

ACT 2 LEAD

Taking action to lead software testing

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- 30 years of expertise around testing in various roles
 - Currently: QA Coach at Hidden Trail + Advisor/Trainer at Marko Rytkönen Oy
 - Past: Ericsson (1994) → Sonera → Nokia → Konecranes → Elisa → TietoEvyry
- Author of 'ACT 2 LEAD Software Testing Leadership Handbook'
- Voluntary work around testing, public talks
 - FiSTB board (2012-2017), FiSTB Testing Assembly (2012-2022)
- Married, two daughters, 70's & 80's heavy rock, travelling, cycling, floorball

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- Expertise Capability Owner at Gofore Verify Oy
- CEO and Author of Dragons Out book teaching testing to children
- Author of 'ACT 2 LEAD Software Testing Leadership Handbook'
- 28 years in testing, a bit less in agile, DevOps, and AI in all industries
- EuroSTAR Testing Excellence Award, Tester of the Year, Exemplary DevOps Instructor
- FiSTB 2002-, TestausOSY 2002-, ISTQB Exec 2015-2021, TMMi Board 2021-
- Married, 1 son, kayaker, snowboarder, roleplayer, a cappella singer

How many of you think that...

...testing is **really understood*** by leadership
(as CxO's, directors, managers, product owners, etc.)?

* e.g., terms, process, relation to risks, test types and approaches, coverage, dependencies, competencies, how to improve...

How many of you think that...

...testing is **really lead***

on all needed leadership levels?

* e.g., quality culture, vision, strategy, capabilities, competencies,
budget, schedule, visibility on current state...

Our observations

There are way too many people*
who **should understand** and **lead testing**,
but they don't.

* e.g., director, head of, manager, product owner,
developer, and even test manager and tester.

Conclusions

Testing is not lead (but “delegated” and people are “trusted”).

Poor quality testing and software.

Testing is poorly understood and **not valued as a profession**.

What is test leadership?

- Leading testing and testers through the product lifecycle
- Aims to ensure alignment with business needs and risks
- Test leadership work cannot be separated from other leadership work
- Done in two levels:
 - Organizational level (company or department level)
 - Operational level (product, project, or team level)
- Organizational-level test leadership is often overlooked, as the focus tends to remain on operational level

Test leadership at organizational level

- Strategic leadership to define the role of testing within your organization
 - Vision and principles to align and empower the organization
 - Guidelines to establish a shared understanding of terms, tools, and practices
 - Help leadership and managers to lead testing
- Quality culture to emphasize the importance of quality and testing
- Provide visibility to quality of testing across the organization
 - Look for systemic and team-level problems to improve practices
- Respect the autonomy of teams and individuals
- Drive competence development and testing community
- ACT 2 LEAD!

Test leadership at operational level

- Operational leadership (test management) implements testing into practice
- Align practices with the organizational level vision, principles, and guidelines
 - Plan, resource, coordinate, and improve testing
 - Ensure all needed testing is done
 - Help teams and individuals to test
- Integrate testing into software development and operation processes
- Respect the autonomy of teams and individuals
- Gain visibility to software quality, risks, test coverage, and quality of testing
 - Test results, bug statistics, debriefs, retrospectives, monitoring...
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Said by Edwards Deming

*“Support of top management is not sufficient. It is not enough that top management commit themselves for life to quality and productivity. They must know what it is that they are committed to — that is, what they must do. These obligations can not be delegated. **Support is not enough: action is required.**”*

Out of the Crisis, Deming, W. Edwards.

Heuristic

Approach to problem-solving that employs a **practical method** that is **not guaranteed to be perfect**, **but is sufficient** for reaching a short-term goal.

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Heuristic>

ACT 2 LEAD as a heuristic

Add

Add testing to everything so that testing is not a separate function, process, team, or phase.

Lead it as a whole.

ACT 2 LEAD as a heuristic

Add	
Organizational level	Operational level
Contracts, budgets, KPIs/OKRs, team structures, competence development...	Plans, processes, guidelines, DoR/DoD, retrospectives, discussions, meetings...

ACT 2 LEAD as a heuristic

Context

Understand your context and lead testing accordingly.
There is not just one correct way to test or lead testing.

ACT 2 LEAD as a heuristic

Context	
Organizational level	Operational level
Business, users, risks, laws and regulations, contracts, budget, schedule, team structures, resources, competencies, development, and operations processes,...	

ACT 2 LEAD as a heuristic

Transparency

Create transparency in testing.

The better the visibility, the better it can be led.

ACT 2 LEAD as a heuristic

Transparency	
Organizational level	Operational level
Quality culture, testing practices, competences, vendors, decisions, improvements...	Test strategy, test plans, test results, DoR/DoD, quality, risks, defects, improvements...

ACT 2 LEAD as a heuristic

2

2 ways to test: by humans and through automation.

Humans are good at exploring the product, and automation is good at checking the product - both are needed.

ACT 2 LEAD as a heuristic

2	
Organizational level	Operational level
Metrics, vision, guidelines, support, competence development, budget, time...	Test automation strategy, pipelines, exploratory testing, reviews, pair testing...

ACT 2 LEAD as a heuristic

Learn

Learn to test and test to learn.

Use the learnings to improve and lead testing, as well as to improve the software and business.

ACT 2 LEAD as a heuristic

Learn	
Organizational level	Operational level
Competence development budget, culture (safe to fail), library, communities, training, study groups, mentoring...	Test results, feedback loops, group work, retrospectives, blameless post-mortems, A/B testing...

ACT 2 LEAD as a heuristic

Enable

Enable good quality testing by creating a quality culture where the importance of quality and testing are understood.

Boost the culture via your daily work and the decisions you make.

ACT 2 LEAD as a heuristic

Enable	
Organizational level	Operational level
Quality culture, budgets, recruitment, vendors, capabilities, team structures...	Schedule, competencies, processes, methods, tools...

ACT 2 LEAD as a heuristic

Adapt

Adapt testing to risks.

ACT 2 LEAD as a heuristic

Adapt	
Organizational level	Operational level
Identify and mitigate risks by testing, budgets, focus testing to high-risk areas...	

ACT 2 LEAD as a heuristic

Diverse

Ensure that testing is diverse enough.

The more diverse the testing, the more diverse information you get.

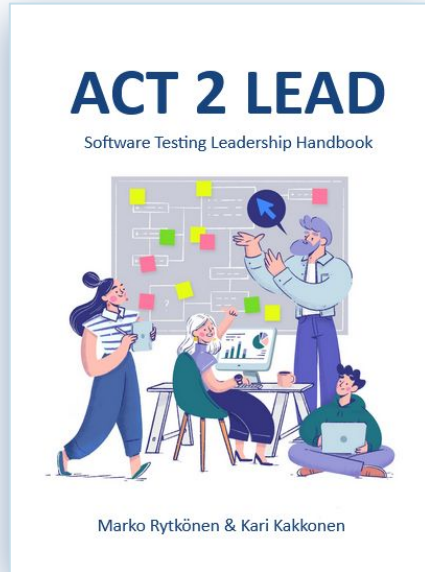
ACT 2 LEAD as a heuristic

Diverse	
Organizational level	Operational level
Recruiting, vendors, competence development, ways to improve...	Test types and approaches, tools, test environments and data, ways to improve..

Key takeaways

- Leadership **must have an understanding** of testing in order to lead it effectively
- Leadership **cannot delegate** all actions; they must take the initiative and actively lead testing
- **Organizational-level leadership** is essential; operational-level leadership is not enough
- **Help leadership** to understand and lead testing
- **ACT 2 LEAD!**

Questions?



Visit: www.act2lead.net

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