like more than 10 or 12?

Participant 18 05:23

Yes, yes. Yeah. 12.

Researcher 05:24

Okay, great. How long this team has been working together? I understand. You haven't. You've just joined the team few months ago, but how long the team has been working together?

Participant 18 05:37

I know this project, where I begin this month, or began at the end of last year. So in December, we strong working on the January, so it is.

Researcher 05:57

Yeah, less than a year.

Participant 18 05:58

Yeah. Yeah. Okay.

Researcher 06:02

Do you think that the team is cross functional? You mentioned that our developers and team leaders, but do you have like product owners? Do you have other functions within the team?

Participant 18 06:15

Oh, yes. I have two colleagues, which are project management to manage managers. Sorry. Yes. But I don't know if there is a product owner or not, I don't think so.

Researcher 06:32

Okay, no problem. What type of software do you develop in the team?

Participant 18 06:42

This project is about digitalizing of a government agency in Germany. So everything that is and written and on paper they want to be in laptops. Computers,

Researcher 07:01

So is digitalization of government services. Okay, great. You are a quality assurance analyst. And we will be talking about quality and the interview a lot. So, as you know, quality has different definition. And sometimes people cannot agree with one definition. So, we use a specific definition, which is the ISO standard definition. I'd like to state it and discuss it with you to see whether you agree or disagree before we proceed with the interview. Okay, okay. The definition says, I'm just going to read it out loud. Software is the degree to which the system satisfy the stated and implied needs of its various stakeholders and provides values. So the model also talks about non functional characteristic like performance, compatibility, usability, reliability, security, maintainability, and portability. So do you agree with this definition? Would you like to add something to it?

Participant 18 08:23

No, I think I agree with it.

Researcher 08:30

Okay, fantastic. Let's move to the next question. So, in order to assure quality, what processes and technique do you use in this teams to assure quality?

Participant 18 08:51

I think the best process to assure quality is team support. Because in the meetings, if we are honest with each other and say correctly, what we worked, we can help each other to overcome difficulties and to and to send a more quality work.

Researcher 09:23

Do you think this honesty is more important than testing for example?

Participant 18 09:31

Yes, because I have not so much an example. But in the past, I mean, in the last year, I worked also as automation tester, and I didn't in one meeting I didn't say exactly what I did. I somehow say I did more. And on the other end the next day, my team leader I wanted to see to see something to see what I actually did. So I had to work overtime in order to get something done. And from that day, I tried to be honest for myself because I otherwise I started to work overtime is not good for myself.

Researcher 10:24

Yeah, I agree. So this openness and honesty is as important as the processes, right?

Participant 18 10:29

Yes. Yes.

Researcher 10:33

Okay, thanks for that. So, processes was you talked about automation, what else do you have?

Participant 18 10:49

Right now in this job, just this automation testing and right now test management.

Researcher 10:57

Okay, great. Thank you regarding the questions you've sent, thanks for doing that. I looked at the question and I made an assessment of your team, which we make in this research, we make an assessment of the safety level of the team and explain to you what do we mean by safety? We mean by safe is that your work environment in this team people in this work environment believe and feel it's okay to admit mistake like you said being honest and open. And not only admitting mistake but they like to report them. They also believe and feel it's okay to accept and report and discuss difficult problem. They will come initiatives and they feel okay to ask and help from each other. So when I look at the answer, I think that your team is highly safe workplace Do you agree with me and to what extent do you agree with me? Strongly Disagree? Disagree? Neutral agree or strongly agree?

Participant 18 12:18

I strongly agree.

Researcher 12:20

Okay, thank you. So let's start with the question in your opinion from your experience in this team what make this safe what's make it a good teams where people admit mistakes where people felt comfortable to discuss problem and propose initiatives.

Participant 18 12:43

I think it's important when you're in team, when you feel like you did something wrong to feel comfortable to say that to know that someone will help you and I don't know if help right now in the moment may be there is no help because they don't have an idea but to feel comfortable that they will not judge you based on your experience. Because as I said, I changed my path in the job and they could simply just said that you have already five three years of four years worth of experience you should know something by now but I changed my bed and it is normal that in this team I don't have experience and I shouldn't be judged.

Researcher 13:46

Yes so when you feel like you are not judge, how does it influence your attitude at work and the way you do things?

Participant 18 14:00

I think you open up very well to the team because you try you start to trust them. Otherwise you work alone. You don't ask for help and you do more mistakes. You don't admit your problems, your mistakes and it is not good for the whole team not just myself.

Researcher 14:26

Yeah, I agree that's a very good answer. Would you be able to share with me an example where you felt comfortable to admit mistake

Participant 18 14:46

In this new job, I admitted my mistakes as I said, when I say I when I said I want to too much. And actually, I didn't work that much. I did overtime, I actually asked for help, or for someone more experienced than me. And I admitted that I cannot do my task. Although I did some courses and took some training I am still new. I didn't know a lot of things. So helped me and I learned from him a lot. We had many session and he share his knowledge with me.

Researcher 15:34

So do you feel that the support from your colleague helped you to do your task?

Participant 18 15:39

Oh, yes, yes. Actually, sometimes I feel that they, they did the task for me, because they actually helped me a lot. And I keep learning.

Researcher 15:51

So, do you learn from them when they help you? Do you think this help helping each other and admitting mistakes? Helps to assure the software quality? In your team?

Participant 18 16:09

Yes. Because things are doing things are done more quickly, a more with more. To be more careful at the details. And not to rush into all alone. And yes. I became a better QA and the more you know the better you become at assuring quality.

Researcher 16:37

Fantastic. I think we already discussed about mistakes, because the question of sent in the email says, if you make mistakes on your team, it's often held against you? And the answer was no, it's not held against me, I always get an explanation from my team leader on what I did wrong, and continue to learn from my mistakes. And I'm encouraged to do this in order to evolve and to better person in the organisation. That's a very nice answer. How does your team lead encourage you to accept or to admit mistakes?

Participant 18 17:30

Through conversations I am as a person. I don't know how to say I don't open up easily.

Participant 18 17:44

And on second. I am very, very reserved person. And I had some issues with my team leader in a project. And my development manager, the one who helped me to develop to evolve to make courses on personal and professional level. She had some coaching meetings with me one to one and explained that it is not okay to be just you in your space and the rest doesn't matter. Yeah, and I try to open up and I try to accept support and help. Because I didn't like to give updates daily and yes. And this changed me and I continue to change. This partly because of the safety we have, I feel confident to open up.

Researcher 18:43

Yeah, I'm like that when I worked on Scrum. I didn't like to give updates every day. And sometimes I felt embarrassed because I didn't have updates. And I felt like I'm obliged to give updates. And it's no true. You are not obliged to give update. If you don't have update, just say it I don't have an update. I'm still working on the same task. But I always felt like there is an obligation to give an update. And when I start seeing my colleague not giving updates, sometimes I become encouraged not to give update. I agree with you. I'm like that I don't open up quickly. So do you think this coaching from your manager, like you said, how do you to evolve as a person?

Participant 18 19:34

Well, yes, yeah. Yeah. Because in the best jobs in the past two jobs, I didn't have that chance. I was left quite alone. And I was left to you know, learn what I showed you when we speak in one month to see where are you and yes, I didn't have that support.

Researcher 20:01

Great, fantastic agree with you it makes a difference. So in regard to the second question of sending the email, it says member of your team can bring up problem and tough issues? And the answer said, Yes, of course, it is encouraged to bring issues in the front of others. In order to be discussed and understood by the whole team. Maybe someone can help. Would you like to elaborate a little bit on this answer how it happens in your team?

Participant 18 20:40

Oh, well, it happened. Yesterday, when we had a short meeting with my colleague and my team [REDACTED], where my colleague said she had a problem with an Excel file. She couldn't do something I don't remember what. And my man, she explained the problem. And the team leader asked me if I have enough knowledge in Excel to help her. Unfortunately, I don't have but yes, this kind of you, I appreciated this thing, because I know when I will have problem I can bring up and a solution will be found. Maybe not, it was not found yesterday. But I know my team leader went to another person and so on.

Researcher 21:38

So fantastic. So do you think that's bringing a problem and discussing them helps the team to evolve and deliver better quality?

Participant 18 21:52

Oh, yes, yes. Yes, of course.

Researcher 21:55

How it does that in your from your own experience?

Participant 18 22:05

When you it may be something someone encountered, and the colleagues could help. Maybe some colleagues encountered that too, in the past? Because I'm in my team are all experienced colleagues, people wait one month, one year, 10 years? And yes, it is easier if you have someone with 10 years experience. It is certainly what I encountered that talking about problems helps better quality.

Researcher 22:53

So when you have help and your colleague share their knowledge, you become better at what you do. That's what I understand. And do you find in this team, people are always willing to share with you their knowledge and experience?

Participant 18 23:10

Yes. Yes. And I hope they will do in the future too, because I am willing to do as well.

Researcher 23:23

So what makes you willing to share your knowledge and helping each other in this team?

Participant 18 23:30

Because I trust my team. I think that people would and will reward me with the same behavior.

Researcher 23:51

Fantastic. That's a good way to see it. It's a nice way to hear it. Thank you. That wasn't really good answer, and I liked it very much. Let's move to the next one. people on your team sometimes reject other from being different. I think this question needs a little bit of clarification. Because when we mean or reject, we mean rejecting someone's way of working someone wise of the wind things. And your

answer was I don't remember this kind of situation. And I'm certain that will not happen. New ideas are encouraged to be shown up. That's a good answer. I mean, new ideas are encouraged to show up. Do you have an example someone brought up a new idea to the team and how the team did go about it?

Participant 18 24:54

In the project, my main way of working was the environment or stuff like that. Actually, I, I was caught up in these two projects in the middle, I don't know from where he'd started. But we're in Germany and half of the team is in Bucharest, we have an office where we meet regularly. And we are from different teams. And we share what we did we share how we feel. And actually, someone just said that too, if you'd be nice to start to do some outdoor activities, like hiking, paintball, cycling in the park. And, yes, someone everyone was thumbs up and except that

Researcher 25:58

That's really nice. That's bringing the team together. How did those activity help the team in your opinion, from your experience to

Participant 18 26:08

Now it didn't happen because we want you to go to a private place in Romania, you know that it still snow down there. But I think it will help to, to get away from there to work who mindset to be in a more personal environment to share some personal step stuff, and proceed that you have a group that shares the same hobby, as you do.

Researcher 26:43

It's bring the team together closely, right? Yes. Okay. Let's move to the fourth question. The fourth question says it is safe to take risk in your team. And your answer was, it is better for everyone in the team to take initiative sometimes, for him or her to speak up in his or her idea and get rid of the feeling of embarrassment in this way we can develop our speaking skills. What makes people let's start with this because this is a good interesting word. We should speak up what makes people encouraged to speak up in this team.

Participant 18 27:37

I think the idea that they are really they're listened to. And you know, although we sometimes didn't open our camera, I don't know for several reasons. You know that there are five, six people in the meeting that will listen to you and will give reaction or will answer by yes or no when a discussion could be started.

Researcher 28:10

Yeah, so when people listen to you, you feel comfortable? And yes, yes to speak up. Do you have an example? Or someone proposed an initiative in the team? And how did the team went about it?

Participant 18 28:40

Oh, yes, yes. I had, I have a one of my colleagues wanted to found some certificates to get to give Yes. And we didn't know about it. Also, the development manager didn't know about it. And everyone embraced this idea like, Hey, we should do learn together or we should do or share our knowledge and

how our some will be if we can give the exam not in the same time but in seven same week or same two weeks to be at the same level.

Researcher 29:30

So what's the certification about? I'm just curious.

Participant 18 29:34

The certification for tester.

Researcher 29:48

Okay, that's, that's really a nice interesting let's move to the fifth question. Before that, I'd like to follow up when people bring initiatives to improve, like you said in your answer. Do you think it helps quality somehow?

Participant 18 30:18

Yes. Yes. Because it is nice to see different way of thinking different ideas. And maybe one big idea will be so many. Yes. And it is nice to brainstorm. Different ideas make us stronger and we learn from each others and the quality keep improving. Our test coverage improves. We know the business better because we learn from the seniors and ideas also improves our tools and processes.

Researcher 30:43

Yeah. When collective thinking come together the best idea? Yeah, yeah, I agree with you. That's very true. I had moved to the fifth question. I think we discussed a little bit this one, it is about helping each other it says it is difficult to ask other members of your team to have. And you say no, never it is difficult to ask. It is very okay. And polite to give a message with the request and wait for the team member to answer your request. The first question, we already discussed that helping each other improve the quality of the work. Do you have an example who someone helps you or you help someone? And you felt it's improved the quality of the product you're producing?

Participant 18 31:46

Yes, yes. My colleague she helped me recently. She not just know. When she had time, but also helped me always is she helped me and also before the final presentation, because I was on vacation, and that was the fate. He must to have to give that presentation. And we had a long call where we put in the same level as to say, because I finished some of the project and he didn't know the thing, the last part. And I explained to him, he put some new ideas and during the far end, in the end, we had the nice work to present the client.

Researcher 33:07

So do you think this thinking together and helping each other make the task easier for you? And subsequently the quality better?

Participant 18 33:19

Yes, yes. Not only for me, I think for the person with the more experience too.

Researcher 33:29

Yeah, he learned from you and you learn from him as well, right? Yes, yes. Yeah, it makes Of course, it doesn't not only if even with 10 experience you learn from the new person. Yeah, that's very true. Yeah. So when you collaborate together, you learn from each other? Yes. All right. I think we up to the six items and the question no one on my team would deliberately act in a way that undermines my effort. And your answer said no, in my team, everyone is respected and encouraged to work better next time. I like this one which is on know to work better. What do you mean by that?

Participant 18 34:23

Um I mean, by giving advice, how to manage their time, because sometimes we lose our joy. The joy of working then because of time management. We cannot divide our time properly. And we as a team can encourage that person who is a little bit sad to find the most joy in work. Also in this job is not is not is not fit for someone because I don't know, for example, he looked for programming and now he's doing he's doing testing, we encourage him not to give up because he doesn't know what to tomorrow we'll show him and to expect and to produce more than to gain experience. Maybe in the future, we will find the dream job.

Researcher 36:00

So do you think this support is important?

Participant 18 36:04

Can you repeat this?

Researcher 36:05

Do you think this support supporting each other and this person's a level helps? Yeah, yes, yes. Yes. Yes. Yeah. Do you think it makes people better? Team members?

Participant 18 36:18

Yes. Yes.

Researcher 36:20

Thank you very much. I'll move to the next question.

Researcher 36:29

Yeah, which is working with member of my team, my unique skills and talents are value and utilise. Yes, your answer was in my team, everyone has unique traits that differentiate from each other's and everyone is encouraged to show their best quality to expert them to for professional and personal growth. This is interesting this diversity in skills?

Participant 18 37:04

Does it make your team stronger? or Yes?

Participant 18 37:07

Because you will see how different are our people, and you can learn something new from each other. If you want to do that,

Researcher 37:21

As long as you willing to learn, I guess. As long as you're willing to learn

Researcher 37:34

And you're willing to open up to take advantage from the difference of others, right? So you mentioned professional and personal growth. How does this diversity helps you to grow personally and professionally.

Participant 18 37:56

When professionally, it helps because in in this company, we had a lot of internal courses. Everything. And in some meetings, we shared what we choose to do in next two months or two months. And it is nice to see that some colleagues choose to participate in I don't know sustainability workshops, or others who wanted to learn more about Java programming, or through others fathers want to give some tests or certificates and are focusing on my SD to be workshops, and so on. And it is nice to see this because you can make a list working this one choose this this, I maybe choose this sustainability workshop next two months, because I don't care about the planet. So and you develop some other skills, different skills. Yeah.

Researcher 39:15

Do you think technical skills are part of this development as well?

Participant 18 39:20

Oh, yes, yes, of course.

Researcher 39:22

Do you think when you grow technically, it helps you contribute to the quality of the software?

Participant 18 39:30

Yes. Yes. Of course.

Researcher 39:34

Do you have an example where you were developed technically and it helps you to do a better job.

Participant 18 39:46

Yes, I had some knowledge in JIRA, but not just basic, not advanced and so on. And in the of last project, there are requirements and test cases and yes, or maybe no, you have to test. And it is it was a little easier for me to begin with Q test because I had some knowledge in JIRA. And they are quite the same thing. But yes, and then I develop more in to test. And I use the knowledge in JIRA to help me to test.

Researcher 40:37

So you would manage to transfer the knowledge to the new tool, right?

Participant 18 40:40

Yes, yes.

Researcher 40:44

Participant 18, that was really nice. Thanks for all those examples and answers. I don't have other questions. Unless you want to add something to the topic we've been discussing. You're more than welcome.

Participant 18 40:59

No, I just wanted to thank you for this opportunity. It was a really nice experience too.

Researcher 41:20

Thanks a lot. I wish you a good day. We'll stay in touch.

Participant 18 41:24

Yes, thank you. Bye