

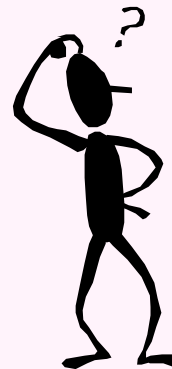
The Influential Test Manager

The Influential Test Manager

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What's a Test Manager to Do?

- We have lots of problems, many of them tactical
 - Too many defects in the product
 - Too little equipment
 - Cascading schedule slips
 - Not enough people
- We have strategic problems too
 - How we are perceived within the organization
 - How the organization does business
- Influence others to change



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Influence

- Mutually valuable decision about a problem
- Swaying other people to your point of view
- Producing an effect without an apparent exertion of force
- Influence is not
 - Control
 - Taking away choices

*“A man convinced against his will is of the same opinion still” -
- Anonymous*

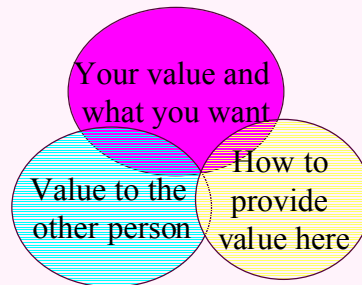
Unique Perspective

- “Testers hold the flashlight” -- James Bach
- Risk illumination
- Risk management

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Exchange: the Essence of Influence

- Define the problem context
- For you and the other person: What's In It For Me? (WIIFM)
- What do you have of value?
- What does the other person want?
- Choose how to provide value
- What to ask for in return



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Test Manager's Mission

- Assess the state of the product under development at any time, and report on that state
- How do you use your mission to define value?

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What You Have of Value

- Personal value
 - Credibility
 - Fairness
 - Track record
 - Management capabilities
- Test Manager value
 - Information about the product under development or test
 - People who test
 - Machines that execute the tests
 - Tests

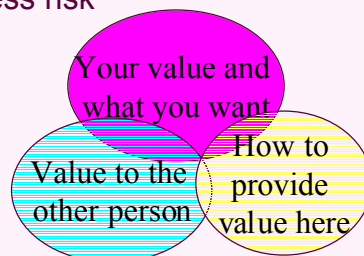
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People Use Their Value Differently

- Sometimes, trade project information to obtain a specific end result
 - Is that result valued?
- Sometimes, trade capability to assess risk
 - Is the assessment valued?
- Others must value what you offer, or you become less valuable
 - ➡ Result: lessens your influence



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How You Provide Test Manager Value

- Assess risk
- Identify and solve testing problems that affect the project
- Manage test and measurement work
- Help people make decisions about product's readiness to ship

Assessing Product State

- Did we build the product we intended to build?
- How much have we tested?
- How stable is the product?
- How complete is our information?

- You may have other questions to add to your list that reflect your goals and priorities

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When Product State Is Not What You Expected

- Are you in a good state to influence people?
- If you don't fall into classic testing mistakes
 - Being the *only* one responsible for product quality (per Marick)
 - Being the *only* one responsible for assessing product shipment risk
 - Being the *only* one who can see the implications of shipping the product in its current state
- When you're the only one with the data, and you make all the decisions, you will make wrong decisions



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What's in It for the People in Your Organization?

- Ask the money-oriented questions:
 - *What are the effects of shipping a product with too many defects?*
 - *What are the effects of shipping a product when we haven't finished testing?*
 - *Where's the pain in the organization?*
- What about the people-oriented questions:
 - *What are the effects of denying people the times to do their jobs professionally?*
 - *What happens when the people want to do a good job, and we won't let them?*
- Most often, it's "Can we ship this product yet?"

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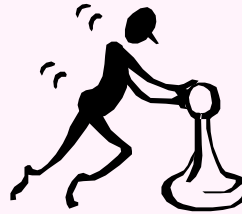
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Make Ship Readiness Decisions

- It's tempting to decide by yourself when a product is ready to ship
- Can't do it alone, discuss and clarify release criteria



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Create Release Criteria

- Define what quality means for this project
- Define what's *critically* important to the project
- Define measurable, objective criteria to know when you've met the project goals.

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Define Quality

- Quality is value to someone -- Weinberg
- Who are all your someones?
 - When do they need the product to ship?
 - What feature set or attributes do they need? What tradeoffs can we make?
 - How well do the someones tolerate defects?

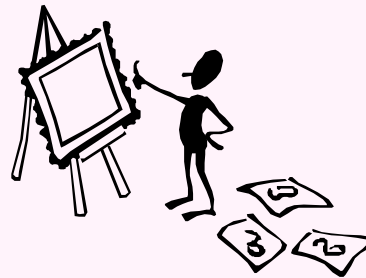
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What's Critically Important to the Project?

- Context-free questions elicit business requirements
 - *Who are the clients of this project?*
 - *What does a highly successful project look like?*
 - *What is that solution worth to you?*
 - *Why are these results desirable?*



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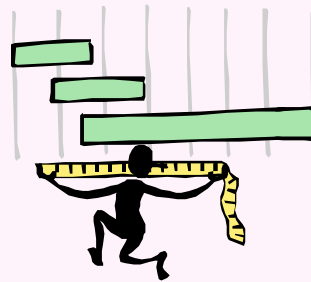
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Define Measurable Criteria

- Especially useful with no requirements spec
- Develop criteria, discuss with project team, project manager, senior management



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What Do You Want in Return?

- Assume your managers aren't stupid
 - They may be ignorant, but they're probably not stupid
- Use your value to decide what you want from the organization
- When you provide value, explain why:
 - Shipping a defect-laden product increases other groups' pain.
 - Shortening your test schedule will prevent you from collecting enough data to know whether to ship.

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When It's Not You

- Influence may not work immediately
 - Maybe people don't know what they really want
 - Maybe people don't know their value to the organization
- You can
 - Help define their value
 - Help them understand your responsibility
 - If your group doesn't put the defects in, you are not responsible for getting rid of the defects



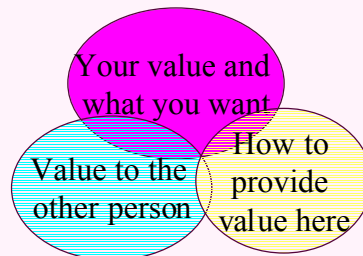
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Influence Works

- Product ship decisions or other risk-based decisions
 - Knowing what you have of value
 - What's in it for the other person
 - What you want in return



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Influential Test Managers

- Provide value
 - Ask questions and assess answers about the product and project
 - Facilitate release tradeoff discussions
 - Generate and test release criteria
- Understand what the other person wants
- Choose how to address that want
- Decide what to ask for in return
- Control is not the issue
- Share your risk perceptions to influence your project and make it successful

Questions?

- You can find this updated presentation at <http://www.jrothman.com/ftp/starwest99.pdf>