SQ mag

THE VOICE OF SOFTWARE QUALITY

01
OCT 2016

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Alison Wade on Women in IT

INTERVIEW

A CHANCE, NOT AN OBSTACLE

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THE RELEVANCE OF CERTIFICATION

Erik van Veenendaal on Certification

INTERVIEW

Lima
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Stephan Goericke
CEO, International Software Quality Institute

THE NEXT BIG THING

Kevin Spacey is a great Hollywood actor, Oscar winner and theater director. I love him as Frank Underwood in "House of Cards". But I even love more the start-up investor and tech evangelist Kevin Spacey. Looking for the next big thing, Spacey is willing to invest his time, his money and celebrity in creative ideas of other people. Why? Because he believes in applied technology and in the necessity to view the future with optimism. With software we can prepare a better future for humanity. I passionately believe that.

The more innovative software development is, the more developers and testing experts have to work creatively. Software development is a creative contest. For this we need smart people, creative ideas as well as passion and enthusiasm.

SQ mag was created and dedicated to these creative software developers, testers and visionaries. Literally it is meant to be a „voice" for software quality and QA community. In the very first issue of SQ mag we put together amazing interviews with powerful leaders of software testing industry, interesting articles, and much more. It is inspiration and information source for anyone interested in the topic of software, quality and training. So, be inspired and take a look on brand new SQ mag. We hope you enjoy this as much as we enjoyed by making it!

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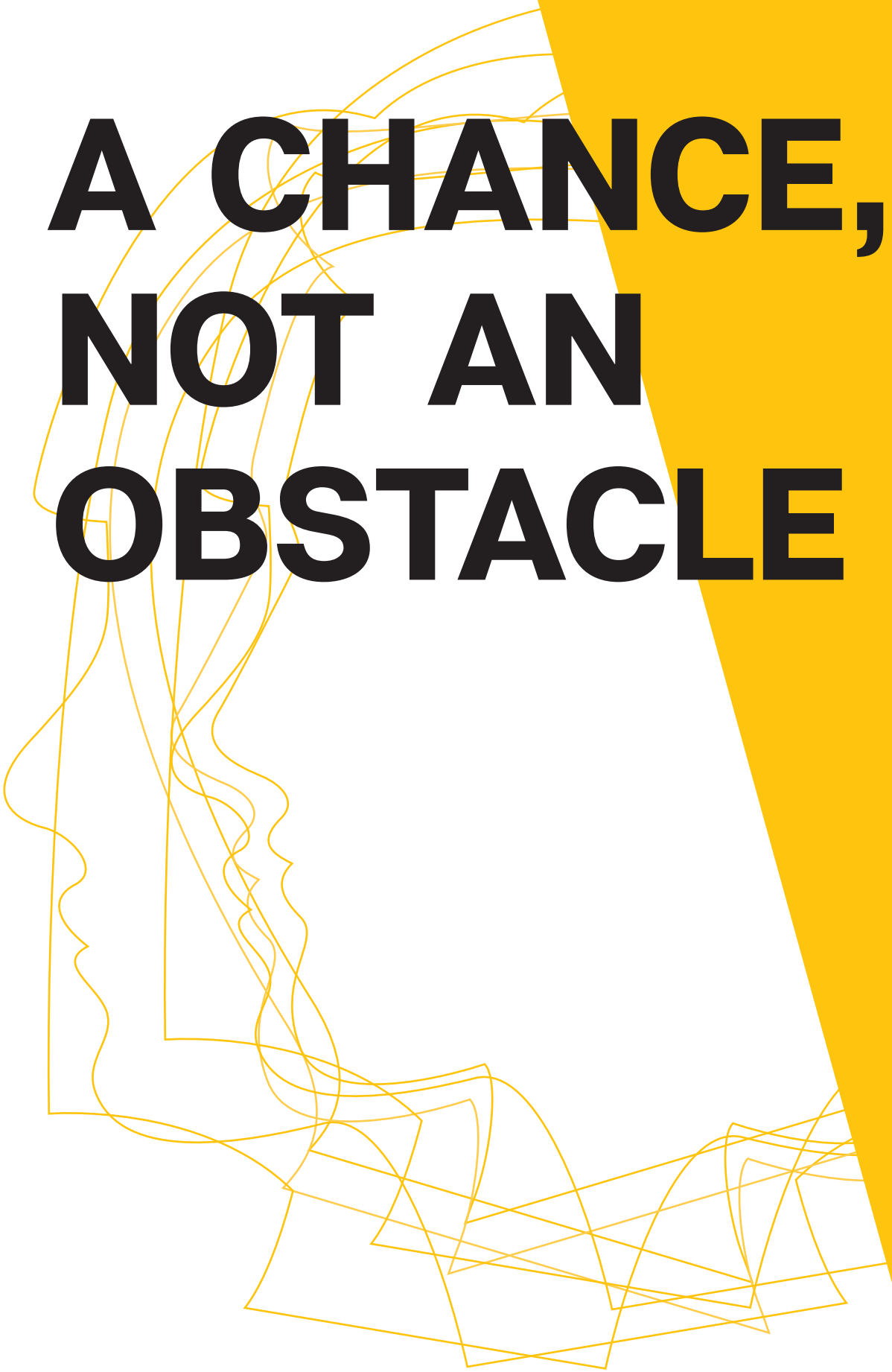

For more than ten years the Dutch social enterprise Specialisterren has been working with people with autism. Specialisterren recognises that people with autism have a variety of exceptional skills that are in high demand in the job market, most especially in IT and software testing roles. These skills include high levels of concentration, accuracy and close attention to detail, ability to spot errors, good technical ability and excellent memory.
Through a network of recruiters and coaches, Specialisterren has successfully supported candidates with autism to find software testing roles and, through its cooperation with Polteq, has made available an extensive training and coaching program.

In conversation with the SQ mag **Anja Bakker** *(manager education at Polteq) and Polteq trainer* **Erik Runhaar** *describe their experiences in working with people with some form of autism.*

What is Polteq´s involvement in this initiative?

Anja: Actually we were contacted by AuthentICT and Specialisterren. AUTHENTICT is a company who specializes in creating a working and learning environment where people with autism can offer excellent IT services. They approached us because we are the largest and most experienced independent test training organization in the Netherlands. We also had some experience with similar projects in the past. Over the years we have trained more than 60 people with autism. During the first training course we noticed that not all participants were completely comfortable with our normal structure of the day. But after a while you see the participants getting used to aspects such as the early starts and very full days; they start enjoying the new situation, the working environment and the software testing. It's such a wonderful experience to see such an important change! People thoroughly enjoy what they do and being part of the class. For us it's such a pleasure to support people and help them to do things they are good at. Unfortunately in many cases people had become stuck in their previous jobs. We also noticed that the working environments in the past were not always suited to their needs. Our cooperation with Specialisterren and especially AUTHENTICT is aimed at creating a new opportunity, recognising the many talents and aptitudes of the individual. The programme helps to increase confidence in what they do and possibly even more important: they see how important their contribution is.

What specific skills do you identify and help develop?

In general people with autism are very analytical and persistent. They can maintain a good focus. It can be a challenge to find new issues in software and the testing can require a high level of attention to detail repeating the same manual tests multiple times – a new release of software that has already been tested by our students will be tested as thoroughly and detailed as if it was the first release.

A CHANCE, NOT AN OBSTACLE

How does Polteq work with the students?

Anja: For a number of years Polteq has been running a training program called the Masterclass. This is an intense seven week training program aimed at people who want to become a software tester. The training is multi-dimensional and includes all aspects of what makes a person a successful software tester. For mainly AuthentICT we have a similar program. Maybe the main differences are that we train at their location and that we have more but shorter days to reduce the stress level and for a better learning (and experience) effect. During the training for Specialisterren and AuthentICT we also work on building confidence and the work related skills, such as deadlines and team work.

What are the challenges for people with autism in the workplace?

Anja: If you put people with autism into an existing team, without taking into account that they may need more time or attention to connect with the team, then it may be a challenge for the person. You will have to make adjustments to help them feel comfortable (in their work) and appreciated as well as to help them overseeing what is expected from them. If you don't, then they will probably be less efficient or less motivated. In a way it's a two way adjustment: all members of the team need to adjust in order to make the team a success. The people we have seen in our training courses are practically all people who lost their job because the organization was not able or willing to adjust.
In our training courses we have seen people who were unemployed for a significant number of years since their last job. Some of them had worked for ten years or more without any problems but then, for example, they got the opportunity to get another position and to grow within the organization. That sounds great, but if the new job is in management with much more stress, interaction, meetings, uncertainties and issues then people with autism will face a real challenge. People with autism can be very successful students at university. They graduate with good results and then they get a job. The workplace gives new challenges including the social environment, making contacts, building relationships, working with different colleagues and possibly new issues to deal with every day. In our experience people with autism can have excellent skills in computers and systems. Data entry, programming and testing are typical IT areas where people with autism can be very successful.

How can this initiative be more widely supported?

Anja: I think it is important that organizations are informed that people with autism can be excellent software testers. You need to create the environment which will work for them. That is why organizations like AuthentICT and Specialisterren are doing so well. They created an environment in which their employees can contribute. They have coaches to help them if they have a difficult day or they run into things they have problems with.

Erik, as a trainer, did you need additional skills?

Erik: In my private situation I am involved in working with people with autism. When Polteq was asked to provide training to Specialisterren and AuthentICT I was asked to deliver the training. I was asked to find out how it works when you train people with autism in classroom situations. People with autism are quite easily distracted. As a trainer you have to make sure that they can focus and that there is no distraction. If for instance I'm fiddling with a pen when explaining a topic, then participants may be distracted. Which doesn't mean that the topic was too complex or that I explained it badly; it's a matter of focus. The challenge for the trainer is more than in other situations react (and change course) on the group: how are they doing, reacting, focussing.

What is special about teaching people with autism?

Erik: The best thing to do as a trainer is to explain as explicitly and clearly as possible. Also do not go back on an earlier explanation. If you explain, for example, that testing is green and two days later you explain that it is red, a person with autism can become confused and even stressed. It can create

↙
Training at Polteq
with Eric Runhaar

↗
What is autism?
Autism is the general term for a group of complex disorders of brain development that affect how people perceive the world and interact with others. That's why people with autism have great difficulties with some "simple" things, while they sometimes handle easily "difficult" challenges.

doubt in things learned previously, even some of the basics.

Erik, you train candidates for the ISTQB® Certified Tester Foundation Level (CTFL) exam for your customers Specialisterren and AuthentICT. What approach do you use?

Erik: Participants need more time to learn, because things are mainly not straight forward. In some sessions we did half a day of training with the possibility for them to repeat content or simply relax in the afternoon.
Anja: ISTQB® CTFL exams are usually one hour; ISTQB® allows extra time (candidates have 90 minutes in total if they need it). The main aspect is that they don't feel pressure time wise. Having an invigilator who is used to working with people with autism is also very helpful. In general we see very good results.

What have you personally learned from this project?

Anja: Our experience as Polteq is very positive – we are committed to developing good testers and we know that we have trained people who will be excellent.
Erik: People have different levels of adaptability depending on the flexibility of the organization and situation. We see people with autism doing test coordination work working effectively with users having developed the necessary skills. Social behaviour can often be summarized in a set of rules. For instance when you want to make contact with people you first shake hands, then you drink a cup of coffee together and talk about some general topics and then you ask about someone's work or training. In this sense social behaviour can be learned. Some people with autism do this in a natural way and others have much more difficulty with it. They are for example better in solving computer or software related issues. Initially we wondered how employees from AuthentICT and Specialisterren would cope with a changing agile environment, but this is a challenge that can be met positively. I have done agile practises in a training environment which was very successful. They found failures and specific false combinations that other groups did not find. They really have attention to detail which helps quite a lot in finding failures. That is a very important aspect in testing, of course.

So people with autism can be very good software testers?

Anja: Yes, absolutely. In some ways they may be even better software testers, especially when testing details. Give them the responsibility and the right support and they will do a great testing job. ▌

“WOMEN HAVE THE POWER TO CREATE CHANGE

In just five years, there will be a million unfilled computer science–related jobs in the United States, which according to calculations could amount to a $500 billion opportunity cost. Tech companies are producing jobs three times faster than the U.S. is producing computer scientists. We need women to help fill these jobs, and we need them now.

Alison Wade *is an accomplished executive dedicated to the business of software. For the past fifteen years, she has worked with industry leaders developing programs for software development and testing professionals. She is the Program Chair for the Mobile Dev + Test and IoT Dev + Test Conferences , and she plays a pivotal role in the development of the Better Software, Agile Development Practices, DevOps, and STAR Conferences. She also directs Software Quality Engineering's highly respected training curriculum and programs. Alison strives to increase awareness of diversity in the software industry concerning both the workforce and the role of software beyond commercial products and IT departments. In February 2015, Alison launched Women Who Test. Later she added a day dedicated to women in software testing, happening in conjunction with the STAR-WEST conference. Exclusive for SQ mag she gives an insight in her work.*

Alison, how did you start to work in the Tech?

Alison: Software development crossed my working life very early on when I had to solve a big problem. I was twenty-four and working for a non-profit in LA, and I had to organize a massive fundraiser. It was a very fancy dinner for almost two thousand people, many of whom were celebrities, at the Beverly Hills Wilshire Hotel. A prominent patron bought a table at the highest level of sponsorship, and she requested the Beef Wellington for her entire table. Unfortunately by the time the waiters reached her table they were all out of the beef. To my surprise, many of the guests had simply changed their order when they saw the delicious looking Beef Wellington passing by, and they claimed that they ordered the beef.
I averted disaster by engaging a nearby Beverly Hills restaurant to rapidly produce and deliver twelve filet mignons at a considerable price tag, but managing to console the inconsolable patron. A volunteer working with me who witnessed the fiasco was also a software developer and thought that he could help. We devised a plan to build software that would ultimately create a seating map indicating each guest name and their food preference. The waiters would then be able to discretely and politely say, "I am so sorry, it says here, that you ordered the chicken, not the beef." In the end, the software we developed also tracked payments, ticket sales, and guest names. At the time there was nothing like it available on the market and to give you a clue about how long ago that was, the program was built using DOS. The developer and I worked closely together, me I now know in the role of the product owner and tester. We successfully developed the software, along with my steep learning curve of software development.

Why is it so interesting for you?

Technology is exciting to me because I love the efficiency, along with its potential for solving really hard problems. Software development done well is the perfect marriage of art and science. There is the added element of human interaction, and I love anything to do with how people think and behave.

Tech companies are producing jobs three times faster than the U.S. is producing computer scientists. We need women, to help fill these jobs, and we need them now, right?

We won't be able to meet that kind of demand without the other half of the equation, women. The current rise in women's tech groups, the promotion of STEM to girls in schools all helps to urge

WOMEN HAVE THE POWER TO CREATE CHANGE

women to seek jobs in tech. However, if the culture doesn't change women may not stay in Tech. Engineering is the most male-dominated field in STEM, with women making up only 13% of the engineering workforce.

For many women, a profession in the Tech is still unattractive. Why is that?

A career in Tech should be very attractive to women. The salaries can be higher than other professions, and there is an opportunity for flexibility, working remotely, setting your hours, but the environment can be challenging for women. A recent study from the Sloan School of Management at MIT showed that although women made up 20% of the engineering graduates ant estimated 40% of women quit or never enter the profession. Females did just as well or better than male students in school—but often point to the hegemonic masculine culture of engineering itself as a reason for their leaving. During a four-year study of both male and female engineering students, women more often reported being treated in gender stereotypical ways, both by their peers and professors. They were often relegated to routine and managerial tasks. Whereas the males, on the other hand, described their peer interaction and group work as exciting turning points in their schooling. Almost without exception, men reported the experience of internships and summer jobs as positive, whereas the women's reports were nowhere near as uniformly positive. The study concludes that women's experience of their education differed along two critical dimensions — they encountered a culture where sexism and stereotypes were left unaddressed, and they saw only lip service offered toward improving society—and both of these disproportionately alienated them.
I think it is clear that without real and deliberate effort on the part of companies and leaders within tech companies, the culture, will not change, and women will not be taken as seriously as their male counterparts, or offered the same rewards regarding job satisfaction and financial compensation.

What can we do to inspire women for IT / Tech? What inspires you?

What inspires me is helping to empower others to do what they love. Being passionate about your work is everything. After all, the average job takes up about 57% of your waking hours.
Inspiring women to work in Tech has to be a priority for companies. It starts at the leadership level and needs to have the support of both men and women to be successful. We need to ask ourselves, what are we doing to make sure we are treating women and men equally? Are we looking for diversity in our hiring? Being conscious about the subtlest of our gender bias.
However, women can't afford to wait for the external climate to change, because cultural change can be slow and incremental. For me, the one thing I did have control over is my internal environment. I needed to make a deliberate plan to get to what inspires me, to grow in the areas that were important for my personal goals, and to advocate for myself. Many of these things are uncomfortable or just not a priority for women because of the many other varying pressures on women.

Women often have to contend with many stereotypes. How important are female role models for the next generation?

It is everything! You can't become what you can't envision.
Young women need to see women in all areas of business, politics, and community leadership. Relating to those women and seeing yourself in those women is critical. Young women also need to hear

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@womenwhotest
and contact her at
info@womenwhotest.com

powerful messages that help break stereotypes. My daughter is now a teen, and has told me as only a teen can, that she is "tired of hearing all that power women stuff." However, I recently saw first hand that she is absorbing these messages. We were shopping to buy and outfit for a friends toddler. I saw the most adorable little tutu-like skirt with a matching shirt with the words "perfect princess" on the front. I was heading to the cash register with it, and my daughter literally took it right out of my hands and said, "mom, she doesn't have to be perfect, and she doesn't have to be a princess". How right she was, what message is a shirt like that sending? What if the commonly available shirts for young girls said, sassy scientist, amazing engineer, perfect problem solver, incredible inventor, how affirming would be?

You created Women Who Test. What is it about?

It is about women in software testing coming together first as women and then as software engineers. It is about creating the opportunity for women software testers to share their ideas, experiences, and concerns, about their careers and life. To discuss not only software testing, but business, inspirations, solutions, work-life balance, and being a woman in a male-dominated profession.

How many women already joined in?

There have been well over 1,000 women who have participated in the Women Who Test events and groups to date.

How do men react to your Women Who Test and the perspective that more and more women will join the Tech-community?

I have had some incredible support from men. One of my very first goals was to get more women speaking at software testing conferences. Being a program chair, I saw how few women ever applied to speak. I wanted to help by finding women who wanted to be speakers and give them the tools and encouragement they needed to make speaking a reality. I had assistance from a few good men with positions of influence in several companies, and they helped me recruit female speakers for their organizations. I have also been approached by several men who have heard about Women Who Test and wanted to connect me with other programs for women in their businesses. So I have seen a lot of positive reinforcement.
Unfortunately, there are still those men that make jokes, poke fun, or feel threatened. There are some who simply don't think there are any issues and that equality means women shouldn't get any special attention.

You say: When women work together and inspire each other, amazing things happen. What kind of amazing things? What do you mean?

When any group finds commonality, there is the ability for people to connect and learn. When women working in the same field come together, they automatically start with a lot in common, and they can share their experiences, and learn from each other.
We often make all our learning in IT about process and skills and forget that just as much knowledge, insight, and growth takes place when we communicate with each other, understand others, and ourselves.
It is so great to get a group of women in a room to talk about our experiences and to laugh. We laugh at ourselves and with each other, humor is everything! We need all of those experiences and qualities to take our careers and ourselves seriously and know we are not alone. ▮

ARE YOU WITH US?

The world is going to Lima. #cometoLima and attend the 7th World Congress for Software Quality!

Lima
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HAVE YOU SEEN ...

ROYALS

Congratulations to football team Potsdam Royals for a very good season and the 3rd place in GFL2

BITS & PRETZELS

Hollywood star Kevin Spacey is a big fan of Virtual Reality. He invests even in start ups. Spacey told the founders at the Munich conference Bits & Pretzels why he is taking risk.

HIGH5

High5 - The Start up Booster was established. The new company is 100% owned by iSQI GmbH and is based in Berlin.

DEDICATED TO YOUR SKILLS

Do you have a question? iSQI´s team is at your service around the world:

iSQI is very different! Dedicated to lifelong learning and an incredible passion for quality this leading provider of certfication examination paves the way for successful career development of IT professionals. Learn more about what iSQI can do for you. Also visit www.isqi.org

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WHAT´S NEW?

3 Questions to Geoff Thompson

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Stephan Goericke (r.) met Software Testing Expert Geoff Thompson and talked with him about his new task as Director of Testing Services UK at Planit Software Testing.

Geoff, you have taken up your new task as Director of Testing Services UK. Why did you decide to start a new career path with Planit Software Testing?

I had 12 brilliant years at Experimentus which I helped build up from nothing to the largest TMMi consultancy in the world, I simply felt the time was right for change. I had been following Planit's development for many years and when the opportunity came up to manage their UK operations it felt just the right opportunity for me.

With over 30 years you are a high profile and active figure in the global software testing industry. You earned numerous awards. Do these awards still have a special meaning for you?

The awards I have won still mean a massive amount to me as they were awarded by my peers for the work I have done to improve the software testing industry. I didn't do the work to get awards but it is great when my peers recognise the work I have been doing.

What are your plans for the future?

Initially to ensure that I deliver the Planit expectations from its UK operations. Alongside that I am very aware that the world is moving on in IT in general and in software testing specifically and the schemes I have been involved in (ISTQB and TMMi) need to stay relevant. So I am keen to continue to drive strategic focus and the relavancy of the products they deliver as much as I can. Personally I am keen to continue to develop my DIY and gardening skills, and grow my collection of Hard Rock Cafe memorabilia!

CERTIFICATION FOR DEVOPS PROFESSIONALS

iSQI has entered a partnership with DASA (DevOps Agile Skills Association) and is the official Examination Service Provider for the DASA certification scheme. This scheme addresses the skills requirements of DevOps professionals at Associate, Practitioner and Expert Level. DASA has defined a competence framework that identifies 8 knowledge areas and 4 skill areas that are highly relevant in DevOps. The framework ensures that the learning curricula and certification paths address the competency needs of those working in a DevOps environment.

The competence model and fundamentals syllabus can be found at www.devopsagileskills.org.

WHAT'S HAPPENING

With over 25,000 certifications per year, iSQI paves the way for successful career development. Join an exklusive insight into iSQI's world.

SOFTWARE QUALITY MEETS IoT ON 7TH WCSQ

The 7th World Conference for Software Quality – to be held from March 20th-22nd, 2017 in Lima, Peru – will bring together international software experts, thought leaders, innovative practitioners and inspiring speakers from industry and academia. Three days of remarkable keynotes, intensive sessions, practical tutorials and workshops, EXPO and an incredible social event will together make up this unique event.
In reference to the topic "Software Quality meets IoT", the congress is organized by the Software Division of American Society for Quality (ASQ), the Union of Japanese Scientists and Engineers (JUSE) and the Software Group of the European Organization for Quality (EOQ-SG) represented by iSQI.
For more details about parts of this exciting event, visit the 7th WCSQ official website.
www.wcsq.org

IFPUG™ COOPERATES WITH iSQI®

The International Software Quality Institute (iSQI) is as of the November 1, 2016 the exclusive examination provider for the Certified Function Point Specialist (CFPS), the Certified Function Point Practitioner (CFPP) and the Certified SNAP Practitioner (CSP) in English, Brazilian Portuguese, Italian and Spanish, with additional languages to come.
The goal of the International Function Point Users Group (IFPUG™) is to promote the efficient development of application software through specific measurement practices and procedures. In able to accomplish this, they have developed the IFPUG software sizing standards and other methods for measuring software projects. Project managers and software developers can use the sizing measures as the basis to calculate an accurate cost estimate of their software projects and the maintenance of applications. In addition, software users can better understand the business value of their software.
IFPUG™ is the responsible body for the certification for Certified Function Point Specialist (CFPS), Certified Function Point Practitioner (CFPP) and Certified SNAP Practitioner (CSP). For each of these certification opportunities iSQI, with be able to administer the examination on IFPUG's behalf. The main focus will be with iSQI's electronic platform as FLEX or SMEX examination.

MORE INFORMATION
www.ifpug.org

CERTIFI-CATION FOR BPA

In cooperation with the US Nextpond, the iSQI, Inc. now offers certification for Business Process Architect, Industry Professional (BPA-IP). A contract has been signed in July, where iSQI is offering their examination platforms FLEX and SMEX as a service. With Nextpond, BPA methods drive companies to optimize their internal processes and structures and operate business precisely for quality and success, by design. In order to use the implement Nextpond technology to its fullest advantage, consultants are trained in a dedicated method and IT training and certification for BPA as a whole. As an independent audit partner, iSQI offers you the opportunity to acquire this professional qualification certificate.

MORE INFORMATION
www.nextpond.com

Business Process Architect

GLOBAL EXAM PROVIDER FOR TMMi®

The TMMi® (Test Maturity Model integration) Foundation is delighted to announce that the International Software Quality Institute (iSQI) will be the exclusive exam provider for the TMMi Professional Examination globally. TMMi is appropriate for anyone who wants an understanding of the TMMi model, a reference framework for test process improvement. Holders of the TMMi Professional Certificate will be able to demonstrate the level of knowledge required as a prerequisite to become an accredited TMMi lead-assessor or assessor. Stephan Goericke, iSQI CEO, says: *"Improving test processes is a key imperative in software development and can ultimately lead to supporting an organisations' success. TMMi certification helps people and companies to ensure they have the capability to offer more efficient and effective test processes."*

THE RELEVANCE OF CERTIFICATION

Nobody knows the software testing industry better than Erik van Veenendaal. He is an internationally recognized software testing expert, author of a number of books and has published a large number of papers within the profession. Since its foundation in 2002, Erik has been strongly involved in the International Software Testing Qualifications Board (ISTQB). He was vice-president of the International Software Testing Qualifications Board (ISTQB) from 2005 until 2009 and is currently a board member of the TMMi Foundation. ISTQB® has recently released a new product road map with new areas of curriculum. Debbie Archer, Managing Director iSQI LTD, met Erik van Veenendaal in Berlin for an interview to discuss the relevance of certification in the future.

Debbie Archer: Erik you have been very involved in the ISTQB® software testing certification scheme for many years. Looking ahead, what's your assessment of the relevance of certification to employers and test professionals?

Erik Veenendaal: Certification has been an important aspect of the "professionalization" of testing by helping to establish common standards, language, an understanding of the core techniques and the role of a tester. If I want to hire a tester I want to know that they have benchmarked their skills, no matter whether a person is at an early stage in their career or further along. I am keen to see a commitment to professional development; it says a lot about the person. As well as ensuring core skills, it also supports career progression, specialization and keeping up to date. As an example, we have seen a significant demand for the ISTQB® Foundation Level Agile Tester extension - agile has been around for a while but people are keen to verify and consolidate their knowledge.

Do you think that the format of the assessment process for certification exams is effective?

More than 600,000 ISTQB® exams have been delivered with more than 500,000 certificates issued; the current format of the exams makes it scalable and accessible around the world. I think there are some incorrect perceptions about multiple choice exams; skilled questions writers, working with a well-developed syllabus, can create an objective and reliable exam that can effectively assess to even Blooms[1] K3 and K4 levels. At expert level in the ISTQB® scheme – we have essay-based questions which are also an effective assessment method. Perhaps in the future there will be more practical based exams.

ISTQB® certification is the most successful certification for testing professionals in the world. What do you think has been critical to that success?

I think that the syllabuses were well written, well-constructed and relevant. Also the scheme structure is important, the core content helped people to learn skills needed for their day to day job and the overall scheme supported career aspirations - to gain the certification was often like an added benefit but not the main reason for taking the course! The other reason I think is the international aspect. This is very important. People work together in projects across the world and international cooperation and a common understanding became increasingly important. ISTQB® provided this underpinned by the local and regional Member Boards and promotion by internationally recognised exam providers such as iSQI.

[1] Blooms "Taxonomy of Educational Objectives". Each section of ISTQB®'s syllabuses is allocated a Knowledge (K) level appropriate to the level of assessment for more information go to http://www.istqb.org/exams-root/what-are-k-levels.html

THE RELEVANCE OF CERTIFICATION

ISTQB® has released a new product road map with new areas of curriculum. Can you give some insight into the new certifications and why they are relevant?

Yes indeed, it is important that the needs of test professionals and employers can be met. The ISTQB® scheme structure is based on the "core," if you like, which consists of the current foundation syllabus and the advanced syllabuses then the expert level. We created a new stream for agile – give the tester the knowledge to be a more effective part of agile teams. And we also created the "specialist" stream with curriculum in Model Based Testing and Usability Testing at foundation level and Automation and Security at advanced. I guess you could say that we are looking to ensure both breadth and depth of knowledge.

> **If I want to hire a tester I want to know that they have benchmarked their skills, no matter whether a person is at an early stage in their career or further along.**

What are the key skills and competences you anticipate the testers of the future will need?

For me personally, I think knowledge and skills should be broader than "just" testing for a tester. So I think there should be a closer relationship to other disciplines, for instance, to the requirements engineers and software development. It's important the testers understand how what they can contribute and why at that stage in the project – training and certification in requirements engineering, as an example, could support that. I think also good communication skills, being able to work in a team – these so-called soft skills are really important.

You mentioned ISTQB® Expert Level. Would you anticipate any new modules at expert level?

Yes, I think there will be other modules in the future but for now, for today, I think we are ok with the existing test management and test process improvements at expert level. It is nice to see that especially the test process improvement module is now really taking off. The new ISTQB® Roadmap is offering knowledge specialisms as well as the career path for testers – the current expert modules support that well.

So, thinking about the expert level module "Improving the Test Process" what would you see as the benefit to a test professional and their organisation?

The main benefit is that it is a very most practical module. It has a lot of what I call very high knowledge levels and "homework" exercises which are challenging but which reinforce the learning and give experience. For instance, you teach people how to do an assessment and as part of the course the student returns to their organization, does an assessment and then reviews it with the course tutor. I think that offers so much added value. Students also have to define a test

↙
Erik *is a passionated table tennis player*

improvement plan; again they learn the theory during the course, go back to the workplace and produce a plan, again they will return to the course and review with the tutor. So it's very practical, it covers actually all I think you should cover and we get very positive feedback. The individual and the organisation get value.

Erik, you've been in the business for about 30 years now, in software development, in software quality, software testing. How did you get involved in the industry?

I started as a programmer, which I think, by the way, is a good background for software testing though not essential. I moved into a project management role; the level of quality we were delivering to our customers was simply not good enough – there were too many dissatisfied customers. So I thought there must be a different way and went to a company that was offering consultancy services in the area of quality and testing and I became a tester again, test manager and then test consultant.

What is your current focus?

My focus is still evolving – creating value for costumers is still very important to me and also ensuring that testing is really understood. People like to run after buzzwords; I've been there so long…. the first course I ran – I remember that really well actually – people were saying "tomorrow we'll get tool XYZ and we can remove testing" – I have heard that so many times! You just need to read the newspapers to see the consequences of defects whether in an airplane, a nuclear system, a banking system, and we have all these mobile apps – it doesn't go away. Testing remains a priority for any organization although it may be organized differently.

Excellent. Erik, you are an international testing expert, you are writing books, you are a highly respected authority and speaker. I also understand, that you're also a successful table tennis player.

E: I am also doing test consultancy and training in the Caribbean, especially on the Island of Curaçao. Table tennis, yes I played at two world championships in the past - I still train two, three times a week for fitness but these days I am moving more into coaching youth teams, sharing my experience.

As you do in the testing world!
Yes, but differently.

Wonderful. Thank you so much, Erik.

You're welcome. ▌

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Erik van Veenendaal *(www.erikvan-veenendaal.nl) is a leading international consultant and trainer. He is one of the core developers of the TMap testing methodology and the TMMi improvement model. Since its foundation in 2002, Erik has been strongly involved in the International Software Testing Qualifications Board (ISTQB). As a working party chair, he has lead of the ISTQB Expert Level working party for over 10 years. As a co-author he is also involved in writing syllabi at Foundation, Advanced and Expert level. Erik is a frequent keynote and tutorial speaker at international testing and quality conferences. For his major contribution to the field of testing, Erik received the European Testing Excellence Award (2007) and the ISTQB International Testing Excellence Award (2015).*

You can follow Erik on twitter via @ErikvVeenendaal.

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3 sunglasses

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5 energy drink

When conference season begins it seems like everyone packs out to explore the trends of their industry. But how to survive attending a big conference? We empty our bags and share the things we carry with us on conference days. Here are our top five picks.

ANY QUESTIONS?

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