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Journal: Tester

A Tester in an agile development team has many important roles. They are the team members that ensure the code is behaving as it should. However, the involvement of a Tester varies between an Agile approach versus a Waterfall methodology. The structure of a Waterfall methodology limits the involvement of the Tester in earlier stages. However, the Agile approach encourages the involvement of the Tester in all stages. In fact, the Tester should attend all the Scrum meetings and provide test feedback as soon as there is working code. By having the Tester involved in earlier stages it decreases the chance that mistakes or faulty code are noticed further in the development process. Finding functionality issues early on is likely to keep the project on track for completion and not have to back track.

Having the Testers involved in the Agile Scum meeting is extremely beneficial to the success of a project. Their involvement increases communication amongst team members and collectively pinpoints focus areas for the Quality Assurance team. Establishing these focus areas on a Sprint-by-Sprint basis will contribute to the flow of the project. Likewise, it will direct the Quality Assurance team where to focus their efforts, instead of aimlessly searching code for issues. It is important to define these focus areas because in most cases it is not necessary to test all code. However, in some cases, for example if the Tester is reviewing code from a new team member, or a less experienced developer, then the Tester should likely widen their scope of testing. Regardless, all developers should try to their best ability to not leave code unfinished or unpolished.

Not all Agile teams have a designated Tester. In many situations the developers are the testers and there is no distinction between the two. A dynamic where one team member develops and tests the code is more likely from a smaller company or a team that has fewer contributors. Designated Testers tend to be more common at large companies that have more flexibility. After all, the Agile approach is very dynamic and the implemented Agile practices vary between teams.