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Delta Testing: Improving the Cost of Quality



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The Pursuit of Quality

Quality is not just a buzzword in the world of product development; it's a crucial factor that will make or break a product's success. It encompasses both a product's freedom from defects and customer satisfaction with its features.

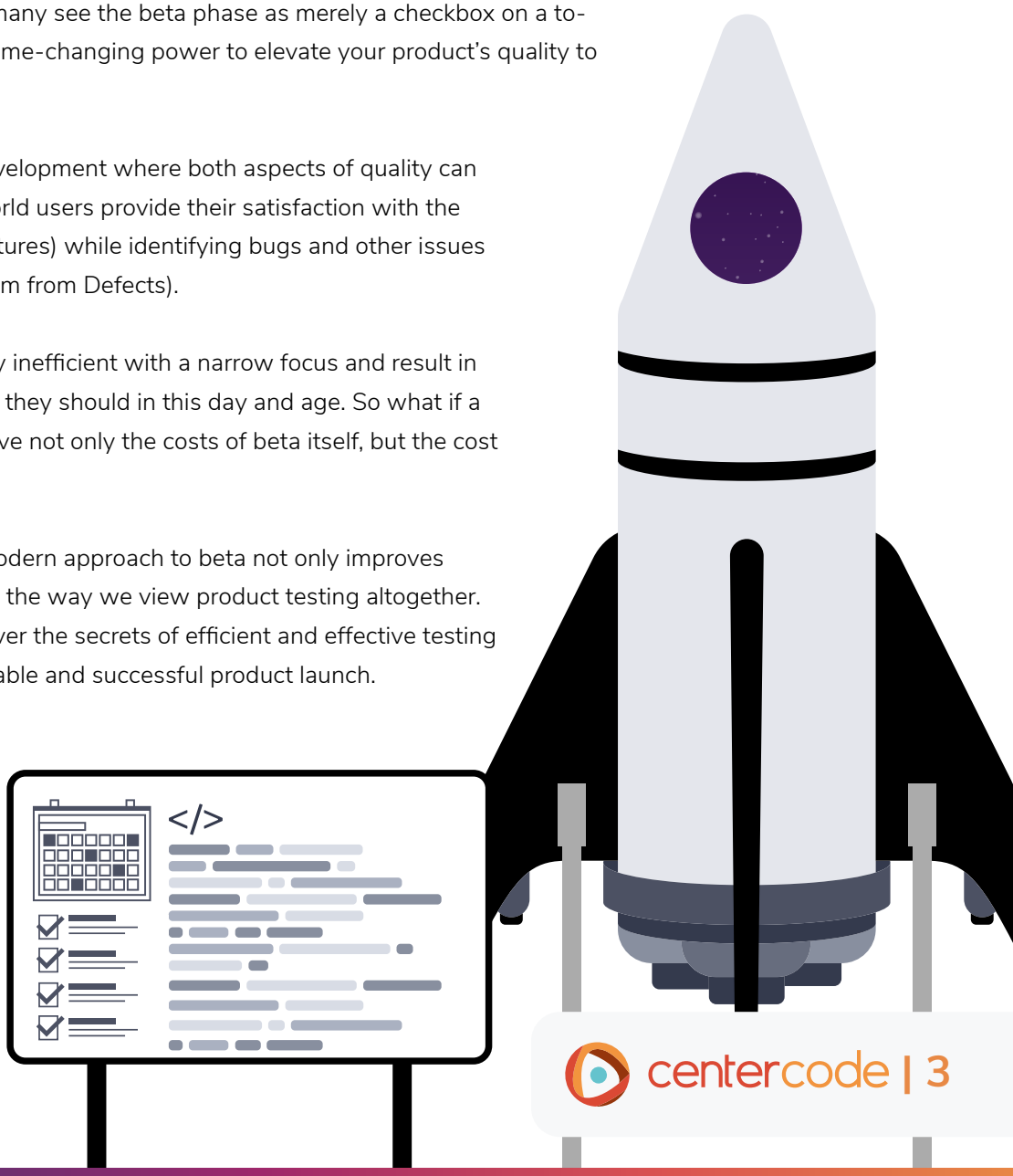
The pursuit of product quality can be an expensive, though necessary, endeavor. From the time spent conducting intricate market research to the investment in top-notch manufacturing materials and more. Once started, the cost of ensuring this quality can spiral into unsustainable territory. As you push for higher quality, the cost snowballs rapidly and the pressure for guaranteed success mounts.

Beta testing is a vital tool in the pursuit of quality. In most major companies it's a key milestone required for release. Yet, many see the beta phase as merely a checkbox on a to-do list, completely overlooking its game-changing power to elevate your product's quality to unparalleled standards.

Beta is the only stage of product development where both aspects of quality can be tested at the same time. Real-world users provide their satisfaction with the product experiences (Satisfying Features) while identifying bugs and other issues that impact their experience (Freedom from Defects).

Traditional beta testing can be wildly inefficient with a narrow focus and result in tests costing significantly more than they should in this day and age. So what if a better approach to beta could improve not only the costs of beta itself, but the cost of quality as well?

In this ebook, we'll explore how a modern approach to beta not only improves the cost of quality but revolutionizes the way we view product testing altogether. Come along for the ride as we uncover the secrets of efficient and effective testing and how it can lead to a more profitable and successful product launch.



Understanding the Cost of Quality

The cost of quality goes beyond dollars; it's the sum of resources invested in crafting a world-class product.
It has two facets:

1. **Satisfying Features** involves tailoring the product to user expectations through research and testing, which adds to the cost of quality.
2. **Freedom from Defects** is the realm of quality control and the focus is on pursuing a bug-free product. Defects that make it to market are the most expensive, affecting support costs and brand reputation.

Better quality costs more upfront, but saves money in the long run.

COST OF A GREAT PRODUCT

Market research
Quality of materials
Feature design
User testing and research

Higher quality costs more to make

+

COST OF BUGS AND ISSUES

Brand health
Quality assurance function
Bug fixes, updates, revisions
Support and returns

Higher quality costs less to maintain

Modernizing Beta

Beta testing has long been the go-to strategy for refining products before they reach consumers. It's a crucial phase that provides a snapshot of how real users will interact with the product, offering invaluable data for fine-tuning. This method is not without its challenges, however; it's often time-consuming, requires significant resources, and can inflate the cost of quality. This raises an important question: *Is there a more efficient, yet equally effective, alternative?*

Enter delta testing. Unlike traditional beta tests, delta testing is a repeatable, automated process. It allows for real-time adjustments based on continuous user feedback, making the development cycle more agile and responsive to ever-changing market needs. This iterative approach not only streamlines the development process but also ensures that the product remains aligned with user expectations throughout its lifecycle.

The result? Delta testing provides a more efficient and responsive method for ensuring quality, effectively reducing the cost of quality while maintaining a product's market relevance.

How Delta Testing Improves Cost of Quality

Delta testing offers a transformative approach to ensuring quality by focusing on three pivotal areas:

1. **Comprehensive Coverage:** It breaks the product into bite-sized pieces and takes the testers on a tour, scrutinizing the entire product in real-world conditions, ensuring no defects go unnoticed.
2. **Focus on Experience:** It validates that the product's features and experiences meet the users' needs.
3. **Impact Discovery:** Not all feedback is equal. Delta testing uses the weight of a feature, the severity of the issue, and the frequency of occurrence to identify what's most critical to address for success.

Comprehensive Coverage

Delta testers serve as an invaluable extension of your efforts in Quality Assurance. They catch issues that might escape internal testing, offering early detection that saves both costs and brand reputation.

Beyond mere defect detection, delta testing serves as a gateway to diverse tech ecosystems, allowing for testing across a multitude of devices and unique combinations that a lab setting could never accommodate. This expansive reach into real-world settings uncovers challenges and insights that are not just difficult but virtually impossible to replicate in a controlled environment.

Focus on Experience

Delta testing transcends the conventional focus of beta testing which often has a narrow focus on bug detection. Instead, it delves deeply into the user's evaluation of each experience, from the interface to the features, providing a comprehensive and insightful view of how the product resonates with the target audience. This approach captures a range of user perceptions:

- **Poor Experience:** Often indicates a bug or usability issue, leading to actionable insights for product fixes.
- **Okay Experience:** May reveal areas for improvement, often providing insights into the competition as users compare your product to others.
- **Delightful Experience:** Capturing what delights users is crucial both to preserve those aspects and to inform marketing strategies, focusing on feature spotlights and ads that resonate with the market.

By offering real-time feedback, delta testing allows you to fine-tune your product even as you approach launch and beyond. It's a more dynamic and responsive way to align product features and experiences with market needs, all while using fewer resources to achieve this alignment.

Impact Discovery

Traditional beta programs can be resource-intensive, especially when it comes to analyzing the results of the test. With delta testing, issues and other feedback are automatically prioritized based on key signals: the weight or importance of the feature, the severity of the issue (in the case of bugs), and the frequency of occurrence of the issue or other type of feedback. These values are combined to provide a score that indicates which feedback is having the highest impact on your product's success.

Consider the time-savings alone stemming from an automated prioritization system for feedback - no more hours-long debates on where to direct development efforts in the run up to launch. With more objectivity and automation introduced, the process is more efficient and the cost of quality is improved as a result.

These efficiency gains aren't exclusive to feedback analysis, delta testing streamlines in the three main areas of a user test:

1. **Planning:** Delta focuses on relevant scenarios and aligns them with the product lifecycle, reducing delays and associated costs.
2. **Testing:** It introduces efficiencies like centralization and automation, speeding up the process while reducing manual errors.
3. **Results Analysis:** Beyond automated prioritization, delta testing utilizes real-time dashboards and seamless integrations for quick, data-driven decision-making, further reducing time and costs.

Conclusion

Quality is non-negotiable for product success, and it can't be a financial burden. Delta testing offers a balanced approach that optimizes both quality and cost. It's a method that understands real-world complexities, aligns with market expectations, and leverages modern testing innovations.

By adopting the right strategies, like delta testing, we can achieve high-quality products with better financial outcomes, paving the way for continued profitable and successful launches.

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Centercode is the leading platform for managing impactful in-the-wild delta tests.

Start for free, scale as your program grows.

COMPARE PLANS



Run real-world delta tests with passionate audiences to release amazing products every time.

PRODUCT LAUNCH TESTING

Engage your **Target Market** to successfully bring new products and services to market

USE CASES:

- Beta Tests
- User Acceptance Tests
- Field Tests

CONTINUOUS USER TESTING

Recruit **Existing Customers** to continuously mature live products and services

USE CASES:

- Progressive Delivery
- Early Access
- Customer Advisory Boards

EMPLOYEE DOGFOODING

Gather **Employee** feedback to enhance your products while fostering a product culture

USE CASES:

- Alpha Tests
- Dogfooding
- Employee Tests

COMPETITIVE TESTING

Enlist **Competitors' Customers** to rapidly gain actionable intel about their products

USE CASES:

- Competitive Intelligence
- Market Testing
- Comparative Research

GET STARTED FOR FREE

OR SCHEDULE A LIVE DEMO TO LEARN MORE

SCHEDULE A DEMO

SIGN UP FOR FREE

WHY CENTERCODE?

Increase Revenue

½ ☆ INCREASE

in product ratings

Release Sooner

50% FASTER

test cycles

Gain Participation

75% INCREASE

in tester engagement

Save Time

40% ↓ DECREASE

in time managing tests