Between the mainstream adoption of agile practices and the growing DevOps movement, you may have noticed the word "continuous" popping up a lot: continuous integration, continuous testing, continuous delivery, continuous deployment.

In today's continuous-everything, app-centric world, test automation isn't a nice-to-have; it's a must-have. To stay competitive in the marketplace, organizations must automate as many tests as possible to release products as quickly as possible. To maintain an edge in the job market, testers must grow their technical skills to fit into this rapid-release, automated environment.

In this Test Automation eGuide

Bringing the Value of Your Test Automation Efforts Front and Center
Once you've adopted test automation, you should determine whether it's actually yielding the expected benefits—and you'll want to keep these benefits visible to stakeholders to reinforce the value. A metrics dashboard aligned with the organization goals and business objectives shows you're on the right track.

Why Your Test Automation Efforts Should Tackle Data First
Automation projects often start by tackling the technical issues, but Linda Hayes says a specific data environment should be established first. If you can't control, define, and predict your data, you won't have the repeatability that makes test automation practical—but it makes sense for manual testing, too.

Selenium: The Open Source, the Myth, the Legend
Many people wonder what it means that Selenium is open source, and further, what the community element of that paradigm brings to the table. This article addresses some of the common misconceptions about that situation, as well as details some of the benefits of the community behind a product like Selenium.

Automation That Learns: Making Your Computer Work for You
It's been suggested that because automation can only do checking, automation cannot learn. But if you're talking about the acquisition of knowledge through experience and study, Jeremy Carey-Dressler believes automation can, in fact, learn—with a tester adding some additional code to capture and analyze more available data.

The Top 5 Test Automation Mistakes
Test automation is a valuable process, but it can be difficult to integrate into your existing test strategy. Hundreds of people weighed in about the biggest mistakes they've made when automating. Here are five of the most popular answers—and advice on how we can stop repeating these mistakes.

The Buzz on Test Automation
Some of the industry's best and brightest share their thoughts on Test Automation and its role in agile, QA, and the shift to continuous integration and delivery.

Additional Resources for Test Automation
Invaluable resources to keep you, your organization, and your practices at the forefront of the Test Automation movement.

Bringing the Value of Your Test Automation Efforts Front and Center

By Michael Sowers

Sometimes, in order to get everyone on board with adopting test automation, you have to build a business case to highlight the potential benefits. Once you've convinced the organization to make that investment, you should determine whether it's actually yielding the predicted benefits—and you'll want to keep these benefits visible to key stakeholders to reinforce the value.

> *How do we frame the quantitative and qualitative benefits of test automation in a way that links to the organizational objectives and business goals?*

We tend to have many metrics in place to track the progress of testing and measure the degree of readiness or risks in our software products. These metrics include test effectiveness, software quality, test status, resources, issues, and so forth, but what about metrics for the test automation platform? How do we frame the quantitative and qualitative benefits of test automation in a way that links to the organizational objectives and business goals? This is an important element of planning and implementing our automation architecture.

One of the approaches that has worked well for organizations I've worked with is a test automation dashboard. A useful dashboard should reflect values that align with the organization and business goals, be agile and adaptable, and contain information that is actionable and meaningful, with just enough information that it's still easy to use and maintain.

It's important to design the dashboard at the beginning of your automation project in order to ensure that the approaches and tools you choose will yield the measures and metrics you need. Five dimensions will usually cover the range of information that the team and key stakeholders require, but of course you can trim or expand these to meet your needs:

Capabilities include the automation platform features, interface capabilities, integrations, types of systems under tests that are supported, and scripting languages supported.