



My QA Career

WHAT'S NEXT? LINDA MCINNIS

My QA career

- Started life out of college as a Hardware Technical Writer (because I had a typing/editing business in college)
- Transitioned to firmware and software (because I knew how to spell)
- SQA as result of writing a manual and finding more bugs than anyone else
- QA Engineer → Project Leader → Manager → Director → VP → Consultant-QA Engineer

Where is QA now?

- There are QA jobs but..
 - There is increased competition from off shore
 - Change in hiring managers and HR expertise level
 - Age, credit history, body image, medical history and other discrimination barriers actively practiced in the workplace
 - Downward salary spiral
 - Escalating skill requirements

Where is QA going

- Manual testing needs are slowing
- Automated testing are accelerating
- Analyst jobs have cropped up this year
- QA Programmers are cropping up
- Dual subject experts are in demand (ex. Finance & QA)
- Contract versus “Permanent” employment

The Good News

- Things are getting better
- In fact, older workers, those between 55 and 64 had the lowest overall unemployment rate at 6.6 percent, compared with 6.9 percent for over-65-year-olds, 7.6 percent for 45- to 54-year-olds, and 8 percent for 40- to 44-year-olds★
- Rising salaries & transportation costs are making off shoring less attractive

★Source: Forbes, Jan. 9 2011 and the Bureau of Labor Statistics

Where do I go from here?

- Stay in QA
- Leave QA



How to decide

Should I stay?

or

Should I go?

- Is there at least 1 day a week where you accomplished something
- Do you still get a charge out of finding a bug?
- Do you like the people you work with?
- Do you feel your work matters?

- Every day is a struggle
- The money is bad
- You don't like the people you work with or for
- You've had several jobs in a row that have been the same
- You'd rather be doing something else



How to keep your Job

eHow:

- Learn as many jobs as possible at your place of employment. Make yourself as useful to the company as you possibly can. Let your managers or employer know you want to learn. Train for things outside your scope of what you already do.
- Be involved. Volunteer when it comes to things like fundraisers and any other type of company events. Show that you think the company is important to you.
- Keep a positive attitude. With your co-workers, with customers, always appear positive and pleasant. Stay out of office gossip and any other form of negativity.
- Be there. Get to work on time or early every day. Don't miss work for stupid reasons. In other words, be dependable, and it will greatly increase your value to your employer

Fortune Magazine

- 1. Create successes for yourself.
- 2. Set 30-day and 60-day goals..
- 3. Watch your attitude.
- 4. Keep your network active.
- 5. Update your skills.
- 6. Make sure your work serves the larger goals of the organization.
- 7. For now, forget about work-life balance.
- 8. Take a hard look at your finances.
- 9. Never badmouth anyone.
- 10. Remember, in the knowledge economy, you are the product.



Explore other fields

Technical

- Tech Soup
- Local orgs
- Government agencies
- Tech Support
- Tech Writing
- Build and release

Non-technical

- Food pantries
- Habitat
- Non-profits
- Service businesses
- Regulatory
- Sales



Keep your job and prepare for the future

Feel the fear

- Get your financial house in order-so panic is minimized
- 6 months salary in the bank

Start to turn the Titanic

- Assess your skills
- Look at interests

Assess Your Skills

- Can you use an automated tool?
 - You can download for free many tools: QTP, Selenium, and get your feet wet
- Is there an area outside of QA that you are good at or studied in the past (Accounting, Life Sciences, Physics)
- Do you know a web technology? HTML, javascript, css



Skills: Make two lists

Things I can do today

- Write and execute test plans
- Accurately plan a project
- A little visual basic
- Some HTML
- I'm very good organizing volunteer activities

Have examples of each skill available

Things I would like to do

- QuickTestPro
- A scripting language
- A blog

Are the skills you have and want saleable?

- Do some searches on job boards for keywords in you existing skills list and you desired skills list

skill	# of jobs	Level of interest
QTP	149	2
blog	43	3



Fill in the gaps

Free

- Use Job Networking groups to create buddy groups if you need support
- Self-study if not

Inexpensive

- Adult Ed/ed2go.com
- Community college
- MIT Open Courseware
- W₃C Web schools



The Future

- What do you want to be when you grow up?
- If money were not a concern how would you spend your days?
- Would you chose QA or something else?



Thank You!!!

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Resources

What's Next in My QA Career

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What's Next

When you're faced with looking at a career change it can be exciting, terrifying and uplifting all at the same time. This Resource guide contains some tools that have helped me along the road and I hope will help you.

Something that has helped me over the years is to cut out quotes and put them in my wallet for the dark times. Here are a few, I carry with me.

You are perfect as you are.

You are loved and treasured by your family and friends.



Websites

http://www.whatsnext.com/	Midlife career change
http://www.linkedin.com/	Networking to see who's where
http://www.ed2go.com	Inexpensive online courses

Books

What's Next? Follow Your Passion and Find Your Dream Job by Kerry Hannon

The Job Hunters Survival Guide: How to find a job Even When "There Are No Jobs" by Richard Bolles

How to find Your Mission In Lfe by Richard Bolles

The Three Boxes of Life and How to Get Out of Them by Ricard Bolles

Networking sites /Groups

Groups	When they meet	URLS
	<i>Undergraduate</i>	
WIND	Wednesdays	http://www.windnetworking.net/index.html
Acton Networking	Fridays	http://www.actonnetworkers.com/index.html
Soc. Professional Consultabts	197	http://www.spconsultants.org/

Source: Linda McInnis

Master List by Geogaphy

<http://www.job-hunt.org/job-search-networking/job-search-networking.shtml>

Tools to Find Your Next job - What Interests you?

<p>What Have I always wanted to do</p>	<p>What I might do if the price was right</p>
<p>What I might do if it were a stepping stone to something I really wanted to do</p>	<p>What have I never wanted to do</p>

What Interests You Example

<p>What Have I always wanted to do</p> <p><i>Fly aircraft</i> <i>Help people</i> <i>Use my hands</i> <i>Use my experiences to help people improve their lives</i> <i>Hike the Appalachian Trail</i> <i>Take a train across Europe & Asia</i> <i>Become a hypnotist</i></p>	<p>What I might do if the price was right</p> <p>Take an experimental drug Re-locate to England, Australia or Continental Europe</p>
<p>What I might do if it were a stepping stone to something I really wanted to do</p> <p>Become a Radiological technician</p>	<p>What have I never wanted to do</p> <p>Manage Software Development team</p>

What do you like or dislike in your current job? Fill out this list daily for 2 weeks

Like	Don't like

Interest – Job Description Matching Checklist

As a result of your research into your interests, develop a list of those interests. For example, you've decided to stay in QA for the next year and these are the things you like to do:

- Javascript
- Writing test cases
- Writing bugs
- Building the product
- Web

Then go on to figure out how much of your day you want to spend doing each activity and your list will look like:

- Javascript (3 hours)
- Writing test cases (8 hours)
- Writing bugs (1 hour)
- Building the product (5 hours)
- Web (4 hours)

This will give you a relative preference of the activity (and some good questions for the interview).

Next, go to your favorite job sites and type those terms in for a job search.

Example:

QA, develop test cases, javascript, web and your location



The image shows a screenshot of the Monster job search interface. The search bar is filled with the text "QA", "develop test cases, javascript, web", and "01778, Wayland, MA". The "SEARCH" button is visible. The interface is purple and white.

One of the jobs found:

Senior SQA Engineer - Platform

Job Title: Senior SQA Engineer - Platform
Location: Cambridge, MA or Santa Barbara, CA
Reporting: SQA Manager
Status: Full time
Travel: 10%-15%

For the right individual, Sonos will offer relocation reimbursement to our Cambridge, MA or Santa Barbara, CA offices.

General Summary:

The Sonos Platform team seeks an experience, motivated, and talented test engineer to help test the internal applications supporting the Sonos Multi-Room Music System. The position requires a unique blend of skills and an aptitude for testing multi-tiered systems that include embedded devices making web service API calls, application servers receiving and applying business logic to the calls, databases storing the raw data from the calls, and data warehouses and reporting tools. This is a great position for someone who loves diverse technologies and modern architectures.

The ideal candidate will delight in both breaking down systems and testing at each level, and in designing end-to-end tests that verify real world use cases. The candidate will have total ownership over the testing for a given project or feature. They will be responsible for estimations based on high-level specifications. They will be responsible for test case and plan design, and then documentation, automation, and execution. They will be responsible for results reporting and for issue reporting.

They will be required to provide an objective assessment of product quality based on appropriate criteria and conformance to standards. They must be detail oriented, able to work autonomously, and communicate clearly with a variety of groups such as software development, customer support, and project management.

The position is in either our Santa Barbara, CA or Cambridge, MA office.

Responsibilities:

- Design test plans and test cases for API, functional, and end-to-end testing
- Provide accurate estimates for documenting, automating, and executing test plans and test cases
- Execute and augment API, functional, and end-to-end test plans and test cases
- Automate test cases using web service testing tools, python scripts, and shell scripts
- Capture, analyze, and report defects using the defect tracking system
- Report test results and summary defects for technical and non-technical audiences
- Regression test and close out resolved issues
- Provide technical feedback to product management and development.
- Review, update, and expand internal instructional documentation
- Participate in Agile burn down project tracking that requires you provide estimates and report time spent daily.

Experience and Skills:

More senior engineers with appropriate experience and responsibilities will be considered.

- Experience as a manual and automated test engineer (at least 3 years combined).
- Experience testing web services using automated tools such as soapUI, JMETER, or Selenium
- Experience testing databases using SQL queries.
- Experience using and testing applications on Linux/Unix, Windows, and Mac operating systems.
- Experience with some or all of the following languages and technologies: C++ or C#, Python, PHP, XML and XSL, Web Services, JavaScript, Unix/Linux shell scripts.
- Understanding of home networking: TCP/IP, DHCP, DNS, 802.11x wireless protocol, home routers.
- Experience using packet sniffers to analyze network traffic.
- Responsible, team-oriented, self-starter, proactive.
- Excellent analytical and troubleshooting skills.
- Excellent verbal and written communications skills.
- A love of music and consumer electronics.

Desirable:

- Experience doing performance testing include load and duration tests
- Experience testing consumer devices such as access points, mobile phones, network-enabled TVs, tablets, or other network connected devices
- BS/BA in Computer Science or equivalent experience.