WHAT MAKES DELTA DIFFERENT

Comparing Delta Testing to UX, CX, QA & More



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Delta Testing in Context

Investing in market research, quality testing, user experience, and product analytics is absolutely essential to building a good product. But delivering a ***great*** product requires delta testing to get it out of the office and into the hands and true environments of targeted users.

While delta testing has taken hold at many companies, it's still relatively new compared to other user testing and development practices. So where does delta testing sit? What does it replace, and what does it complement? And how does it compare to other initiatives like quality assurance, usability, and market research?

This ebook answers those questions. Specifically, you'll learn:

- How delta testing expands and supports QA, CX/UX, market research, and your customer communities
- How it levels up dogfooding and employee testing
- How it solves the challenges of beta, field, UAT, and other user testing practices

Keep reading to see how delta testing supports and enhances corporate initiatives at every phase of the product development life cycle.



NEW TO DELTA TESTING?

This ebook is part of *The Definitive Guide to Delta Testing*, a comprehensive guide to automated user testing. 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, and more.

GET THE GUIDE

Expanding on Traditional and Crowdsourced QA

While quality assurance is critical for ironing out bugs and ensuring the product works "as designed," getting the product out of controlled environments and into the real world during delta testing is essential. It's the only efficient way to validate product quality across a wide enough variety of demographics, scenarios, and technographic ecosystems.

How does delta testing complement QA?

- Brings in new test cases
- Expands testing to customer environments
- Applies customer sentiment (qualitative data) to bugs (quantitative data)
- Aligns with the continuous, iterative nature of QA

How is delta testing different from QA?

- QA focuses on test cases, while delta testing focuses on experiences.
- Delta testing generates insights from more technological ecosystems than QA has access to in the lab.
- Unlike QA, delta testing includes adoption through natural use, which allows testers to discover features outside of a quality-focused test plan.
- Delta testing goes beyond quality and stability to also evaluate customer satisfaction and product maturity.

ITEM	DELTA	QA
Able to min/max stress-test device specific scenarios		✔
Tested in real-world environments	✔	
Representative of target market demographics	✔	
Identifies and prioritizes bugs and issues	✔	✔
Identifies and prioritizes customer ideas	✔	
Provides exploratory user experience feedback	✔	**Partial**
Provides satisfaction ratings for each tested experience	✔	
Provides representative user acceptance	✔	
Prioritizes most impactful issues using customer feedback	✔	**Partial**
Executed by professional testers with deep product knowledge		✔

WHAT MAKES DELTA DIFFERENT

Enhancing CX/UX Efforts

The majority of today's companies already have initiatives that listen for the voice of the customer at a broad level and fine-tune features at the interactive level. Delta testing combines qualitative insights with quantitative attitudes and surfaces insights about features and experiences based specifically on their impact on product success.

How does delta testing complement CX/UX?

- Highlights feature experiences that need improvement and shows researchers where to focus
- Prioritizes UX work, based on gaps or usability issues that are impacting customer satisfaction most
- Surfaces real-world test cases that weren't discovered during prototype testing and other qualitative studies
- Offers researchers on-demand access to a pool of potential customers for surveys and other projects

How is delta testing different from CX/UX?

- CX and UX focus on the customer's experience at a micro level, while delta testing focuses on their experience with the product holistically.
- CX and UX are aimed at understanding sentiment and user behavior, while delta testing also surfaces quantitative data that highlights specific drivers of customer satisfaction.

ITEM	DELTA	CX	UX
Tested in real-world environments	✓	✓	**Partial**
Representative of target market demographics	✓	✓	✓
Provides exploratory user experience feedback	✓	✓	**Partial**
Run before product launch	✓		
Continued after product launch with updates	✓		
Prioritizes most impactful issues	✓		
Uses collaboration to understand product better	✓	✓	
Tracks user engagement and identifies best/worst testers	✓		
Leverages user analytics to understand behaviour		✓	
Observes and finds issues that testers did not realize they encountered		✓	✓

Offering New Market Research Possibilities

Market research is an integral part of early development and post-launch marketing tactics. Some delta use cases, like competitive testing, contribute to market research directly, while others take place later in development to validate lessons learned during this phase of customer research.

How does delta testing complement market research?

- Allows you to better identify and contextualize market needs through user feedback about your competitors' products
- Highlights competitor weaknesses and strengths to consider for your product
- Ensures that the end product actually delivers on the customer needs and requirements identified during market research
- Provides insight on how to best market the final product, based on the experiences that resonate most with users

How is delta testing different from market research?

- Market research is focused on current or potential markets at a macro level, but delta testing provides a deeper understanding of those markets at the product experience level.
- Market research relies mainly on surveys, interviews, and focus groups, while delta testing relies on real-world product usage to generate qualitative feedback (issue reports). These issues are then presented based on their quantitative impact on product success.

ITEM	DELTA	MARKET RESEARCH
Able to target expected technographic ecosystems	✓	
Representative of target market demographics	✓	✓
Identifies and prioritizes bugs and issues	✓	
Identifies and prioritizes customer ideas	✓	**Partial**
Continued after product launch with updates	✓	
Facilitates cross-departmental collaboration and training	✓	
Uses collaboration to better understand product	✓	
Used to make pricing decisions		✓
Quantifiably establishes market segments and personas		✓
Relies on both qualitative and quantitative feedback	✓	✓

Increasing the Value of Customer Communities and Forums

While customer communities and forums help companies stay engaged with their target market, the data generated is usually very generic. That's why communities and forums are often used to feed more targeted testing and research efforts that deliver actionable insights.

How does delta testing leverage customer communities and forums?

- Uses customer communities as a vital recruitment source
- Leverages community profiles to identify best-fit testers, based on demographics, technographics, and other information
- Relies on profile information to contextualize incoming feedback and analyze insights based on audience segments
- Applies forums as a way to increase project engagement, since it gives testers a place to talk about their experiences with other participants
- Leans on the private nature of tester forums to reduce leaks of proprietary or other confidential product details

ITEM	DELTA	COMMUNITIES AND FORUMS
Uses functioning products, not prototypes	✔	✔
Tested in real-world environments	✔	✔
Provides exploratory user experience feedback	✔	✔
Systematically guides testers through features	✔	
Provides satisfaction rating for each tested experience	✔	
Executed before product launch	✔	
Continued after product launch with updates	✔	✔
Prioritizes most impactful issues	✔	
Process and technology designed to prevent leaks	✔	
Uses collaboration to better understand product	✔	**Partial**

WHAT MAKES DELTA DIFFERENT

Delivering on Dogfooding Initiatives

It's easy to find a company that has some sort of dogfooding or employee testing program. But it's more difficult to find one that delivers actionable user insights derived from real-world product use, like those companies using delta testing tools and practices.

Why are companies replacing dogfooding with delta testing?

- Expands participation to teams across the organization
- Builds collaboration between teams as they work towards a common goal
- Brings other teams up to speed on new products prior to launch or release
- Offers structured processes for effective test execution
- Automates internal user testing to increase efficiency
- Uses qualification screenings and tester scoring to reduce incentive spending for poorly engaged employees
- Delivers consistent ROI and evangelizes the importance of user testing and the voice of the customer in the organization

ITEM	DELTA	DOGFOODING
Identifies and prioritizes bugs and issues	✔	**Partial**
Systematically guides testers through features	✔	
Provides satisfaction ratings for each tested experience	✔	
Facilitates iterative (Agile) updates during testing	✔	**Partial**
Continued after product launch with updates	✔	
Facilitates cross-departmental collaboration and training	✔	**Partial**
Provides program health metrics	✔	
Provided solely as incentive to employees	**Partial**	✔
Tracks user engagement and identifies best/worst testers	✔	
Prepares internal teams for supporting new or updated product	✔	✔

Solving Beta, Field, and User Acceptance Testing (UAT) Challenges

Beta, field, user acceptance, and delta testing have the same overall goal in mind: to gather real-world feedback and improve products before release. While the majority of companies include these customer tests in their development processes, they experience varying degrees of success with beta, UAT, and field because they aren't driven by proven processes or aligned with modern requirements.

Why are companies replacing beta, field, and UAT with delta testing?

- Automates customer testing to save you tons of time
- Aligns with sprints and the continuous nature of agile development
- Provides structured processes for effective test execution
- Increases feedback relevance with targeted audiences
- Prioritizes feedback based on impact to product success
- Provides actionable recommendations for fixing, improving, and promoting your product
- Delivers clear metrics, consistent ROI, and the ability to scale programs effectively

ITEM	DELTA	BETA, FIELD, AND UAT
Provides representative user acceptance	✓	**Partial**
Systematically guides testers through features	✓	**Partial**
Run before product launch	✓	✓
Continued after product launch with updates	✓	
Tracks user engagement and identifies best/worst testers	✓	
Provides program health metrics	✓	
Prioritizes most impactful issues	✓	
Built-in tester privacy thought centralized technology	✓	
Very rapid turnaround using business teams to represent end users		✓
Results differ depending on what group is managing the project		✓

Conclusion

Now that you're well-versed in the ways delta testing enhances and supports your product with user feedback throughout its life cycle, you're ready to take things to the next level.

There's so much more to delta testing, from who uses it (people like you), to who benefits from it (your organization, your products, and your customers), to the delta testing tools you need to see those benefits in full effect.

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