

A Word (Or Two) On Quality

By Gina Lijoi

In the world of interactive project management the promise of quality has become cliché. Quality is sometimes seen as an incidental to each client delivery, as opposed to an independent, critical phase of the delivery. Because quality control is commonly compressed at the tail end of a project, the overall commitment to the caliber of work produced is inherently compromised. There is, however, one person that can change this negative trend - the project manager. Here's how every project manager can do their part to save the interactive industry from a decline in excellence:

Include testing in the price to client

Always incorporate costs for a thorough quality control phase into the budget of your projects. It is a project manager's job to show value in the process and methodology they employ. This means you must be able to demonstrate the benefit of each project phase to a client in order to justify the cost of a job. By doing so, you will be able to recover any time spent against testing in the original price to client, and you'll be able to articulate the work effort behind the line item cost. This will also make you accountable for the integrity of the final deliverable, providing additional incentive to do a thorough, proper job.


Include a testing phase in your project timeline

I suspect the primary reason that testing is short-changed is time constraint. Project teams are often focused on completion of the build, forgetting that actual completion is achieved at the end of successful testing and bug resolution, not at the end of the build. If you incorporate a quality assurance phase into your timeline, your team will be able to work towards this project milestone from day one, allowing sufficient time towards the end of the project to work through the proper cycles.

Don't do the testing yourself!

One of the worst mistakes a project manager could make is to complete testing themselves. Flawless quality assurance is an expert skill that is developed over time. Like project managers, professional testers will have solid process and methodology to support their efforts. When time and budget are running out, some project managers will take on the quality assurance portion themselves, thinking a quick review will suffice - this is never the case. Leave testing to professionals - facilitate the process, but don't overtake it if you intend on delivering a perfect product.

In summary, do not take quality for granted - designers, writers, developers, and even project managers will make mistakes. Quality assurance is the catch-all to identify and resolve these issues before client delivery. Flawless execution will always be remembered, and will go a long way towards a good name for you and your firm. Insist that quality be the golden rule for every project you touch.

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