



a global vision for software testing

CASE STUDY

DEFINING AND FACILITATING TESTING: SKILLS DEVELOPMENT AND MANAGEMENT FOR THE MET OFFICE

Client description:	Specialist government agency
Locations:	Multiple
Customers:	61 million +
Testing team size:	10
Testing delivered:	Primarily functional testing
Testing structure:	Specialist teams

Client situation

The Met Office, a Trading Fund of the Ministry of Defence, are a world leader in weather forecasting and climate science. Their business involves providing a wide range of services to government and commercial customers in the UK and overseas, many of which are based on using leading-edge science and technology.

The Met Office assess their test teams' capabilities annually for their ongoing skills and development programme, but their development framework was based upon the SFIA version 3 and needed upgrading to bring it in line with the SFIA version 4.

They wanted a partner that could both help them to develop and implement an enhanced framework for skill development, which was compatible with the SFIA version 4, but would then enable them to manage it following the term of consultancy.

The Met Office turned to TCL for this support.

Issues faced

The Met Office management knew that there was a need to increase effectiveness, efficiency and proactive working practice, but in what, and for whom, was the problem. Each team member's current skill set needed to be analysed so that the most relevant and effective personalised plans could be put together. An important part of this would be to test an individual's skills independently rather than relying on self-assessment, which can be inaccurate.

The Met Office required support integrating with the SFIA version 4 framework while making development plans applicable to the business and motivating and engaging staff.



"TCL's enthusiasm to deliver benefits combined with their thorough knowledge of testing skills and processes have provided us with a streamlined professionalism assessment process. TCL have both increased buy-in from team members participating in annual reviews and delivered greater clarity and visibility of team skills to assist with team development. Many providers of IT services claim to hold customer benefits as the driving force for their work, but I can't think of any I've worked with that demonstrate this during engagement better than TCL."

Richard Cave

Testing team leader

Met Office



a global vision for software testing

CASE STUDY

Solution proposed

Richard Morgan, TCL Training Manager, was brought in to support the Met Office through these improvements. Richard's experience in the software development lifecycle enabled him to fully understand the complexities involved and to synthesise the multiple elements effectively.

Initially Richard worked with the management team to establish the Met Office's priorities and how the framework could assist these. He then carried out a series of face-to-face interviews to understand and uncover skills that currently existed or were required, and a series of self-assessment exercises to establish the individuals' recognition of their own skills in these areas.

Once these sessions were complete Richard established each person's development plan including a grading of their current skills and a route for ongoing development.

Richard's involvement helped the Met Office build a framework that could be easily sustained and managed internally with little or no input required by TCL. This meant that the Met Office did not have to pay ongoing consultancy fees as the skills would be developed through their existing management.

Success achieved

Implementation was smooth and it has been a great exercise for the test team as they have had their skills qualified and assessed by an expert external source, as well as having been given an individual route map to achieve the highest standards possible.

Results

It is too early in the training cycle to see the full impact of each individual's development but TCL have been asked to continue this consultancy into another three technical areas: knowledge management, release management and configuration management. All of these need to be focussed on integration of the SFIA version 4 and ITILv3 framework.



“ I was impressed by the way that the teams engaged enthusiastically and readily accepted ownership of the framework. This will help ensure that required skills are identified and individuals' development is managed to maximise the effectiveness of the Service Transition function. ”

Richard Morgan,
Training Manager, TCL

© TCL 2009