Test management in Agile is a challenging area

As described in my [previous post](), assessments at different organizations show that test management in Agile is a challenging area. By diving deeper into the results of these [TI4Agile]() assessments, I see that the management of testing requires change. At the first maturity level the larger part of the assessed organizations are missing:

1. **A**pproach for testing
2. **B**ird's eye view on quality and risks
3. **C**ontribution from testing to the release planning

So what can you do to improve your test management in Agile? Let's look at the three aspects.

1. Create a generic test approach

Testing is an important part of development and it deserves proper attention. Every organization needs a generic test approach. Don't you have a generic test approach yet? Consider creating one. Setting up and applying a good generic test approach will result in:

- Awareness
- Clarity
- Efficiency

By creating the test approach you will increase the overall awareness of the testing craft. You can use it to provide clarity to both the business and the development teams on what you expect from testing. When the approach is incorporated in the daily work, this will result in a higher efficiency.

2. Provide a bird's eye view on quality and risks

Most of the time, the teams know about the quality and risks in their parts of the project. However, you need a bird's eye view on quality and risks at higher levels in the organization. When a proper bird's eye view is missing, you can end up in two different situations.

The first situation is that too little or no information on quality and risks is supplied. This results in decision makers that have to make assumptions on these aspects. They should be making their decisions based on facts.

The second situation is that too much information on quality and risks is supplied. This provides another challenge for the decision makers. Which information is relevant enough to take into account? By flooding them with information, you are hindering the process.

So provide the right level view on quality and risks. The team provides the detailed view, you need to make sure there is a proper bird's eye view as well. This enables making explicit and conscious decisions about the product at different levels of the organization.

3. Contribute to the release planning

The release planning is often created by the project manager(s) together with the product owner(s). These are indeed people that need to be present at this planning session. Their focus is to create as much value for the business as soon as possible. But there is more to creating value than deadlines and content.

Putting all high value user stories together, often creates releases where all parts of the release are high risk items as well. If all items are high risk, all items require a lot of attention from testing. This results in packed releases that put a lot of pressure on the teams. How can you prevent this? You can lower the pressure by creating a balanced release planning. Contribute to the release planning by thinking about risks upfront and combine items with high, medium and low risk into releases. Additionally, group and order the stories with

testability in mind.

Jeroen Mengerink