The Role of Technology in Delta Testing



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What Is the Role of Technology in Delta Testing?

Delta testing *is* **user testing automation**, and technology plays an essential role in its ability to offer today's product professionals deeper insights into customer attitudes and behaviors. What does it do, exactly?

For one, **delta testing technology delivers prioritized insights** — from necessary fixes, to crowd-pleasing improvements, to the product aspects that are already delighting your users.

Second, **it saves you much-needed time** by automating key tasks related to tester engagement, test planning, and reporting. This resolves challenges that make other user testing practices like beta, field, and UAT less efficient than they should be.

Finally, **delta testing technology builds best practices into your processes automatically**. It takes away the guesswork, guaranteeing the accurate, actionable feedback you need to move the needle on your product.

In this ebook, we'll dig into:

- Why automation is so essential to delta testing
- The shortcomings of point solutions and generic tools
- Critical delta testing tool features and how they make it easy for professionals like you to net game-changing results

Excited? Us too! Let's get started.



NEW TO DELTA TESTING?

Get *The Definitive Guide to Delta Testing* and sink your teeth into everything you need to know — from where delta testing fits in with other user research practices, to choosing delta testing tools, to building a business case that convinces stakeholders.

GET THE GUIDE

The Relationship Between Delta Testing and Automation

Delta Testing IS User Testing Automation.

WHY IS AUTOMATION SO ESSENTIAL?

At a tactical level, delta testing means identifying users from your target market, getting them to use and provide feedback about your product, prioritizing those insights, and turning them into action items for Product and Engineering. It's a highly effective strategy for product success, but without automation technologies, the work takes a lot of time and effort.

Skilled resources and repeatable processes alone aren't enough for most companies to succeed. Just as QA and other testing disciplines leverage automation to keep up with rapid development, delta testing relies on technology to increase velocity and reduce friction.

1. Reducing Friction for Test Managers

Delta testing has a lot of moving parts, from recruiting testers and maintaining engagement, to prioritizing feedback and managing stakeholders. Without technologies to automate and accelerate execution, the amount of time and effort involved in performing each activity with any level of effectiveness is simply impractical. The issue is compounded when you consider how to connect the data and procedures involved with each individual testing process into one cohesive operation.

If you're not already using a delta testing platform, it's likely that you're using generic productivity tools or point solutions that address a single aspect of your testing process (e.g., email, a survey tool, a community tool, etc.). With tasks and insights spread across different systems, the friction of executing your user tests only grows.

Think about the endless barrage of activity as you try to chase after testers to keep them engaged, identify important feedback when it ***does*** come in, clarify details with testers, route feedback to the right internal teams, and close the feedback loop when feature fixes and updates are delivered. In the midst of all of that effort, you're faced with the decision of sinking deeper and deeper under an ever-growing pile of incoming feedback or cherry-picking insights and hoping nothing important has fallen through the cracks.

Without integrated technology to lighten your load, all of that friction adds up to a decreased ability to deliver user testing value and spread the benefits of your program across the organization.

The Relationship Between Delta Testing and Automation

2. Reducing Friction for Testers

Making things easy for your testers is the only way to guarantee you'll get the feedback you need during your projects. Period. If testers don't understand what they need to do and when they need to do it, or if they feel like it's too difficult and time-consuming to provide their feedback, they simply won't.

Providing testers with a frictionless experience is a key focus of delta testing. And it relies on automation and other platform features that make it easy for testers to:

- Understand what to do next,
- Access the project workspace,
- Provide feedback,
- Communicate with your team, and
- Engage with other testers

without also creating additional work and friction for test managers.

THE SHORTCOMINGS OF POINT SOLUTIONS AND GENERIC TOOLS

- Time-consuming nature of execution prevents agility
- Difficult to scale efforts and apply lessons learned
- Each tool is owned by a different department or group
- No decision-making power or control over continued access
- Data and procedures are siloed
- Security and privacy are problematic
- Features and roadmap aren't aligned with the needs of test managers
- Customizations are time-consuming or impossible to implement
- Creates friction in the digital transformation process

Critical Delta Testing Features

Delta testing reduces friction and increases internal adoption by giving you all of the tools and automation you need to manage your user tests in one centralized place. The technologies used during delta testing deliver prescriptive processes that offer a plug-and-play path to program success. They provide targeted functionalities, including: guided planning; engagement automation; automated feedback prioritization; and comprehensive dashboards with health scores and drill-downs about your feedback, product, and program.

The beauty of delta testing platforms is that they completely eliminate wide swaths of the work involved with managing user testing projects and generating prioritized insights. This lets you focus on improving your product before sending it out into the world, totally confident in its success.

PROJECT AUTOMATION

Delta testing platforms drive project success with prescriptive planning and increased visibility. This makes it easy to start and keep your project on course.

Guided Planning

Guided planning uses your project goals and product details to automatically organize your test into phases. Each phase focuses on specific product features for testers to evaluate. Phases and tester activities can be auto-scheduled based on expected effort, which gives you maximum engagement by preventing testers from getting overwhelmed or bored by their task list.

Live Insights

You can monitor and control project activity, engagement, and progress in real time so you know which parts of your project need attention. Daily scrum emails give you a digest version of project progress, and out-of-the-box dashboards feature project health scores and drill-downs that show feedback and engagement details that are impacting project success.

Prescriptive Templates

Whether your program is focused on getting feedback on products leading up to launch or gathering feedback on iterative product updates, delta platforms offer templates that support the most common program types. In addition, you can customize and clone a neat bundle of emails, feedback forms, workflow automations, and project settings, or tweak and clone individual elements.

Critical Delta Testing Features

COMMUNITY MANAGEMENT

Maintaining a thriving community of testers to pull from for your delta testing projects is critical for success, so delta testing platforms provide features for helping you build and manage a vibrant community.

Branded Portal

The community portal provides a branded space for your community to live and thrive. It also offers a way for you to communicate with members (through surveys and email, for example) and a place for testers to see and apply for upcoming tests from their phone, tablet, or computer.

Tester Profiles

Profiles help deliver one of the main ingredients of delta testing: targeted testers. Use tester profiles to capture and store standard or custom demographic and geographic information about your community members, as well as testing interests and more.

Test Platforms

Test platforms are like profiles for your testers' tech products, and they add another key layer of targeting during recruitment. They capture and store information, like device make, model, and operating system, which is then attached to feedback automatically. This gives your team full context as they're implementing fixes or new features.

Automated Nurturing

This feature helps battle the natural tendency for profile and test platform data to decay as community members purchase new devices, change geographic locations, and develop new interests over time. It allows you to set individual cadences that remind community members to update various profile and platform elements so your test data is always accurate.

Community Growth Tools

Features for helping you grow your community and maintain full visibility are also critical. Some examples of these kinds of features include: CRM import, list import, recruitment email, overall growth metrics, and growth drill-downs for specific groups.

Critical Delta Testing Features

RECRUITMENT AUTOMATION

A common question people ask about delta testing is "How do I find the right testers?" What used to be a big variable for legacy beta testing has become a no-brainer. Delta testing technology places a special emphasis on recruitment and onboarding features, like filters, segmentation, and legal agreements.

Targeted Recruiting

Filters allow you to automatically target the most qualified members of your community for each project recruitment using community *profiles and test platforms*. You can mix and match these filters for profile elements like demographics and technographic details to start focusing in on candidates who are a perfect match for your project.

Qualification Screening

This survey screening uses conditional questions and custom fields to surface applicant details and narrow down your candidate pool to best-fit testers. Qualification screening features allow you to probe at requirements that may not already be housed in profiles or test platforms and help you gauge each applicant's enthusiasm for participating.

Automated Tester Onboarding

Automated onboarding uses your filters to funnel qualified applicants into your tests, segment them into groups based on demographics or technographics (e.g., age or mobile OS), and walk them through pre-test steps like NDA signatures, without you having to lift a finger.

Digital Agreement Signing

Because user testing involves sharing sensitive information with testers, delta testing platforms have agreement management built in. Having a straightforward and easy way to distribute NDAs, collect signatures, and keep agreements organized makes the onboarding process that much easier — and your legal team will thank you.

Critical Delta Testing Features

FEEDBACK AUTOMATION

Feedback automation brings easy organization and management at scale. That's why it is one of the biggest time-savers that delta testing technology offers today's test managers.

Issues, Ideas, and Praise

These feedback types are the basis for prioritized, actionable product recommendations. They can be collected via desktop, mobile app, or from within your product, and they capture the details internal teams need to take action on what has to be fixed, what should be improved, and what could be promoted.

Enriched Feedback

Enriched feedback features include deduplication, extended submitter context, and feedback collaboration. These save you time while also improving the quality and clarity of submissions, providing more context, and increasing reporting accuracy. In addition, custom forms increase feedback quality out the gate, since they allow upfront collection of the specific information you need based on your product or use case.

Feedback Ranking

Automated feedback ranking uses signals like feature weight, severity, popularity, and frequency to score feedback and bring your most important feedback to the surface. This feature delivers an actionable list of feedback to take action on, organized by impact to product success.

Routing and Triage Workflows

Workflows define the stages of internal feedback triage, establish clear rules governing when feedback should transition from one stage to the next, and automate the flow of feedback from stage to stage. They also provide an easy-to-understand framework for internal processes and are the foundation for establishing Service Level Agreements (SLAs) for follow-up activities and organization.

Engineering System Integration

Being able to integrate with systems like Jira in a clean and simple way is key for efficiently pushing insights throughout your organization. A real-time, bi-directional sync that supports everything from crash logs to tester comments keeps everyone on the same page as they work to implement fixes and close the feedback loop.

Critical Delta Testing Features

ENGAGEMENT MANAGEMENT

Maintaining high engagement means staying in constant contact with testers and making it easy for them to give you what you need. That's why delta testing platforms offer a straightforward testing experience for testers as well as communication features that help them stay on task while you focus on the bigger picture.

Engagement Automation Agent

Maintaining participation used to be very time-consuming, given the amount of proactive communication involved. But engagement automation features use machine learning to shoulder that load by keeping testers on the ball with ongoing tester outreach, including auto-reminders for upcoming tasks and features they'll need to evaluate.

Frictionless Tester Experience

The centralized and standardized nature of providing feedback during delta makes it easy for testers to engage in your projects. A big part of this experience is *structured feedback forms* and integrations that allow testers to submit feedback from right within your product app or website.

Mobile App

Delta is most successful when testers can easily submit feedback whenever and wherever they have it. Delta testing platforms provide opportunities for testers to submit feedback and engage in a test from the comfort of their couch or anywhere else an idea or praise might strike them.

Tester Collaboration

Your testers are excited to talk about their experiences with your product. Delta testing platforms let you channel that energy into meaningful engagement by allowing them to view, comment, and vote on feedback from other testers they agree with. Discussion groups also help testers share their experiences in a secure forum, which means more insights and fewer product leaks.

Critical Delta Testing Features

REPORTING AND ANALYTICS

Delta testing platforms use dashboards, scores, and auto-distributed reports to keep everyone on the same page when it comes to your tests. Say goodbye to that slew of emails and long meetings it used to take to get Product, Engineering, and execs on the same page about the voice of the customer.

Feedback Dashboard

Feedback dashboards empower you to analyze feedback by product, project, feedback type, customer segment, and so on. Review and take action on the top issues, ideas, and praise for the entire project or a specific phase, and dig into the details for a rich, contextualized understanding of your feedback.

Delta Success Dashboard

Delta metrics provide a clear path for achieving your target star rating and analyzing how issues, ideas, and praise are impacting your product's success — from initial builds to maturity updates. They show Product and Engineering exactly what to address to increase product ratings and reveal how changes made to your product are impacting quality and customer satisfaction.

Project Dashboard

The project dashboard gives an at-a-glance view of project schedules, as well as key project KPIs like delta health, success, and impact. It also provides quick access to contextual details about your audience and details on engagement, phase coverage, and feedback impact. These highlight the successful areas of your project as well as the areas that might need attention.

Program Dashboard

Measure and compare project performance by product line or test type using metrics like project health score, engagement, and feedback generated. As a result, you can quickly identify which parts of your program are working and use drill-downs to gain visibility into initiatives and improvements that will have the greatest positive impact.

Tester and Community Dashboards

These dashboards let you monitor how each segment of your community is growing, how often testers are logging in, and which projects they've participated in. With features like tester scoring, you'll even be able to see how engaged testers were during your projects and identify your top testers.

Critical Delta Testing Features

PRIVACY, SECURITY, AND INFASTRUCTURE

To handle testing data responsibly, delta testing platforms provide features like the agreement center, user permissions, and SSO to ensure both your testers' privacy and your own data security.

Privacy Law Compliance

To support compliance with laws like the GDPR and CCPA, delta testing platforms offer features for managing PII and upholding your testers' right to be forgotten — without dissolving their commitment to maintaining secrecy about your projects and products.

Digital Agreement Center

To further support privacy law compliance and to protect confidential information, digital agreement centers give test managers and testers a single place to access all of their agreements.

Roles, Permissions, and Secure Partitions

You can control permissions on a user-by-user basis and create roles that align with specific areas of functionality (like a tester role that gives the ability to submit feedback only). You can also create secure partitions or sets of assets (e.g., projects, feedback, workflows, and reports) that align with the structure of your organization. This allows separate groups to use the platform without risk of interfering with each other.

API/Integrations

The API tells other business systems when and how to access the delta testing platform to retrieve data or initiate an action. Integrations also allow the delta testing platform to deliver information or trigger actions in tools like your ticketing and business intelligence systems.

Single Sign-On

Security during user testing should never be optional, so security features like Single Sign-On are built into delta testing platforms at no extra cost.

Conclusion

You've made it to the end, which means you're now well-versed in the role technology plays in delta testing and you have the knowledge necessary to choose the right tool for you. Congrats!

But this is only the first step on the journey. There's ***so much*** more to delta testing, from who uses it (people like you), to where it falls in the product development life cycle (at every phase), to who benefits from it (your organization, your products, and your customers).

Take your knowledge to the next level with *The Definitive Guide to Delta Testing*, your everything-you-need-to-know companion for user testing automation.



If you'd like to talk with us about automating your user testing program, *put some time on our calendar today*.

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Delta Testing Solutions



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

The Centercode Platform equips you with the automation and best practices 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