

This resource is meant to act as a guide through the common vocabulary you'll come across as a beta tester.

A Alpha Test

The phase before beta, typically including employees, friends, and/or family as testers. Alpha products are less stable than beta products and lack planned features. This phase often focuses on basic functionality and feedback, with more detailed customer testing taking place during the beta phase.

aka Pre-Beta

Alternate

A person designated to take the spot of a beta tester should one need to leave the project for some reason. Alternates are often used in hardware beta tests, since there are a limited number of beta units and the beta managers want to ensure every unit is utilized during the beta test.

B Beta Applicant

A person who has expressed an interest (typically via an online survey or form) in joining a private beta test, but has not yet been selected as a tester.

aka Beta Candidate

Beta Community

A group of people who have expressed interest in being beta testers for a specific company and/or product. Members of the community are then notified as specific beta testing opportunities become available.

aka Beta Panel

Beta Key

A unique string of characters which gives beta testers access to a beta test or the beta product. These can only be used once and cannot be shared with others.

aka Serial Number, Product Key, Beta Code, Beta Token

Beta Manager

The employee of the company that is in charge of managing a beta test, as well as all of the beta testers and their participation throughout the test. This is the person you will be interacting with most during the beta test, though other companies representatives may take part in the test as well.

aka Beta Administrator, Project Manager, Test Manager, Beta Test Manager

Beta Portal

The secure website where testers can find information about the beta test, as well as submit their feedback and communicate with the beta manager and fellow testers. This where you'll log in each day to submit bug reports, fill out surveys, find your tasks that need to be completed, and discuss your experiences with other testers.

Beta Product

A pre-release version of a product that beta testers will use and provide feedback on during the beta test. This could be a new, unannounced product or an update to an existing product, either way it includes functionality that is not publicly available yet. While the product is usually feature complete, it still may contain significant bugs and issues that could affect the use of the product.

Beta Test

A project where a company recruits people from their target market to use a pre-release product and provide feedback on their experience with that product. The company can then use that feedback to improve the product, the product's marketing, and the product's support system before its release. This phase comes after internal testing is complete, but before the product's release.

aka Beta, Beta Project, Field Trial, User Acceptance Test (UAT), Friendly User Test (FUT), Customer Acceptance Test (CAT)

Beta Tester

A volunteer that has been selected to participate in a beta test. These people reflect the demographic and technical requirements of the product's target market. They are expected to use the product and provide honest, detailed, objective feedback about their experience during the beta test. Beta Testers are not employees of the company.

aka Participant, Tester, Customer, Beta Member, You!

Beta Tester Agreement

The legal agreement which dictates your involvement and participation responsibilities during the beta test. This document will cover everything from what activities you'll be expected to complete as a beta tester to what you're allowed to do with the beta product.

aka BTA, Beta Participant Agreement (BPA)

Beta Unit

This term is used in hardware beta tests and refers to the physical beta unit that is given to you to beta test.

Bug Report

Feedback you give when you run into a problem during a beta test, which typically includes enough information that the company's employees can reproduce the bug on their own. Bug reports are some of the most valuable information a company can collect during beta testing, so you'll probably see a bug report form on every private beta test that you join.

C Crash Report

Technical details regarding a product malfunction or crash, typically generated and sent automatically by the beta product itself.

D Demographic

Traits such as gender, age, ethnicity, language, employment, and location that you may be asked about when applying for a beta test. Companies are looking for beta testers that reflect the target market of the product they're testing so they'll often ask for specific demographic information during the application process.

F Feature Request

Suggestions for future functionality you would like to see in the product. These help the company determine which potential new features are most important to their customers and where they should take the product in the future.

Feedback

Information you provide to the company about your experiences with the beta product. This can take many forms, including bug reports, feature requests, journals, discussions, and survey responses.

Forum

A private online discussion board where you can communicate and interact with other beta testers, as well as the beta manager or other employees.

Incentive

A reward given to beta testers who meet or exceed their participation responsibilities during the test. These rewards usually aren't cash, but instead could be the beta product itself, a released version of the product, gift cards, t-shirts, or something similar.

Journal

A form where you recount your latest experiences with the beta product, usually on a daily or weekly basis. These give the beta manager an idea of how testers are using the product on a day-to-day basis.

Leak

Sharing information about the product (text, photos, or video) with people outside of the beta test. This violates the non-disclosure agreement (if you were asked to sign one) and could result in legal action against you.

Non-disclosure Agreement

A legally binding agreement between a beta tester (you) and the company, which states that you will not discuss or reveal anything about the beta test/product with anyone outside of the test. This secrecy could extend long after the beta test is complete and is not to be taken lightly.

aka NDA, Confidentiality Agreement

Onboarding

Your initial experience with a product right out of the box. This is a very important focus of many beta tests because first impressions can make or break a product for many new and potential customers.

aka Installation, Out of the Box Experience (OOB), New User Experience (NUE)

Participation

Your active contribution to the beta test, usually in the form of regularly logging into the beta portal, submitting bug reports/feature requests, taking part in forum discussions, and completing tasks/surveys. Your level of participation will influence whether you receive an incentive at the end of the test and are invited to future tests.

aka Engagement

Phase

Different periods of one beta test, which may include different versions of the beta product, different testers, and/or different objectives.

Private Beta

A beta test that you must apply for and be selected to join. They are usually small and highly confidential. Most of the beta tests run within the Betabound portal will fall into this category of beta test.

aka Closed Beta

Public Beta

A beta test in which anyone is free to join without going through a qualification process. These tests are usually less focused on feedback and more focused on giving testers the chance to try out the product before release.

aka Open Beta, Marketing Beta

Qualification Survey

A short questionnaire intended to determine your eligibility and enthusiasm for the beta test. After filling this survey out you'll be notified if you've been selected as a tester.

aka Application Survey

Recruitment

The period when a company announces and promotes their beta opportunity to get interested people to apply for or join their beta test.

aka Callout

Regression Testing

The act of going back to an earlier reported bug to verify if it still exists or has been fixed. You may be asked to regress bugs you found and reported during a beta test.

Release

In software beta testing, this refers to the version of the beta product you're currently working with. You may get multiple releases of a beta product during a test as the company continues to make mid-test improvements.

Survey

A series of questions about your experience with or opinions about the beta product. You'll be asked to complete surveys regularly throughout the beta test on different aspects of your experience.

Target Market

The group of customers that a company plans to market its new product toward. Ideal beta testers are members of a product's target market. A target market could be defined by some combination geography, demographics, and technical factors.

Task

A specific activity assigned to you to complete and report back about. This may include installing the latest release, trying out a specific feature, or checking to see if a reported bug is still happening.

Test Platform

The device on which you use the product, such as the PC you use to test software, the phone on which you test an app, or the browser you use to test a website.

Testimonial

Your positive feedback about the product, which the company can use as a marketing or sales asset once the product is released.

Verify

Testing to see if a bug is real. When you submit a bug you'll need to include detailed information on how and when the problem occurred. This will help other testers or the company's developers reproduce the bug so they can see what's happening and fix it.

Want to learn more?

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