Elena Savinova

Engineering Manager | Quality & Developer Experience Leadership

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Summary

Engineering leader with 15+ years of experience in software development and quality engineering. Proven track record in leading multi-national, distributed teams in fast-paced environments. Adept at driving engineering excellence, embedding data-driven decision making, setting strategic direction and fostering inclusive and high-performing team cultures. Skilled at balancing technical quality, accelerating product delivery through automation, tooling and mentoring engineers to achieve their full potential.

Core Competencies

Engineering Leadership, Team management, Cross-functional collaboration, Quality strategy, Test automation, Developer experience, Hiring, Mentorship, Career Development, Goal setting, Performance Management, Static analysis, Release management, Shift Left, CI/CD, C#, Mercurial, Git, Fogbugz, JIRA, TestRail, NUnit, WebDriver, Playwright, Docker, Devcontainers, Deepsource, Test automation frameworks, Github actions, Grafana, Python (basic), Ruby (basic), AppScript (basic), Tableau

Experience

Babbel | Head of QA
September 2022 - Present, Berlin

- Set and executed a company-wide quality vision and strategy, partnering with product and engineering to embed a **quality-first culture** across 15+ teams.
- Scaled and led a global quality engineering organisation (4 direct reports, 25 total), implementing a formal career development framework, facilitating growth plans and mentoring engineers into senior and leadership roles.
- **Reduced mobile release cycle time by ~20%** by implementing a risk-based testing strategy with early-feedback loops.
- **Decreased bug backlog by 40% and MTTR by 30%** by standardising defect workflow, introducing **data-driven metrics**, SLAs, and actionable dashboards in Tableau to enable informed prioritization.
- Successfully **led cross-company coordination** for high-visibility projects like the rebrand, delivered on time with zero critical regressions.
- Introduced **static code analysis** and **quality gates** across 300+ repos**,** empowering product teams to iterate faster without sacrificing quality.
- Led a strategic Shift Left program, integrating testing as early as possible in the development lifecycle and redefined QA roles and processes.
- Oversaw hiring, headcount planning, and vendor management, ensuring the right talent and capacity for growth.
- Introduced devcontainer setup, **cutting environment setup time by 80%** and enabling faster, more consistent testing workflows.

Unity Technologies | Unity Engine | Quality Manager (Engineering Manager)
February 2021 - August 2022, Berlin
September 2015 - February 2021, Odesa

- Led three distributed teams of senior engineers in the platform and foundation areas.
- Created a student worker programme that converted 100% into successful full-time hires
- Introduced **Grafana dashboards** to track team metrics and insights on pull request velocity and bug trends, reinforcing a culture of continuous improvement across distributed teams.
- Partnered with the Developer Experience team to **stabilise test infrastructure** and reduce flaky test

incidents.
- Owned department-level quality strategy and worked directly with Engineering Directors on shared goals.
- Contributed to **cross-department hiring efforts**, including interview design and DEI initiatives.
- Represented Unity on forums and industry conferences in Eastern Europe.

Unity Technologies | Unity Engine | Software Developer in Test
July 2012 - September 2015, Odesa

- Developed internal frameworks and automated testing tools using C#, improving test coverage by 60% across several engine areas
- Drove early bug detection and developer education around testability and quality practices.
- Organised company-wide bug bashes and internal game jams to encourage engagement with product testing.
- Acted as a customer advocate by relaying feedback from Unity's user forums into engineering priorities.

HP BSM & HP SiteScope | QA Engineer -> Automation Engineer
2008 - 2012, Odesa

- Designed and maintained test automation using Java, QTP, and in-house tools.
- Led test coverage efforts and collaborated with dev teams on release readiness.
- Implemented automation tools to replace repetitive manual test tasks.
- Managed service pack releases and post-release validation workflows.

Education

Odesa National University / Master's Degree in Theoretical Mechanics and Computer Science
2009, Odesa

Awards

Ciklum, Values Award