

# Software Testing Case Study



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## Software Testers Academy Champions:

**Name:** Kieran Gallaher  
**Position:** Director of Quality Assurance

**Company:** NaviNet (Belfast)  
**Sector:** Healthcare

**Employees:** 250+ World Wide  
**Website:** www.navinet.net

***“At NaviNet, we employ the Lean Development Methodology whereby Development and Quality Assurance sit side by side in a diverse engineering team.”***

### My ‘Pathway’ into Testing

“Computers - how they work, and why has been something that I have been interested in, from an early age. I studied Computer Science at school and then at college.

“The course was an excellent introduction to the practical implementation of IT, and how the use of technology could have a positive impact within a commercial environment. My course focused on the applied element of IT, as well as offering an industrial placement opportunity.

“My placement year with Octel was fantastic. It was very much a hands-on experience and certainly helped to cement my desire to progress within a computer based career. I was involved in the creation of database systems that were implemented across the organisation. This time was invaluable and along with my academic qualifications allowed me to move into employment from a very solid base” explains Kieran.

Kieran’s professional career began in Dublin, where he took up an associate engineering position with Lotus. As part of Kieran’s induction he was given the opportunity to experience both software development and testing.



“This period in my career was very exciting; I was working for a forward thinking organisation and was being given the opportunity to use the very latest technology. But I needed to decide which discipline to follow. I opted for testing because, at the time, automation was very much at the forefront of the industry and I felt that my skill-set, as well as my interests played better to the testing side of IT.”

After a few years with Lotus, Kieran took up a position with Microsoft before accepting a senior testing role with IBM. Working on a variety of test projects, Kieran managed a direct team of seven engineers, taking both a strategic and hands-on role. One project in particular saw Kieran and the team save the company more than \$1m.

“Having such a strong skill base so early on in my career was a real advantage. Yes, I followed a software testing career, but I also understood the software development side, which in my opinion is invaluable when it comes to delivering client solutions” explains Kieran.

### From Silicon Valley to Belfast

International travel has played a big part in Kieran’s career. Having taken the opportunity to relocate to Boston, USA, an ex-colleague invited him to Silicon Valley with a view to taking a post with a new software testing consultancy. “The opportunity to work in Silicon Valley was a once in a lifetime opportunity and one that I could not turn down” says Kieran.

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Kieran Gallaher

“Silicon Valley was simply fantastic, particularly from a career development point-of-view. The exposure to cutting edge technologies was out of this world.”

After four years Kieran took the decision to return to Northern Ireland taking software testing positions with companies such as Mobile Cohesion, Aepona and NYSE, before taking the opportunity to get involved with NaviNet, to build out the Test Engineering side of the business.

#### **My Typical Day...**

As a Director of NaviNet, Kieran’s focus is, as you would expect, strategic. However, as Kieran points out he is still a test engineer and is very much involved in team projects. “I still get my hands dirty and will work with the testers on a variety of projects, often getting involved in the likes of test definitions, planning and execution, but I’ve always one eye on the strategic goals and the client objectives related to each of the projects.”

It is clear that this sort of engagement is viewed as essential by the NaviNet team and particularly by Kieran. “Technology advances so quickly, and in today’s market you cannot afford to get too far removed from the types of developments, tools and processes that are coming online, however the real challenge for us is to understand each and how they can be applied to the client solution. I want NaviNet to be seen as pioneers in this respect and not market followers.”

#### **Software Tester Academy**

The launch of the new ‘Software Testers Academy’ is something that Kieran is very much supportive of, believing it will help raise the profile of the profession.

“I had to travel in order to gain the skills that I now have because testing wasn’t really taken all that seriously when I was starting my career – in fact it was viewed as the poor relation to software development.

“Thankfully times have changed and software testing is enjoying better press. People are beginning to realise the diverse career options testing can offer and the marketplace is starting to see more and more enquiries. I sincerely hope that this is just the beginning!”

#### **Encouraging the Next Generation**

Kieran, as you would imagine is very much a proponent of software testing, but why should you consider it as a career.

Well, as Kieran explains the discipline has no restrictions – “A software tester gets to ‘play’ with the latest technologies and to employ the most up-to-date techniques to ‘break’ software, with a view to delivering the best solution for the client. For me, a tester is in a unique position to influence a solution, to engage with the client and demonstrate how an original brief can be made even more robust.”

For Kieran the software testing profession is at the hub of the business. Testers need to have the ability to question the status quo, to be inquisitive and to not be afraid to question everything – personal backgrounds are unimportant, but the aforementioned traits are. Career development is very much the norm and the opportunities to advance are there – all you have to do is reach out and grab them.

