



How iXie stayed ahead of the competition and transitioned to a dedicated QA Vendor

Application:

Casual Match 3 Puzzle Game

Services Offered:

PlayTest and Functional Testing

Tools:

JIRA

Key Highlights

Key Success:

Successfully transitioned services from a competitive vendor into a dedicated QA partner in challenges timelines. Established a fully armed team to handle the breadth of QA requirements including project management and mature communication methods. Deployed a 30-member Functional Testing Team in less than 4 weeks.

Businesses and organizations face economic and operational uncertainty across every industry and sector. The gaming industry had to respond a little differently from others going through market withdrawals. The pandemic and its lockdown measures have emerged to be a boon to the video games industry as user engagement with video games spirals. The result is that the global gaming industry is expected to reach a value of \$170 billion by the end of 2020, exceeding previous forecasts by as much as 50%. The number of games in the making was mounting and there was very good response. This is a story straight from our Gaming Delivery Center at iXie, on bagging a Global Game Title for a long-term engagement, winning over a strong competitor.

Our client, a global Game Developer, was creating a whimsy puzzle game (Casual Match 3 Game). The game was produced on a grand scale, adventure packed, featuring AI to test the game completion viabilities and so on. iXie was one of their QA vendors dedicated to conducting Playtest for this title.

When COVID struck, with a bunch of vendors involved, arrangement of remote Dev and QA engagements were initiated, and in few weeks a particular project management metric flagged red. The Functional QA arm (handled by a vendor) appeared disloyal to productivity, a critical sentiment before a big release (probably the remote setup caused a slack in engagement).

The client is a popular name with access to millions of players for their games in the past; and no stakes on release quality were to be compromised at that juncture. In a quick response to the negative throughput for Functional QA, the client chose iXie to take over the comprehensive Functional Testing alongside Playtest. iXie's professional project management and high standards in reports earned it the confidence of its client and took over the complete assignment from multi-vendor to iXie only.

1 Reset Project – QA

iXie had a successful record executing the playtest engagement through a 20-member team equipped with advanced knowledge of game experiences. From this point, extending the QA engagement to Functional Testing would be seamless, in view of the knowledge on game mechanics and business/technical requirements. While that is a major positive, the challenge was to employ/replace an entire team for Functional Testing. Did iXie have the capacity for this sudden drastic change? No. It was time to evaluate the options available and revise the action plan.

There was only one goal: Embrace and Execute the client's vision for game quality.

2 Challenges

- » Achieve 100% productivity with optimized time for recovery of the QA function (the previous vendor provided 30-35% productivity)
- » Deploy a 30-member Functional Testing Team in less than 4 weeks. Build a ready-to-deploy team, prepared for the vendor transition dynamics, and face up to the remote working model
- » Develop a roadmap for broadening the scope of QA
 - o Plan for sharing working resources and knowledge
 - o Extend Test Process for Functional Test Reporting
- » Identify options to find the right talent and onboard them into the operating team

3 Building the Team: Evaluating Capabilities and Rejigging Organization

iXie pivoted on building capabilities by profiling the current team and appraising skill fulfillment needs. Productivity being the winning theme for the transition, iXie geared up to assume no delay in starting the process. The first share of Functional Testing team was shifted from the Playtest team. Playtest skills are niche, however with iXie's Game Training Academy (IGTA) – every employee undergoes a foundational training of the full suite of game testing services across functional, compatibility, mobile and project delivery/communication skills.

4 Extended Service Capabilities in the new normal

In a conscious response to committed deliverables & productivity in a (fully) remote environment, iXie extended their Business Continuity plan through a top-down approach led by the organization Quality Control Group. The remote working approach was a keynote in the engagement roadmap.

Highlights:

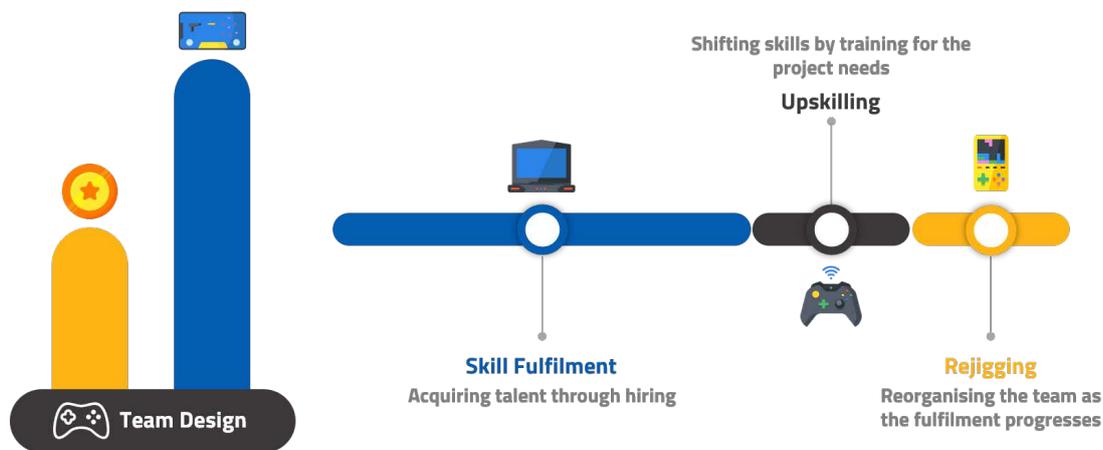
- » Enabled WFH for all employees via secure infrastructure and network.
- » The IT team, the chief custodian of remote working operations ensured availability of laptops, testing device inventory and spares for the working employees and for the forecasted delivery requirements.

- » Extended working hours and keeping up the confidence
- » Remote training and daily reviews

The project began with training and developing a 20-member team (transpired progressively from 10-20+ team in weeks' time) for a rigorous course of functional testing process, defect reporting standards and leading the verification of functional requirements. This was led by team Leads from within the organization, at **no cost to the client**. At the end of week 2, a team of junior test engineers transformed into Functional Testers fully accountable and confident of running a sprint. A resource repository of Game Requirements and QA Skills were saved and centralized for potential team expansion.

5 Ramping up the team and organizing for efficiency

While the team was building up with the best resources from within the organization, iXie's talent fulfillment center set out to design the team into reassured structures. The basis of team design was to distribute in order of experience and complementary skills. **The team lead oversees the project metrics, resource management and delivery. The Test Engineers function collaboratively on quality engineering.**



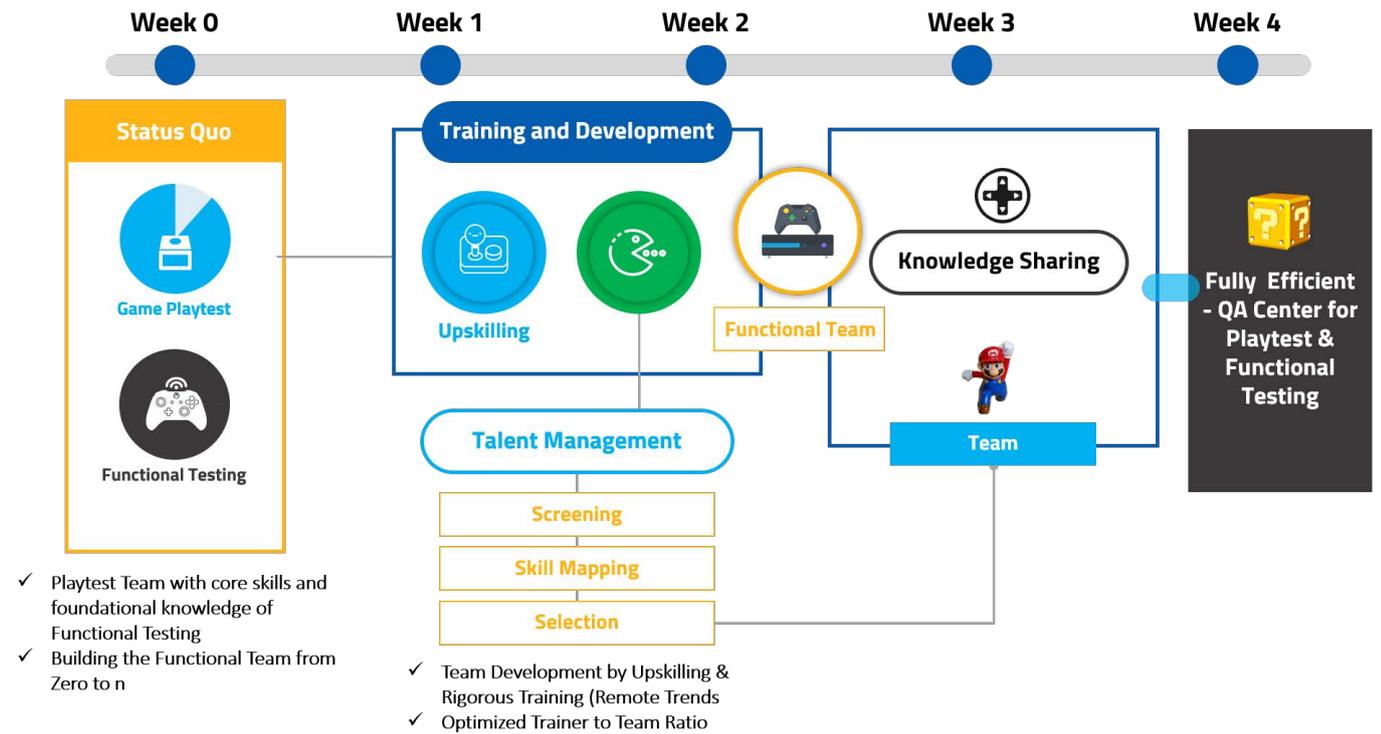
One-third of the team was deployed and demonstrated results from the first couple of sprints. The team embraced the working process of the client and delivered on expectation. The pursuit of skills from the market progressed in a remote setup, screening based on a definite set of requirements and tactical evaluation of project management and leadership skills.

The final team was a formed by logical restructuring of the skills based on the team design. Productivity metrics and Test Cycle Optimization findings are a direct feedback in the process of continuous improvement. iXie is a dedicated QA partner today for functional QA and a comprehensive set of quality requirements, with a competitive edge.

6 Value Additions

- » Analysed the operational needs due to transition and successfully deployed a 30-member team with complete processes and infrastructure in place
- » **Service flexibility:** Proactively evaluated the real time utilization data and time zone coverage needs to plan and operate round the clock Maintained an active repository of project artifacts and knowledge assets that helped in faster onboarding of team
- » Rigorous training and hands-on assessment of team skills by iXie project champions, with no cost to the client. The effort was an investment from iXie's management in return for a trusted relationship with the client
- » iXie became a dedicated vendor and a long-term QA partner in a timeline of 1 month

Achieved 100% productivity with dynamic team employment and minimal knowledge transition times



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