

Tanya Davis' Transition from Psychology to a Career in Tech



Tanya Davis' career journey reflects a unique blend of resilience and a drive to explore new paths, transitioning from psychology to a rewarding role in tech. Originally from Russia, Tanya studied developmental psychology at university and began working with children as a Montessori teacher, later expanding into counseling teenagers and adults.

"I'm not a licensed psychologist here in the United States," she explains, "but I still work with Russian-speaking clients from around the world." Her years in psychology have given her valuable insights into human behavior, which she finds surprisingly applicable in her tech career.

Achievements

- Transitioned from Psychology to Tech
- Advanced from Intern to QA Engineer
- Bilingual professional
- Learned automation and programming skills

Career Path

- Moved to U.S. as au pair
- Worked in psychology and education
- 3 years ago: Started learning QA
- Joined Pax8 as intern
- Content Writer
- Currently QA Engineer, focusing on continuous learning

Key Experience

- Developmental Psychology
- Self-taught QA and Tech Skills
- QA Internship at Pax8
- QA Engineer at Pax8

A New Chapter in Tech

About three years ago, Tanya decided to explore a new career path and began researching quality assurance (QA) testing in tech. “I started watching videos on YouTube and took online classes in Russian,” she recalls, which led her to a supportive tech community in Fremont County.

Tanya joined a local tech night group called Tech Night Out, where she met people in the industry, including a developer who told her about an internship opportunity at Pax8. “I applied, got interviewed, and started as an intern,” she says. Through hard work and dedication, Tanya secured a contract, and eventually, a full-time position as a QA Engineer.

From Intern to Engineer

Starting at Pax8 as an intern, Tanya embraced the challenge of transitioning into tech, advancing to a QA Level One Engineer role. In her position, Tanya works on a team that oversees applications related to communications, where she ensures quality and functionality through rigorous testing. “My job is to test functionalities manually first, and if it’s critical, I automate it,” she explains.

Using her skills as a psychologist and leveraging her empathy for others, Tanya finds the work dynamic and intellectually stimulating. “I try to think from a user’s perspective—if I were using that product, what would I do with it?” she shares, enjoying the process of exploring positive and negative scenarios to improve the user experience.

Embracing Continuous Learning and Team Collaboration

For Tanya, learning is at the core of her career in tech.

“I used to work only as a manual QA engineer, but now I’ve been learning automation, a new programming language, and new frameworks,”

she says. The team she’s on operates within an Agile framework, allowing each member the autonomy to manage tasks, plan work, and solve problems collaboratively. “We have a manager, but we manage ourselves,” she explains. This structure enables her to adapt and learn in real-time, with constant support from her team and mentors.

Overcoming Challenges as a Non-Native English Speaker

Switching from psychology to tech was not without its challenges, particularly as a non-native English speaker. Tanya’s journey to the U.S. began in 2012, when she moved to New York as an au pair, gradually building her English language skills through immersion and practice. “I was trying to learn English and adjust to life in a new country,” she recalls.

In her tech role, Tanya still encounters challenges with English, especially around technical terminology. “Each field has its own language and terminology,” she says. “Sometimes words just don’t work for me, especially if I’m tired or busy.” Yet, her determination to overcome these language barriers has fueled her growth, both personally and professionally. “This job has helped my English improve a lot,” she shares, grateful for the opportunity to learn and adapt in a supportive environment.

Looking Ahead: Growth and Continued Learning

Reflecting on her journey, Tanya acknowledges the value of her psychology background in her tech role. "Understanding how my learning process works has helped me manage it better," she explains, noting that the knowledge of managing anxiety, fears, and challenges has been beneficial in her new field.

Looking to the future, Tanya plans to keep learning within her current role rather than setting distant career goals. "I like to learn something if I have to use it right away," she says, adding that her current focus is on mastering JavaScript and automation tools as they apply to her projects.

Tanya's journey from psychology to tech shows how diverse experiences can converge to create a fulfilling career, underscoring the value of embracing new challenges and skillsets.

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