

QA professionals – ensuring optimum quality



With expanding industry and growing competition in the market, quality assurance has gained immense prominence. The need for good QA professionals has thus become the priority in most organisations in order to make sure they deliver nothing but the best

Gone are the days when price was considered a cue for the quality of an offering. With the establishment of well defined quality standards and certification, the adoption of these standards is now used to gauge the quality of an offering. The importance of a QA function is aptly put in the phrase 'when accounting for quality, don't forget the often hidden costs of poor quality'. It has been observed that the costs of poor quality make up as much as 30 to 40 per cent of all costs. These costs of poor quality include cost associated with poor product performance, services and processes—the costs associated with not meeting customer requirements, not providing products or services on time or reworking them to meet customer needs.

An indispensable part

Quality Assurance (QA) has come into prominence now due to the expanding industry, fierce competition from within and outside the country and most importantly a well-informed customer. In today's market, quality of product and services is of paramount importance. Be it in the manufacturing or services industry, a company's acceptability, image and performance is centred on the quality of its products and services. The quality assurance department has hence become an integral part of organisations.

"Quality assurance has become the most sought after stream by both professionals and employers," - Rashim Arora, general manager, Fiserv, India Operations

Rashim Arora, general manager, Fiserv, India Operations points out, "The quality group at Fiserv believes that quality of the product is only as good as the quality of the processes used to develop it. Now it is very well understood in the software industry that in order to steer software development from an art to a science, strong processes are needed. That is the reason why organisations which have long term visions for themselves are investing into Quality Assurance initiatives. The benefits of any QA initiative can be achieved only 18 to 24 months after implementation of the initiative."

According to Mukesh Sharma, founder & CEO, QA InfoTech, "Quality Assurance department monitors every stage and aspect of solution/product development, ruling out practically any chance of defects creeping in. All the deliverables are examined against predefined acceptance criteria to ensure that the solution/product develops as per specified requirements. The team is dedicated to only one mission to deliver solution/products that meet the standards in terms of quality, safety and consistency and provide their customers a smooth experience. The role of QA department should be focused on the client satisfaction and cooperation with other departments in initiating and maintaining projects and quality standards for the project management."

Growing need of QA professionals

With the growing importance of quality, there has been a surge in the demand for Quality Assurance professionals in the industry. More and more companies are seeking QA professionals who can help in building a better organisation through Process Compliance Measurement.

"This demand-supply imbalance places the QA professionals in a win-win situation. Quality assurance has become the most sought after stream by both professionals and employers. There is a great scope for professionals to grow their career in this area. Typically, a QA professional specialises in the field of Quality Management/Business Management and related areas like Quality Management Systems (QMS), Occupational health and safety information (OHSAS), Process-Mapping, Benchmarking, Total Quality Management, Total Productive Maintenance (TPM), Balanced Scorecard and Six Sigma," explains Arora.

Sharma further states, "Traditionally, the role of quality assurance department in an organisation has been a complicated process, requiring specialised expertise and great effort and attention. QA professionals are trained to recognise the efficacy of a product/solution, and QA department hosts the infrastructure to test across a wide range of hardware, software and network configurations."

Join the league

So, what are the skills and qualifications required to become a QA professional? According to Sharma, "The massive increase in quality assurance activity have created a new profession that requires a structured academic discipline and programs to educate QA professionals. Qualifications for a QA professional vary from BE in Computer Science/Information Systems or MCA to just graduates in any discipline with excellent communication skills and the ability to learn quickly."

So, if you think you have these qualities and are keen to play a significant role in an organisation, becoming a quality analyst is certainly a way to go.