



BDD with Cucumber

Training You Can Apply Instantly

When Canon Europe's Senior Manager, Yuan Shao, sent his team to learn Behaviour Driven Development with Cucumber he was able to see the benefits almost immediately. We caught up with him to find out more....

H

i Yuan, can you tell me a little bit about yourself and your team?

I work at Canon's European headquarters where we're responsible for Canon's operations across all of EMEA. I'm the senior manager in a small development team that develops applications for our customers, especially our very large customers. They come to us with requirements and we'll develop new software for them. We also develop some applications for our own internal use to help us deliver services for our customers.

I understand that before discovering Cucumber you were using Agile methods like Scrum and TDD. When did you decide to start practicing BDD?

With TDD we found there was sometimes a disconnect with the business requirements, and we wanted to find a way to properly align the requirements with the actual code. We have a Scrum master, but the product owner is from the business. We need to give them confidence that what we're developing actually reflects what the product owner wants. We'd heard

of BDD, so we decided to explore it.

OK, tell me a little bit about your first experience of BDD training with Cucumber. How did that go?

The really refreshing thing was there no slides! It kept everyone completely focussed. I often send the team for training and there's always lots of slides and you think - do we really need this? We're all technical people and we like to get involved. The other great thing is that the instructor didn't feel like he had to stick to a script. Everyone on the team really loved it.

CUSTOMER PROFILE

COMPANY

Canon Europe

NAME

Yuan Shao

POSITION

Senior Manager

So, it's quite hands-on and workshop based rather than classroom style? Lot's of doing as well as listening?

Yes, and it was also really flexible. We concentrated on things that are important and relevant for us. I always think that if the team can pick up one or two things that they can actually apply in their day-to-day work then training has been a success. And this was a big win because we started implementing BDD on a real project almost right away.

How did that work out? What sort of changes did you implement and how did they affect the project?

We had a new project to develop a web based application integrated with Microsoft Excel and we thought let's apply BDD to it. And because the training is very hands-on we knew right away what we needed to do, what steps we needed to take, and which order to do them in. Most importantly, I think BDD gives your project a solid start and clear direction for where you actually want to go.

Does your team use any CI tools or other DevOps practices? How does BDD fit in with what your team is already doing?

Yes, we use Atlassian tools like Jira and we have Bamboo and Bitbucket for CI. But, in terms of our whole DevOps strategy, BDD has really helped

us to bring all of these different things together. The team is really happy, everyone is motivated and the product owner is also pleased with the approach we've taken. That's given us a big lift.

Do you think BDD can help your team realise any other ambitions?

We're still not able to release software as quickly as we would like. We want to be able to push, maybe not every feature, but at least every sprint. We

haven't been able to do that up until now, but I say with confidence that BDD will allow us to do that very soon. And that would be huge - it means that the business can benefit from new features as soon as they're ready.

What advice would you give to someone like yourself who is considering BDD?

Just try it on one project, ideally a new one, and you'll see that BDD is about more than just

the software. It's about the people who make it, the culture of how you develop applications, and how you communicate with the rest of the business. BDD helps you to appreciate all the challenges you face, and it gives you the confidence to build higher quality software. Just try it!

Be like Yuan and send your team on training courses that count. Find out more by visiting our website:

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Yuan Shao Senior Manager,
Canon Europe.

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