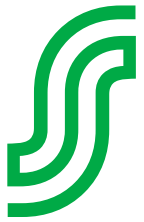# How testing is led in the organizational level at S-Bank

**Henri Tehilä, S-Pankki**
**Marko Rytkönen, Hidden Trail**

20.11.2025

# Who we are?

## Henri Tehilä

QA Manager at S-Bank

- 15 years of experience in fintech
- Worked in different roles in testing and QA
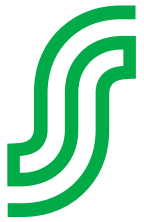- Believes that co-operation between people is the key to achieve quality

## Marko Rytkönen

Quality Coach at Hidden Trail

Advisor & Trainer at Marko Rytkönen Oy

- Three decades experience around testing and QA in various roles and companies
- Author of 'ACT 2 LEAD Software Testing Leadership Handbook'
- Co-founder and organizer of Testing Assembly

# For whom do we work?

## PANKKI

- Banking and wealth management
- 4th biggest bank in Finland
- Founded in 2007
- 1200+ employees
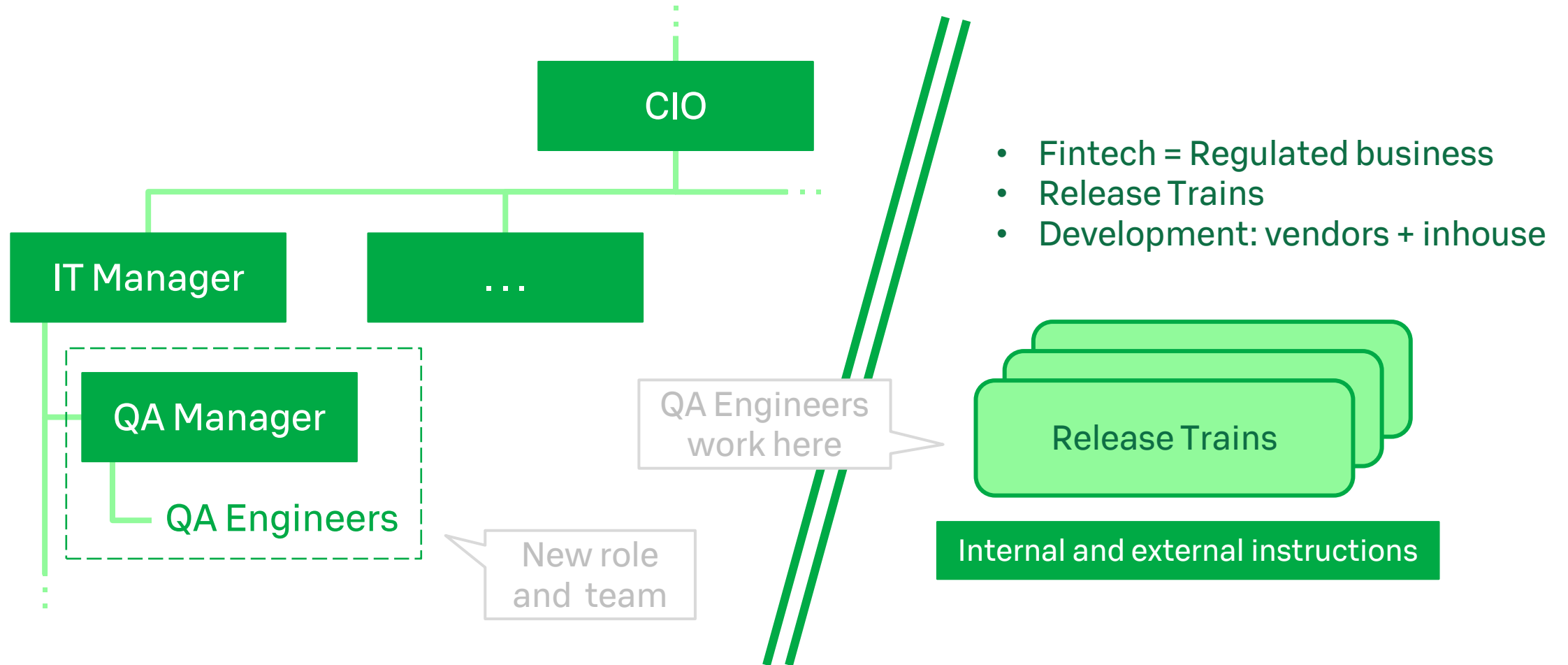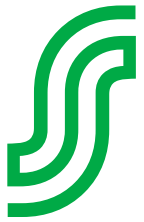- Part of S-Group

https://www.s-pankki.fi

## HIDDEN TRAIL

- Consulting, specialized in digital quality
- The first quality consultancy in Europe
- Founded in 2021
- 30 employees
- Part of Sevendos and Reaktor Ecosystem

https://www.hiddentrail.com/

# Background

CIO

IT Manager

. . .

QA Manager

QA Engineers

New role and team

QA Engineers work here

- Fintech = Regulated business
- Release Trains
- Development: vendors + inhouse

Release Trains

Internal and external instructions

# Recap: Test leadership levels
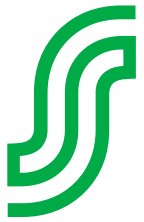
Team, individual

**Operational level test leadership**

Short term work
Focus on efficiency and effectiveness of testing
Make sure all needed testing is done

Company, department

**Organizational level test leadership**

Long term work
Focus on building testing capabilities across the organization
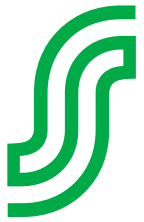Make sure there is direction, structure and harmony

# Today's focus: Organizational level test leadership

How would **you** build QA function across the organization,
while keeping the responsibility of quality in dev-teams?
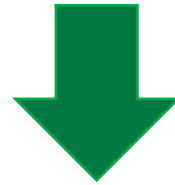
**Organizational level test leadership**

**?**

# How did we start it?

## Establish new role
- HR tasks
- Testing capabilities and advocacy across S-Bank

## Understand the current state
- Internal view: Interviews and discussions
- External view: QA Assessment by Hidden Trail

## Respect existing responsibilities and processes
- Release Trains' schedules, backlogs and budgets (Handelsbank migration)
- Development model, release model, security, regulation...

# Guiding principles for us

**Make it collaboratively**

**Create transparency**
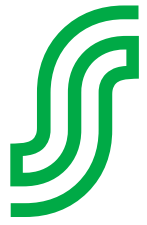
**Create awareness**

**Responsibility stays in RT's**

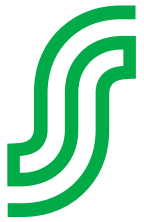**Experiment new ideas**

**Set own expectations**

# Five-pillar model

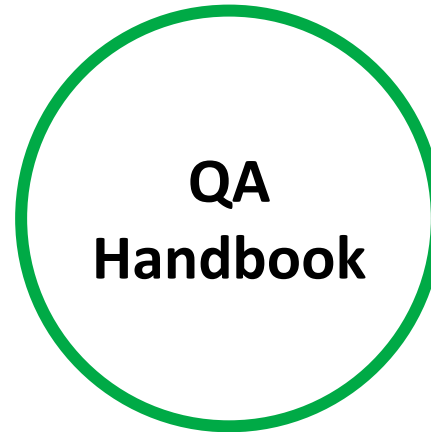# Yeah, Five-pillar model ☺

# QA Handbook

- One place to document all QA stuff
- To get shared understanding
- To share tips
- To help on-boarding

**QA Handbook**

## Examples

- **QA Handbook**
  - › Generic
  - • QA Strategy template
  - • QA Principles
  - • QA Guidelines
  - › QA Process
  - › QA Maturity Assessment
  - › Testing
  - › Test automation
- › QA Community

# QA Strategy

## Examples

Test types
- Why
- What
- When
- When
- Where
- How

QA Hub:

| | Responsible | QA Strategy | ... |
|---|---|---|---|
| Release Train A | ... | link | ... |
| Release Train B | ... | link | ... |
| Release Train C | ... | link | ... |
| ... | ... | ... | ... |

QA Strategy

- Documented QA Strategy per Release Train
- To get shared understanding within Release Train
- To clarify responsibilities
- To get visibility across S-Bank via QA Hub

# QA Guidelines

## Examples

Backlog management

- MUST have testable <u>acceptance criteria</u>

Testing

- MUST have documented <u>QA Strategy</u>
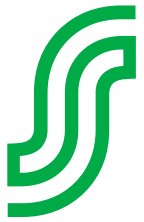- SHOULD use <u>debriefs</u> to share test results

Test environments

- MUST NOT use production data as <u>test data</u>
- RECOMMENDED to have <u>repeatable way</u> to deploy software

Links to QA Handbook

- Best practices defined by the QA Team
- To harmonize and discuss on QA practices
- Similar as <u>SOK Development Guidelines</u>

**QA Guidelines**

# QA Maturity Assessment

- Continuous improvement process
  - Questionnaire defined by the QA Team
  - Each Release Train answers as one
- To get shared understanding within the team
- To get visibility across S-Bank via Heatmap

QA Maturity Assessment

## Examples

Development process
- Is DoD followed and improved?

Test process
- Is QA Guidelines in use?
- Is test automation used to its full potential?
- Is there enough visibility to testing?

Heatmap:

| | Release Train A | Release Train B | Release Train C |
|---|---|---|---|
| ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Question 1 | Yes | Yes | Not known |
| Question 2 | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Question 3 | Yes | No | Partly |
| Question 4 | No | No | No |
| ... | ... | ... | ... |

# QA Community

**QA Community**

## Examples

- Meetups once a month
- Teams channel
- ACT 2 LEAD Study group
- X'mas party

- Community of practice for anyone interested in QA
- To connect people
- To learn, share and innovate

# Five-pillar model is not enough

Advocate

1-1's
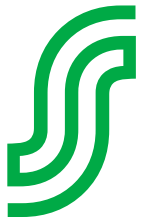
Set targets

Recruitment

Competence development

Vendor co-operation

Risks

QA Principles

QA Process

Etc.

# Learnings and key take-aways

## 1. Set realistic expectations to yourself

- Everyone doesn't need to like the Five-pillar model
- Continuous baby steps instead of one big bang

## 2. Ideas are easy, implementing them is hard

- Create tools to get discussion and transparency
- The things that gets attention can be changed

## 3. Let the people do the thinking

- Create tools to get people thinking
- Help people to figure the solutions out by themselves

## 4. It is a marathon, not a sprint

- Repeat – repeat – repeat
- Experiment, and improve as you go
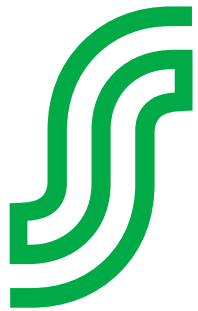
# Questions?

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