



Erik van Veenendaal

Become a TMMi Professional

Column

The times they are a-changing

I have been involved in the test training market in various roles for over 20 years. Clearly something has changed in recent years. Although I have not done a detailed and full market survey, I've however seen and studied much data from various perspectives. In the test training market around 90 % of the volume is currently attributed to training courses that are part of a formal certification scheme. It even seems that this percentage is growing. Whether that is good or bad, I don't really know but it is a reality in today's test training market. Due to the current economic situation training budgets are under pressure and it seems many organizations are only prepared to invest in courses if that raises their testers' profile.

Certification benefits

There are of course some clear benefits to attending a training course where one at the end takes an exam, (hopefully) passes and receives a certificate:

- Enabling professionally certified testers to be recognized by employers, customers and peers;
- Raising the profile of certified testers and their organization;
- Showing to a (prospective) employer that one is a professional tester.

There is also something else; I have run many courses over the years and attendees in certification course are almost always more eager. They actively participate in discussions, exercises and even take homework for the next course day. Of course all of this implies that more learning takes place, making the investment in a certification based training course much more effective. This is all true provided the course is not run as one big exam preparation exercise, which unfortunately sometimes happens.

In addition test certification schemes generally promote consistent and good testing practices. This is important for many reasons, including international communication, sharing of knowledge and resources. It also raises the recognition for testing as an essential and professional engineering discipline and provides career paths.

ISTQB

Of course the clear market leader when it come to test certification is the International Software Testing Qualifications Board (ISTQB) (www.istqb.org). World-wide there are almost 300,000 testers certified by ISTQB distributed over Foundation and Advanced level. The number of certified ISTQB testers is growing at a rate of approximately 12,000 per quarter. Another test certification scheme that needs mentioning is Certified Agile Tester (CAT) scheme (www.agile-tester.org). It had a very slow start but now seems to be taken off and has a huge growth rate. The IREB scheme in the area of requirements engineering (www.certified-re.de/en) is another example of a popular and growing certification schemes (see figure 1). Although in the area of requirements engineering, many tester take the IREB Requirements Engineering Foundation level course to enhance and broaden their knowledge.

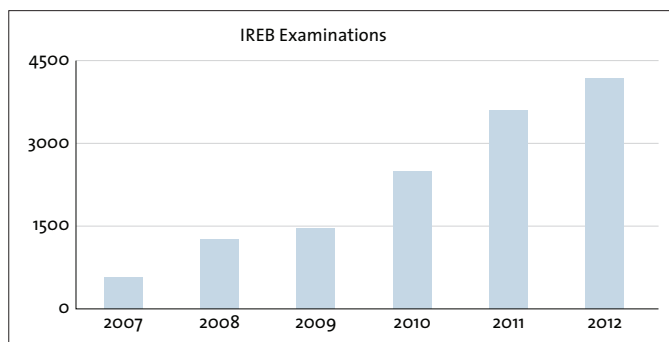


Figure 1. Number of Examination IREB scheme

Now at Agile software development in Vegas and again many of the tutorials/courses are on certification: Certified ScrumMaster, ISTQB Foundation, Product Owner Certification, Fundamental of Agile Certification, Agile Tester Certification. It's not just the testing industry that is looking for certification, even the agile community has embraced certification.

TMMi Professional

In the context of the above a new certification scheme has recently been launched by the TMMi Foundation (www.tmmi.org). The Test Maturity Model integration (TMMi) is an independent test maturity model that has rapidly become the world-wide standard for test process improvement. With the TMMi model being fully released since spring last year [1], soon thereafter the market was asking to certify TMMi (test) professionals. The TMMi Foundation has published the TMMi Professional syllabus [2] that identifies the following business outcome for those attending a recognized TMMi training course and passing the exam:

- Explain to management the business importance of test process improvement
- Guide and advice an organization or project when using the TMMi model as a basis for their test process improvement
- Provide support in the interpretation and understanding of the TMMi model, including the relationship of the TMMi to the CMMI model
- Act as a co-assessor in informal TMMi assessments
- Participate in programs for improving the test process within an organization or project and can identify critical success factors

The TMMi Professional qualification is aimed at anyone involved in using the TMMi model. This includes people in roles such as test process improvers, test consultants, TMMi (lead-)assessors, business stakeholders, test managers, and members of a Test Process Group. The TMMi Professional qualification is appropriate for anyone who wants a basic understanding of the TMMi model.

TMMi assessors

Holders of the TMMi Professional Certificate will also be able to demonstrate a level of knowledge required as a prerequisite to become an accredited TMMi lead-assessor or assessor. (Lead-)assessors can only become formally accredited by the TMMi Foundation, if they show sufficient knowledge on the TMMi model (see table 1). This knowledge can be gathered by means of practical experience or through participating in a TMMi Professional training and passing the exam. As one can observe from the table of course TMMi knowledge and skills is not the only area of expertise required to become a certified TMMi (lead-)assessor, but it is of course an essential one.

Assessor Accreditation Criteria		
Area of expertise	Lead assessor	Assessor
Testing	A minimum of five years of experience in different kinds of testing and in different types of organizations. Shall be ISTQB Advanced certified.	A minimum of five years of experience in different kinds of testing and in different types of organizations. Shall be ISTQB Foundation certified.
Test Process Improvement	A minimum of two years of experience, in which two years of experience in software process improvement equals one year of experience in test process improvement.	A minimum of one year of experience, in which two years of experience in software process improvement equals one year of experience in test process improvement.
TMMi	Holds TMMi Professional certificate.	Holds TMMi Professional certificate.
Assessments	Attended assessment training and has at least 20 days of assessment experience.	Attended assessment training and has at least 10 days of assessment experience.

Table 1. Assessor Accreditation Criteria

TMMi Professional Examination

The format of the TMMi Professional exam is multiple-choice. Exams may be taken as part of a training course or independently (e.g., an on-line exam at an examination center or in a public exam). Completion of a training course is therefore not a pre-requisite for the exam. The exam comprises of 40 multiple-choice questions and a score of at least 65 % (26 or more points) is required to pass. Recently the TMMi Foundation has recently signed contracts with both two professional and well-known examination bodies (International Software Quality Institute (ISQI) and British Computer Society (BCS)), to run the exams world-wide as.

Erik van Veenendaal
Brian Wells



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Get on board

The market for test training has changed in recent years and the TMMi Foundation has recognized this. A new certification has been launched and is now fully operational. If you are involved in improving test processes in whatever way, this could well be something for you to consider.

References

- [1] E. van Veenendaal and B. Wells (2012), *Test maturity Model integration (TMMi) – Guidelines for Test Process Improvement*, UTN Publishers (www.utn.nl)
- [2] TMMi Foundation (2013), *TMMi Professional – TMMi model training*, www.tmmi.org

> about the author

Erik van Veenendaal (www.erikvanveenendaal.nl) is a leading international consultant and trainer, and a widely recognized expert in the area of software testing and quality management. He is the founder of Improve Quality Services BV (www.improveqs.nl). He holds the EuroSTAR record, winning the best tutorial award three times! In 2007 he received the European Testing Excellence Award for his contribution to the testing profession over the years. He has been working as a test manager and consultant in various domains for more than 20 years. He has written numerous papers and a number of books, including “Practical Risk-Based Testing: The PRISMA Approach” and “ISTQB Foundations of Software Testing”. He one of the core developers of the TMap testing methodology and a participant in working parties of the International Requirements Engineering Board (IREB). Erik is also a former part-time senior lecturer at the Eindhoven University of Technology, vice-president of the International Software Testing Qualifications Board (2005–2009) and currently board member of the TMMi Foundation. You can follow Erik on twitter via @ErikVeenendaal.