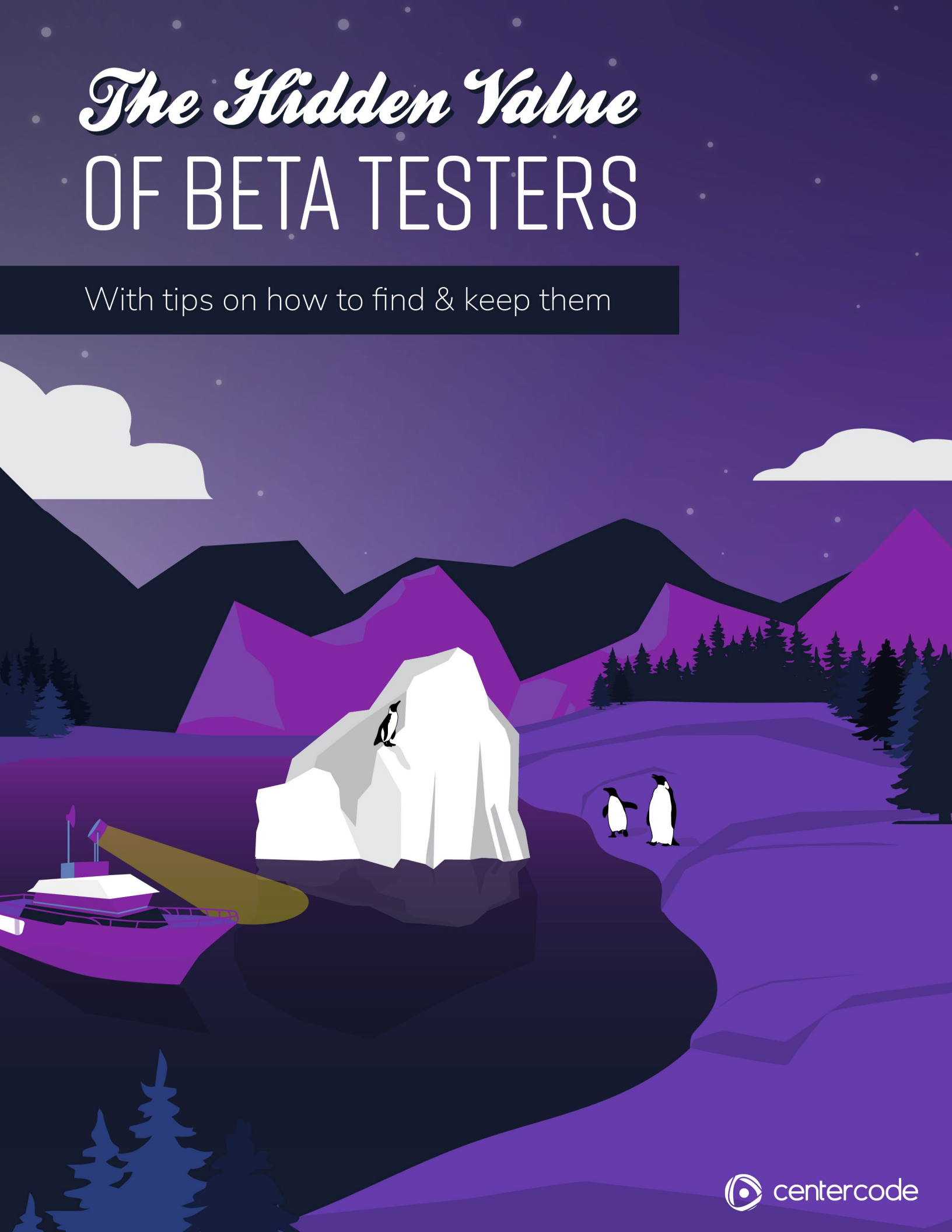
The Hidden Value OF BETA TESTERS

With tips on how to find & keep them



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JUST THE TIP OF THE ICEBERG

Could you be getting more value from your beta testers before launch?

THE SAYING GOES THAT ABOUT 10% OF AN ICEBERG IS VISIBLE AND 90% LIES BENEATH THE WATER.

Most companies see the value of beta testers as contributing feedback to influence the product before launch, but that's just the tip of the iceberg.

Testers who invest time with your development team become loyal and enthusiastic about your brand and products. Good testers become brand evangelists for your company, allowing you to leverage their excitement well after launch. As these early adopters participate in the development of a product they'll use their influence with their friends, family, and colleagues.

In this guide, you'll learn from industry experts how to find great beta testers that are valuable from product development and beyond.

ABOUT CENTERCODE

At Centercode we believe that technology can truly make everyone's life better, but products have become complex and confusing. Centercode helps companies create better technology by providing an all-in-one user testing automation platform to identify real-world issues, discover areas to improve, and see what their users love.

ARE YOU READY TO LEVEL UP THE VALUE YOU GET FROM BETA TESTERS?

SCHEDULE A DEMO LEARN MORE

WHAT IS A BETA TESTER?

A beta tester is an individual in your target market who tests your product or service and helps your team learn about customer satisfaction and uncover issues and defects.

By testing a product that's stable enough to work properly in customer environments, teams can make usability improvements, influence the product roadmap, and understand perceptions of the entire product experience from the customer perspective before launch.

WHAT KIND OF COMPANIES WILL HAVE BETA TESTERS?

While many companies recognize the inherent value in beta testing, they often lack the mature processes and strategies to get the most value out of their betas. As with all customer validation methodologies, beta testing applies to every product with a customer base. This means any hardware, software, and services product with a consumer, business, or enterprise clientele will find value in beta testing.

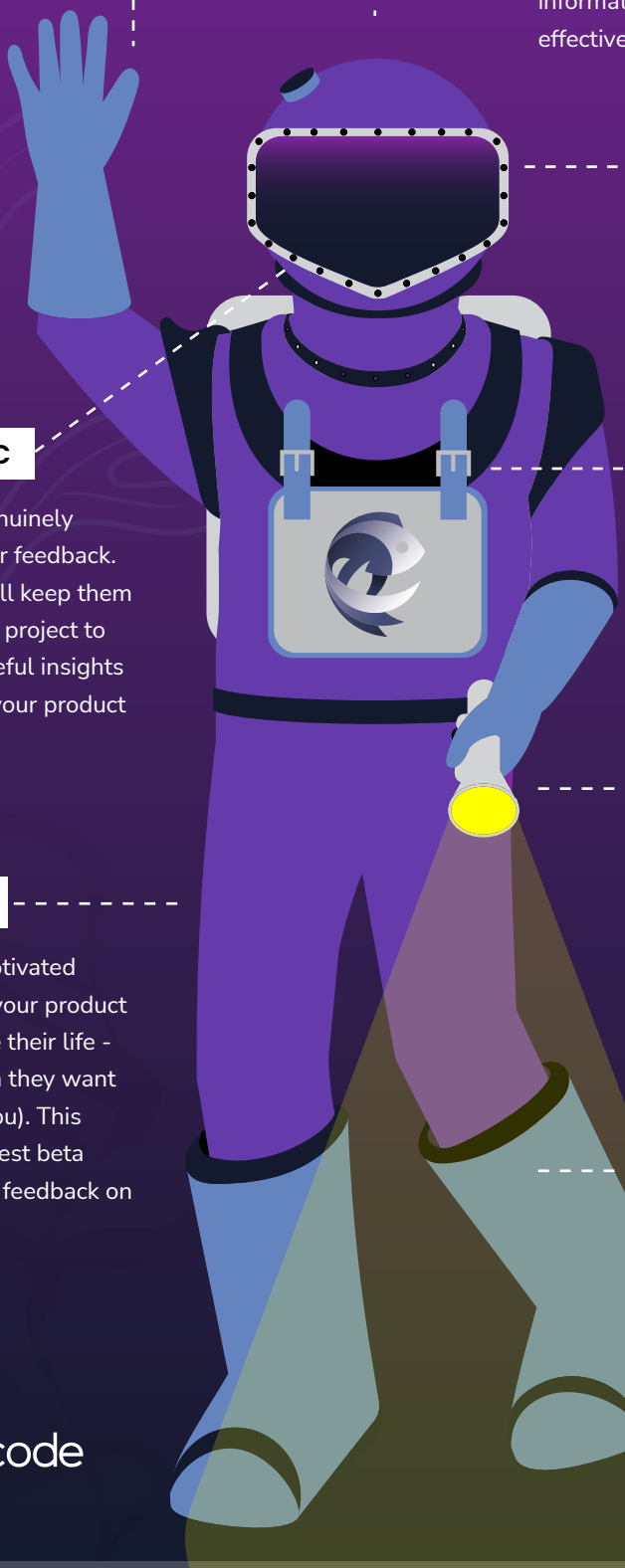
WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF BETA TESTERS?

Beta testers give you a comprehensive perspective of the actual customer experience before release to ensure your product or service is being delivered as expected. As the critical last step before launch, the feedback that testers provide during beta testing aims to steadily increase the probability that your product or service will succeed when it is launched and lands in the hands of your customers.

So what makes for a good great beta tester? Perhaps the most important aspect of any beta test is recruiting the right testers that are helping you shape your products.

THE ANATOMY OF A GREAT BETA TESTER

Great beta testers share many of the same commonalities, making them a very valuable part of the product development process. Here are some desirable traits to look for in your beta testers.



COLLABORATIVE

Great testers are quick to lend a hand to the team as a way to work together and solve problems. Their collaborative efforts lead to more innovation, efficiency, and productivity within the team.

ENTHUSIASTIC

Great testers are genuinely excited to share their feedback. Their enthusiasm will keep them coming back to your project to provide detailed, useful insights on how to improve your product before launch.

MOTIVATED

Great testers are motivated because improving your product will directly improve their life - they have a problem they want solved (and so do you). This produces both the best beta testers and the best feedback on your product.

RATIONAL

Great testers are critical thinkers and have the strong ability to analyze your products in a way that will provide relevant information to your team to solve problems as quickly and effectively as possible.

RESPONSIVE

Great testers are responsive and ready to adapt to whatever might need their attention. They are willing and available to help when needed to ensure things stay on track.

PASSIONATE

Great testers are passionate about sharing insights that help shape your products' success and view testing as a unique and exclusive opportunity to help be a part of its future developments.

CURIOUS

Great testers are curious individuals that ask questions and look for answers – they genuinely want to know more. Curiosity helps one become a better problem solver and discover different possibilities and outcomes.

RESILIENT

Great testers are resilient when encountering obstacles and are not phased by the friction that may come with finding bugs – they are comfortable with being uncomfortable and enjoy being part of making your products better.

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WHAT IS A BRAND EVANGELIST?

A brand evangelist is a customer who's not only a big fan of you and the products you sell, but often makes it their mission to refer or recommend your products to everyone around them.

Brand evangelism might seem new and innovative, but it's actually one of the oldest forms of marketing. Brand evangelism is simply word-of-mouth marketing. It is said to be "the most effective form of promotion."

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF A BRAND EVANGELIST?

Brand evangelists can be a force multiplier for your product. These people are passionate about helping make your products better and you can rely on them to provide high quality feedback on things that are really important to you. What excites them most likely resonates with your audience, developing a supportive community around your brand.

Cultivating as many brand evangelists as you can will prove to be very beneficial for your business, and an area where beta testing can be a huge help. Brand evangelism has been and will remain one of the most effective forms of promoting a product or service – people value recommendations from those that they know and trust.

Since consumers are increasingly distrusting of advertising and marketing, authenticity has become absolutely critical for brands. According to Nosto, in their Consumer Content Report, the vast majority of consumers (86%) said authenticity is important when deciding what brands they like and support. That number is even higher among Millennials, with 90% saying authenticity is important.

What drives evangelists to want to promote your product or service to others?

WHY DO GOOD GREAT BETA TESTERS BECOME BRAND EVANGELISTS?

The driving force behind great beta testers becoming brand evangelists is the feeling of inclusivity and feeling heard by the companies they know and love. There's a feeling of satisfaction that one gets when their voice is acknowledged in such a meaningful way. Often, evangelism happens because something about your brand resonates with some part of the customer's own identity, and that's special to them.

TIPS FROM THE EXPERTS

We asked industry experts what tips they have for finding great testers, how they present the value of those testers to their company, and what they do to maintain them. Here's what they had to say.

HOW DO YOU FIND GREAT TESTERS?

1

LEVERAGE DIFFERENT TEAMS WITHIN YOUR ORGANIZATION

Be resourceful by utilizing different teams within your organization to help promote your testing opportunities to a wider net, like social media and forums. They are likely to have groups of enthusiastic customers that are willing to help test your products.

"The most common method we've used to bring new testers into our community is to reach out to the internal Peloton social media teams within different markets and ask them to promote within their groups to drive users to the Peloton Field Testing Community." ***– Travis Clifford, Senior Program Manager, Field Testing at Peloton***

2

RECRUIT FROM QUALIFIED TESTERS WITHIN YOUR COMMUNITY

Recruiting beta testers can be a challenging process if you don't know where to look. Chances are that you already have qualified testers that you can utilize within your community that fall within your target market. If you segment your testers by demographics and technographics as they come into your community, this will make it easier for future recruitments.

"Our first action is to develop a profile of who the users of our products are. We want to create a community that is demonstrative of our user base and has a passion for technology. One thing we always collect from testers is occupation – this is helpful to identify those who have the technical chops to help you early in your testing to validate and act as QA. Then, we start to segment testers once they join the community based on the user groups or cohorts to make recruiting great testers easier."
– John Crick, CX Manager

3

ENCOURAGE REFERRALS FROM TOP TESTERS

Oftentimes, your existing testers and community members are happy to share beta test announcements with their friends and family. By encouraging them to refer your testing opportunities to their close circle, they'll be able to speak from personal experience about what it's like to work with you. This means any candidates they bring in will be more informed and likely better suited for the program than those who apply with no previous knowledge or context.

"We ask our current top testers to refer their friends and family that they think would make good testers. We also post opportunities to the Betabound community." ***– Chhay Lim, Beta Program Manager at Corsair***

"A helpful resource that we find useful is the User Referral program within the Centercode recruiting tools." ***– Travis Clifford, Senior Program Manager, Field Testing at Peloton***

TIPS FROM THE EXPERTS

HOW DO YOU PRESENT THE VALUE OF GREAT BETA TESTERS TO YOUR COMPANY?

1

DEMONSTRATE THE IMPACT BETA TESTERS HAVE ON PRODUCT LAUNCH SUCCESS

It's important to convey to your team the value that beta testers bring to your organization. Their role is key in validating your product and providing actionable feedback that will ultimately make it more impactful and successful at launch. They find critical bugs during the beta stage and if gone unnoticed, could be extremely costly and put your products reputation at risk.

"DATA! Demonstrate the impact they have on the launch or update of your product. Share the critical bugs they've found and the suggestions they've provided that you have implemented to better your products. Align yourself to your company's goals, or Product Managers goals to tell a cohesive story that's leading you to a successful product launch."
– John Crick, CX Manager

2

PRESENT INSIGHTS FOUND BY BETA TESTERS THAT WERE MISSED BY QA

Your quality assurance team can't run tests using every single platform, use case, or environmental factor that might affect your product's performance. Beta testing helps to cover those gaps by providing your product with real-world testing in a wide variety of environments and scenarios (including many that you may have never considered). It's important to present these insights to your company to ensure those issues are caught and corrected before they launch.

"We show the team the bugs that our beta testers found in every release cycle, which weren't found by QA (our QA team is about 40 people, so it's crazy to show that full time employees didn't find bugs that our beta testers did). We show within the company how deeply our beta testers understand Waze features & products." ***– Hila Roth, Global Head of Waze Communities & Crisis Response, Waze***

3

EVALUATE TOP ISSUES SUBMITTED IN WEEKLY BUG REVIEW MEETINGS

Any time you talk directly with your market, it reveals incredible insights. That's why carving out a process to review and take action on feedback your testers are submitting is critical. The earlier you start leveraging customer feedback, the easier it is to align your product with the needs of your target market.

"During weekly beta bug reviews, we mention the testers who have exceeded expectations. We also include the most reported issues as a slide in our final presentation after the beta ends, along with the bugs' impact and current status."
– Chhay Lim, Beta Program Manager at Corsair

TIPS FROM THE EXPERTS

HOW DO YOU KEEP GREAT BETA TESTERS AROUND?

1

MAINTAIN TESTER MOMENTUM THROUGH ENCOURAGEMENT AND MOTIVATION

Many beta tests suffer from dropping participation after the initial excitement of the test wears off. It can be difficult to maintain momentum, so motivating and encouraging your team of testers becomes extremely important during your project to ensure they remain engaged.

"Your participants are effectively extended members of your own team, and it's important that they feel encouraged and motivated to participate. They've come this far, so they're holding up their end of the bargain. It's important to remember that participants in your program are all real people, volunteering to help make your product(s) better."
– Brad Day, Product Director at Centercode

2

CONVEY THE BENEFITS OF GETTING TO INFLUENCE YOUR PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT DIRECTLY

Having early access to new technology, being provided the opportunity to influence product development, and having a direct line to developers are some of the benefits that are extremely valuable to a beta tester. It's a rewarding experience for them, so be sure to convey your interest in their feedback during those stages and they'll most likely maintain their enthusiasm and stick around for future testing opportunities – it's a win-win!

"We show our testers the benefit of having an opportunity to connect directly to Waze developers and PMs in order to provide feedback. Top beta testers are the only ones who can reach the Waze beta team directly and not just through Centercode (where we have thousands of active testers). We lead online calls with our top testers where we share very confidential information and ask for their feedback."
– Hila Roth, Global Head of Waze Communities & Crisis Response, Waze

3

SHOW YOUR APPRECIATION FOR THEIR INPUT

Beta testers who feel their efforts are appreciated are much more apt to continue providing great feedback and will continue to put the effort into being a reliable tester. If you're reviewing their feedback daily (and you should be), it only takes a few extra moments to respond and thank them for the efforts. They give their free time to test your product, and you acknowledging their commitment and demonstrating gratitude has a huge impact on their experience.

"In my experience, testers are primarily motivated by the desire to be heard and validated. There are many ways to provide that validation and reward them for going above and beyond. I've reached out via direct email (and even phone!), scheduled zoom sessions to get their input, and have included other internal stakeholders in these conversations. Really this is all about showing them that their extra effort is actually being heard, presented, and being used to assist in decision making."
– Dzevad Kudic, Consumer Insights at Talliez

TIPS FROM THE EXPERTS

HOW DO YOU REWARD GREAT BETA TESTERS?

1

OFFER GREAT TESTERS FURTHER OPPORTUNITIES TO INTERACT WITH YOUR TEAM DIRECTLY

Providing great beta testers with further opportunities to interact with your team directly is not only extremely rad but it's a unique way to connect with your community beyond traditional means that can be very rewarding for everyone involved. This can have a great effect on future engagement and open doors to insights and interactions that are hard to obtain through other methods.

"We've invited top testers to exclusive zoom meetings to interact with the product team directly. It's important to think of other ways to spur engagement with your testers – these folks become the SME's in your communities." ***– John Crick, CX Manager***

"For our top testers, we invite them to take part in our in-person community meetups globally, where we cover the entire trip." ***– Hila Roth, Global Head of Waze Communities & Crisis Response, Waze***

2

REWARD YOUR TOP TESTERS WITH BRANDED COMPANY SWAG

Reward your testers for the time and energy they have put into your project with some branded company swag (seriously, who doesn't love a new hoodie?). Your beta testers will not only be reminded of their experience working with you, but they will also act as brand ambassadors when using and wearing the gifts you provided. This is a meaningful gift that serves as a reminder of the products they impacted.

"We have sent care packages and swag to great testers separate from the other tester rewards. I think this works really well because the tester feels included and like they are truly an insider to the company."
– Dzevad Kudic, Consumer Insights at Talliez

3

GRANT TOP PARTICIPANTS WITH PRIORITY ACCESS TO FUTURE TESTING OPPORTUNITIES

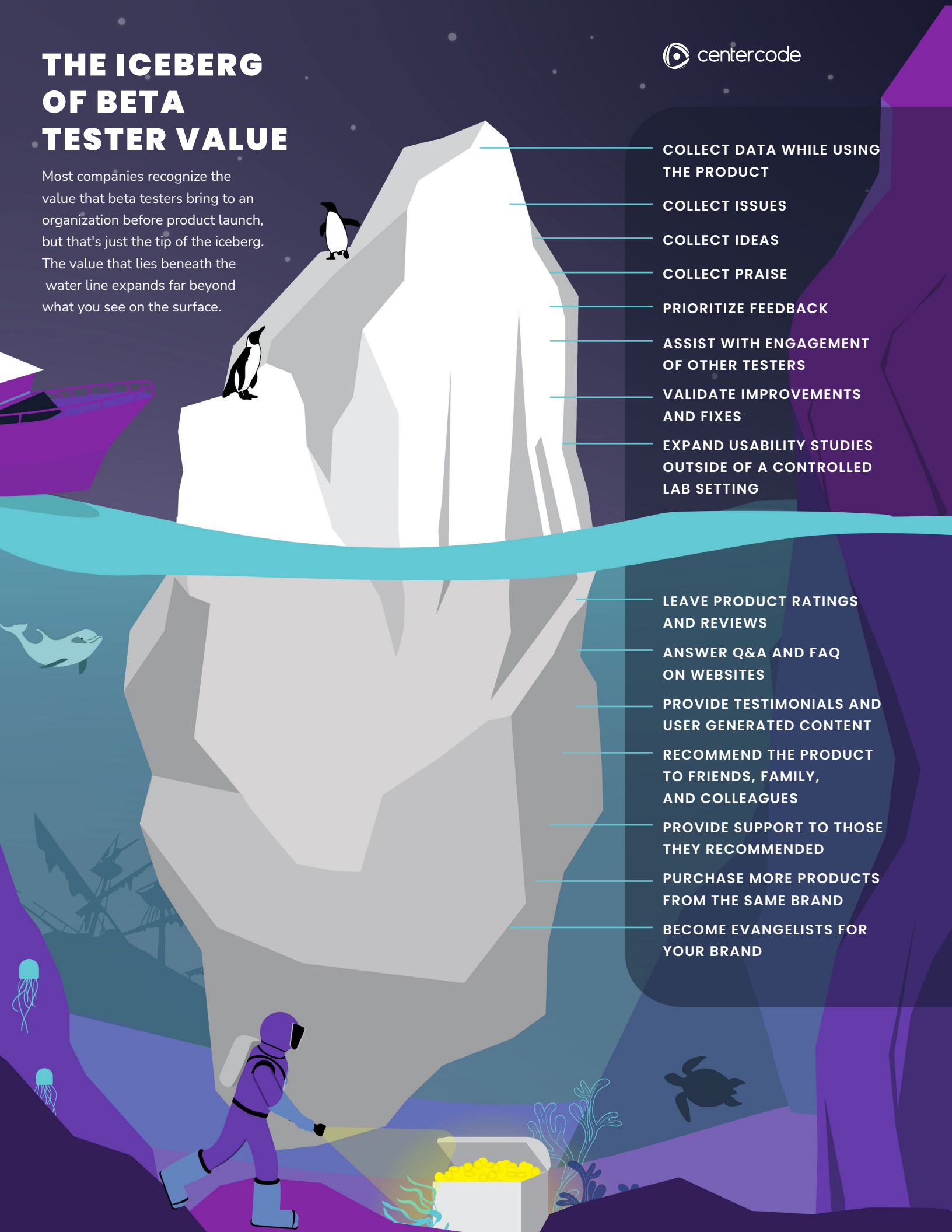
Many testers find great satisfaction in knowing that they directly helped shape a product, particularly if it's something they already regularly use. In many cases, these testers are existing brand evangelists and enjoy testing because it's a chance to be one of a select few to experience a product before its release. As a way to maximize on their enthusiasm, reward your top testers with the opportunity to have priority to participate in future tests.

"Even though your participants are volunteers, they still need to be reminded of their value to keep their motivation and enthusiasm high. If you're able to, you can reward top participants with priority access to future tests. When your testers are excited, you can rest easier knowing that your next project is going to start with a bang of enthusiasm."
– Brad Day, Product Director at Centercode

THE ICEBERG OF BETA TESTER VALUE

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Most companies recognize the value that beta testers bring to an organization before product launch, but that's just the tip of the iceberg. The value that lies beneath the water line expands far beyond what you see on the surface.



- COLLECT DATA WHILE USING THE PRODUCT
- COLLECT ISSUES
- COLLECT IDEAS
- COLLECT PRAISE
- PRIORITIZE FEEDBACK
- ASSIST WITH ENGAGEMENT OF OTHER TESTERS
- VALIDATE IMPROVEMENTS AND FIXES
- EXPAND USABILITY STUDIES OUTSIDE OF A CONTROLLED LAB SETTING
- LEAVE PRODUCT RATINGS AND REVIEWS
- ANSWER Q&A AND FAQ ON WEBSITES
- PROVIDE TESTIMONIALS AND USER GENERATED CONTENT
- RECOMMEND THE PRODUCT TO FRIENDS, FAMILY, AND COLLEAGUES
- PROVIDE SUPPORT TO THOSE THEY RECOMMENDED
- PURCHASE MORE PRODUCTS FROM THE SAME BRAND
- BECOME EVANGELISTS FOR YOUR BRAND

CONCLUSION

There you have it: the importance of cultivating brand evangelists within your beta tests, with expert tips that will help you transform your common beta tester into an enthusiastic evangelist.

These evangelists go on to be a huge part of your brand story and will continue to bring value for many years to come. To learn more about how Centercode can help you build brand evangelism through user testing, schedule time to meet with us today.

HOW DOES CENTERCODE HELP FIND BETTER BETA TESTERS?

Through beta testing, you are bringing your users closer to your product or service earlier in the development lifecycle, creating an opportunity for testers to have a voice and influence the future of your products.

Centercode's built-in Tester Impact Scoring gives you quantifiable data on how much value each tester is actually providing, making it easy to identify your top testers (and your future brand evangelists!). A great place to see this data is the Top Tester dashboard, which ranks testers by the impact they're providing, so that you can quickly get a sense of who your most valuable participants are, based on their actual impact, not just their rate of activity.

SCHEDULE A DEMO LEARN MORE



betabound

Betabound is a great resource to utilize when recruiting quality testers for your program. Betabound has hundreds of thousands of members within the community to recruit from!

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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