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Product Validation Glossary

168 terms across beta testing, delta testing, user research, and product development, defined in plain language.



A

AARRR (Pirate Metrics)

AARRR or pirate metrics is a simple model for understanding five product metrics (Acquisition, Activation, Retention, Referral, and Revenue) at each stage of the user journey, from becoming a customer to referring the brand.

Activities

Activities are tasks that direct testers to explore and engage with product features during a delta testing phase.

Agile

Agile is an iterative product development approach used to organize work into consumable, incremental “sprints” to deliver value to customers faster.

Agile Release Train

Agile release trains or ARTs align cross-functional teams to incrementally define, build, validate, and deploy one or more solutions for a long period of time.

Alpha

A quality phase just prior to beta testing that typically includes employees and/or friends and family, focused on a less-stable and often feature-incomplete prerelease product.

Also known as Pre-Beta

Alpha Testing

Alpha testing is a method of software and user acceptance testing used to evaluate the early stability and quality of a product. It does this by gathering feedback from employees and/or more technical members of your target market.

Attitudinal Data

Learn more about attitudinal data, the information about customer feelings, motivations, and opinions toward a product, brand, or customer experience.

B

Backlog

The backlog is a prioritized list of tasks, work, or features that support the product strategy or roadmap.

Backlog Grooming

Backlog grooming or backlog refinement refers to the ongoing efforts of product teams to prioritize and clean up the agile software development backlog for future sprints.

Behavioral Data

Behavioral data is the information collected about the actions or activities of users or customers as they use your product.

Beta Applicant

An individual who has explicitly expressed an interest in participating in a private beta test.

Also known as Beta Candidate

B

Beta Community

An online collection (i.e. database) of users who have expressed an interest in participating in a company's beta program.

Also known as Beta Panel

Beta Key

A unique string of characters which grants access to either a beta test or beta product.

Also known as Serial Number, Product Key, Beta Code, Beta Token

Beta Manager

The primary individual responsible for orchestrating a beta test.

Also known as Beta Administrator, Project Manager

Beta Objective

A defined goal of a beta test; often influenced by product management, quality, engineering, marketing, support, and/or sales.

Also known as Beta Goal

Beta Portal

A website dedicated to providing beta information, releases, and feedback functionality to beta testers and internal beta team members.

Beta Product

A prerelease version of a product which serves as the focus of a beta test; typically at or near feature-complete, likely includes a number of known and unknown bugs.

Beta Program

A beta program is a type of testing program in which a company invites a group of users to test a pre-release version of a product and provide feedback on its performance, functionality, and user experience.

Beta Site

An individual test location encompassing one or more users participating in a beta test project; typically used in a business context.

Beta Team

The complete pool of beta testers associated with a beta test, often broken into sub-teams based on demographics or other defining attributes.

Beta Test Plan

A document detailing the objectives, target market, internal beta team, and processes for a specific beta test.

Beta Tester

An individual selected to participate in a beta test.

Also known as Participant, Tester, Customer, Member

B

Beta Tester Agreement

The legal agreement which dictates the participation responsibilities of the beta tester.

Also known as BTA, Beta Participant Agreement (BPA)

Beta Testing

Beta testing is a coordinated project that puts a real product in the hands of real users, in real environments, over time. Prospective customers use a prerelease product the way they would every day, and their feedback improves quality and confirms the product meets their acceptance criteria before launch. A beta test can span multiple phases.

Also known as Beta Test, Beta, Beta Project, Field Trial, Prerelease, User Acceptance Test (UAT), Friendly User Test (FUT), Customer Acceptance Test (CAT)

Beta Unit

A preproduction hardware unit which will be distributed to a beta tester.

Bill of Materials

The complete set of components (packaging, beta unit, cables, documentation, etc.) that will be delivered with a beta unit.

Also known as BOM

Bug Report

Feedback provided by a beta tester which details an unexpected failure or defect in the product (typically includes a title, description, steps to reproduce, severity, category, and related file attachments).

Burndown Chart

A burndown chart is the visual representation of the work completed and the work remaining for a given project.

C

Canary Deployment

Canary deployment is the delivery of new software features to a subset of users (say 5 to 10 percent) or specific servers before being released to a wider audience.

Churn Rate

Churn rate is a measure of the percentage of customers or users who discontinue using a product or service over a given period of time.

Codebase

A codebase refers to the collection of source code files that make up a software application or system.

Competitive Benchmarking

Competitive benchmarking is a method of comparing and evaluating product or company metrics against competitors.

Competitive Intelligence

Competitive intelligence is the legal and ethical collection and analysis of your competitor's information to make more informed decisions about your product and company.

C

Competitive Testing

This delta testing use case is utilized to research and test competitors' products with potential customers to make sure you have product-market fit and differentiation in your product specifications.

Also known as Centercode Competitive Edge

Compliance

The measurement of how thoroughly beta testers meet the base level participation requirements set for them.

Concept Testing

Concept testing is the user evaluation of your product designs or ideas to help inform product development decisions.

Continuous Delivery

Continuous delivery (CD) is the automatic preparation of software from a version-controlled repository to a running, testable state that can be checked prior to deployment to staging or production.

Continuous Development

Continuous development is an approach to software and product development that includes continuous integration, continuous testing, continuous delivery, and continuous deployment.

Continuous Testing

Continuous testing is the process of automated software testing during the delivery pipeline of software. Teams perform continuous testing to evaluate the functional quality of the software so they can assess the risk of the upcoming software release.

Crash Report

Technical details regarding an application crash, typically generated automatically by the beta product.

Customer Advisory Board (CAB)

A Customer Advisory Board (CAB) is a group of influential or key customers that a product manager invites to periodic events or an ongoing project for advice and feedback about a product, service, or brand.

Customer Experience (CX)

Customer Experience (CX) is the practice of monitoring and responding to the experience or interactions a customer has with a company or brand.

Customer Satisfaction (CSAT)

Customer satisfaction (or CSAT) is often used as a metric or KPI to indicate the quality of a product or service experience. CSAT is commonly shown as a percentage from 0-100%, with 100% being great.

Customer Validation

Umbrella term describing the primary purpose of beta testing.

D

Daily Active Users (DAU)

Daily Active Users (DAU) is a measurement of the unique number of users that have used your product or application each day.

Defect Density

Defect density is a measure of the number of defects or issues that are discovered during the testing process, relative to the size of the product being tested.

Definition of Done

The “definition of done” refers to an agreed-upon list of criteria that must be met before a user story or project can be considered done.

Delta Health Score

The Delta Health Score indicates how well your project is running in real time. This letter grade combines the level of feature coverage your project is getting (based on audience engagement) with the amount of actionable feedback submitted by your audience.

Delta Impact Score

The Delta Impact Score is a real-time percentage that measures the impact of total project feedback against the impact of the feedback your team has addressed.

Delta Success Score

The Delta Success Score balances the impact of positive feedback like praise, negative feedback like issues, and improvement ideas to show the overall success of your product in real time.

Delta Testing

Delta testing is a movement in modern product development that reimagines beta and other forms of user testing in an automated and continuous fashion.

Also known as user testing, customer validation

Delta Testing Features

In delta testing, products or releases are broken down into a collection of features and experiences. Each one represents an area of your product you want users to test and provide feedback on.

Also known as Features

Demographics

Demographics are the shared traits, such as age, gender, or income, that define a group of your target market, customers, or users.

Also known as Demographic, Demographic Segmentation

Diary Study

A diary study is a research method for collecting qualitative data about your users' experiences with products or environments over a period of time.

Dogfooding

Dogfooding (from “eating your own dog food”) is when a company uses its own product internally, the way customers would, to find issues and build product fluency.

D

Double Diamond Design Process

The double diamond design process is a four-phase model used by design and product teams for problem and solution discovery.

E

Employee Testing

This delta testing use case employs close collaboration between coworkers to surface real-world user experience issues.

Also known as Centercode Customer Zero, dogfooding, internal user testing

Engagement Automation

Engagement automation uses machine learning to personalize mass communication to individual testers in a way that drives ongoing project participation.

Exit Criteria

Exit criteria refers to the defined requirements within software testing that must be met in order to determine that testing has been completed.

F

Feature

Features are traits or experiences that deliver value to a customer or user. Products are made up of a collection of features that encompass the entire solution.

Feature-complete

A state in which a product has all of its planned or primary features implemented, commonly reached by a product before or by beta.

Feature-Driven Development

Feature-Driven Development is an agile framework that organizes development around features or specific product experiences as the unit of work.

Feature Request

Feedback provided by beta testers in the form of a suggestion or idea intended to improve the product.

Feedback

Refers to information provided by beta testers, often in the form of bug reports, feature requests, and survey responses.

Feedback Impact Score

The Feedback Impact Score is automatically applied to incoming feedback during delta testing and reflects the feedback's impact on product success.

Feedback Loop

The process in which feedback is submitted by beta testers, reviewed, and addressed by internal beta team members, which helps increase overall beta participation.

F

Field Testing

Field testing is a product development process for collecting usage data from potential customers before launch. This test type focuses on the unguided, natural, contextual usage of a product.

Forum

An online discussion board intended to allow communication between the beta and internal teams; typically secured to ensure that they are not publicly available or search indexed.

Frequency

The amount of times a bug report or feature request are encountered within a beta test.

Friends and Family

Used to identify beta testers as being related to the product team or company; often includes actual friends and family in addition to employees.

Functional Testing

Functional testing is a collection of software quality testing methods used to validate that a software or hardware product meets predetermined requirements or business scenarios.

Functionality

The set of features, capabilities, and behaviors that a software application or system provides to its users.

G

General Availability (GA)

General Availability (“GA”) is used in development to indicate that a product has left the Alpha and Beta stages and is stable, fully-functional, and widely available.

Golden Bug

In the context of beta testing, a “golden bug” is a term used to describe a particularly significant or impactful issue or bug that is discovered during the testing process.

Golden Build

In the context of beta testing, a “golden build” is a term used to describe the final version of a product that is ready to be released to the general public.

Grey Box Testing

Grey box testing is a type of testing in which testers have some knowledge of the internal workings of a product, but are not given access to the full source code.

Guerilla Testing

Guerilla testing is a method for collecting feedback about a design, mockup, concept or prototype, by getting live, real-world feedback from people encountered in public.

G

Guided Testing

In the context of beta testing, “guided testing” refers to a type of testing in which testers are provided with specific instructions or scenarios to follow while testing a product.

Gut Check

In the context of software testing, beta testing, and product development, a “gut check” is a term used to describe the process of evaluating the overall quality and readiness of a product based on subjective impressions and gut instincts, rather than objective data or metrics.

I

Ideal Tester

An ideal tester is a user that has met all the requirements or criteria of a recruitment qualification and is eager to test.

Ideas

In delta testing, ideas are a type of feedback that identify feature additions or improvements that testers believe would elevate their experience with your product.

Impact

The effect that a bug or feature request will have on the product based on both frequency and severity.

In-Home Usage Test (iHUT)

An in-home usage test (iHUT) is a study that evaluates product performance as potential customers use it in a natural setting or targeted environment.

Incentives

An incentive is a reward or thank you gift for testers who have participated in a user test. They can also be given to testers to encourage their continued participation in a user testing program.

Incremental Innovation

Incremental innovation is the process of improving existing products, services, or experiences to add or maintain value.

Internal Beta Team

The group representing the beta test from within a company; may include individuals from a wide variety of groups such as quality, engineering, support, and marketing.

ISO 9001

ISO 9001 is a standard used to manage quality within organizations to prevent issues that would impact the customer’s experience with a product.

Issues

In delta testing, issues are a type of feedback representing quality, interoperability, and real-world performance problems (often bugs) that have decreased a tester’s experience with the product.

J

Jobs to Be Done Framework

The “Jobs to Be Done” framework was created by economist Clayton Christensen as a process for defining, capturing, and organizing the needs of potential customers.

Journal

Feedback provided by beta testers in an open text format which details their ongoing experience with the beta product.

K

Kano Model

The Kano Model is a product management approach to prioritizing features within a product roadmap based on how likely they are to delight customers.

L

Leak

Information about the product (in the form of text, photos, or video) which has been exposed in direct violation of the NDA.

M

Market Validation

The process of assessing and evaluating a software product or feature to determine its market viability and acceptance.

Microinteractions

Microinteractions refer to a product experience or interaction that has a single purpose: providing context signals for the user to convey status or help prevent errors.

Minimum Viable Feature (MVF)

A Minimum Viable Feature (MVF) is a feature developed using minimal resources to validate its satisfaction, usefulness, and usage with a group of customers or potential customers.

Minimum Viable Product (MVP)

A Minimum Viable Product (MVP) is a product in the design phase that has just enough features for target audiences to use and provide feedback on.

Monthly Active Users (MAU)

Monthly active users, or MAU, is a metric that indicates the number of users that are active or have done something meaningful in your product or service each month.

Moscow Method

The MoSCoW method (or MoSCoW prioritization) is a process by which product managers manage product requirements.

N

New Product Development (NPD)

New Product Development (NPD) is a product development process that uses stages to help teams strategize, define, design, and develop a product for market.

Nomination

Employees or existing beta testers recommending additional beta applicants or beta testers to participate in a beta test.

Non-disclosure Agreement

A legally binding agreement between the beta tester and the company which indicates the beta tester will not reveal or discuss the beta product and/or their involvement in the beta test.

Also known as NDA, Confidentiality Agreement

O

Onboarding

Onboarding is the introduction of the product to users and the initial education on primary features, which is a crucial part of the product experience and product adoption process.

Also known as Product Onboarding, Installation, Out of the Box Experience (OOB), New User Experience (NUE)

P

Pareto Principle

The Pareto Principle, or 80/20 Rule, refers to a theory that 80% of the consequences come from 20% of the effort.

Participation

The active contribution of a tester to the beta test, usually in the form of regularly logging into the beta portal, submitting bug reports and feature requests, contributing to forum discussions, and completing tasks and surveys.

Also known as Engagement

Persona

A term borrowed from marketing in which users are grouped into named segments (e.g. “Jenny”, “John”) based on their demographics and other traits; a method of providing additional context when considering feedback.

Phase

A period of time during your delta test when testers are focused on evaluating the experiences of using a specific feature-set.

Praise

Praise represents what is working well, what’s delightful, or what testers are satisfied with in a product or feature.

Principle of Least Surprise

The Principle of Least Surprise (or consistency principle) is the idea that a user shouldn’t be surprised by the way an interaction or object works in an interface or design.

P

Prioritization

Prioritization is a process of taking a group of items and imposing a rank, sort, or order based on importance.

Private Beta

A beta test in which participants have been invited by internal team members, most often after applying and completing a qualification survey.

Also known as Closed Beta

Product Adoption

Product adoption or user adoption is the process of a customer or potential customer starting to use your product or feature to achieve the goal it was designed to solve.

Product Brief

A product brief is a document that outlines your product goals, requirements, and strategies for team members, stakeholders, and executives.

Product Iteration Testing

This delta testing use case captures input from actual customers on an ongoing basis. It is utilized as features are updated or added to an existing product to ensure that every release is successful and to cultivate a group of product evangelists.

Also known as Centercode Product Growth, customer testing

Product Manager

A product manager defines long-term vision and strategy for products within a company and communicates that vision to cross-functional teams and stakeholders.

Product Owner

A product owner is a member of an agile team whose primary responsibility is grooming the product backlog, defining user stories, and being the customer and product representative within the agile team.

Product Release Testing

This delta testing use case delivers insights from target audiences testing your pre-release product so you can identify real-world bugs to fix or improvements to make before launch.

Also known as Centercode Product Launch, beta testing, user acceptance testing, field testing, customer testing

Product Requirements Document

The Product Requirement Document (PRD) is a resource that defines the product, its purpose, market, features and functionality.

Program Manager

A program manager is a professional who is responsible for managing and coordinating projects and initiatives across a company.

P

Progressive Delivery

Progressive delivery is an approach to releasing software updates to users gradually and monitoring how the software performs before releasing it to larger groups.

Proof of Concept (POC)

A Proof of Concept (POC) is a small-scale project or experiment that is carried out to demonstrate the feasibility of a particular idea, concept, or technology.

Prototype

An initial version of a software or product created to test its functionality, design, and features before it is finalized and released to the market.

Psychographic Segmentation

Psychographic segmentations are a grouping of customers or potential customers by their beliefs, opinions, lifestyles, or values.

Public Beta

A beta test in which participants are free to join without an application process.

Also known as Open Beta

Q

QA Environment

Think of it like a controlled setting in which products are tested. Its purpose? To provide a safe space for teams to test, where issues can be quickly identified and resolved before a product is released.

Qualification Survey

A short questionnaire intended to qualify the target market and enthusiasm of beta applicants.

Also known as Application Survey

Qualitative Research

Qualitative research is the collection and analysis of data concerned with understanding or observing behaviors most commonly reported as non-numerical data.

Quality

Quality refers to how well a product works with minimal failures and whether it meets the standards set by a product team, company, or industry.

Quality Assurance (QA) Testing

A systematic and planned process of evaluating a software application or system to ensure it meets specified quality standards, functional requirements, and user expectations.

Q

Quantitative Research

Quantitative research is the collection and analysis of numerical data to make predictions or generalize results for a larger group of people.

R

Recruitment

Recruitment is the process of bringing qualified participants into your user testing project.

Also known as Tester Recruitment, Callout

Regression

The process of re-testing specific issues which are believed to have been addressed.

Release

An individual beta build which will be distributed to beta testers (in the case of software beta tests, this may include multiple beta builds); often given identifiers such as Beta 1, Beta 2, etc.

Remote Usability Testing

Remote usability testing refers to the process of evaluating the usability of a product or service remotely, rather than in person.

Requirements Management

Requirements management is the process of identifying, documenting, and tracking the requirements for a project or product.

Retention Rate

Retention rate is a product analytic that refers to the percentage of customers who continue to subscribe or pay for the product within a given period of time.

S

Satisfaction Scores

Satisfaction scores use a 5-star rating to capture user sentiment about each feature. They serve as a signal for testers to submit deeper feedback (issues, ideas, and praise) about the experiences that influenced their rating.

Scalability

Scalability is the capacity of a system or product to handle an expanding amount of work or data as it increases in size or complexity, without experiencing significant performance degradation or failure.

Scope Creep

Scope creep is what happens when new work, tasks, or requirements get added to a plan that has already been agreed upon, enlarging the scale of the project at hand.

S

Secondary Research

Secondary research or desk research is a practice of using previously completed or published research to inform product or business decisions.

Smoke Test

A smoke test is a form of testing that checks fundamental and/or important features first to determine if the build or release is stable enough for further testing.

Soak Test

A soak test is a type of testing that measures product or system performance over an extended period under production-level loads and realistic usage patterns.

Software Testing Metrics

The quantitative measurements and analysis of various aspects of the software testing process, including test coverage, defects found, and test execution time, among others.

Stress Testing

A type of testing that evaluates the performance and stability of a software system under extreme or stressful conditions.

Survey

A series of questions asked of beta testers intended to collect information relevant to a beta objective or related topic.

T

Target Market

A target market is a group of consumers or businesses with shared traits that are most likely to buy a product or service.

Task

An activity assigned to individuals or groups of beta testers in order to influence or ensure beta testing coverage.

Technographics

“Technographics” is a mash-up of “technology” and “demographics.” Together, they describe your customers’ tech stacks.

Test Period

The actual period in which testers are using and reporting feedback on the beta product.

T

Test Platform

The system or environment in which the product is being used, such as the PC used to test software, the phone on which an app was tested, or the browser used to test a website.

Test Scripts

Written instructions or code that is executed to automate certain tasks or processes involving text-based data.

Tester

A tester is a member of your target market, your customer base, or an employee or co-worker who has been selected, accepted all agreements, and has been onboarded into an active user test or project.

Tester Impact Score

The Tester Impact Score is the aggregated Feedback Impact Score of all the project feedback from an individual tester, revealing the impact that specific tester has had on your product.

Testimonial

Feedback provided by beta testers which acts as an early statement of satisfaction of the product, intended to assist with future sales and/or marketing.

Testing in Production

Testing in production (TIP) is a development practice in continuous delivery that involves deploying new code or updates into a production environment where it is tested with live users.

Triage

The process of analyzing and organizing feedback prior to distribution to the appropriate internal beta team members.

Triple Constraint

The triple constraint refers to a model used by project managers to deliver project on time, within budget, and within the defined scope.

U

Unit Restrictions

Unit restrictions refer to limitations or constraints imposed on specific components or modules of a software system.

Usability

Usability refers to the ease with which a product or system can be used by its intended users to achieve their goals effectively, efficiently, and satisfactorily.

U

Usage Behavior

The patterns, habits, and actions of users when interacting with a software application or system.

User Acceptance Testing (UAT)

User Acceptance Testing (UAT) is the final phase of software testing, where real users evaluate whether a product and its features meet their real-world requirements before release.

User Behavior

The actions, patterns, preferences, and interactions exhibited by users when engaging with a software application, website, or digital product.

User Benchmarks

User benchmarks or UX benchmarks are measurements used to gauge the performance of a product or service against one or more comparable products.

User Research

User research is a discipline of learning from users, customers, or potential customers by studying their interactions with products or experiences.

User Story

A user story is an explanation of a feature or experience written from the perspective of the intended audience of the feature or experience: the user.

V

Validation Testing

Validation testing is a method for ensuring that the product or feature meets the actual needs of a user or customer.

Viability

The state at which the product is stable enough to be beta tested.

Also known as Beta Ready

Voice of the Customer (VoC)

The voice of the customer is a program or practice used to collect insights from customers as they interact with a brand and/or product.

W

Waterfall Methodology

The waterfall methodology is a traditional product development model used to create a product or solution in a linear or sequential approach, each stage flowing from one phase to another.

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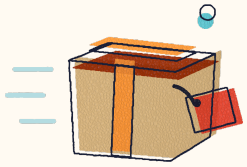


BETA TESTING

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