Principal Engineer – Digital Platforms (Quality Software Assurance)

Location: Louisville, KY (Hybrid)
Department: Technology – Digital Engineering

About the Role

Papa Johns is seeking a **Principal Quality Engineer** to drive the vision, strategy, and technical execution of quality engineering across our omnichannel digital commerce platforms. In this senior role, you'll combine **hands-on expertise, domain technical leadership, and community of practice guidance** to ensure every customer interaction—across web, mobile, API, and in-store—is reliable, seamless, and secure.

You'll architect enterprise-grade automation frameworks, champion DORA metrics to measure delivery health, and provide executive-level insights into quality outcomes. Just as importantly, you'll mentor engineering talent, raise the bar on technical practices, and shape the culture of continuous improvement across the organization.

This is a high-impact opportunity to influence how Papa Johns delivers software at scale for millions of global customers.

What You'll Do

Architectural & Domain Leadership

- Define and evolve the quality engineering architecture, frameworks, and strategy across multiple digital domains.
- Partner with product, QE, and business analysis leads to ensure requirements are testable, aligned with business outcomes, and contribute to the long-term target state.
- Act as a solution lead for quality in domains, collaborating with architects and engineers to embed resilience, testability, and observability into designs.
- Contribute directly to delivery (50–70% hands-on automation, reviews, and tooling), while advocating for continuous tech debt cleanup (~15% of team capacity).

- Ensure the technical feasibility of test automation approaches and uphold high standards for software quality across the teams.

Engineering Excellence & Shared Practices

- Design and implement automation frameworks spanning functional, regression, integration, and performance testing.
- Champion modern quality engineering practices for cloud-native environments using GCP and modern test tools.
- Embed automated quality gates into Harness CI/CD pipelines, ensuring secure, reliable, and repeatable releases.
- Develop and maintain shared resources (starter kits, test strategies, reusable frameworks, documentation) to improve delivery consistency across teams.
- Identify duplication, fragmentation, or misalignment in testing approaches and collaborate with domain leads and architects to address them.
- Drive shared visibility into delivery health via DORA metrics and quality dashboards.

Mentorship & Influence

- Pair with engineers and testers to stay close to the automation codebase and validate practices in real time.
- Coach teams on automation, CI/CD practices, and quality-first thinking, spotting skill gaps and growth opportunities.
- Establish and facilitate cross-team rituals (brown bags, demo days, peer reviews) that encourage shared learning and capability growth.
- Serve as a trusted voice for difficult technical quality decisions, enabling teams while maintaining alignment to strategy.
- Promote a culture of accountability, collaboration, and continuous improvement across quality and engineering.

Cross-Functional Collaboration

- Partner with product, UX, and delivery teams to align quality goals with business outcomes.
- Work with developers, SREs, DevOps, and platform teams to ensure testability and observability are integrated throughout the SDLC.
- Liaise with partners in Architecture, Security, and Data Engineering to proactively manage risk.

- Clearly communicate quality insights, risks, and trade-offs to both technical and non-technical stakeholders.

Reliability & Innovation

- Champion the use of DORA metrics (deployment frequency, lead time, change failure rate, MTTR) to measure delivery performance.
- Provide actionable insights to executive leadership on release health, velocity, and quality outcomes.
- Continuously evaluate new testing frameworks, tools, and strategies to improve automation speed, reliability, and coverage.
- Drive resilience engineering practices and ensure quality remains a first-class citizen in delivery.

What We're Looking For

- Expertise in:
    - Automation frameworks for web, mobile, and APIs.
    - Performance testing and observability practices.
    - Cloud-native testing (Google Cloud Platform preferred).
    - CI/CD pipelines with Harness (Jenkins a plus).
- Familiarity with DORA metrics and experience using them to report on delivery health.
- Strong leadership, mentoring, and communication skills.
- **Preferred Qualifications**
    - Advanced scripting/programming skills (Python, Java, Kotlin, or JavaScript) for automation development.
    - Experience scaling automation and quality practices across global e-commerce or omnichannel platforms.
    - Expertise in validating complex customer journeys (payments, loyalty, delivery, POS).
    - Proven ability to build high-performing teams and drive measurable improvements in release velocity, reliability, and quality.

What Success Looks Like

Success for a Principal Quality Engineer means **enabling teams to deliver reliable, secure, and performant software at speed** while guiding both the quality domain and the broader practice. Signs of success include:

- **Effective Stakeholder Management** – Product and engineering leaders trust your quality insights because they are clear, actionable, and consistently delivered.
- **Successful Value Delivery** – Teams release on time with automation that ensures software is resilient, reliable, and meets user needs across all channels.
- **High Team Morale and Engagement** – Engineers and testers feel motivated, confident, and supported by clear practices that lead to quality outcomes.
- **Capability-wide Consistency and Quality** – Shared frameworks, test strategies, and observability standards drive modern, maintainable solutions across teams.
- **Accelerated Decision-Making** – Quality decisions are clear, patterns are known, and teams move faster without sacrificing reliability.
- **Proactive Issue Surfacing** – Quality gaps, risks, or delivery bottlenecks are identified and addressed early, with solutions—not just signals.
- **Team Growth and Connection** – Testers and developers feel part of a larger quality community, benefiting from cross-team learning and shared best practices.
- **Trusted Voice Across Domains** – Your input on release readiness, quality gates, and resilience is actively sought because it consistently improves delivery.

What Failure Looks Like

Failure is obvious when delivery slows, quality gaps surface late, or trust in the quality function erodes. Warning signs include:

- **Stakeholders Lose Trust** – Product or engineering partners stop seeking your input because expectations are unmet or mismanaged.
- **Fragmented Vision** – Quality practices diverge across teams, leading to duplicated effort, fragile automation, and inconsistent standards.
- **Quality Erodes** – Automation coverage drops, flaky tests accumulate, and defects escape to production, undermining release confidence.
- **Team Disengagement** – Engineers and testers feel unsupported, directionless, or disconnected from the quality strategy.

- **Isolation from Partners** – Lack of collaboration with architecture, DevOps, or product teams leads to late-stage surprises and rework.
- **Becoming a Bottleneck** – Knowledge and decisions bottleneck at the Principal QE, slowing progress instead of enabling flow.
- **Inconsistent Practices Across Teams** – Different teams reinvent automation or test data strategies, creating duplication and fragility.
- **Dogma Over Pragmatism** – Quality guidance feels rigid, slowing delivery instead of enabling it, causing teams to bypass or resist.
- **Lack of Cross-Team Visibility** – Defects, performance bottlenecks, or delivery risks are surfaced late instead of proactively managed.
- **Disconnected Community** – Quality engineers don't feel part of a shared craft, missing out on collective growth and consistency.
- **Erosion of Trust** – Executives and stakeholders stop relying on quality insights because they're not timely, actionable, or aligned to business goals.