

Few tips for successful completion of UAT:

1. Try to get the User Acceptance Test (UAT) test cases from the customer in advance (possible before you start the system testing). During the system testing phase, in addition to your ST test cases, test the application with the UAT test cases also. This will help the team to detect the 'likely' bugs during the ST phase itself and the team can fix them before the code moves to the UAT environment. This will help in minimizing the UAT Bugs.
2. Include a pre-UAT phase. This phase shall take place before the customer starts the UAT. This phase can be of 1-2 days duration. The purpose is to deploy the application in the UAT environment and your development team needs to check if the application is getting launched all the screens are navigable. You also need to involve one or two IT team members from the Customer side to do the same. All this need to happen before the Testers from the end customer tests the application. This helps in ensuring the confidence that there are no last minute surprises.
3. Atleast one day before the actual UAT start date, ensure that all set-up is done on the application (Including – application deployment, data migration, fill the master tables with the required data, provide access rights based on roles etc.,) in the UAT environment. This will help in saving the UAT testers' time and the testing can be started as planned.
4. Prepare a checklist with the list of activities to be done as soon as application is deployed. Ensure that this checklist is implemented in the Pre-UAT.
5. Provide the screen shots of the screens and purpose of these screens to the UAT testers 1-2 weeks before UAT. This will help them to have a clarity on how the screens look like and what the functionality in it (something like a quick training)
6. Ensure that the UAT testers are trained on the application
7. Ensure that you have 2-3 onsite coordinators to help the testers at UAT. Most of the bugs at UAT are NOT because of the application malfunction but because the lack of knowledge and awareness on the application by the testers. The coordinators need to help them while test so that only genuine bugs are reported and 'user errors' are eliminated. This will be something like 'on the job training' While doing this, please make sure that the coordinators are very well aware of the application functionality and features.
8. Perform UAT in at least 2 or 3 phases (advisable to have it in 3 phases). Keep some time for bug fixing in between. Means: UAT - Pass1 -> few days bug fixing -> UAT- pass2 --> Bug fixing < final round of UAT (pass 3). Each pass need to test the entire functionality so that if there is any impact on the other functionality due to bug fixing, it will be tracked and can be fixed.
9. Release all the bugs fixed in the UAT and perform the entire ST (or Regression Test) before it is deployed for UAT- Pass2. Repeat the same steps for UAT- Pass3.
10. To the extent possible, test the performance/load during the UAT phase or Earlier
11. If there is any batch processes to be tested, make sure that it is done during UAT.
12. If there are any offline interfaces is expected, try to get the "actual offline interface file" from the source. Deploy /load this file and use this data for UAT. Using a dummy interface file does not give you the right results. The actual data might always behave differently.

13. If there is any online interface is expected, try to have an 'on-line connection' with the source and test it. Do not bypass this as this might be problematic in Live.
14. Try to perform the UAT on the copy of the Production data instead of testing on Dummy data. This will ensure that the data behavior with the application is tested properly.
15. Needless to say to ensure that UAT environment is EXACTLY same as that of Production environment.
16. Use a Tool to record and track the Bugs reported in UAT (eg., Test Director or XL sheet). Keep every comment in the tool regarding each and every bug.
17. Often you would end up in debate during the UAT with the customer such as 'if something is a Bug or a change.' The customer tends to argue that it is a bug whereas your team might say that it is a change. Be aware of this issue and get prepared to take proper stand on such cases.
18. Try to prepare data on the number of bugs reported along with root cause (Example : Bugs due to user error :10; Bugs due to change of requirements : 5; Bugs due to Code Error : 5; Bugs due to Set-up problem : 3; Bugs due to In correct data : 8 etc.,)
19. There is a likelihood that during the UAT, some change might also creep in. (the customer might feel something need to be changed in UAT). There might be many such requests. Instead of negotiating each such change, consolidate all such changes and give the estimate to him.
20. Customer might challenge that certain features are bugs though they may be changes. The team need to be fully aware with evidence (mail/ documents/ MoM) to prove if it is a bug or change. Otherwise, you will end up in making changes under the pretext of bugs. Probably the preparation for this need to be done from the Beginning of the Project.
21. Share the test report dash board with the customers at regular intervals.
22. Have a face to face meeting/interaction with the Customer on UAT and express major challenges that you face. Also give the first hand information to him on the results of the UAT status. Normally customer will have access to his team more closely and he is tend to get the information from them. In order to give Satyam's point of view one need to speak to him regularly. This will help us/him to get a proper perception on the UAT. If our team does not give our view point, customer's perception will be biased.
23. Provide the user manuals/ administration manuals / training material and any other such documents (as per the deliverables) to the customer before the start of UAT up to his satisfaction. In some of the projects, the customer did not sign off the UAT stating that the documents are not given to him (though the docs were given, they were not upto his satisfaction level and the level of details are very poor)

PS : Primarily these tips help the Development projects in a fixed bid mode. However, some of them can be applied to the T&M by sharing the possible challenges with the customer.