

# Karen Jester, solutions design and engineering

Helping take the guesswork—and the risk—out of application deployment.

**THE REAL TEST** for any information technology solution comes down to two simple questions: Does the solution work in the context of a user's environment, and can we measure the benefits?

At F5, those "proofs of concept" fall largely upon Karen Jester and her team. As director of product management solutions engineering, this six-year F5 veteran drives application and new technology interoperability and integration design, engineering, and testing. Her team is also responsible for demonstrating and measuring the benefits of F5 solutions while providing configuration guidance to customers.

Perhaps the most valuable service Jester provides F5 customers is helping them mitigate deployment risk by leveraging her team's countless hours of design, testing, and documentation. Removing the guesswork for customers maps directly back to improving the user experience. Jester defines this as how a user characterizes his or her interaction with an application.

If that user experience is positive, overall adoption of new applications across the board is enhanced. So what are Jester and her team doing day in and day out to improve the user experience?

"We start with a significant amount of research and customer interviews; we speak often with many ISVs [independent software vendors] and application vendors to understand everything from common deployment issues, to the types of clients used to access the applications, to application configurations," Jester notes.

"Then we design and assemble the environments in our Technology Center,



Karen Jester's team helps clients find the right testing and troubleshooting tools for the job.

and go through a rigorous test cycle. In doing so, we measure the benefits of applying F5 solutions. We focus on the client's or end user's perspective when accessing the application, noting how the user will benefit from F5's equipment accelerating, simplifying access, and ensuring the reliability of these applications—improving the overall user experience."

## Help with testing

If a customer's application or environment is particularly unique or complex, Jester invites the customer directly to the Technology Center to work with F5 engineers and build a highly customized solution. For F5 customers partial to their own testing, Jester offers them F5's complete and unvarnished testing methodologies.

"We document how we test everything and give it to our customers," Jester says. "We believe in complete transparency, accuracy, and repeatability, and we give customers the tools to do it all. By helping them preconfigure their solutions, we remove a lot of the guesswork."

Helping customers essentially troubleshoot their applications has given Jester a great deal of insight into many problems plaguing companies in application deployment, and a view of the obstacles they often face in overcoming these problems.

For example, rapid growth in remote computing has brought significant latency problems to the surface, particularly as files being accessed and swapped grow in complexity. Commonly, enterprises address poor application performance by throwing more, and increasingly more expensive, bandwidth at the

problem. Jester's experience tells her the only enduring solution lies in changing the network infrastructure itself, to support these kinds of applications.

"F5's TMOS architecture gives us tremendous flexibility to add modules such as dynamic caching, intelligent compression, and other optimization techniques to deliver a real workable, scalable solution to application performance issues," Jester concludes. "Our full proxy allows us to intercept, inspect, and transform all the data. And iRules gives customers even more flexibility to fine-tune and tailor solutions, maximizing the benefits of their applications. Our team in solutions engineering simply helps chart the way for customers. We demonstrate how and why someone should consider F5 as the best choice for their application network infrastructure." \*