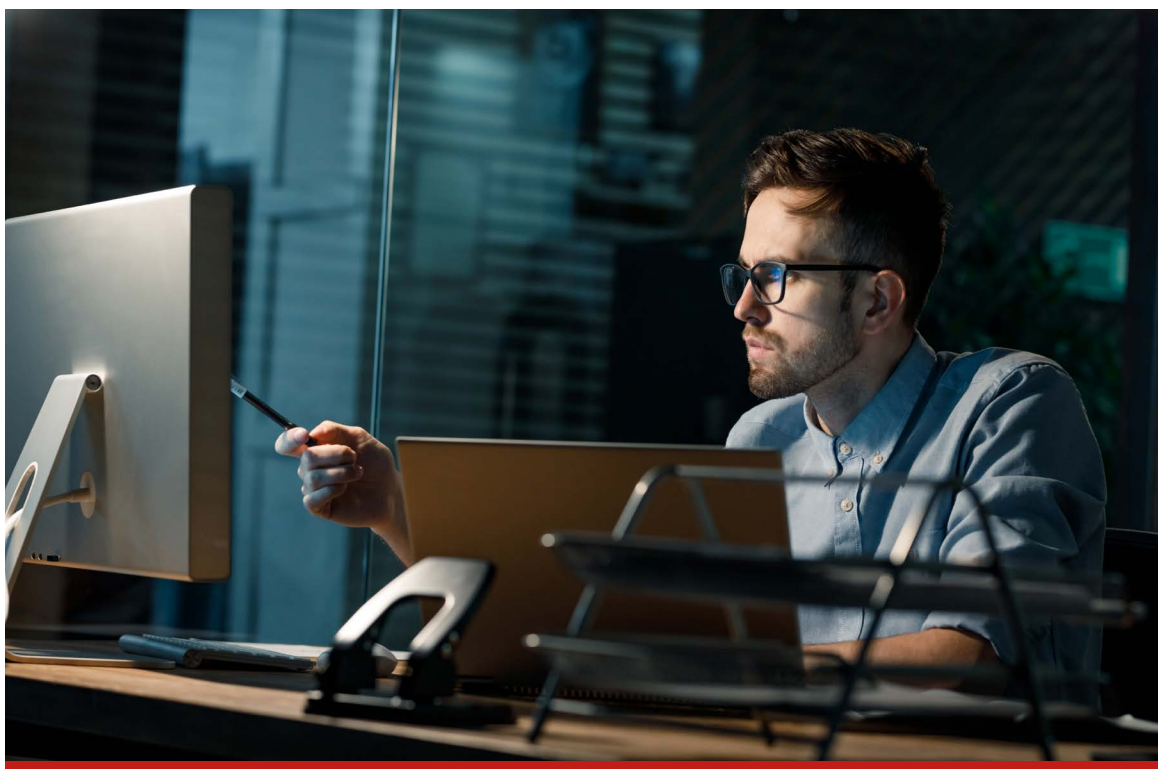PHOTO BY ALTITUDE VISUAL

Quality assured: third-party testing banishes bugs, speeds delivery, saves money and safeguards reputations

The IT ecosystem is vast. It drives productivity across organisations of all sizes and sectors, yet almost all organisations release flawed software. Some 95% release software with 'severe undetected bugs'.

Such errors are costly – putting finances and reputations at risk.

According to research from Foundry and Acutest, most testing is conducted in-house by people who lack

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the right expertise. Yet securing third-party support could avoid costly mistakes.

Acutest commissioned the survey to explore the state of software and technology testing, discover how much companies invest in it, the types of testing conducted and the role of internal versus external testers. The survey also explored the quality of software released and the financial and reputational costs of getting it wrong.

We surveyed 109 respondents across various sectors, including financial services, transportation, telecommunications and healthcare. Respondents were from companies of various sizes, from 250 to 100,000 employees.

Uncovering the state of testing

Almost all organisations release products and services with severe bugs. Our survey found that 95% of organisations release software with severe undetected bugs.

There are negative consequences for organisations that release buggy

Almost all organisations surveyed (95%), release software with 'severe undetected bugs'.

software, and companies pay a high price financially and reputationally.

Negative consequences of buggy software reported by respondents include:

- **Application downtime (51%)**

- **Application performance issues (46%)**

- **Delayed product releases (39%)**

- **An increase in operating costs (33%)**

- **Loss of customer data (26%)**

- **Loss of customers/clientele (26%)**

- **Loss of intellectual property (20%)**

- **Negative press/brand degradation (17%)**

Only 1% of respondents told us they didn't experience any negative consequences due to releasing software with severe bugs.

Organisations need to get their (in) house in order

The survey found most testing is in-house, ranging from a high of 72% of testing done in-house for accessibility testing, to 48% at the low end for load testing.

The survey demonstrated that in-house teams lack the relevant expertise, with organisations classing just a third of overall testers as

More than one-third of organisations are turning to **external testers to tackle emergencies**

experts (34% in stress and security testing). At the bottom end, only 18% of testers are considered experts for acceptance testing.

Budgets are small and stretched too tight across multiple testing areas. Almost half of the organisations surveyed commit less than 20% of

development budgets to testing. That 20% is stretched thin across a broad range of testing areas, including stress testing, security testing, sanity testing, usability testing, performance testing, integration testing, accessibility testing, end-to-end testing and more.
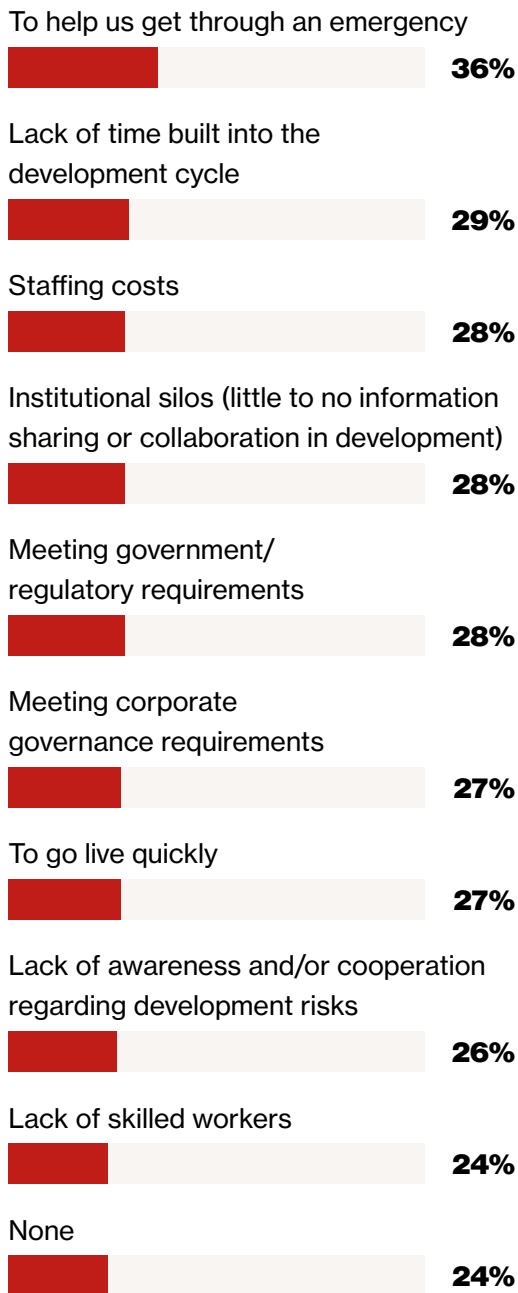
The test of time...

Skimping on budgets is a false economy, given the cost of remediation and the potential loss of clientele and reputation. Yet, companies are only calling on third-party suppliers when it is almost too late.

Our survey reveals that slightly over one-third (36%) bring in third parties in an emergency. The second most cited trigger for engaging third-party testers was running out of time.

Conversely, 68% of those surveyed either agree or strongly agree that spending more time testing improves the quality of their IT deliverables, making a case to bring in expertise earlier in the development cycle.

There is also an argument that many are not spending enough time testing during the product development lifecycle. Those with an emergency are twice as likely to have used con-

Figure 1 |

**Triggers for hiring
a testing consultancy**

To help us get through an emergency

36%

Lack of time built into the
development cycle

29%

Staffing costs

28%

Institutional silos (little to no information
sharing or collaboration in development)

28%

Meeting government/
regulatory requirements

28%

Meeting corporate
governance requirements

27%

To go live quickly

27%

Lack of awareness and/or cooperation
regarding development risks

26%

Lack of skilled workers

24%

None

24%

SOURCE: FOUNDRY

tractors with their testing, perhaps revealing a false sense of confidence in their in-house capability to test. Those who experienced emergencies during a project reported spending more of the overall budget on testing. But a testing budget spent effectively can avoid last minute emergencies.

The rules of engagement

Working with an expert testing organisation will reduce bugs. To get the best out of your third-party provider, engage them early in the process, and use them to supplement and upskill existing in-house resources.

Engaging early can help to make the most of restricted budgets and avoid last-minute emergencies – and additional costs – because you are hiring the right expertise from the get-go. External experts can find defects early, prevent last-minute emergencies and ensure that you focus effort and, therefore, budget on the most critical areas.

A third-party review also provides an independent assessment of your assurance techniques. More than half of organisations surveyed feel having independent evaluators review their software is very important.

How can Acutest help you?

Acutest offers strategic support and best-in-class testing approaches.
Together, we can shape your goals, improve your testing capability
and confidence and deliver success.

Acutest brings a wealth of experience across a diversity of sectors.

Our highly skilled and experienced team members will work alongside
internal teams. They'll offer vital expertise and support at all stages of your
software development. Throughout the process, we'll upskill your teams, too.

Bulletproof change governance

Ensure your go-to-market solutions are fully planned, tested effectively
and fit for purpose at every stage.

Accelerate innovation

Speed up testing, prioritise
coverage and reduce resources
to quicken the pace of change
and project completion.

Reduce project deployment costs

By shortening the timeline and
finding risks sooner, we streamline
delivery to reduce the total cost
of your projects. ◆

For more information

www.trustmarque.com/acutest

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