

Test Team Management Course Outline

General Description

Management in the technical world requires different skills than non-technical management. As managers and leads, we are dealing with highly skilled individuals who have their own motivations and goals. Molding this group into a working unit has many unique challenges. Put that already challenging task into the software test environment and suddenly your life as a manager has become extremely complicated. Not only must you deal with the very intelligent technical individuals on your team, but you must also deal with the external pressures of politics. Add to that the constant battle of removing the “second class citizen” aura that tends to surround test organizations and you may find yourself seeking a more rewarding career, say bagging groceries at the neighborhood store.

It’s a difficult job at best but this course will walk you through building the team, also known as the Perfect Beast. We’ll talk about making the team effective, how to lead a strong team, how to do evaluations, how to handle compensation (and that ever present fight for equity in pay) and how to do terminations and layoffs.

This class is focused on the needs of the technical manager with specific attention to the unique problems we experience managing testing and quality assurance staffs. Both experienced and novice managers will leave this class with valuable and practical information. This is not a course on management theory; you can read about that elsewhere. Judy McKay teaches this one-day class based on her own real world management experience and a survey of techniques used by other successful technical managers.

Learning Objectives

A successful instructor/attendee/material interaction will allow the student to:

- Find and hire the very best people for the team

- Master management techniques that will lead to productivity gains and will keep the group working together
- Deal with the politics of the job while being an effective leader
- Fairly and accurately assess performance and conduct reviews for mutual gain
- Create and administer effective reward systems, even within the confines of the environment
- Deal with problem employees as necessary and conduct successful layoffs without causing a mass exodus
- Create, maintain and develop an effective team of test professionals

Course Materials

This course includes the following materials:

<i>Name</i>	<i>Description</i>
Course Outline	A general description of the course along with learning objectives, course materials and an outline of the course topics, including approximate timings for each section.
Noteset	A set of approximately 360 PowerPoint slides covering the topics to be addressed.
Bibliography and resources	A set of further readings, Web sites, tools and other resources to help implement the concepts.

The printed course materials are provided in a binder in a way which makes it convenient for course attendees to remove portions as needed for reference; e.g., during exercises.

Session Plan

Day One

- 8:30 Introductions, objectives and overview
- 9:00 How do we build our world-class test organization, our Perfect Beast?
- 10:15 Break
- 10:30 Defining your team and sizing the organization

- 11:30 Keeping your beast effective by mastering communication and creating synergy and pride
- 12:00 Lunch
- 1:00 Being an effective manager by setting expectations, gathering feedback and being responsive
- 2:00 Break
- 2:15 Evaluating the Perfect (or not so perfect) Beast
- 2:45 Creating and implementing effective reward systems
- 3:15 Growing and developing your staff
- 3:30 Delousing your beast
- 4:30 Summary, review, Q&A, discussion

Recommended Readings

The class materials include an extensive bibliography of books related to software testing, project management, quality, and other topics of interest to the test professional.