

Automation testing skills define the future

In 2016, the global test automation market was valued at around \$US16bn. In a study done by Zion Market Research, the company also predicted that this market will reach \$US55bn by 2022 with a compound annual growth rate of just over 23% from 2017.



Driven by digital transformation and measurable benefits to business and process, the test automation market is seeing steady growth. However, according to Mandla Mbonambi, founding CEO of Africonology, there is a critical need to invest in new skill sets to make local adoption of automated testing a more impactful reality.

“It is essential that we invest into multiskilling on the use of automation testing tools to ignite digital transformation and the adoption of automated testing in South Africa,” he says. “Manual testing is still a critical component of testing, it cannot be completely removed, but it cannot cater for the full project scope beyond the sanity testing stage. As DevOps continues to grow in popularity alongside Continuous Integration/Delivery, automation testing is becoming increasingly important and so are the skills that support it.”

South Africa is facing a significant skills shortage. Statistics point to a market that's lacking in education and has limited skills development. Organisations wrestle over the small pool of talent available while the young and the restless remain unemployed and untrained. It has never been more important for both the public and private sector to invest in skills development, especially in the areas of science, technology, engineering, and maths.



Innovation and automation critical in race to digitisation

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“To build these skill sets in the African market, companies, and universities can only align by collaborating with one another,” he adds. “It is time to create opportunity and expand capability through innovative projects that address existing challenges and inspire students to come up with solutions. Universities and schools must emphasise the qualities of creativity and innovation to prepare the workforce of tomorrow.”

That said, there has been a significant increase in test automation skills development in the industry as a whole. Most testing professionals are acquiring the knowledge and capability required to embrace the full potential of testing automation as they recognise the need to remain relevant in the digital transformation era.

“Organisations should invest into continuous training and innovation,” Mbonambi concludes. “This will ensure that they stay ahead of the technology curve while endorsing a culture that embraces ongoing skills development and career growth. The result of this focus will be a marked increase in their testing capability while giving them the skills base they need to take advantage of the potential that automation testing offers.” says Mbonambi.

Those organisations that miss the skills development boat will struggle to locate the talent required to kickstart their digital transformation plans and drive their automated testing goals. Without the right talent, their only option is to contract experienced test automation specialists at high cost and high talent turnover.

By investing in training, both at the student and professional levels, the private sector is ultimately investing into a more sustainable and skilled workforce that will have a positive impact on the all-important bottom line.

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