

# Do's and Don'ts of Process Improvement

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## Acknowledgments

Terms like these are often used in the following material:

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## **Frequent Themes at SPI Conferences**

Secure Senior Management Sponsorship

Treat SPI like a Project

**Engage Internal Staff.** 



## OK, what now?

Yeah, but what do we DO?

And is there anything we should **AVOID** doing?



#### **Caveat**

#### Weinberg's Organizational Dichotomy

- No two organizations are entirely the same
- No two organizations are completely different

#### Weinberg's Law of Raspberry Jam

- The broader you spread it, the thinner it gets
- This tutorial covers 30 specific Do's and Don'ts
- Hope for about a 20% "raspberry jam" rate
- The rest are intended for "a friend of yours."



#### Do's and Don'ts

**Senior Management** 

**CMMI** 

**Process** 

Measurement

**Behavioral Change** 

**Reviews** 

Message from our Sponsor.



## Do's and Don'ts: Senior Management

"Sponsorship" is nice, **Proactive Leadership** is better!

Don't Treat the Level as the Goal

Do Establish "Alignment Principle"

**Do Take Time Getting Faster** 

Don't Let the Dip Get You Down

**Do Align the Reward System** 

**Do Ask Different Questions** 

Do/Don't Lead by Example



#### Don't Treat the Level as the Goal - 1

#### What are you really trying to achieve?

- What is the business imperative?
- Why aren't your customers THRILLED with your products and services?
- Why do potential customers keep buying your competitor's products?

#### Which would be better:

- Achieve Level 2, but NOT the business objectives
- Achieve the business objectives, but NOT Level 2?

So what's the REAL goal?



#### Don't Treat the Level as the Goal - 2

#### Maximize the VALUE, not the LEVEL!

- Problem: Focusing on the level establishes conflict between the SPI project and the engineering projects
- Solution: Focusing on the business imperative produces harmony

Well, at least it reduces the conflict!

Lends credibility to the SPI program

Changes discussion from "if" to "how."



## Do Establish "Alignment Principle" - 1

#### First Rule of Project Management:

- Faster, Better, Cheaper pick two
- The third will be the independent variable

#### First rule of process improvement:

#### Faster, Better, Cheaper - pick ONE!

-If you could improve in only 1 area, which would it be? Which "number one priority" is really on top? Remember Deming's "constancy of purpose"?



## Do Establish "Alignment Principle" - 2

#### **Medtronic Example:**

 "Achieve an annual, sustainable 10% reduction in field reported defects without degrading current levels of cost, schedule, and functional variance"

Align business, project, and SPI goals

- SPI becomes "Software/System Project Improvement"

**Communicate this broadly** 

Focus with a passion!



## **Do Take Time Getting Faster - 1**

Recognize the tune of the ritualistic dance

Why would your customer believe 6 months when they don't believe 8?

- Do YOU believe it?
- Have you seen the plan?
- Is it credible?
- Remember: A wish is NOT a plan!

How will the troops respond to this goal?



## **Do Take Time Getting Faster - 2**

Despite what they SAY, most customers WANT predictability - they want to believe

Applies equally well to:

**Internal customers (Product Mgt / Marketing)** 

**External customers** 

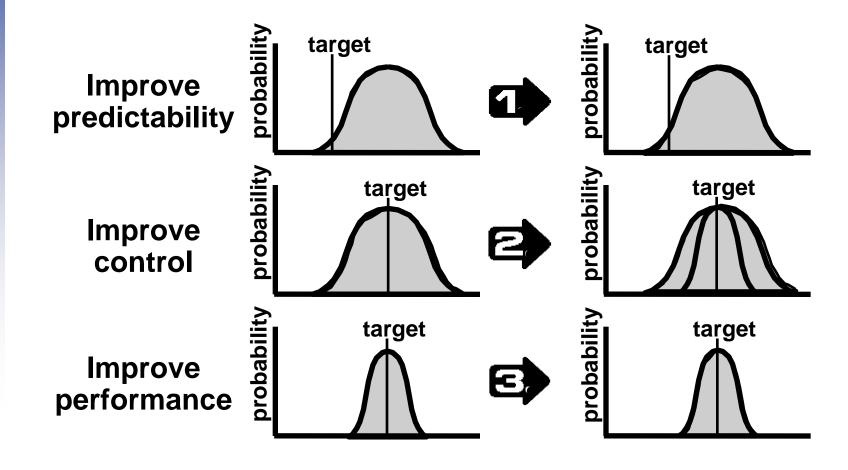
Prerequisite to getting faster: Enhance the credibility of your current estimates!

- The troops want to be believed
- It's a matter of professional integrity

Change the tune of the ritualistic dance

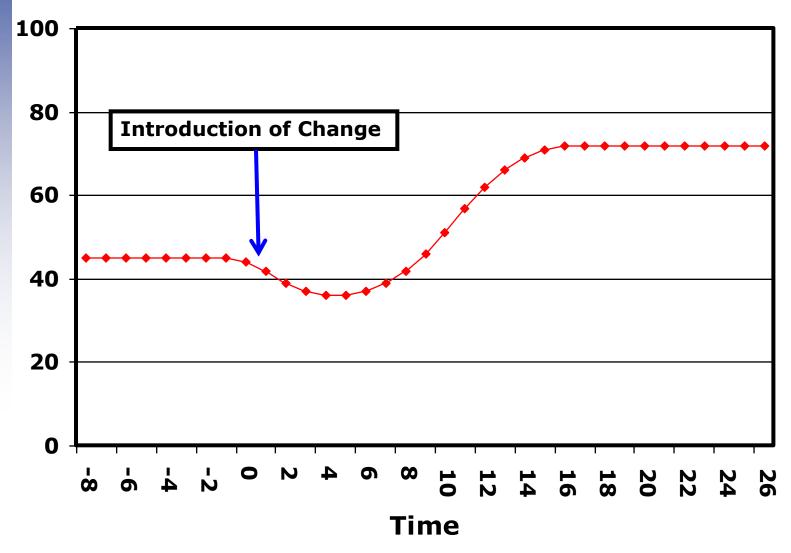


## **Improving Capability**





## Don't Let the Dip Get You Down - 1





## Don't Let the Dip Get You Down - 2

#### Attributes that affect length/breadth of the "dip:"

- Recognition of the need to change
- Organizational change culture
- Cultural fit of the changes being introduced
- Compelling evidence of the benefit of <u>these</u> changes
- Size of the target audience
- Perception of cumulative changes
- Change saturation point of the target audience
- Duration since the last change in same general area
- -Visibility/believability of management support for the change.

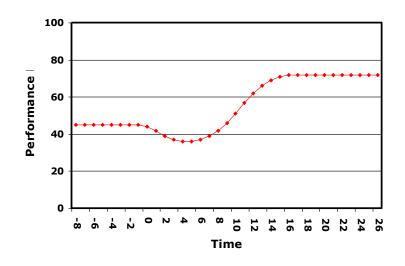


## Don't Let the Dip Get You Down - 3

#### Not all resistance is irrational!

- -Some changes do more harm than good
- -Don't confuse "change" or "activity" with "progress"

#### The REAL trick is knowing the difference!





## **Do Align the Reward System - 1**

#### What behavior do you reward today?

- Who received the last few achievement awards?
- Why did they receive them?
- Why do people *perceive* they received them?
   Perception is reality to the perceiver
- Are the reward system and the Alignment Principle aligned?



## **Do Align the Reward System - 2**

#### The behavior you reward is the behavior you get

- Stop rewarding process arson and fire fighting
- Start rewarding disciplined planning & execution

#### Not all rewards are monetary

- Atta-boys
- Success stories published
- Executive recognition
- Promotions

But money's nice too!





## **Do Ask Different Questions - 1**

What do you ask about in project reviews today?

- Is the project on schedule?
- Is the project on budget?
- Whose fault is it?
- Why don't I see anybody in here on Saturday?

Do you ask any questions related to process or process improvement?



## **Do Ask Different Questions - 2**

#### The power of the executive question:

- Management can:

Influence behavior by asking different questions Change behavior by insisting on getting the answers!

#### Try asking:

- Is SPI helping us achieve our alignment principle?
- What improvements are you piloting?
- What SPI suggestions have you made recently?
- What's painful about the current way of doing things?



## Do/Don't Lead By Example - 1

What are <u>YOU</u> as senior management doing to become more process disciplined?

- Are any of <u>your</u> processes documented?
- Does anyone verify that you are following them?
- Are <u>you</u> trying to improve them over time?

Are you sending the message, "Do as I say, not as I do"?



## Do/Don't Lead By Example - 2

## Consider documenting the Organizational Commitment Process first

- "How does your organization commit to doing work on behalf of a customer?"
- Involve peers in Marketing/Product Management
- Pilot the process
- Have PPQA verify adherence

Demonstrate your personal commitment to process discipline and process improvement

Sponsorship is nice; proactive leadership is better!



#### **Exercise**

#### Do's and Don'ts: Senior Management

- Don't Treat the Level as the Goal
- Do Establish "Alignment Principle"
- Do Take Time Getting Faster
- Don't Let the Dip Get You Down
- Do Align the Reward System
- Do Ask Different Questions
- Do/Don't Lead by Example

#### What now?

- Which would help your organization the most?
- What are you going to do when you get back?
- Are there other Senior Mgt Do's and Don'ts?



#### Do's and Don'ts

**Senior Management** 

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#### Do's and Don'ts: CMMI

"All models are wrong; some models are useful"

Don't Treat the CMMI as the Bible

**Don't Train the Masses on CMMI** 

Do Become a Stronger Level 1

Don't Skip Over Maturity Level 2

Don't Use Appraisals for Diagnosis

Don't Use the Continuous Representation Don't Use the Staged Representation



#### Don't Treat the CMMI as the Bible - 1

# Does Watts really look that much like Moses?

- The CMMI is a good book but it's not THE good book!
- 1000+ suggested changes submitted

#### It's just a model!

- Goals sound engineering/management principles
- Practices one way to accomplish the goals
- Subpractices insight into the practices.



#### Don't Treat the CMMI as the Bible - 2

#### Don't have one policy per process area!

- Apply the CMMI with your brain in "ON" position
- Consider policies for:

**Project Management Stuff** 

**Engineering Stuff** 

**Process Stuff** 

Write the policy LAST

#### Look elsewhere for additional guidance

- IEEE standards, ITIL, ISO, Baldridge
- Books, periodicals, employees, Dilbert, etc.



#### Don't Train the Masses on CMMI - 1

#### Have you heard the expressions:

- Here we go again?
- The next silver bullet?
- Yet another flavor of the month?
- This too shall pass?

#### Have you ever read the CMMI stuff like a novice?

- "Technical data package"?
- "Organizational Process Focus"??
- "Instantiation"???
- "Constellation"?????



#### Don't Train the Masses on CMMI - 2

#### What should you do?

- Train the SEPG on the CMMI
- Train Process Action Teams on relevant portions
- Train the unwashed masses on <u>their processes</u>
   And DON'T call it "the CMMI process!"
- Consider providing CMMI orientation after:
   Initial value has been proven and momentum established
   People start asking how you got so smart

#### Translate CMMese into local jargon

 In order to influence behavior, people have to understand it!



## Do Become a Stronger Level 1 - 1

#### How many Process Action Team do you have?

Do you have one PAT for each of the Level 2 PAs?
 Is your "process pain" equally distributed?
 Can projects absorb all of these concurrent changes?

#### Are you treating the projects as your customers?

– Are they actively involved in establishing SPI requirements and priorities?



## Do Become a Stronger Level 1 - 2

#### Treat every level, even level 1, as a continuum

- Improve in a few areas to gain experience, credibility, momentum, and process discipline
- Provide one or two improvements per target audience
- It's OK to improve in non-CMMI areas

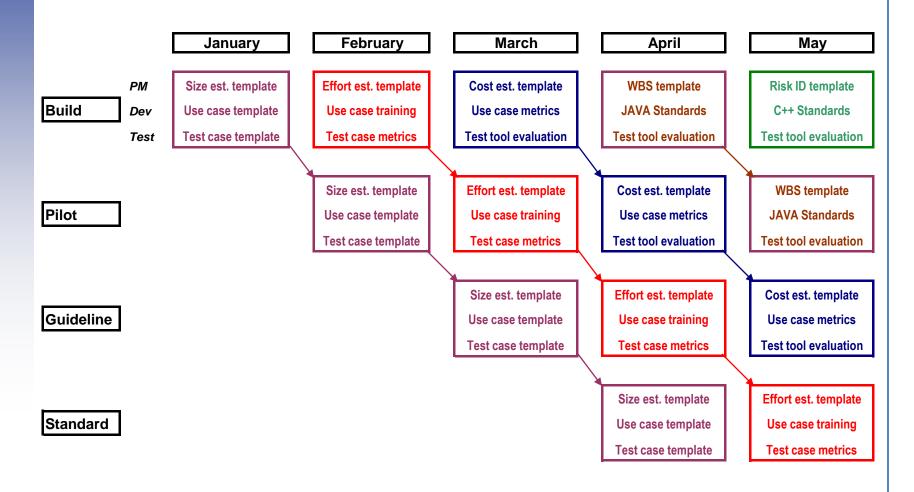
#### Pilot changes to get it "righter"

- Not every change is an improvement
- Not every improvement will be initially embraced If you build it, they might <u>not</u> come!

It's the education, not the degree, that makes you smarter.



## Do Become a Stronger Level 1 - 3



Do's and Don'ts – 2008 SEPG



## Don't Skip Over Maturity Level 2

#### Level 2 approach:

- Document the "as is" practices
- Use the CMMI to supplement existing good practices
- Provides a basis for sharing good practices

#### There is no "CMMI Level 2 In-a-Box"

- It's not the process documentation, Stupid!
- The process documentation is NOT the process

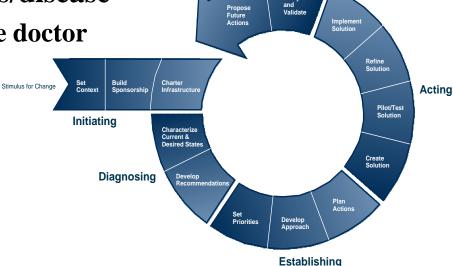
Believe it or not, it's a BEHAVIORAL model!



## Don't Use Appraisals for Diagnosis - 1

#### Diagnosis implies sickness/disease

Nobody enjoys going to the doctor



Learning

#### An appraisal should be more like a health check

- Many people do enjoy going to the health club
- Let's treat the patient like they are already healthy
   Assume that the patient wants to get even healthier
   "Seeking opportunities to make the organization even better than it already is."



## Don't Use Appraisals for Diagnosis - 2

#### It's not about levels, it's about capability

- Don't confuse tactics with strategy
  - **Alignment Principle speaks to strategy**
  - Process improvement is nothing more than one <u>tactical</u> approach to achieve <u>strategic</u> business objectives
- "When the map & terrain disagree, believe the terrain"

#### **Appraisal view**

- The process documentation is the map
- The process as performed is the terrain

#### **Outsourcing view**

- Their maturity level is the map
- Their results are the terrain.

# Don't Use the Staged Representation Don't Use the Continuous Representation

# **Staged representation**

- Prescribed ordering with proven results
- Organizational change model

# **Continuous Representation**

- Feel the pain/fix the pain
- More granular level of information
- Encouragement to consider quantitative management in any/all process areas

**Don't** use *either* – **Do** use *both*.



# **Maturity Level 2 Example**

	Staged at Maturity Level	1/1/08 Mini Appraisal	1Q08 Plan	2Q08 Plan Act		3Q08 Plan	4Q Plan	08 Act
Project Mgt:								
PP	2	2	2	2		2	2	
PMC	2	1	1	2		2	2	
SAM	2	0	1	1		2	2	
Engineering:								
REQM	2	1	2	2		2	2	
Support:								
CM	2	2	2	2		2	2	
PPQA	2	2	2	2		2	2	
MA	2	0	0	1		1	2	



# **Maturity Level 3 Example**

	Staged at Maturity Level	1/1/08 Mini Appraisal	1Q08 Plan		08 Act	3Q08 Plan		008 Act	1Q09 Plan		09 Act	3Q09 Plan	4Q Plan	09 Act
Process Mgt														
OPF	3	1	1	2		2	2		2	3		3	3	
OPD	3	0	1	1		1	2		2	2		3	3	
ОТ	3	1	1	1		1	2		2	2		3	3	
Project Mgt														
PP	2	2	2	2		3	3		3	3		3	3	
PMC	2	1	1	2		2	2		3	3		3	3	
SAM	2	0	1	1		2	2		2	3		3	3	
IPM	3	0	0	0		0	1		1	1		2	3	
RSKM	3	1	1	1		1	1		1	2		2	3	
Engineering														
REQM	2	1	2	2		2	2		3	3		3	3	
RD	3	1	2	2		2	2		2	3		3	3	
TS	3	1	1	1		1	1		1	2		2	3	
PI	3	1	1	1		1	1		2	2		2	3	
VER	3	1	1	1		1	1		2	2		3	3	
VAL	3	0	0	1		1	1		2	2		3	3	
Support:														
CM	2	2	2	2		2	2		3	3		3	3	
PPQA	2	2	2	2		3	3		3	3		3	3	
MA	2	0	0	1		2	2		2	2		3	3	
DAR	3	0	0	0		1	1		1	2		2	3	



#### Do's and Don'ts

**Senior Management** 

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Message from our Sponsor



# Do's and Don'ts: Process

It's NOT the process documentation, Stupid!

**Don't Over-Engineer Processes** 

**Don't Target Mega-Projects First** 

Do Think "Good" Not "Best" Practice



# **Don't Over-Engineer Processes - 1**

# The "accordion effect" may be unavoidable

- Start with very little process documentation in place
- Develop 4 big honkin' binders
- It becomes shelfware
- Devolve RDC versions"Decomplexification."
- TRY to do it right the first time
  Preflight checklist
  Think "Thin to win!"

Experienced practitioner's cheat sheet PPQA/PPQA's review checklist.



# Don't Over-Engineer Processes - 2

# Process documentation vs. Procedures/work instructions vs. Training material

# Don't give Process Action Teams too much time

- Parkinson's Law is sure to creep in
- Have "good case examples" for guidance

# Use 4 roles to develop process documentation:

- Facilitator (SEPG)
- Content providers (process executors)
- Scribe (technical writer)
- Reviewers (other process executors).



# Don't Target Mega-Projects First

Many groups build the "standard process" to address their largest projects

- Theory is: easier to eliminate than to add
- Problem: Projects have to "justify" scaling down

Build a thin process layer for medium projects

- Justify changes as the first 2" binder fills up
- Provide ability to tailor up/down to accommodate need for more/less complexity, coordination, control

The process should serve the projects not vice versa!



# Avoid religious warfare for a 2% improvement

- At least until maturity level 4 and 5
- "Just because I'm different doesn't mean I'm wrong"
- Consistency is good, but weigh the cost/benefit
- Consider "content standards" vs. standard templates
   Especially for the journey to maturity level 2

Don't exercise stupidity in the name of consistency!



### **Exercise**

#### Do's and Don'ts: CMMI and Measurement

- Don't Treat the CMMI as the Bible
- Don't Train the Masses on CMMI
- Do Become a Stronger Level 1
- Don't Skip Over Maturity Level 2
- Don't Use Appraisals for Diagnosis
- Don't Use the Staged Representation
   Don't Use the Continuous Representation
- Don't Over-Engineer Processes
- Don't Target Mega-Projects First
- Do Think "Good" Not "Best" Practice



#### **Exercise**

#### What now?

- Which would help <u>your</u> organization the most?
- What are you going to do when you get back?
- Are there other CMMI or Measurement Do's and Don'ts?



# Do's and Don'ts

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# Do's and Don'ts: Measurement

"In God we trust, all others bring data"

**Do Employ Basic Measures NOW!** 

Don't Collect Data You Don't Use

**Do Enhance Data Integrity** 

**Do Capture Healthy Measures** 

**Do Study Math for ML4 and ML5** 



Picture by Bill Riddle (Used with permission)



# **Do Employ Basic Measures NOW! - 1**

#### You don't have a current baseline?

- Start now or you'll be saying the same thing in 2 years
- Do you remember saying it 2 years ago?!

#### What to measure?

Look to

The Alignment Principle

The goals of the process improvement program

Defects, effort, schedule.



# **Do Employ Basic Measures NOW! - 2**

### There is no physics in software

- You can't say, "It can't be done"
- You should be able to say, "We can't do it"
- "But here's what we can do..."

# Management's gut is bigger than yours every time!

– Schwartz's Law:

"Gut size and estimates are inversely proportional."



### Don't Collect Data You Don't Use

Do you have "write-only" databases?

Do you use your:

Historical data to improve your estimates?

PPQA, inspection and risk data to detect trends?

Use it or lose it!

- Data collection is an expensive investment
- There is no ROI if the data is not used

Don't conduct appraisals if nothing is to change

Same for Employee Satisfaction Surveys, etc.

Better yet - USE THE DATA!



# **Do Enhance Data Integrity**

# Track actuals at the same level you estimate

- Don't throw darts in the dark
- Track actuals to motivate corrective action

#### Providers of data must be consumers of the data

- WIIFM?

# **Adopt Grady's Rules of Data Etiquette**

- Private vs. public data
- Don't misuse the data.



# **Do Capture Healthy Measures - 1**

87% of Americans who establish New Year's resolutions have one related to health

- (And 72% of statistics are made up on the spot!)
- There is no universally-accepted "health index"
- But there are indicators of health

**Blood pressure** 

Weight

**Body Mass Index** 

Time to run a mile/5K/10K/marathon

Beers per fortnight

Number of trips to the doctor

- Therapeutic
- Preventative

Etc.



# **Do Capture Healthy Measures - 2**

### Ensure consistent weighings over the year

- Same digital scale
- Same day of the week
- Same time of day
- Same level of clothedness
- Before working out
- After the purge and before the gorge

#### **Bottom line on software measures:**

Two thirds of all projects have lousy metrics; The other half just don't care!



# Do Study Math for ML4 and ML5

### ML4 establishes and exploits stable processes

- It's the only level that's NOT about improvement
- It's about understanding your capability and performing that way consistently

#### **Process performance baselines**

- Established based on historical performance data
- "If you always do what you've always done,
   You will always get what you've always gotten"

# **Process performance models**

- Think about Alan Greenspan...
- Use leading indicator data to predict the future value (or range of values) of a related variable of interest



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# Do's and Don'ts: Behavioral Change

# If it isn't helping the projects succeed, the SEPG is failing!

- **Do Eliminate Low-Value-Added Tasks**
- **Do Pilot Early and Often**
- **Do Make Friday SPI-day**
- Do Become a Learning Organization
- **Don't Ignore the Adoption Curve**



### **Do Eliminate Low-Value-Add Tasks**

Seek and eliminate some useless administrivia

The plate is only so big!

Do this early and make some friends

Helps avoid the "process weenie" tag.



# **Do Pilot Early and Often**

# Don't debate issues in the ivory tower

- Wastes a lot of time
- Chances are, both sides are wrong!

# Run "alpha pilots" to test competing theories

Seek feedback from the process executors

Value vs. overhead/disruption

Skills and cultural fit

**Toolability** 

**Tailoring suggestions** 

Run "beta pilots" to demonstrate readiness.



# Do Make Friday SPI-day

# If you allocate part-time SEPG/PAT members:

- Less than 20% is useless
- Remember the Law of Raspberry Jam
   The broader you spread it the thinner it gets
   Don't spread it out allocate a full day for SPI work
   Friday is a lousy day pick Wednesday instead!
- Hold SPI people accountable for:
   Achieving their SPI milestones and deliverables
   Renegotiating their SPI commitments
- Make it part of their performance review.



# Do Become a Learning Organization - 1

# Most organizations are Learning Organizations

- Most are Forgetting Organizations as well
- Do post mortems really capture "lessons learned?"

#### Evolve "lessons identified" into "lessons learned"

Conduct "phase transition reviews"

#### At the end of each phase, ask:

- What went right; why?
- What went wrong; how could it have been avoided?
- What problems escaped from previous phases?

#### Review "lessons identified" for the upcoming phase

- From your last project
- From other projects

Incorporate changes and recommit to the plan.



# Do Become a Learning Organization - 2

# The flip side of every assumption is a risk

– And the flip side of every risk is an opportunity!

# Every problem is a risk that was overlooked

- How can you gain better foresight next time?
- Establish triggers indicating, "Here we go again!"

### Learn from other projects

- Each project exploits organizational knowledge
- Each project contributes as well
- Flag data from "less than successful" projects
   "Those who study history are bound to repeat it!"



# Don't Ignore the Adoption Curve

#### You will NOT convert the unwashed masses

- Don't waste cycles on the late majority/laggards
- Target the innovators and early adopters
- Prove the value and capture the early majority

Senior management must exercise "tough love"

- Apply pressure on the late majority
- Apply sanctions on the laggards

Ultimately, compliance becomes part of the "salary continuation program."



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# Do's and Don'ts: Reviews

- **Do Implement Value-Added PPQA**
- **Do Evolve PPQA's Role**
- **Do Reinvigorate Your Peer Reviews**



# Do Implement Value-Added PPQA - 1

### **Invest your best and brightest**

- Train them to serve as project coaches/mentors
- Consult on the selection of process elements

# Initially focus on process adoption not compliance

 Assist projects in adopting the process and deriving the intended value

Ask about the value of the process - and LISTEN! Solicit feedback on administrivia/improvements

– Are there resources/skills issues to be addressed?

## Serve as the projects' liaison to the SEPG

-Help them Obiwan, you're their only hope!



# Do Implement Value-Added PPQA - 2

# The first two audits of a new process are freebies

- First one is "understanding"
- Second one is "alignment"
- Third one is for real

### Differentiate non-compliances by severity

# Use a 4-point scale

- Fully(100), largely(80), partially(40), not (0) compliant
- Sets up a consulting discussion

#### Perform trend analysis

Identify opportunities for sampling.



# **PPQA** – Example Trend Charts - 1

Estimation Process 3/2008	Ave	Α	В	С	D	E	F
Size estimate	80	80	80	40	80	100	100
Size-based effort estimate	77	100	100	80	0	80	100
Bottom-up effort estimate	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Effort estimate reconciliation	<b>67</b>	100	80	0	40	100	80
Effort estimate assumptions	80	100	80	80	40	80	100
Cost estimates	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Non-personnel costs	67	N/A	80	N/A	80	40	N/A
Cost estimate assumptions	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Score	85	97	90	71	68	88	97



# **PPQA – Example Trend Charts - 2**

<b>Estimation Process</b>	3/08	2/08	1/08	12/07	Ave
Size estimate	80	76	71	N/A	<b>76</b>
Size-based effort estimate	77	72	65	N/A	71
Bottom-up effort estimate	100	98	95	100	98
Effort estimate reconciliation	67	65	60	N/A	64
Effort estimate assumptions	80	87	92	97	89
Cost estimates	100	100	96	94	98
Non-personnel costs	67	80	88	80	<b>79</b>
Cost estimate assumptions	100	100	100	100	100
Average	85	85	83	94	



# Do Evolve PPQA's Role

### **Level 1 => Level 2: PPQA instills process discipline**

- Assists with process adoption
- Compliance based on "fear of the audit"

# **Level 2 => Level 3: PPQA detects process erosion**

Sampling is fine! Selection based on:

Most critical items

Systemic problems

New/modified process

New process executer

If major non-compliances, then conduct full audit.



# Do Reinvigorate Your Peer Reviews

# Softer, gentler approach

- Peer review objective: phase containment of defects
- "Defect" implies that the author is defective
- "Saves" and "escapes"

# Inject defects to gauge review effectiveness

- Initially, don't tell 'em
- Once you've got a baseline of performance, tell 'em
- After improvement is noted, stop injecting defects
   But don't tell 'em you've stopped!
   Hawthorne effect will sustain improved performance

Make the review team co-responsible for the quality of the work product.



### **Exercise**

# Do's and Don'ts: Behavior and PA Specific

- Do Eliminate Low-Value-Added Tasks
- Do Pilot Early and Often
- Do Make Friday SPI-day
- Do Become a Learning Organization
- Don't Ignore the Adoption Curve
- Do Implement Value-Added PPQA
- Do Evolve PPQA's Role
- Do Reinvigorate Your Peer Reviews

#### What now?

- Which would help <u>your</u> organization the most?
- What are you going to do when you get back?
- Are there other Behavior or PA Do's and Don'ts?



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**PA Specific** 

**Message from our Sponsor** 



# Do Participate in Your Local SPIN

# Why participate in your SPIN?

- Learn from others' experience
- Get consultation on your issues
- Provide consultation on their issues
- Expand your network

All this for one low price of admission!



# **Questions?**

### Pat O'Toole

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### More "Do's and Don'ts" After Break

#### **Break starts in about 5 minutes**

- We could cover another slide or two
   OR
- We could be first in line for coffee and cookies!

# But before you go...

- Do's and Don'ts articles
   Sent via email on (or about) the first of every month
   No salesman will ever call
   Free and worth every penny!
- Give me a business card or send me an email

# One LAST thing...