centercode

DOGFOODING TESTER GUIDE

The mastery of employee product feedback & managing a successful internal beta test

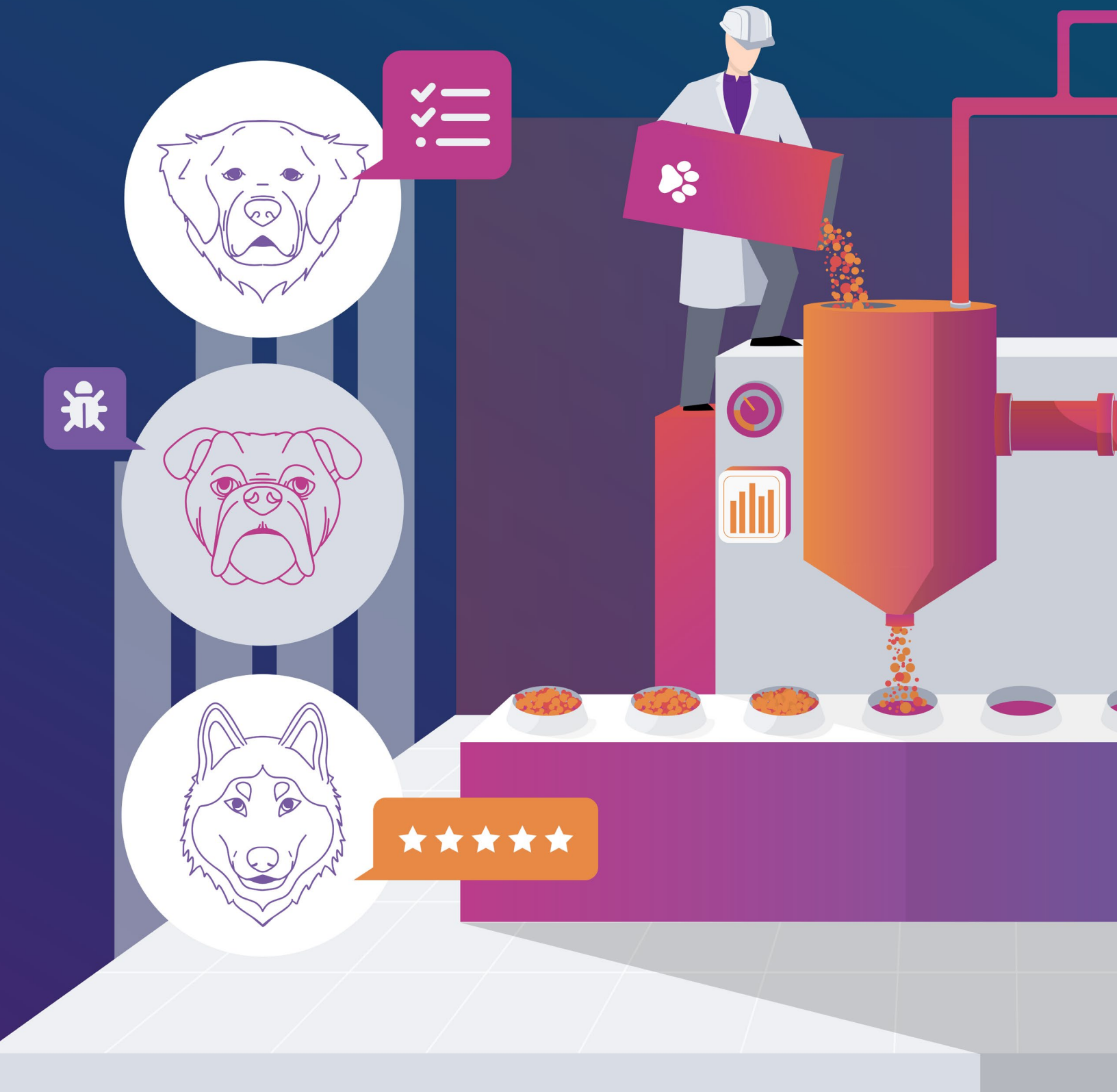


TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction 3

The Tester Personalities of Dogfooding 4

- The Reliable Golden Retriever 6
- The Vocal Husky 7
- The Overachieving Greyhound 8
- The Neurotic Chihuahua 9
- The Loyal German Shepherd 10
- The Agreeable Labrador 11
- The Entitled Pomeranian 12
- The Lazy Bulldog 13
- The Clueless Corgi 14

The Guide for Handling Employee Product Feedback 15

How to Run a Successful Dogfooding Program 16

Conclusion 23

Dogfooding with Centercode 24

Delta Testing Solutions 25

Introduction

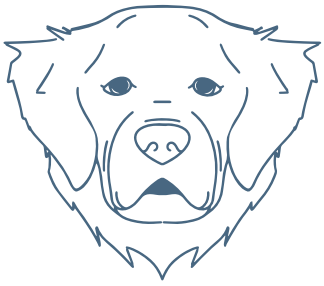
You're a customer-centric, data-driven, outcome-focused product manager making your way toward launching your product. You've done the due diligence, executed product discovery, developed a product strategy, and built a great roadmap.

As your product comes to fruition, it's time to get it out of the labs and into the hands of your colleagues that don't work directly on the project.

While you unite your co-workers to convince the world that your product is excellent by "eating your own dog food," you encounter misleading feedback and unfounded requests. "This is awesome," "what an awful experience," and "maybe we should add this?"

Introducing The Personalities of Dogfooding: employee testers that, if left unchecked, can disrupt the vision of your product.

The Tester Personalities of Dogfooding



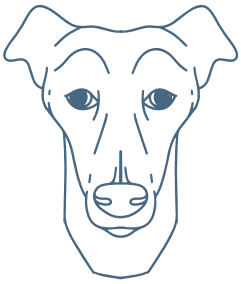
The Reliable Golden Retriever

Why can't they all be Golden Retrievers? They do everything you ask of them promptly, provide clear feedback, and help you build a better product with their input.



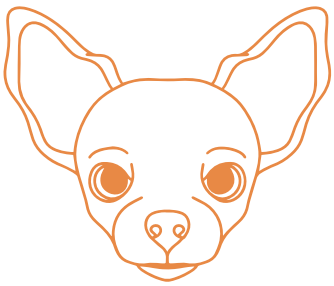
The Vocal Husky

Talkative and needy Huskies have some things to say about the product and need to feel heard, or you are in for it. They can provide you with a laundry list of feedback driven by their empathy for other users.



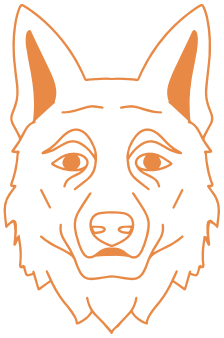
The Overachieving Greyhound

Bred to be a champion, they quickly find issues and improvements for your product. The greyhound thrives off of being #1 and willing to do the work.



The Neurotic Chihuahua

This little bundle of joy is loud and proud. Chihuahuas are aggressive, have strong opinions, and are eager to go down barking.



The Loyal German Shepherd

A loyal companion and fierce protector of your brand and product. The German Shepherd is ready to lay the smack down against naysayers and opinionated feedback givers.



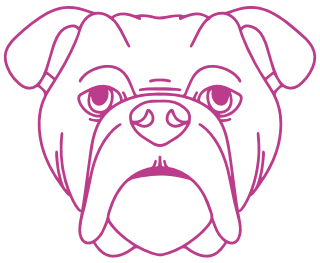
The Agreeable Labrador

Enthusiastic and agreeable by nature, the labrador, isn't too bothered by negative product experiences. Sometimes they'll encounter bugs or usability issues and just blow them off as if they made a mistake.



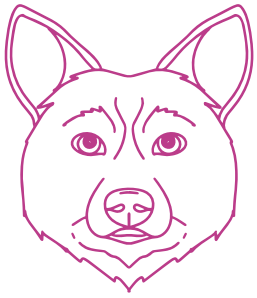
The Entitled Pomeranian

Watch out for your handbag because Pomeranians are looking for a free ride. You must break through a sense of entitlement and pamper them to get their contribution.



The Lazy Bulldog

A freeloader by trade, these couch potatoes require motivation to get stuff done. While the Bulldog isn't leaping at opportunities to do activities, they can be persuaded.



The Confused Corgi

Excited to get going but not sure where or how to get there. Corgis will help if given guidance but can often be seen as a loaf of bread if no direction is given.

Employees come in all shapes, sizes, and personalities.

These personalities influence stakeholders and decisions with their product feedback through your dogfooding program. Misleading suggestions or biased data can disrupt the product strategy and cause tension in the workplace.

The difficulty is that product managers struggle to deal with their colleagues' personalities and often find themselves stuck on the best way to keep everyone on track. To continue on their path of excellent product management, they must adopt a strategy and tactics to handle the different breeds of employees providing feedback to ensure data is accurate and useful.

This guide looks at the strengths and weaknesses of varying employee personalities to better understand their nuances. Then we'll share some best practices and skills you can utilize to tame these dogfooders and produce a collaborative culture while building exceptional products.



The Reliable Golden Retriever

WHAT IS THE ESSENTIAL TRAIT OF THESE TESTERS?

The primary characteristic of this type of tester is reliability. As a test manager, you can count on them to consistently participate in your test from week to week. This group of testers really wants to make a difference and submit meaningful feedback.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF THESE TYPES OF TESTERS?

These testers make your project easier to manage because they promptly complete activities, submit feedback, respond to requests, and collaborate with others. Managing these testers tends to be a breeze – it takes minimal effort to keep them motivated and participating. They are the gold standard of participants but can be challenging to find.

What are the challenges of these types of testers?

These testers are prone to fatigue. Because they regularly submit and collaborate on feedback, they may stop participating if their effort isn't acknowledged.

These testers can be hard to come by.



IF THESE TESTERS ENCOUNTERED A SIGNIFICANT PRODUCT ISSUE, HOW WOULD THEY RESPOND?

These testers would submit the case with support logs, screenshots, videos, and information.



HOW OFTEN DO THESE TESTERS COMPLETE ACTIVITIES?

These testers consistently complete assigned activities and in a timely manner.



HOW OFTEN DOES PRODUCT FEEDBACK GET SUBMITTED?

These testers regularly offer their input on the product.



HOW OFTEN DO TESTERS COMMENT OR COLLABORATE ON FEEDBACK?

These testers promptly respond to requests for more information and collaborate on other feedback.



HOW WOULD TESTERS RESPOND IF POSED WITH A CONTROVERSIAL PRODUCT FEATURE?

These testers would be respectful of decisions and provide constructive feedback.



The Vocal Husky

WHAT IS THE ESSENTIAL TRAIT OF THESE TESTERS?

The primary characteristic of this type of tester is being vocal. These testers speak up and tell you about positive and negative experiences they've had with the product.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF THESE TYPES OF TESTERS?

These testers are very active and excited when it comes to product feedback – act on their momentum to get the most from their efforts. They regularly submit their opinions and collaborate with others on the feedback they've raised.

What are the challenges of these types of testers?

If these testers feel like their feedback isn't being looked at or listened to, they are more likely to stop participating. Communicate with this bunch more often to ensure they stay focused and are kept in the loop.

Prioritizing their feedback can be tricky because there is so much of it.



IF THESE TESTERS ENCOUNTERED A SIGNIFICANT PRODUCT ISSUE, HOW WOULD THEY RESPOND?

These testers would submit their feedback immediately and provide all the supporting information needed to reproduce the problems they've encountered.



HOW OFTEN DO THESE TESTERS COMPLETE ACTIVITIES?

These testers frequently finish assigned activities and may complete more than they asked.



HOW OFTEN DOES PRODUCT FEEDBACK GET SUBMITTED?

These testers regularly offer their feedback on the product, so you will be able to rely on their feedback coming in from week to week. Keep them aligned with the test's goals to avoid submitting quantity over quality, ensuring they submit helpful feedback.



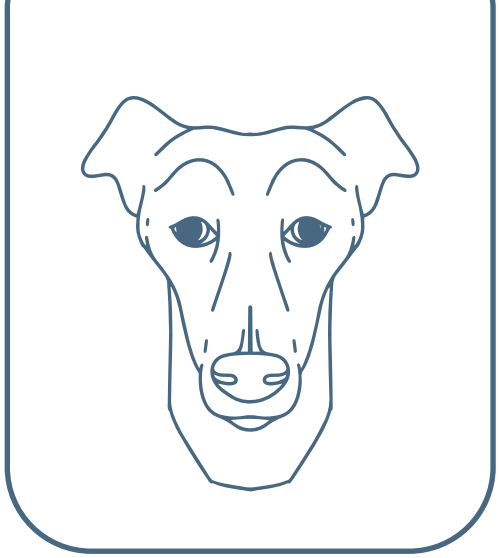
HOW OFTEN DO TESTERS COMMENT OR COLLABORATE ON FEEDBACK?

These testers love to collaborate amongst their team and can be very social, so you want to make sure that they do not become distracting to others and continue to keep their eye on the prize.



HOW WOULD TESTERS RESPOND IF POSED WITH A CONTROVERSIAL PRODUCT FEATURE?

These testers would give constructive feedback and provide any additional details from their point of view.



The Overachieving Greyhound

WHAT IS THE ESSENTIAL TRAIT OF THESE TESTERS?

The primary characteristic of this type of tester is being an overachiever. These testers try to be the best testers possible by completing activities, finding issues, and submitting ideas faster than others – they are there to get a job done!

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF THESE TYPES OF TESTERS?

These testers are a significant source of data for your project. Oftentimes they will be the first to submit feedback on their experiences with the product. They are helpful in situations where you need specific areas of the product tested or provide crucial additional details on issues already submitted.

What are the challenges of these types of testers?

These testers tend to focus more on submitting a quantity of feedback rather than deep, meaningful feedback.

They may need to be reminded of the testing goals to ensure they aren't going so fast that they miss the important details that are critical.



IF THESE TESTERS ENCOUNTERED A SIGNIFICANT PRODUCT ISSUE, HOW WOULD THEY RESPOND?

These testers would submit the case with support logs, screenshots, videos, and information.



HOW OFTEN DO THESE TESTERS COMPLETE ACTIVITIES?

These testers are timely with their feedback submissions and take pride in their work. Maximize on their strength and excitement to be the best.



HOW OFTEN DOES PRODUCT FEEDBACK GET SUBMITTED?

These testers regularly submit their feedback on their experiences with the product, but again, be sure to keep them focused throughout the duration of the test to ensure their feedback remains concise and helpful. With the right guidance, these testers can laser focus on their priorities which provides a ton of value to your program.



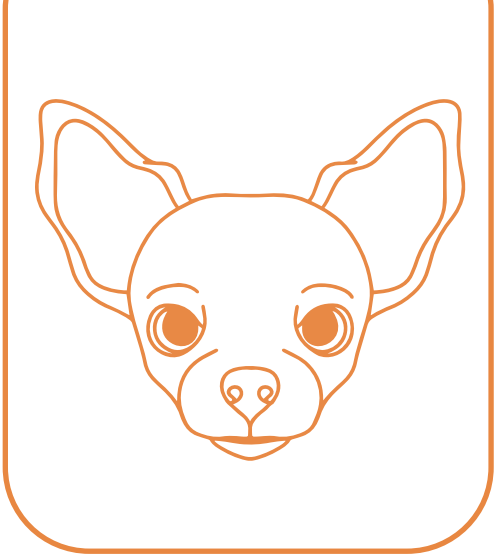
HOW OFTEN DO TESTERS COMMENT OR COLLABORATE ON FEEDBACK?

These testers periodically collaborate with their teammates on feedback, and part of their motivation for this is to be seen as a thought leader on the team.



HOW WOULD TESTERS RESPOND IF POSED WITH A CONTROVERSIAL PRODUCT FEATURE?

These testers would be respectful of decisions and provide constructive feedback.



The Neurotic Chihuahua

WHAT IS THE ESSENTIAL TRAIT OF THESE TESTERS?

The primary characteristic of this type of tester is being neurotic. These characters believe that every issue or idea submitted could spell the end of the product as we know it.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF THESE TYPES OF TESTERS?

These testers are quick to bark at areas of the product that don't work, so they work well as an alarm system for improvements.

What are the challenges of these types of testers?

They tend to have a negative bias toward the product.

Understanding the priority of their feedback can be challenging.

Can influence feedback popularity because of the exaggeration of product issues.



IF THESE TESTERS ENCOUNTERED A SIGNIFICANT PRODUCT ISSUE, HOW WOULD THEY RESPOND?

These issues are right up their alley. They are happy to discuss the negative impact and risks of launching with these issues in the product.



HOW OFTEN DO THESE TESTERS COMPLETE ACTIVITIES?

These testers periodically complete assigned activities but stay where the product is least stable to cause a stir.



HOW OFTEN DOES PRODUCT FEEDBACK GET SUBMITTED?

These testers rarely submit feedback, but when they do, it exaggerates a corner case or a minor issue.



HOW OFTEN DO TESTERS COMMENT OR COLLABORATE ON FEEDBACK?

These testers are active in the feedback they submit because they tend to exaggerate its impact and influence on the product experience.



HOW WOULD TESTERS RESPOND IF POSED WITH A CONTROVERSIAL PRODUCT FEATURE?

If the feedback aligns with their idea that the sky is falling, they are happy to hop on the bandwagon.



The Loyal German Shepherd

WHAT IS THE ESSENTIAL TRAIT OF THESE TESTERS?

The primary characteristic of this type of tester is being loyal to the company, product, or colleagues. These testers can be slightly defensive about negative feedback and tend to bark back at those who give it.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF THESE TYPES OF TESTERS?

These testers are willing to provide feedback on the product but tend to prioritize defending its current state or decisions made. They can help explain a specific context to other testers and are willing to complete activities if required.

What are the challenges of these types of testers?

These testers can get aggressive toward those that share conflicting opinions about the product, which can deter other testers from submitting feedback or cause friction among colleagues.

They tend to avoid submitting issues because they consider that the product is still early and will be caught by the development team.



IF THESE TESTERS ENCOUNTERED A SIGNIFICANT PRODUCT ISSUE, HOW WOULD THEY RESPOND?

These testers would submit the case with support logs, screenshots, videos, and information.

HOW OFTEN DO THESE TESTERS COMPLETE ACTIVITIES?

These testers periodically do the assigned activities but tend to see themselves as part of the team building the product rather than as a tester.

HOW OFTEN DOES PRODUCT FEEDBACK GET SUBMITTED?

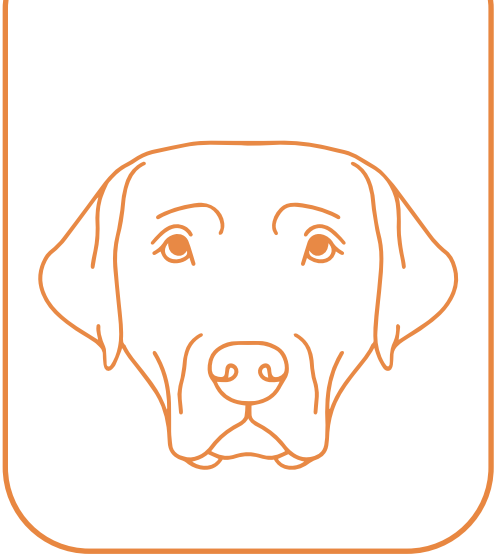
These testers regularly submit positive feedback on the product and tend to avoid submitting constructive criticism about the product or experiences.

HOW OFTEN DO TESTERS COMMENT OR COLLABORATE ON FEEDBACK?

These testers tend to respond with hostility toward negative feedback or controversial ideas.

HOW WOULD TESTERS RESPOND IF POSED WITH A CONTROVERSIAL PRODUCT FEATURE?

They would be agitated and fiercely defend the product, and the decisions the development and product team made.



The Agreeable Labrador

WHAT IS THE ESSENTIAL TRAIT OF THESE TESTERS?

The primary characteristic of this type of tester is being agreeable. These testers are a little timid about providing constructive criticism and choose to be optimistic about their product experience.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF THESE TYPES OF TESTERS?

These testers are easy to get along with and are happy to complete activities.

What are the challenges of these types of testers?

They tend to be positively biased and easily swayed by others, making it challenging to use their opinions or attitudes to understand the product.

They can assume that other testers will submit feedback, so they don't have to.

They blame themselves or think issues or problems were an error they made.



IF THESE TESTERS ENCOUNTERED A SIGNIFICANT PRODUCT ISSUE, HOW WOULD THEY RESPOND?

These testers will likely avoid submitting important issues, assuming someone else will handle them.

HOW OFTEN DO THESE TESTERS COMPLETE ACTIVITIES?

These testers periodically complete assigned activities.

HOW OFTEN DOES PRODUCT FEEDBACK GET SUBMITTED?

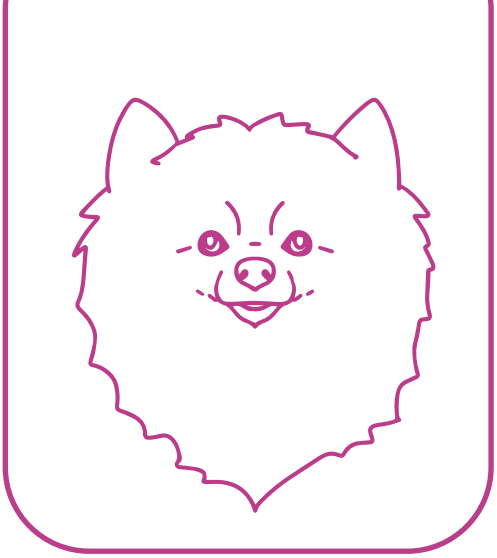
These testers, in rare cases, submit feedback on the product.

HOW OFTEN DO TESTERS COMMENT OR COLLABORATE ON FEEDBACK?

These testers periodically respond to requests for more information and collaborate on other feedback but tend to be optimistic and agreeable in their opinions.

HOW WOULD TESTERS RESPOND IF POSED WITH A CONTROVERSIAL PRODUCT FEATURE?

These testers would avoid controversial features or ideas about the product.

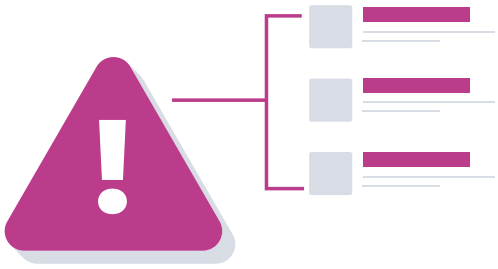


The Entitled Pomeranian

What are the challenges of these types of testers?

Typically avoid completing activities, submitting feedback, and collaborating with others.

They can influence other dog fooders with their entitlement.



IF THESE TESTERS ENCOUNTERED A SIGNIFICANT PRODUCT ISSUE, HOW WOULD THEY RESPOND?

They'll likely avoid having to submit the feedback themselves. If someone else submits it, they may chime in to show their face and make it look like they are helping.

WHAT IS THE ESSENTIAL TRAIT OF THESE TESTERS?

The primary characteristic of this type of tester is entitlement. These testers don't feel like they should participate in testing because it feels like more work.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF THESE TYPES OF TESTERS?

Once you can overcome their entitlement, these testers can become helpful participants who collaborate with colleagues and get excited about new products.

HOW OFTEN DO THESE TESTERS COMPLETE ACTIVITIES?

These testers rarely, if ever, complete activities. This tester will likely complete activities if management requires and monitors them to be completed by testers.

HOW OFTEN DOES PRODUCT FEEDBACK GET SUBMITTED?

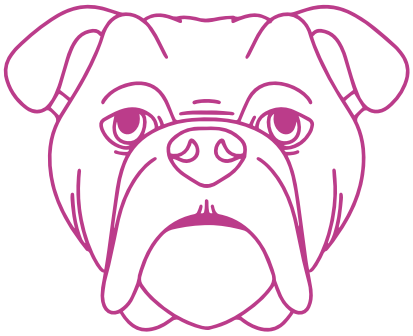
These testers rarely submit feedback, but when they do, it exaggerates a corner case or a minor issue.

HOW OFTEN DO TESTERS COMMENT OR COLLABORATE ON FEEDBACK?

You won't typically see this type of tester commenting on feedback or collaborating with other testers. That's just more work.

HOW WOULD TESTERS RESPOND IF POSED WITH A CONTROVERSIAL PRODUCT FEATURE?

They may pop into a controversial topic to be seen rather than contribute.



The Lazy Bulldog

WHAT IS THE ESSENTIAL TRAIT OF THESE TESTERS?

The primary characteristic of this type of tester is laziness. These testers aren't exactly jumping out of their chairs to complete tasks and submit feedback.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF THESE TYPES OF TESTERS?

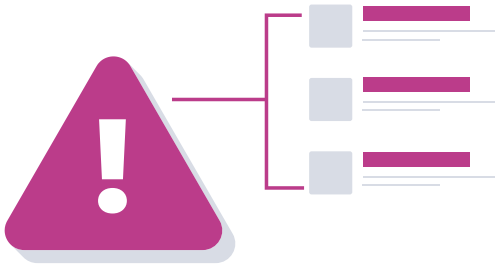
Getting these testers excited or motivated to participate can help collect their feedback and influence the direction of the product.

What are the challenges of these types of testers?

Unlikely to participate unless properly incentivized or motivated.

These testers can absorb much of your attention for minimal gain.

If forced to participate, their feedback is biased or inaccurate.



IF THESE TESTERS ENCOUNTERED A SIGNIFICANT PRODUCT ISSUE, HOW WOULD THEY RESPOND?

They may just stop using the product, but they will not likely provide you with information about what's happening.

HOW OFTEN DO THESE TESTERS COMPLETE ACTIVITIES?

These testers rarely, if ever, complete activities. This tester will likely complete activities if properly motivated or rewarded.

HOW OFTEN DOES PRODUCT FEEDBACK GET SUBMITTED?

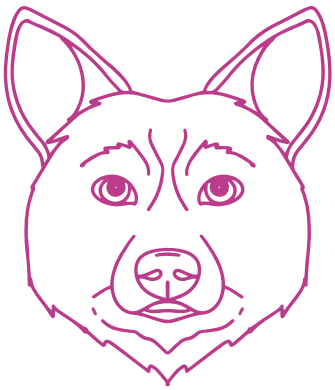
These testers rarely submit feedback, it takes a lot out of them.

HOW OFTEN DO TESTERS COMMENT OR COLLABORATE ON FEEDBACK?

These testers won't be browsing other testers' feedback in their spare time without something in it for them.

HOW WOULD TESTERS RESPOND IF POSED WITH A CONTROVERSIAL PRODUCT FEATURE?

They aren't likely to be bothered enough to include their opinion.



The Clueless Corgi

WHAT IS THE ESSENTIAL TRAIT OF THESE TESTERS?

The primary characteristic of this type of tester is being clueless. These testers aren't sure what to do or how they should be doing it, ultimately leaving them not participating in the test.

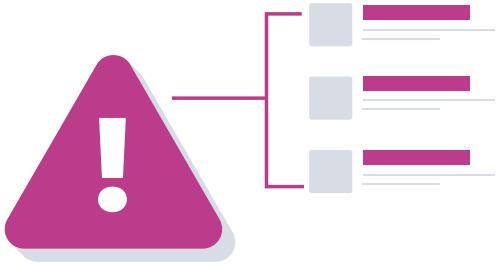
WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF THESE TYPES OF TESTERS?

These testers are willing to put in the effort to test if they can figure out how to do it.

What are the challenges of these types of testers?

If unguided, they aren't likely to participate.

Guiding them can take significant effort without the right tools.



IF THESE TESTERS ENCOUNTERED A SIGNIFICANT PRODUCT ISSUE, HOW WOULD THEY RESPOND?

Likely the same response as the controversial feature. They'll report it, but maybe not where you expect.

HOW OFTEN DO THESE TESTERS COMPLETE ACTIVITIES?

They definitely would if they knew what to test, how, and where to report it! Without that, you are unlikely to see these testers complete tasks.

HOW OFTEN DOES PRODUCT FEEDBACK GET SUBMITTED?

Similar to the activities, these testers need extra guidance to provide feedback. Without that, they'll be loafing around.

HOW OFTEN DO TESTERS COMMENT OR COLLABORATE ON FEEDBACK?

They would if they could figure out how to interact with feedback and other testers.

HOW WOULD TESTERS RESPOND IF POSED WITH A CONTROVERSIAL PRODUCT FEATURE?

If they did have something of a position on a controversial product feature, you're more likely to see their feedback come through some other channel, disconnected from other feedback.

The Guide for Handling Employee Product Feedback

HAVE YOU AVOIDED LISTENING TO EMPLOYEE FEEDBACK ABOUT YOUR PRODUCT BECAUSE IT SEEMS BIASED?

Sometimes employee opinions may conflict with the market's needs or product strategy. While you may disagree with some input, the word could get out if you avoid acknowledging it.

Avoiding employee feedback leaves them upset that you aren't taking their opinions seriously. Your colleagues could be less invested in the product, brand, and organization. As a product manager, listening to your customers is essential to success, and you can consider your employees your first customers or "customer zero." The "customer zero" mindset combats the challenges of dogfooding in several ways, and we've listed some of the most important ones in a previous blog post.

LISTENING TO FEEDBACK AND ENSURING THAT YOUR CUSTOMERS (AND COLLEAGUES) FEEL HEARD CAN TAKE TIME AND EFFORT.

You'll encounter different personalities or breeds of dogfooders, requiring unique tactics and strategies to manage them. Too much effort on the wrong area won't lighten your workload, and too little effort will leave you starved for data and employee engagement.

There's a balance where you can put the right amount of effort in and look like a rockstar, so here are nine tips for striking that balance and handling the personalities of employee feedback.

How to Run a Successful Dogfooding Program

1. Let testers know what is expected from them before they sign-up
2. Have testers confirm their willingness to participate
3. Access to instructions, guidelines, and support resources
4. Listening (and responding) to feedback
5. Fostering a collaborative environment
6. Inspiring contribution
7. Announcing activities clearly and concisely
8. Reminding testers of responsibilities
9. Rewarding good behavior

1. Let testers know what is expected from them before they sign-up

Have you ever applied for a job without seeing the job requirements, qualifications, and expectations? A best practice when leading dogfooding programs is to include clear and concise expectations on the invitation or sign-up page. It's also extremely important that you express to them that their feedback is extremely valuable to the success of the product and organization. This way, before coming into the project, they understand what they need to do and the criteria by which they are being measured against.

EXAMPLE: What can you expect from week to week?

During most weeks, we'll ask that you test a few product features and let us know your thoughts. You'll see brief minute-long surveys asking if you were able to test the feature, your satisfaction with the experience, and what feedback you'd like to share.

2. Have testers confirm their willingness to participate

Sometimes, you need a double or triple check to ensure employees understand what they are getting into. To get your point across, you should expect something from testers in your dogfooding project to confirm that they agree to participate, and understand all of what's involved.

- ***Confirm their availability to participate during a date range***
- ***Require they sign a participation agreement***
- ***Verify their willingness to participate with a simple yes/no question***

3. Access to instructions, guidelines, and support resources

You may have some employees that are new to dogfooding or a little less technically savvy than your product and engineer teams. To ensure you save yourself some time (and headache) answering repetitive questions, think about providing resources to help them succeed.

PRODUCT RESOURCES

You'll likely be testing a product or features that aren't publicly available, providing resources for testers to support themselves or get answers to questions about the product can save you a lot of time and allows them to have the tools they need to succeed at their fingertips (and allows them to keep their momentum!). Don't worry if these resources are in a draft state, you can even collect feedback and improve these before your next release. Here are some examples of product resources:

- ***Quick Start Guide or Installation Instructions***
- ***User Manual***
- ***Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)***

TESTER RESOURCES

Some of your dogfooders may be new to testing, and having resources to help them get started is not only helpful to them but beneficial to you and the product's success overall. Clarity is key across all user testing methods, so tell them what you think is "helpful" to ensure you're receiving the feedback you're looking to collect.

- ***How to complete activities and submit feedback***
- ***What is helpful feedback (issues, ideas, praise)***
- ***How to collaborate with other testers***
- ***How to be a helpful tester***

BONUS

Be sure to note any questions from testers regarding your test programs - this will organically show you where the information gaps may be. Then when you have a moment to review that feedback, create new resources around those areas to ensure your testers don't have any roadblocks to submitting feedback on their experiences with the product.

4. Listening and responding to feedback

HOW LONG DO YOU THINK YOU WOULD TALK TO AN INANIMATE OBJECT? TESTERS, ESPECIALLY EMPLOYEE TESTERS, DON'T LIKE BEING IGNORED.

So if they provide you with feedback, listen and respond to them, or they'll stop providing value. Receiving feedback enthusiastically validates the other person's act of giving it, and reinforces their instinct to want to continue this positive behavior.

You don't need to agree with them or implement everything they ask, but be sure they feel heard and ask follow-up questions to ensure you aren't missing any important details. The last thing you want is for your testers to feel like their feedback goes into a black hole - be sure to be mindful of their time (and yours!).

Following up with them will let them know that you value them, you've taken their feedback seriously, and continue to be a loyal member of the pack.

Here are a few ways you can respond to tester feedback:

"Great, this is just the kind of information we need to hear about. Thank you for going above and beyond to write out the details of your experience with the product, this will help the team quickly reproduce the issue and be able to improve the user experience on the next version!"

"Thanks for taking the time to share your thoughts about the product so far. Can you please provide more detail on [x] so we can align you with the appropriate resources?"



"Thank you for your feedback! The team is going to review this further, and we will let you know if we have any questions that need clarification."

5. Fostering a collaborative environment (and breaking down silos)

FEELING LIKE YOU'RE IN A SILO CAN BE DIFFICULT FOR TESTERS AND NOT PRODUCTIVE FOR THE TEST OVERALL.

By encouraging a collaborative environment, you will benefit from more data to qualify your product feedback. Testers that encounter the same issue, share the same idea, or like the same thing can be instrumental in improving your product. Make sure testers are encouraged to collaborate with each other, it is an extremely useful method for keeping engagement up. One of the dangers of different types of tester personalities is that they can be a little more hostile toward others' opinions and ideas, so be sure to set guidelines for tester collaboration. Peer-to-peer motivation can go a long way! Here are a few tips on fostering collaboration on your team:

- ***Respect their perspective and make sure everyone feels valued for the feedback they provide***
- ***Clearly define and establish goals for your employee testers – it breaks down barriers and promotes collaboration amongst the team***
- ***Create a non-judgmental space that testers feel comfortable with - this allows them to become more open to collaborating with their peers***

6. Inspiring contribution

IT'S CRITICAL THAT YOU EXPRESS TO TESTERS THAT THEIR FEEDBACK IS EXTREMELY VALUABLE TO THE SUCCESS OF THE PRODUCT AND ORGANIZATION AS A WHOLE.

If you can, encourage employees to use the product in their daily workflow and incorporate it into their routines. By enabling your testers, you will get the best return on investment and keep them engaged. When testers believe their feedback is appreciated they will be more invested in the product's success from the start. Don't forget, their feedback is essential for the product's growth and you need them in order to improve from iteration to iteration until the final product is released.



- ***Explain the big picture and set clear expectations***
- ***Be respectful, honest, and supportive***
- ***Provide employee recognition - both privately and publicly***

7. Announcing activities in a clear and concise manner

THERE IS NO DENYING THE IMPORTANCE OF EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION AMONGST YOUR TEAM

It's imperative that you continue to communicate clearly and concisely so everyone can work toward the common goal that you are setting out to achieve. Giving clear instructions to testers regarding your testing activities can ensure that they fully comprehend what they need to do to provide the meaningful feedback you're looking to collect.

Not announcing your testing activities in a clear and concise way will lead your testers down a confusing path, and may result in receiving a ton of unhelpful data, which you want to avoid at all costs.



TO AVOID CONFUSION, HERE ARE SOME TIPS TO HELP WITH THIS:

- ***USE THE RIGHT TOOL FOR THE JOB***
  The key is to think about your goals and select your tools based on what you're trying to accomplish
- ***ANNOUNCE TESTING ACTIVITIES***
  Announce on a normal cadence so testers know what to expect and when
- ***TIME YOUR ASSIGNMENTS STRATEGICALLY***
  This way certain testing tasks occur at different times throughout the duration of your program
- ***GIVE REASONABLE DEADLINES***
  Give reasonable deadlines to testers to ensure you're respecting their time

8. Reminding testers of responsibilities

Raise your hand if your to-do list is getting longer by the second and there are not enough hours in a day (we won't judge you if both of your hands are raised). When you get into the groove of your workday, it's easy to forget some of the things you need to get done, and by the time you blink it's already 2 pm and your third cup of coffee has gone cold. Employee testers relate to these same challenges and often need to be reminded of the testing responsibilities.

BE SURE TO SEND CONSISTENT REMINDERS TO YOUR TESTERS AND AUTOMATE THEM ANY CHANCE YOU CAN TO KEEP THEM ON TRACK.

It's helpful to send reminders on a normal cadence so you can keep tester participation high. Remember, you don't have to wait until the feedback deadline has already passed to remind testers of their responsibilities - it's actually proven to be more effective to send frequent and consistent reminders throughout the duration of your program to keep the momentum going amongst your team.

Here are some additional ways to remind testers of responsibilities:

- ***Keep a shared resource that includes information on testing responsibilities that is easily accessible for testers to reference throughout the duration of the test***
- ***At the beginning of each test week, send the team a group email that reminds them of the testing responsibilities and encourages them to participate in the activities***
- ***Keep tabs on testers progress and proactively reach out to them with feedback to keep them aligned with the goals of the test***

NOW I KNOW YOU'RE PROBABLY THINKING, "WHERE AM I SUPPOSED TO FIND ALL THIS TIME TO SEND REMINDERS?"

This is why having the right tools that can help you automate your workflow is so critical to the success of your programs so that you can leverage all of the benefits of automation while you're busy focusing on other priorities – word on the street is Centercode has some pretty cool automation tools that can help with this ;)

9. Rewarding good behavior

EVERY DOG LOVES A BONE – REWARDING GOOD BEHAVIOR ENCOURAGES HEALTHY PARTICIPATION FROM YOUR TESTERS AND GIVES THEM AN EVEN BIGGER REASON TO REMAIN ENGAGED.

A little bit of positive reinforcement can go a long way when it comes to improving productivity on your team. Whether it's a simple compliment, a team shout out, a free lunch, or a flashy new product, applying these principles to your programs will continue to keep your team feeling motivated and appreciated.

Positive reinforcement is a productive loop. Afterall, a happier team means more meaningful work and increased commitment to the product and organization overall.



MONETARY INCENTIVE



RECOGNITION TO LEADERSHIP



LETTING TESTERS KEEP THE PRODUCT



GENUINE APPRECIATION EMAIL



DOORDASH GIFT CARD TO ORDER LUNCH



NEW PUPPY TO ADD TO THE PACK (WHO WOULDN'T LOVE THIS?)

Conclusion

There you have it: the essentials you need in your toolkit to achieve healthy participation within your dogfooding program to ensure you're getting the most out of employee product feedback.

Hopefully this information comes in handy and will help you continue to build momentum in your dogfooding programs. Remember to have fun – everyone on your team is working toward a common goal and as long as you work toward that goal collectively, the hard work you put in will continue to pay off.

If you'd like to learn more about how Centercode can help you automate your testing programs from start to finish (and save you a ton of precious time), schedule a demo of the platform. We'd love to help your team succeed!

SCHEDULE A DEMO

Dogfooding with Centercode

Whether you need best practices or a tool to help you level up your dogfooding program, Centercode is here to help.

Offering high growth tech companies and modern enterprises unparalleled features to take your internal beta program from dud to stud.

SOLVE EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

- Employee participation is considered the #1 issue of alpha tests. Centercode's engagement bot is fully dedicated to ensuring consistent engagement.
- Single Sign-on ensures employees can painlessly access activity lists, submit feedback, and complete surveys.
- Create clear expectations with Centercode's Content Management System, so testers understand what should be done.

SAVE TIME THROUGH EASY PROJECT DESIGN

- Build a project with Centercode's project builder and kick-off dashboard within minutes.
- Define tasks and create your schedule with Centercode's Test Designer.
- Post invitations on Slack, Confluence, emails, intranet, and anywhere your employees go to get information.
- Quickly provide instructions through landing pages or content, so employees know what they will be doing and what is expected of them.

COLLECT MORE MEANINGFUL DATA WITH SUBMISSION

- No need to dig through emails; employees have access to a branded portal and designated project space to submit their feedback.
- Submit feedback through Slack and safely store it in Centercode with easy integrations.

REAL-TIME REPORTING

- Don't waste any more time copying and pasting data from an email into Jira,
- Centercode's Jira integration seamlessly sets up a flow of data for your product and development teams.
- See updates in Slack about feedback to have a continuous stream of product sentiment.
- Centercode has automated daily emails that set you up for success.

Additional Resources

Blog: Dogfooding 101
Blog: 9 Benefits of Dogfooding
Ebook: Essential Tips for Dogfooding Success
Blog: How Dogfooding Improves Company Culture with Involvement and Collaboration
Blog: How Dogfooding Helps Build a Strong Remote Culture
Blog: 3 Dogfooding Best Practices for Overcoming Employee Beta Challenges

centercode

Delta Testing Solutions

Leading product ops teams use Centercode to identify real-world issues to fix, areas to improve, and what their users love in order to build amazing products.



Centercode's delta testing platform is built on decades of experience user testing the world's most successful products. Our platform equips you with the automation, best practices, and processes you need to get actionable user insights for any use case.

PRODUCT LAUNCH

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

USE CASES:

- Beta Tests
- User Acceptance Tests
- Field Tests

PRODUCT GROWTH

Recruit Existing Customers to continuously mature live products and services

USE CASES:

- Progressive Delivery
- Early Access
- Customer Advisory Boards

CUSTOMER ZERO

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

USE CASES:

- Alpha Tests
- Dogfooding
- Employee Tests

COMPETITIVE EDGE

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

USE CASES:

- Competitive Intelligence
- Market Testing
- Comparative Research

DELTA TESTING PLATFORM

Get a live demo of Centercode to experience the easy way to run your user tests, including:

- Auto-generated test designs
- Ted, your tester engagement bot
- Smart feedback prioritization
- Instant KPIs and dashboards

SCHEDULE A DEMO

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