

LESSONS LEARNED IN HIRING QA PROFESSIONALS

Sabina Fabbian
Newton's Flaws Inc.

Simple “Oracles”

- Interviewee:
 - Know YOURSELF
 - NETWORK
 - An Ocean of Opportunities
- Interviewer:
 - QA/QC is a PROFESSION, not a sub-function
 - No cookie-cutter cheat sheet formula
 - Understand client’s needs for success

QA Jobs in Calgary

All/Calgary	QA	Test	Testing
Ajilon	4	16	8
Agile Referral Only			
Eagle			
InSync	0	7	6
Manpower	0	0	5
Monster	69	0	151
Si Systems	3	2	0
Workopolis	38	139	188

Interviewee





Who are YOU?

- What's your ROLE?
- What's your PASSION, strengths?
- What motivates YOU?
- What kind of environment do you excel in?
- What kind of culture do you like to work in?
- Know your NICHE
- On Average we spend 8-10 hrs at work, we might as well enjoy it, rather than make the "BEST" of a situation



QA Roles

- QA Analyst/Tester:
 - Evaluates & tests new or modified software
 - Creates test documentation (test script, cases, defects)
 - Provides status updates
- QA Lead:
 - Typically SR, in-charge of one or more QA Analysts / Testers
 - Creates Test Plan, monitors all testing activities within a project
 - Mitigates risks, communicates project state to QA Manager / PM
- QA Coordinator
 - Facilitates QA/QC activities between development and business users
 - Business Champion
 - Defines testing approach, guides and executes UAT



QA Roles

- QA Manager
 - Champions Quality Assurance within the organization.
 - Manages a QA/QC department; hires/fires, mentors team
 - Defines Test Strategy, Methodology, QA/QC Processes
- QA Process Champion
 - QA Professional, well versed in process improvement and SDLC's.
 - Implements QA/QC methodology
 - Coaches multi-faceted teams



QA Roles

- QA Automation Developer
 - QA/QC background, with programming skills, and typically a seasoned “toolsmith”
 - Writes automated test scripts/test harnesses to “test” application.
 - Regression test scripts, Infrastructure test scripts (protocol’s, middleware,) Load & Performance test scripts
 - Logs defects... DOES NOT FIX CODE



Resume Observations

- Format / Flow
 - Summarize your objectives/achievements
 - Bullet Point vs writing sentences
 - Work experience is in alignment with job posting
 - Summarize /categorize your technical experience / environments
 - Summarize Education, Courses, Certifications, Professional Associations
 - Include Volunteer Work/Groups, Hobbies
 - References – upon request
 - **SPELLING MISTAKES ARE NOT ACCEPTABLE**
 - **REPEATING SAME JOB DESCRIPTION FOR MULTIPLE POSITIONS NOT ACCEPTABLE**



Marketing Yourself

- **Formally**

- Meet different marketing/recruiting companies first, interview them to see if you ‘like’ them; will they be able to “market” you correctly. Do they understand QA/QC, your skill set.
- If you have multiple marketers, remember that they may be competing for the same job. You’ll have to manage this.
- Find out what clients the Marketers have (eg Oil & Gas, Telecom, etc.)
- What value add does a Marketer provide? Are they a body-shop or a Professional Services group?

Informally

- The Underground:
 - Word of Mouth
 - Former Colleagues, team-mates
 - On-line Networking: Linked-In,
 - Professional Associations



The Interview

- Be Comfortable
 - Dress for Success
 - 1st Impressions do count – **Blink Theory**
- Be prepared
 - **Know your audience**
 - Listen to the question (s), while responding; are you being understood. Ask the interviewer if you have answered the question.
 - Answer questions appropriately, there may be more than one answer
- Are you interviewing for the Job you applied for?
 - During the interview process, try to discern if the role you are interviewing for is what you have applied for, if not. **Ask for Clarification.**
 - Are your skills what they want? Opportunity to “market” yourself.



Interview Learnings

- YOU are interviewing “THEM” to see if there is a **FIT**
- Research the company you are applying to,
- If you know who will be interviewing you, try to get some background information if you can.
- Ask questions, ensure that you get the information you need
 - The project & expectations (eg Over-time, etc)
 - Business acumen of the individuals on the team
 - Value-Add of the project in the grand scheme of things (Business/Company)
 - Expectations of the role, Success Factors
 - Don't be afraid to comment on what you will not accept/tolerate
 - Don't blind side the interviewer (be able to speak to your efficiencies & why you are the best person for the role, as well, acknowledge your inefficiencies and how you will manage these)
- If during the interview, you recognize it is not what you would want to do, and the fit isn't right for you, you have 2 options:
 - Follow-through with your BEST intent (practice your interview skills)
 - Terminate the interview.
- **Rates – The more \$\$ you make, the higher the expectations – can you deliver & manage**



Success

- CONGRATULATIONS! You've made it to the 2nd round
 - Ask yourself if you REALLY want the job
 - if you don't, politely communicate this to the employer
 - Don't allow the marketer to "talk you into" taking the job.
 - If you are passionate, and excited about the opportunity, this will be evident.
 - People like to work with people who are motivated, excited & passionate about what they are doing.
 - Communicate any planned vacations, time-off requirements up front
- References
 - Ask your references if you can use them 1st inform them on the type of position
 - Ensure that YOU know what your reference can comment on
 - (positive & improvements)



Money Talks - Considerations

- If going through a marketer, not appropriate to talk about Rate with the end client -
 - marketer should have taken care of that, you **negotiate with the Marketer, not the client.**
 - discuss policy around contract extensions, and your rate expectations to see if they are in alignment with the Recruiting Company's procedures
- If not going through a marketer, let the interviewer bring up salary ranges / rates
 - Typically, not in the 1st round of interviews.
 - Know your worth, know your salary ranges.
 - If possible, find out how the company ranks comparatively to market value, know how they are doing financially.
 - Salary isn't just monetary value, think about Vacation Time, Benefits, Life / Work balance, Employee Education/Growth programs, learning organization

INTERVIEWER





Non-QA Background

- What kind of QA/QC Analyst?
 - How do you decipher exactly what they need for the project to be successful?
- Job Descriptions
 - Chinese buffet syndrome
- Environment culture
 - Importance of FIT, TEAM dynamics, SDLC
- Experience
 - What level is required for the JOB?
 - Over qualified – should they be hired?



Logistics

- Resume Review's
 - Is there time to READ the resume vs Key Words DB?
- - Fluff vs Substance
 - Identify achievements vs generalities with each position
 - Career development portrayed?
- Congruity
 - Are there gaps? WHY?
- Validate references
- Certifications & what they really mean



Short List

- Phone Interview Process
 - Why do a Phone interview?
 - Challenges
 - Benefits
- Types of Questions & Why
 - Resume Questions
 - Text book questions
 - Technology questions
 - Comprehension questions
 - Behavioural questions



The Interview

- Interview Process at Client Site
 - You're the **FACE** of the Company
 - Who is interviewing & how many?
 - Individual vs Panel Interviews
- Types of Questions & Why
 - General QA/QC knowledge questions – are they who they say they are
 - Text book questions – put them at ease
 - Technology questions – are they technical enough
 - Comprehension questions – siphon out the generalist
 - Situational questions – how they think / work
 - Behavioural questions – how they think / work



Sabina's Interview- Learnings

- People
 - Eager to Please
 - Perception plays a big part in successful candidate
- Experience
 - Perhaps a little stretched
 - Not clearly communicated in text book questions... need to know HOW, WHY, IMPACT of activity
- Communication
 - Hard communicators
 - Various communication styles
 - Cultural communication styles
- Thinking
 - Is how they think important for the role?



Sabina's Interview- Learnings

- Fit / behavioural
 - Very important for success in a project / company
 - Can't teach behaviour/FIT
- Phone vs physical
 - Sometimes takes a while to understand communication style
- Position
 - Very important to understand the role to enable both customers to be successful.
- Feedback / follow-up
 - Important and courteous to let people know where they stand, how can improve, what you think they're good at & should go for.

Questions

- ???